

Stations of the Cross find a new home

St Michaelâ??s church, Mitcham, on Sunday afternoon commissioned a set of wrought iron Stations of the Cross, designed and sculpted by the artist Voitre Marek, which formerly stood in the grounds of St Barnabas Theological College in Belair.

More than 90 St Michaelâ??s parishioners and guests joined around 13 clergy, including the Archbishop of Adelaide Geoff Smith and Bishop of the Murray Keith Dalby, to walk the 14 stations, reflecting penitentially at each.

Parish priest Fr David Covington-Groth said he was pleased so many people could join the parish in celebrating its new artwork.

Station 12: Christ on the Cross

â??I think it was a wonderful way to welcome the stations to our community where they will be cherished,â?• he said.

Although the background and history of the Stations are a little hazy, they are believed to have been a project by students at St Barnabas, who raised money to commission them and gifted them to the college.

The congregation pauses to reflect.

They were installed on the Belair campus around 1981 but were removed and placed in storage in a shed at Bishopâ??s Court, North Adelaide, in 1996, when St Barnabas moved.

When Bishopâ??s Court was sold last year, they were moved again and stored in a different location.

â??I only found out about them during Holy Week this year,â?• says Fr David. â??That was when the Revâ??d Dr Cathy Thomson, then Principal of St Barnabas, told me about them and suggested they would be wonderful at St Michaelâ??s.â?•

Fr Davidâ??s son, Isaac, and friend Lachlan Bryson restored the art works, stripping them back to metal, priming them, re-spraying them and finally installing them in the grounds of St Michaelâ??s.

â??We are delighted that they have found a home where they will be loved and used as they were intended,â?• Fr David said.

The congregation reflects on Staion 14 in the rose garden behind the church.

VojtÄ?ch (Voitre) Marek was born in Czechoslovakia in 1919 and came to Australia in 1948.

Trained as a metal engraver and sculptor in his home country, he settled in Adelaide first working as an engraver whilst also practising as an artist. From 1960 to 1975 Voitre worked full time on commissions of ecclesiastical art for churches throughout Australia.

He made works in beaten copper, wrought iron, enamel, carved stone and wood, and his output ranged from small holy vessels using precious metals to large figurative sculptures, baptismal fonts, altars and Stations of the Cross.

A selection of Marekâ??s works was on display earlier this year at the Art Gallery of South Australia, as part of the â??Surrealists at seaâ?• exhibition.

Many Anglican churches in the diocese hold important works by the artist. You can find out more on the website maintained by his family here.

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