

Distinguished guests, friends and benefactors

1956 marked the arrival of the Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary to Melbourne to begin their ministry in Australia. You may not know but our first community –coming from Malta, experienced what many of the migrant population of the '50's had to experience. That is, to live with others whilst a home was prepared. On the arrival of our first community, the parish- owned convent in 59a Westmoreland Road, was not completed. The Sisters of St Joseph in Footscray were kind enough to open their own convent and allow us to live with them for some months. It's not so hard to imagine the difficulties and challenges that would have brought for our sisters who came to a new country, a 'different' type of English from the 'Australian English', the need to travel back and forth from Footscray to North Sunshine and much more. Yet, this brave community surpassed these difficulties and were blessed with spending their first Christmas (1956) at 59a Westmoreland Road. This convent was to be their home until 2013 where we then relocated to the Congregation's own home 13 Willey Street.

One might say that the Augustinian presence in Australia has always been identified as being relatively small – yet being few in number didn't limit our apostolate to only North Sunshine, in fact our Augustinian presence stretched to Broken Hill, Frankston and lastly Avondale Heights. As years past decisions were taken to concentrate our ministry to the Parishes of Sunshine North and Avondale Heights. Over all these years 40 nuns have been, gone or stayed. I think you would agree with me that this has been quite an achievement.

Presently, in both North Sunshine & Avondale Heights we continue to carry on

in Parish Work, Education, Chaplaincy, Liturgy, Parish Support, and much work which can't be listed but is most certainly part of our day.

Were to in the future – well, we will do what we did on our arrival. That is to trust in God! We trust in the same way our Venerable Mother Foundress, Teresa Spinelli trusted always convinced that God was calling her forth in ministry. The Church today, recognizes Teresa Spinelli as Venerable Teresa Spinelli announcing her unconditional trust in God throughout all her life as an example to be followed by all.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Congregational leaders who – back in 1956, heard and responded to the call from the Australian Church to leave the comfort of the homeland and travel to minister to a parish community that invites us to be a part of their own mission.

I take this opportunity to thank firstly, Rev Bishop Terence Curtin, the Parish Priests Fr Nhan Le and Fr John Taliana and concelebrating priests for their presence and also you, the church community for being with us to celebrate this Mass of Thanksgiving.