



GATHERING IN SOVEREIGN HILL'S ST ALIPIUS DIGGINGS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Enthusiastic singing voices could be heard across the goldfields at Sovereign Hill on Monday, May 23, 2016. Students, principals, teachers and CEO staff gathered as a faith community in Sovereign Hill's St Alipius Diggings Catholic Church to celebrate Ballarat Catholic Education Week 2016.

St Alipius Diggings Catholic Church allowed the small faith community to celebrate Mass in the traditional style of the 1850s. The congregation gathered outside to witness Fr Tom Brophy raise a flag to signal the beginning of Mass, just as Fr Downing (the first resident priest of St Alipius, 1853) did on the goldfields.



Fr Tom showed members of the congregation the vestments worn in this era and the custom of the celebrant facing away from the community throughout the Mass and members receiving communion over a rail at the front of the altar. Many of the younger participants were not aware of this practice of times gone by and were most pleased to be able to be a part of reliving history. Fr Tom began the Mass in Latin, much to the surprise of the students.

Sovereign Hill welcomed the enthusiastic congregation which included representatives from St Patrick's College Ballarat, Damascus College Ballarat, Emmaus Catholic Primary School Mt Clear, St Alipius Primary School Ballarat East, St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East, St Columba's Primary School Ballarat North and St Aloysius Primary School Redan. Susan Crowe and Adam Cameron, and a small student Choir from St Alipius provided the music and encouraged the singing. Jo-anne Van der Voort (Religious Education Officer) assisted with the preparation of the Mass.

The congregation was reminded that the diggers who flocked to the Ballarat Goldfields came here with hopes and dreams of a better life. Throughout the hard times their faith and their Church community continued to support and encourage them in good times and bad, similar to faith communities today supporting the hopes and aspirations of its members.

*Annemarie Kierce
Sovereign Hill Education Officer*



Photo 1: Fr Tom raising the flag

Photo 2: Fr Tom

Photo 3: St Alipius Choir

Photo 4: Fr Tom explaining vestments

Photo 5: Susan Crowe dressed for the 1850's

