

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

On the weekend of July 31, as part of the United Nations "International Day of Friendship", Our Lady Help of Christians Parish East Warrnambool celebrated International Day of Friendship and Cultural Diversity. In these troubled times bringing people together in friendship and harmony is a grand inspiration for us all. It started off as a bright and colourful morning throughout the Church as many of the congregation dressed in their finest cultural garb and costumes. The foyer of the Church was vivid with flags, costumes, music and art work adding warmth and welcoming-feeling. As our parish event followed the successful 'World of Art' exhibition by the school children we were able to display some of their works on Indigenous Australian Art, Japan and Native American Art.

After Mass about one hundred people took up the opportunity to stay behind and join in sampling the various mouth-watering and delightful foods brought in by parishioners' whilst catching up with one another. As well we were treated to a wonderful dance and music performance from the Philippines' community that added to the friendly atmosphere. Every region of the world was well represented and everyone mingled and talked about growing up in their home countries, their past life and why they have now come to live in Australia. Photos were constantly taken and shared with each other between snacks and it was wonderful to see the rapport between cultures.

It was a great day for everyone in sharing and appreciating the various cultures coming together to celebrate the cultural diversity of International Day of Friendship in our parish. This is a day which will be repeated next year going by the response of all who were involved.

A big thank you to all who participated in making this a wonderful day of celebration of friendship and cultural diversity.

Dion Bartlett and Paul Torpy

