

Good morning everyone and welcome to our 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM as the Catholic Parish of Hastings. My name is Mary Jo Close, and I am the chairperson of the Parish Council. It is a privilege to serve this community. Before I begin, I would like to take care of a few house keeping rules. Please be aware of the exits in case of an emergency. There is one here up front, and then there are exits behind you through the doors that lead to the kitchen area. If needed, toilets are in the back through those doors as well. The format for today's meeting will be reports from the chairs of the committees, the schools, the youth, our pastoral assistant and finally our pastor, Fr. Vince. We ask that you hold all questions until the end.

Let me begin by expressing my thanks to all of you who have taken time out of your busy schedules to attend this meeting. It shows your dedication to the faith and to our parish. I would also like to say a special thank you to all of those who serve on the various ministries of the parish. Without you, we would be lost. It is you who make the church what it is today.

I have spent a good deal of time thinking about what I was going to report today. I tried to think about what it is that you want to hear from me. We have come through another year and have seemed to survive the trials and tribulations that have been put in front of us. We are still experiencing growing pains. The past few months have been extremely difficult ones for the parish as we said goodbye to Fr Manoj. And now Fr. Nathaniel is still away in the Phillipines and Fr. Vince has had to run the ship on his own. We must continue to pray for Fr Vince as he guides his flock. We are doing the best we can to assist him.

As we move into 2017, the future of the Catholic Parish of Hastings is changing and growing. We are a very diverse parish, with members

coming from many cultures and walks of life. Sometimes it seems a struggle to try to embrace those who are different from us, those who have grown up in a culture that is very different from the kiwi culture. And we are doing a good job of embracing our differences and showing the love of Christ among us. We need to remember that we are no longer Paki Paki, Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Peter Chanel. We are one, the Catholic Parish of Hastings, and while we do not want to lose our individuality, we need to open our arms and our hearts and learn to live as one, as true followers of Christ.

We ask for your continued prayers and support as we continue to grow in faith, hope and charity. We are striving to be a parish that we can all be proud to be a part of, a mirror of Christ in our lives. As we move forward this year, we need to put on the breast plate of Christ and be prepared to defend our faith and show the world that as member's of God's family, no one will be able to question who we are. **WE ARE THE CHURCH**, we are the Catholic Parish of Hastings.