

THE M^t BARNEY MASS 50th ANNIVERSARY

On Exhibition Wednesday we celebrated 50 years of Mt Barney Masses. One hundred and fifty past and present members gathered at the base of the mountain for Mass and a picnic lunch. Archbishop Bathersby presided over the Mass and nine people from the first Mass in 1960 attended. They were Brian, Sr Rita, Jim, Mervyn, Mary, Jim, Margaret, Byron, Marian.

The Mass began with the presentation of the five candles which represent the five decades of the Club. The candles were carried by Pat (Willie's brother), Leo (John's brother. John served at the first Barney Mass) and three foundation members who were at the first Barney Mass: Merv, Margaret and Mary.

Past member, Maggie did the first reading and Antonia read the Psalm. Archbishop Bathersby delivered the homily. Past member, Mary led the Prayers of the Faithful and allowed us to remember absent friends when she read, with fondness and reverence, the list of 37 deceased members.

Mary explained the offertory gifts which were presented by Don (pack), Robyn (hat), Elizabeth (boots), Paddy (billy), Desley (club staff) and John (bread and wine). Pat, Marnie, Majella and John (a seminarian from Beaudesert) distributed communion. The inspiring music was organized by Peggy. Her guitar playing was accompanied by Thea accordion playing. It was a magnificent combination. Peggy and Liz gave up their school holidays to prepare the Mass which was a very moving celebration of all that is wonderful about a Catholic bushwalking club – the spiritual connection between people and the glory of God in creation.

Mass was followed by a companionable picnic lunch during which many former friends were reunited. Maxine and her helpers kept the tea and coffee flowing.

Following the picnic lunch Pat entertained us with stories from some of the 48 times she has been part of the Mt Barney climb and Mass. Pat joined the Club in 1961 and has had continuous membership since then. One of the original climbers, Brian, shared his memories of the first climb and a second one, a few months later, when he assisted in the laying of a plaque, a club badge and the altar stone.

Another original climber, Mary, was joined by the other eight from the first Mass, for the cutting of the 50th Birthday Cake, organized by Maxine.

Phil read a message from Willie, who said the first Barney Mass on 17th August, 1960. Willie referred to *the Mt Sinai sacredness of the mountain in the morning light* on that first event 50 years ago. He had gained permission from Archbishop Duhig to hold the Mass *in that most unusual location*. In his message, Willie described the *privilege of carrying up the vestments and other requirements for the Mass* but added that he felt that *those who shared the carrying of the altar stone in their rucksacks hardly regarded it as a privilege. It was about a foot square, and must have weighed a good few kilos. At that time Mass was always celebrated on an altar stone embedded in the altar or simply laid on it. All altar stones contained a relic of some saint and were specially consecrated.* Willie poignantly recalled the experience of the first Mt Barney Mass as *one of the highlights not only of my time in Australia, but of my entire life.*

Liz read the list of apologies. Contacts had been received from many parts of Australia and also from Scotland, where past member, Christine, offered to climb Ben Nevis in honour of the occasion.

Desley had begun the day with her President's Welcome and concluded it with her Thank You speech.

Many thanks must go to all who made it such a wonderful occasion by planning, attending and contributing. A special thank you to Maxine, Elizabeth and others who helped with the clean up at the end of the day. Congratulations to the Committee whose vision and early planning got the event underway. Thanks to Club secretary, Jan, who initiated important contacts and bookings before leaving for her travels; and to Liz who put the day's programme together.

Thanks must also go to Greg for all his efforts to track down past members and send out invitations, to Marian who dealt with all the bus bookings and payments, and to Terry who oversaw the finances and brilliantly got the books to balance for the event.

Congratulations BCBC on a great celebration!

Liz