

**Celebrating 40 years of Kippax Parish**  
**Launching 'Heart speaks to heart' by Jim Littleton msc, Sept 28, 2012**

It is a pleasure for me to launch Father Jim Littleton's book celebrating 40 years of the Kippax Parish. From its inception, thanks to those of you who were here in 1972 and to your founding parish priest, Father Harry Morrissey, Kippax has continued to grow into a thriving parish as it pursued its desire to be the Heart of Jesus in the district. Within the parish community and as an outreach to others 'Heart speaks to heart'.

Having, inspired by God's grace, matured as a parish, we ask 'What is God's will for us now? As missionaries of the heart of Jesus what is he calling us to do in today's church and world?' In my desire to help contribute to an exploration of this question in a parish that has been so welcoming to me over the past ten years, I would like to offer three quotes. The first is a statement by Cardinal Franz König, a statement I shared with you last year when you celebrated with me the 50th anniversary of my ordination. Cardinal König, was Archbishop of Vienna. He was one of the leading bishops of the Second Vatican Council and remained a staunch supporter of its central vision, especially its focus on ecumenism and the outreach of the Church to the world. He died in 2004 at the age of 98. I quote: 'The Church of Christ must be an inviting Church, a Church with open doors, a warming, motherly Church of all generations, a Church of the dead, the living and the unborn, a Church of those before us, those with us, and those after us, a Church of understanding and sympathy, thinking with us, sharing our joy and sorrow, a Church that laughs with the people and cries with the people, a Church that is not foreign and does not act that way, a human Church, a Church for us, a Church that, like a mother, can wait for her children, a Church who looks for her children and follows them, a Church that visits the people where they are, at work or at play, at the factory gate and at the football stadium, and within the four walls of the home, a Church of those in the shadow, of those who weep, of those who grieve, a Church of the worthy, but also of the unworthy, of the saints and the sinners, a Church not of pious pronouncements, but of silent helping action.'

There are echoes here of the opening words of the document that most clearly expresses the spirit that flowed through the Council, a document that was presented to the Council numerous times and numerous times was sent back for reworking. It was finally approved towards the close of the Council (1965). I am speaking of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. More than any other document it picks up the movement of the Spirit that breathed through that graced gathering. I quote its opening words. You know them, but we can never hear them often enough: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men and women of this age, especially those who are in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts, for theirs is a community composed of men and women. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone.' (GS §1).

Recently, with the growth in MacGregor and with the need for our two neighbouring parishes to cut down the number of Masses they could offer, we received an influx of parishioners. I hope that they have felt welcomed and encouraged to offer their gifts for building up the community and contributing to its mission in the district.

My second quote comes from Teilhard de Chardin. "Some day, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we will harness for God the energies of Love. And then, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire'. (Toward the Future (NY, Harcourt, 1975, 'The Evolution of Chastity' (1934) page 86.). May everyone who comes through the doors of this church experience a community that wants to harness their love. May the district see the Catholic community here, in the words of Jesus, as a light upon the hill calling everyone to contribute their love to the building of a community open to all ages and all cultures.

My third quote is a prayer from the great missionary of the Heart of Jesus: Saint Paul:  
'If then there is any appeal in Christ, any consolation from love,  
any communion in the Spirit, any movements of compassion and feelings of love,  
make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love,  
being of one soul and of one mind.  
Do nothing from selfish ambition.  
Do not strive after or seek to find your value in things that are worthless,  
but in humility regard others above yourselves,  
so that not everyone is focused on themselves,  
but each is looking to the interests of others.  
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus'(Philippians 2:1-5).

In today's church there are bound to be those who want to live in a world that no longer exists. There are bound also to be those who are hungry for whatever is new, and who lunge from one novelty to the next. There is every reason to hope that a parish that finds its identity in the love of the heart of Jesus will have a place for all and will continue to entice each of us onto healthier ground, where we are obedient to the Spirit, grateful for the richness of our Catholic tradition, and courageous in engaging the world.

I hope you find echoes in Jim's book 'Heart speaks to heart' of your experience here at Saint John the Apostle.