

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ST TIMOTHY'S VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY

In 2012, the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) Dorish Maru College seminarians were helping in terms of singing for the Mass at St Timothy's parish once a month. Because of this, the Vietnamese people in the parish community met Fr Joseph VU Minh Nguyen SVD, the director of the seminarians, and invited him to celebrate the Vietnamese mass for the first time at St Timothy's church. With the approval of the parish priest then Fr Rod Pitt, the first Vietnamese mass was celebrated at 5pm on 10 March 2013, presided by Fr Nguyen. From then on, the Vietnamese community at St Timothy's has been officially established.

Over the last ten years, the community has welcomed the priests from the SVD, as well as the priests from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) Blackburn, and other religious congregations, to come and celebrate mass.

At first, the community had around 20 people attending mass. Even though small, but the community also had different functioning groups and committees such as choir, altar servers, liturgy, lectors, special ministers. Until now (June 2023), there are about 120 people attending Sunday mass; and about 200 attendees and participants for the Solemn masses and Vietnamese traditional masses.

Attached to the St Timothy's Vietnamese Community is its Youth Group, led and guided by the young adults who were being nourished and growing up in the community over the years.

Below are some highlights about this group.

St Timothy's Vietnamese Youth Group is called to guide and unite young Catholics to explore and share our faith through hope and love. Since 2014, we have actively engaged with the youth members of the St Timothy's Vietnamese community, offering a wide range of activities and events that help them deepen their understanding of the message of Jesus Christ.

To achieve our mission, the St Timothy's Vietnamese Youth Group focuses on three aspects: liturgy, music and events. Additionally, the professional development and guidance from Fr Thien is fundamental for developing the skills of our faith leaders in the community.

We understand that the liturgy has a significant role in the development of the faith of our youth community. Our main goal is to provide an engaging and enriching experience, led by scripture and the teachings of the Gospel. Together with the focus on the spirit of Jesus Christ and togetherness, we leverage from our own life experiences to develop enjoyable and relatable activities.

We believe that prayer through praise and worship music can help uplift the spirit of the community. As noted by St Augustine, 'To sing is to pray twice'. This is emphasized through weekly choir rehearsal and a Youth Mass on every

third Sunday of the month, where the youth provide the opportunity for the community to engage in prayer through uplifting songs. This will not only allow our young people to encounter Christ, but also encourage the community to walk alongside us in our journey of faith. In addition to the monthly Youth Mass singing, the choir has also participated in Christmas Carols and cultural events.

St Timothy's Vietnamese community plays a vital role in forming, nourishing, and supporting our youth group. We are thankful for the ongoing support of the Vietnamese community towards our youth ministry. With their encouragement, we can carry on our mission to bring the community together through youth-led community wide events. Over the years, we have organised a variety of events for all ages, including organizing youth mass singing and readings, Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, Christmas Nativity Play, retreats, reconciliation before Easter and Christmas, St Vincent de Paul's Christmas presents, Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts, community camp, picnic day, Bunnings BBQ, sports day, disco party, Halloween party, movie night, trivia night, 'Phở' (Vietnamese noodle) night etc. These events have provided an opportunity for the community to get together and create memories full of love.

With continual support from the St Timothy's community, we hope to continue to build up the faith of our members, both young and old, and invite everyone to join us on our journey of faith, following in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

