



## MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNAE

### A reflection of my time as Parish Secretary



**Mercy College Foundation  
Student  
1965 – 1969**

**Patricia Guatta (nee Ind)  
Blessed Oliver Plunkett School  
(St Oliver's)**

**Pat, congratulations on your retirement after nearly 21 years from the role as Parish Secretary at Sacred Heart in Diamond Creek! How did you come to be in this role?**

Sacred Heart is my parish, and my son Michael was then a student at Sacred Heart School so the Parish Priest knowing that I had worked for 3 years in the National Papal Visit Office organising Pope John Paul's Australian tour in 1986 invited me to consider working in the Parish Office for 14 hours per week.

**There would have been many changes over the years. What are your recollections of the significant milestones?**

What immediately comes to mind are the Hymn books and talented volunteer musicians and singers being replaced with audio visual equipment at Sunday Mass.



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The computer courses and Archdiocese seminars as the parishes moved forward from manual bookkeeping, introduction of Working with Children & Police Checks, OH &S regulations, and being an outer suburb, new bushfire safety requirements. My hours needed to change to 25 hours per week.

Another significant period was the rebuilding of St Mary's Kinglake church and community following the Black Friday bushfires. The parishes stepped in to assist in any way they could help displaced fire victims.

To end on a happy note, another momentous occasion was the celebrations for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the parish.

**I understand there have been Parish partnerships to accommodate the changing times. What have been the challenges of the transitions and the great aspects of promoting an inclusive community?**

Sacred Heart partnered with Greensborough North Parish in 2012. There was a feeling of uncertainty in the parish and school after losing our Priest however we are known for being a renowned welcoming and resilient community, so we were soon sharing their Priest and embracing necessary changes and new Mass times.

In 2017 more upheaval when the combined parishes partnered with St Mary's Greensborough.

We now have many combined committees and parish groups to cater for and support our communities.

**The environmental impacts, particularly around the 2009 bushfires, would have been difficult to navigate to support those in need. Are you able to share a couple of insights of those times?**

Sacred Heart Parish included St Peter's Hurstbridge and St Mary's Kinglake, so we were severely impacted by the bushfires.

Priests from nearby parishes gave support and Diamond Creek St Vincent de Paul members were an incredible assistance to those who lost their homes or were displaced. Members of our local community while stunned helped in many productive ways.



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**With the tremendous commitment and dedication over the years in your role as Parish Secretary, it's time now for you!**

### **What's first on your list!**

Family time, a holiday in a warmer climate and lunch with my Mercy College friends. After all these years, we are proudly known as the 1965 foundation students of Mercy College with friendships that have stood the test of time.

It is lovely to maintain these friendship connections throughout the years, supporting each other through the difficult times and applauding our many accomplishments over the years.



**We wish you the very best for the next chapter in your life!**

**Thank you for sharing your recollections of significant events in your important role over the years as Sacred Heart Parish Secretary in Diamond Creek.**

**The celebration after Sunday Mass was a testimony of how thankful the community are of your valuable contributions and care.**

**We look forward to celebrating 60 years of Mercy next year 1965 – 2025!**