

# JOURNEY

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

WINTER 2017 | NO. 63



Meet the *faces*  
of youth ministry  
in our schools

PAGE 6





PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

EDITION NO. 63  
WINTER 2017

ISSN 1835-7024

**Publisher**

Catholic Diocese  
of Wollongong

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*Journey* is a bi-annual publication and welcomes submissions of articles, photographs and advertisements.

Regretfully, we cannot guarantee publication or replies to unsuccessful submissions.

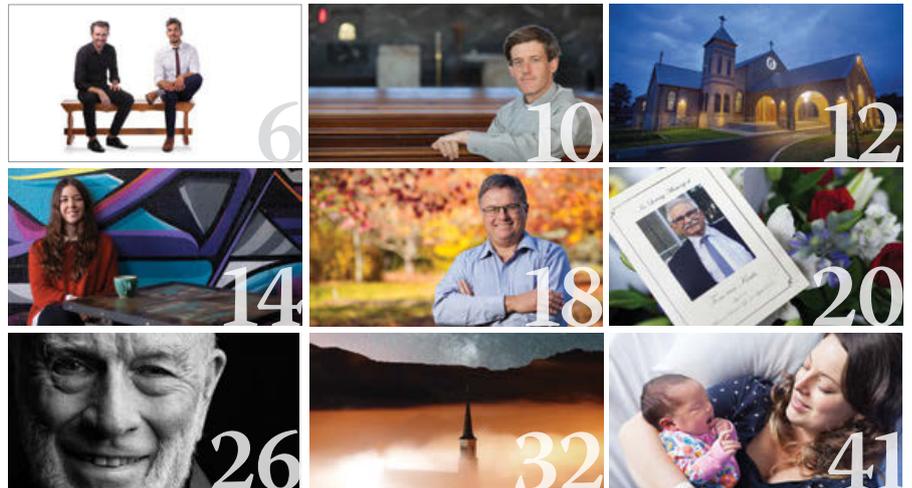
Submission deadline for the Summer 2017 edition is 23 October 2017.



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FROM THE BISHOP

3 Being on the road together

EDITORIAL

4 No one graduates from the basics

FEATURES

6 Faces of Youth Ministry

10 Royal Commission:  
A young priest's perspective

12 "You have kept the best wine till now":  
The Dedication of Holy Family Church Ingleburn

18 Deeds not words: An interview  
with Michael Brearley

20 "Go to Galilee": In loving memory  
of Tom van Kints

26 Fifty years a servant: An interview  
with Fr John Pickering OFM

32 Transforming parish culture

CONFRATERNITY OF  
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

14 Creating Connections

15 What really matters

16 Scripture classes get a big tick

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

22 Year 12's gather with the Bishop

34 Jesus, is that you?

38 Why teaching?

45 Heart, Character, Passion

CATHOLIC WORKS

36 *CatholicCare*: You are not alone

42 *Caritas*: Covenant of compassion

43 *Catholic Mission*: Improving  
women and children's health

DIOCESAN & PARISH LIFE

24 New horizons for Wollongong Youth

30 Light to the Nations:  
A pilgrimage of Hope

31 Try Alpha

40 Faith Circles: The small group  
revolution

41 As easy as smiling as at baby

44 The Catholic Guy:  
To the ends of the earth

46 Fanning the flame of faith in the south

47 Leaving a legacy of faith at  
Macquarie Fields

47 Silver Jubilee celebrations at Varroville

48 Catholic Women's League

48 Good Friday Appeal

49 The unsung heroes of our parishes

49 Sr Joan Goodwin RSJ celebrates 60  
years of love and service

50 Clergy appointments and retirements

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# Being on the road together

BY BISHOP  
PETER INGHAM



**A** Catholic would have to be at least 90 years old to even remember that 1937 was the last time the Church in Australia held a Plenary Council.

With the Pope's approval, a Plenary Council of all the dioceses in Australia is celebrated when the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference considers it necessary or advantageous so as to ensure that the pastoral needs of the People of God in Australia are being cared for.

My short message at this early stage is to alert you, the people of our Diocese, that we will be involved in this national Church event in 2020.

But, why have a Plenary Council now? The Bishops have been considering this possibility for the best part of 10 years. Our *Year of Grace* held in 2012 was a step on the journey towards this goal. Archbishop Mark Coleridge recently spoke on the necessity of a Plenary Council at this juncture in the history of the Church, "We are at a time of profound cultural change. Not only in the wider community, but also in the Church.

"I think we have to accept the fact that Christendom is over – by which I mean civic Christianity. It's over. Now, how do we deal with that fact?" Archbishop Coleridge said.

In addition, there are two catalysts for a Plenary Council that I believe are relevant. Firstly, Pope Francis, in his two Synods on the Family in 2015 and 2016, demonstrated what the "synodality" of the Church could achieve despite the differences of opinion that may have



**We are at a time of profound cultural change. Not only in the wider community, but also in the Church ... Now, how do we deal with that fact?**

ARCHBISHOP  
MARK COLERIDGE

seemed chaotic. *Synod* means "being on the road together". Having a space between the Pope's two synods on the family gave time for reflection, reaction to, and digestion of what was raised. Remember that the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) had four sessions, each a year apart.

Secondly, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse began in 2013 and will deliver its final report in December 2017. This has been a huge catalyst for looking into how the Church is governed.

The hope for a Plenary Council is the opportunity to take stock of where we – as the Catholic Church – have come from, and the opportunity to plan the future direction of the Church in Australia. A Plenary Council aims to involve the "grass roots" of the Church, through listening, wide consultation, and discussion. Anything that does not infringe on the Church's teachings on faith or morals is potentially on the table, and the Plenary Council can also engage with contemporary issues of justice, peace, development, and the environment.

We all have comfort zones that we do not want to desert, and I can foresee that a Plenary Council may be unsettling for some. But, it is my hope that any discontent will, in a creative way, produce a growth in faith, hope and love. We also have to be vigilant against politicising the process. As Archbishop Coleridge explains, "There is politics involved, but it is primarily an ecclesial event. We are trying to discern what God wants, and we are invoking the Holy Spirit. So, it is a much more mysterious event than a political assembly."

The Plenary Council has to be a call to conversion for all of us as we try to re-engage people who feel disconnected from faith in Jesus Christ and his Body, the Church, by putting the focus on the mission of Jesus Christ who told his disciples, "Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the Commandments I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus has a Church community to promote and live his mission!

It is in my prayer and hope that a Plenary Council will "put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith" (Acts 14:22). ■

Yours in Christ



Most Rev Peter W Ingham DD  
Bishop of Wollongong



BY JUDE HENNESSY

A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Global

Leadership Summit in the United States. Big hitters from the world of politics, finance, industry, the military, and “Church” presented inspiring ideas about effective leadership and change management. To say I felt like a very small fish in a huge pond would be a massive understatement. So many things stick in my mind from the words of the amazing leaders who spoke, and Bill Hybels, the host of the conference, made a statement that summarised much of what I encountered in these leaders, in their approaches to life, work, and yes, to their faith. Essentially it was this: *no one – no matter how big, successful, or clever they become – ever graduates from the basics. No one.*

### Taking Stock

In 2016, Bishop Peter Ingham directed that an independent review of the work of the Parish Services Team (PST) and Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) be undertaken in the Diocese of Wollongong. The review of PST and CCD enabled wide consultation with diocesan clergy, staff, parishioners, agencies, and other dioceses. The review process proved to be a most necessary and valuable exercise, providing rich insights about the work of the Office of the Bishop in support of the key missionary elements of the Church and parishes. In the end, it told us some profound things, key amongst them being: don't forget what the Church exists for, and get back to the basics.

### More than a name change

A key recommendation of the review was the establishment of a new office in order to clearly focus on the

# NO ONE GRADUATES FROM THE BASICS

**This is more than just a name change. It is a major refocus of energy and resources on the basics of forming disciples for mission.**

essential mission of evangelisation and aspects of renewal required throughout the Diocese to enable this to occur. To this effect, Bishop Peter recently announced the establishment of the *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation* for the Diocese of Wollongong which incorporates former members of the PST and CCD in their support of clergy and the many parish-based volunteers involved in ministries. This is more than just a name change. It is a major refocus of energy and resources on the basics of forming disciples for mission.

### Our story is powerful

But what is this mission? The Church exists to continue the mission of Jesus to which we were commissioned when he said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). It requires us to share the simple gospel message about how much God loves us and desires to be in relationship with us. It means telling others about how God sent his Son, Jesus, to make this possible, and now continues to pour out the Holy Spirit on all who believe in him and seek him so they might live lives of joy, with the assurance of eternal life in God's love. Basic? Yes. Profound and life changing? Absolutely! Outside our comfort zone? Probably. But, as the civil rights activist, John Lewis, said, “If not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

Pope Francis, like his predecessors, is increasingly using urgent language to shake us into participation in the mission of the Church in this era of new evangelisation. Yet, the most recent results from the 2016 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) shows that only 18% of Catholics who attend Mass regularly in our Diocese feel

# ES

comfortable sharing their faith with others. When we encounter something extraordinary, our human nature wants to share this with another – think of a beautiful sunset or an epic conclusion to a football match. Great things were made to be shared. In my own life, I need to ask myself the question, “Do I see my faith as something worth sharing?” because if it is, then why would I hesitate to share the source of my hope and joy? Pope Francis reminds us that, “Jesus does not say: Go off and do things on your own. No! That is not what he is saying. Jesus says: Go, for I am with you!” We always have Christ with us when we share the gospel of his name.

## Renewal and Evangelisation

With these “basics” in mind, the key focus of the members of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation will be on the reinvigoration of Church life, including evangelising ministries that utilise programs such as *Alpha* to kick-start our understanding of how easy it is to evangelise. The results of the 2016 NCLS, now available for every parish in our Diocese, provide great insights. There are many things to joyfully

**In my own life, I need to ask myself the question, “Do I see my faith as something worth sharing?” because if it is, then why would I hesitate to share the source of my hope and joy?**

celebrate in the results. As you’d expect, the results also give parishes some clear simple pointers about what they can do to ensure they become even more overt places of welcome, belonging, and outreach.

I hope this edition of Journey Magazine sparks a real sense of excitement and encouragement as a result of the amazing people and fantastic initiatives going on right around the Diocese of Wollongong. The engagement with parish-based *Divine Renovation Days* (see page 32) has proved really inspiring, as has the establishment of ministry teams in a variety of parishes to deliver *Alpha* as a basic tool of invitation and evangelisation (see page 31). Youth

Ministry is continuing to reach out vibrantly to young people in our schools and parishes with the new *Youth Ministry Coordinators* (see page 6) in schools drawing hundreds of young people to an encounter with faith via lunchtime concerts, testimony, and retreats. *The Australian Catholic Youth Festival* (see page 24) in Sydney in December is sure to be a life-changing event for hundreds of young people from our Diocese as they join with thousands from across Australia. There are so many good articles in this edition of Journey that I hope inspire you and fuel your desire to deepen your walk with Jesus.

I would ask that you pray for the work of all of our clergy throughout the Diocese, and the members of the newly-established Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, as they focus on assisting parishes to embrace the urgent missionary call to renewal, catechesis, and outreach in vibrant parish communities. ■

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*Jude Hennessy is the Director of the newly established Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Diocese of Wollongong*

One of the principal enemies of growth is isolation, but where collaboration and community are united by a single vision, growth and success are sure to follow. Nature teaches us this lesson as we observe various life-forms and the way they gravitate towards community in order to flourish – roses grow in bushes, trees spring up in forests, fish swim in schools, and humans congregate in suburbs and cities. But it's not simply community that is required for life to thrive, it's also favourable conditions and nourishment.

During my time as Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, I have witnessed first-hand the development of conditions that have provided a dynamic and fertile environment for youth ministry to flourish in a spectacular way. This has come about as a result of a movement away from a silo mentality (isolation) towards one of collaboration (community), as well as a clear articulation of a vision for youth ministry in the Diocese through our new High School Engagement Plan.

As part of the Plan, one of the most exciting recent developments has been the appointment of Youth Ministry Coordinators in each of our systemic schools to generate interest and momentum for youth ministry initiatives. This is yet another step away from isolation towards collaboration. They form part of a dynamic school youth ministry community which includes: the Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong team (CYMW), the Youth Mission Team (YMT), and Joel Duval from Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW).

It is a very exciting time to be part of youth ministry in the Diocese. YMT are in all of our systemic schools three times a year, and their weekly regional youth group, iSTAND, is going from strength-to-strength. YMT's termly iSTAND camps have been highly successful with much growth expected this year. As a key component of the Plan, YMT are teaming up with CYMW and CEDoW to bring an exciting new initiative, *LIVE*, to our high school youth. *LIVE* is a professional and faith-filled initiative that combines live music, powerful presentations, engaging activities, and relationship-building opportunities for all students in Years 7-12 throughout the year. It culminates at the end of the

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SETH HARSH

year in Wollongong with *LIVE* Festival: a massive event giving participants the opportunity to encounter God in a profound and life-changing way.

I recently sat down with Joel Duval and our newly appointed Youth Ministry Coordinators (overpage) to ask them some questions about who they are, what they do, and why:

# faces OF YOUTH MINISTRY

BY SETH HARSH

## **Joel Duval**

*Education Officer - Youth Ministry  
(Catholic Life, Education and Mission),  
Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong*

## **Tell us a little a bit about yourself**

I grew up in the Macarthur attending Holy Family Catholic Parish Primary School, Ingleburn, and then Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville. After school, I travelled for a number of years living in the USA before moving back to Australia and settling at Wilton. I have a Bachelors of Education and a Masters of Theology and was most recently the Religious Education Coordinator at Holy Family, Ingleburn. Before teaching, I worked for Brainstorm Productions travelling around Australia helping more than 350,000 students each

year by performing shows dealing with issues such as bullying, underage drinking, peer pressure, and the dangers of social media. I have also worked as a clown, bartender, florist, agent, chef, fitness instructor/personal trainer, and actor.

## **How was life growing up?**

I am one of seven children, so I am used to a lot of noise and having to literally fight for seconds at the dinner table. My Dad migrated from Mauritius at 17 and Mum from Malta at six-months old. Growing-up, we would spend our holidays in Jervis Bay. I played a number of sports as a kid, but now I mostly focus on the gym and running. I loved helping my





PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

“Participating in the Eucharist deepens my relationship with Jesus and gives me the strength and creativity I need to continue providing opportunities for others to encounter him like I have.”

JOEL DUVAL

### What inspired you to take up this role?

In addition to my faith, there are many people and events in my life that have inspired me to take this role including, my parents, my girlfriend (who has taught me so much about community and the Eucharist), my students, my studies, and my friends. But, perhaps the biggest inspiration was attending World Youth Day in Kraków last year and hearing Pope Francis say, “Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths.”

### What are some key achievements so far in the role?

In no particular order:

- Working on *LIVE* with Seth Harsh and Cathy Brown (Education Officer - Secondary) and receiving feedback from students saying that it has had such a positive impact on their faith.
- Discovering the amazing musical talents of so many of our students at our songwriting workshops.
- Helping to organise the Australian Catholic Youth Festival 2017 in Sydney and our schools’ involvement.
- Establishing a wonderful working relationship with our Youth Ministry Coordinators.
- Working with the Youth Mission Team.
- Being a part of the faith journeys of our students.

### What are your plans for the future?

To continue helping the young people in our Diocese explore and connect with their faith by taking up Pope Francis’ challenge, “So today, my friends, Jesus is inviting you, calling you, to leave your mark on life, to leave a mark on history, your own and that of many others as well.” ■

### Meet your school Youth Ministry Coordinators ▶

*Seth Harsh is the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, Diocese of Wollongong*

parents in the kitchen preparing and cooking dinner, and this has contributed to my passion for healthy eating and cooking.

Both my parents are committed to their faith. We attended Church every Sunday before heading off to the beach for a family lunch. I began reading at Mass at a young age and a number of my brothers and sisters were altar servers and musicians. We prayed as a family (we still do now) and my mum was a catechist. I guess that is one of the reasons as to why we are all so close – faith has kept us together. Growing up in a Catholic family helped me to build a sense of community and allowed me to understand myself through faith.

### At what point did you decide to take ownership of your faith?

I was in about Year 10. I participated in a social justice initiative at my high school, and after helping those less fortunate than myself I thought, “This is what faith is all about, helping the other.” I continued on this path and also made the conscious decision to always attend Church which led me to make sense of *why* I was helping others. Participating in the Eucharist deepens my relationship with Jesus and gives me the strength and creativity I need to continue providing opportunities for others to encounter him like I have. The Eucharistic community also provides me with invaluable support in my own faith life and ministry.

# your YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATORS

## Elise Townend

*Holy Spirit College, Bellambi*

### Describe yourself.

I am a fourth-year HSIE teacher. My teaching philosophy is to empower students through the development of the whole person.



### Inspiration for this role?

My own faith journey has greatly informed my vision of youth ministry. As a young adult, I found it challenging to determine where I "fit" in the Church. Based on this, I feel inspired to connect young people to the Church in practical ways.

### One achievement so far?

I'm really proud of providing opportunities for students to experience what it means to be a young Catholic person in 2017.

### One learning so far?

Where there is food, they will come.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

To inspire students to seek faith in their lives and to enter a genuine relationship with God.

## Matthew Watson

*John Therry Catholic High School, Rosemeadow*

### Describe yourself.

I consider myself to be a friendly, positive, and easy-going person. I love to encourage other people and boost the happiness and energy in an environment.

### Inspiration for this role?

I thoroughly enjoyed participating in spiritual-based events at school. It inspired and motivated me to be who I am today. I would like to provide this opportunity for students now that I am a teacher in a Catholic school.



### One achievement so far?

I have had a high level of communication with students surrounding youth ministry.

### One learning so far?

I have learnt to involve the students in the planning and execution of youth ministry events.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

I envision creating a culture where students can be extremely proud to be involved in expressing their Catholic faith in a variety of ways.

## Sarina Trimarchi

*Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Oak Flats*

### Describe yourself.

I love good coffee and great books, especially if there's a tragic anti-hero involved. Online shopping is my not-so-secret vice and my wish list is never empty.



### Inspiration for this role?

I really wanted to get involved and help facilitate new and exciting opportunities for students to explore their faith.

### One achievement so far?

Our *SPARK Retreat* with St Joseph's was a fantastic night. It was phenomenal to see students from different schools come together for a fun night of music, games, and faith.

### One learning so far?

I've learnt that getting notes returned by a due date is harder than it sounds! But, I've also learnt that students will surprise you with the depths of their enthusiasm and willingness to give anything a go.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

My plans are to keep travelling this journey and to have a great time at ACYF with a bunch of amazing Corpus students.

## Alexander Hayden

*St Benedict's Catholic College, Oran Park*

### Describe yourself.

I teach Drama, English and Art. In my spare time, I am a keen indoor rock climber and ice hockey fanatic.



### Inspiration for this role?

The favourite part of my job is getting to know the kids I teach in a fun and safe environment. Working in youth ministry allows me to do this with the added bonus of nurturing their faith.

### One achievement so far?

Ordering, picking up, and distributing 30 pizzas at a youth ministry meeting with no time to spare (well, with a little help from some colleagues.) Also, delivering my first youth ministry meeting ever without a hitch.

### One learning so far?

That we should never underestimate our kids! Their knowledge and enthusiasm for faith and life amazes me every day.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

Continue nurturing the Catholic community in our school with fun, faith-filled events. Also, instil a culture of social responsibility by creating opportunities for our kids to take the things they learn in youth ministry and connect them to the needs of the world, eg, immersion programs in remote aboriginal communities.

## Amelia Luis

St Joseph's Catholic High School, Albion Park

### Describe yourself.

Creative, lover; not a fighter, passionate dreamer, dedicated, outgoing, foodie, wonderluster, Dr Seuss enthusiast, and crazy – in a good way!

### Inspiration for this role?

I want to change the stigma attached to youth ministry in our community by enlightening, encouraging, and engaging our students to be involved in their faith journeys.



### One achievement so far?

Establishing *Joey's Youth Group* to enable students of St Joseph's to create meaningful friendships and journey in their faith together.

### One learning so far?

It is challenging to gain the attention, trust, and interaction of students, but it is also very rewarding as I am now witnessing so many students respond positively to the involvement of our youth initiatives.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

To continue building and extending the community of *Joey's Youth Group*. I also want to create a *Joey's Youth band*, as well as finish the *Youth Hub Room* for our youth group. Change the culture and stigma around "youth groups".

## Peter Collins

Magdalene Catholic High School, Narellan

### Describe yourself.

Fun, energetic, honest, and sincere. The glass is half full! Passionate about my faith, sport, travel, my work, and live stand-up comedy – laughter is the best medicine.

### Inspiration for this role?

The opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others and to empower our young people to do the same.



### One achievement so far?

We had a very successful *Twilight Retreat* for Year 7 and 8 students at our school. With the wonderful help of some awesome senior students, the juniors experienced the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

### One learning so far?

Young people are amazing! I've certainly learnt never to assume young people can't, won't or don't.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

I'm keen to keep building the youth ministry culture in my school and continuing to develop positive connections with our local parishes and the broader Church.

## Rebecca Toogood

Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville

### Describe yourself.

Enthusiastic and approachable. Passionate about youth voice, spiritual development, and mission. A love of analysis, philosophy, history, and psychology.



### Inspiration for this role?

Our schools are an agency through which youth experience Christ, so I am honoured to help our students experience new encounters with Christ and improve the Catholic culture in our student body.

### One achievement so far?

The commencement of the *Revelation Program* to help students explore how being a Christian inspires them to serve others. Fourteen students have already signed-up!

### One learning so far?

Remembering to take the time to savour and celebrate the joys and "God" moments with the students.

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

Enjoy ACYF! Stage another *Encounter Event*, and further embrace student involvement in our liturgical celebrations. Also, continue the RCIA program and find other opportunities for ministry in the curriculum. Assist staff with their programs to enable encounters with Christ at the college.

## Valerie Lewis

St John the Evangelist Catholic High School, Nowra

### Describe yourself.

I am a mother of three and full-time teacher who cannot survive without coffee! I love a good laugh, adventure, and sharing of great ideas.

### Inspiration for this role?

After attending World Youth Day in Kraków last year, I was inspired by the energy, deep faith, and the people from around the world. I wanted to bring some of that amazing energy back to the youth in my local school and parish.



### One achievement so far?

We've had our first ever *LIVE* concert and *Twilight Retreat*. Students were hesitant at first but then took hold of the opportunity to express their faith through song and group reflections.

### One learning so far?

Channel the youth, they have so many ideas!

### Plans for 2017 and beyond?

We are holding our first *Youth Mass* next month which is so exciting! I also can't wait to see the students experience ACYF in Sydney and bring that energy back to school for the *Year of Youth* in 2018.

BY DANIEL HOPPER

On Monday 6 February 2017, the final hearing involving the Catholic Church at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its data in relation to the extent of claims of child sexual abuse in the Australian Catholic Church. The statistics revealed that 7% of priests in Australia (11.7% in the Diocese of Wollongong), between 1950 and 2010, had claims of abuse made against them.

Just after the data was released, Mr Francis Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of the Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council, gave an emotional speech to the Royal Commission. During his speech he said, "These numbers are shocking, they are tragic and they are indefensible. And each entry in this data, for the most part represents a child who suffered at the hands of someone who should have cared for and protected them ...

"The data is an indictment on the priests and religious who abused these children. It also reflects on the Church leaders, who at times, failed to take steps to deal with the abusers, failed to call them to order, and failed to deal with them in accordance with the law. Or worse, took steps which had the effect, if not the intent, of enabling them to abuse again."

As I watched Mr Sullivan try as best as he could to hold back the tears, I could not keep my emotions in check, and I soon had tears rolling down my face as I tried to come to terms with the enormity of what I had just heard.

Within half an hour, my phone began ringing with media wanting comment on the data. I cannot recall much else of what happened that day – it is just a blur. However, the next day, the youngest priest in our Diocese, Fr Stephen Varney, was approached by Triple J's *Hack* program – a popular national youth-focused radio show – to speak about the Royal Commission data from the perspective of a young priest.

Fr Stephen agreed to do the interview. That afternoon, I drove him to the ABC Radio studios in Wollongong where he was to be patched-in live to the *Hack* presenter in Melbourne. I was not allowed into the studio with him, so I



ROYAL COMMISSION

## a young priest's perspective

“... I try not to let the crimes and sins of others bring me down. That wouldn't help anyone, and gives even more power to the evil already committed.”

watched from outside the studio glass. I've known Fr Stephen for many years and I could tell he was nervous. His hands were shaking as he held some notes that he had brought with him.

I recently caught up with Fr Stephen to ask him about that experience and his life as a young priest in the Diocese.

**In those moments before you went to air, I could tell you were nervous as you were essentially representing every young priest in Australia who, like you, was also reeling from the revelations of the Royal Commission. What was going through your mind?**

To be honest, I was really worried about saying something stupid or not being able to articulate the sympathy I have for victims of abuse and their families. As you would know, in the media, gaffes make good headlines. I know that we can be as well-meaning as possible, but it only takes one misworded comment to cause even more hurt. But on the other hand, I knew Triple J were looking for someone to say something. And so, if it wasn't me, it was going to be someone else. I felt I needed to have courage. The words of Jeremiah were going through my head, "Do not say 'I am a child'; for you must go to all whom I send you and say whatever I command you" (Jeremiah 1:7).



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Although the association between the roman collar and child abuse is often on my mind when I'm in public, I cannot recall copping any flak, even when I'm visibly a priest. I'm not sure if this is because I am a younger priest or not, but I generally find everyone to be courteous with me.

As a general rule, I don't advertise my priesthood, unless it's a circumstance in which I can have a personal encounter with someone. In these situations, the roman collar is of real value when the person wearing it can obviously demonstrate, through word and deed, the gentleness and humanity of Jesus.

**Do you ever have moments of doubt where you feel you made a terrible mistake becoming a priest?**

Yes, all the time! Doubts, some regrets. Some for good reasons, some for stupid reasons. But so what? I was like that before I was a priest. The reality is that I am more fulfilled and happy than I have ever been. But, we all have bad days.

In terms of the abuse crisis, I try not to let the crimes and sins of others bring me down. That wouldn't help anyone, and gives even more power to the evil already committed.

**In the wake of the Royal Commission findings, what can you do to bring about healing and change?**

My attitude as a young priest is to do what I can – and to do what I am good at – to bring about healing and any changes that are required. Certainly, vigilance regarding professional standards and procedures goes without saying, but I think that is only part of the response. Questions of redress and legal proceedings are beyond my pay grade. But, as a young priest, I think I can do a lot to restore a healthy trust in the priest, and be an image of Jesus for people, by demonstrating the highest levels of service, integrity, and charity. I believe I can do more to bring about healing by being the best priest I can be. ■

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*Daniel Hopper is the Director of Media & Communications, Diocese of Wollongong*

**You were asked if you find it hard to live a celibate life and whether you believe celibacy is a contributing factor to the rates of abuse in the Catholic Church. What are your thoughts on this?**

I have lived the commitment to celibacy for about 10 years now, and in my experience, I cannot see any necessary connection between celibacy and child abuse. However, I do not exclude the fact that some aspirants to the priesthood – certainly in the past – have entered religious life in an attempt to either run away from their problems, or more advertently, have sought out the priesthood in order to be placed in a position of privilege, access, and power so as to be given the opportunity to abuse. But, I do not necessarily believe that celibacy was a cause as such.

I am the first to admit that celibacy is hard at times because I am living a life

that runs counter to my natural self that seeks a close companion and a family of my own. But I feel that – as a person granted the grace to live out the celibate life faithfully – there is a lot of freedom to engage in broader acts of charity that go beyond the four walls of the immediate family unit, and I feel blessed and I am very happy with the choice I've made.

All of us – married, single or celibate – are called to chastity: the right ordering of our sexual lives. To be rather frank, a child-abuser has serious psychological problems that go far beyond the normal human inclination to concupiscence or unchaste transgressions.

**What's it like walking down the street wearing a priestly collar these days? Has it affected how people perceive your ministry and how you interact with the public?**

“You have kept the best wine till now”

JOHN 2:10

## The Dedication of Holy Family Church, Ingleburn

BY ANNE SUTHERLAND

What a joy! And what an *impressive* joy it is too! The new Holy Family Church at Ingleburn is finally built and blessed. It has been 50 years since the parish was formed and many long years of saving, watching, and waiting while every other church in the local area went up. At last, Fr Peter Caruana and his faithful parishioners have *their church*: a beautiful building in the Romanesque style – clean and dignified in design, large enough to seat 600 people, and with a bell tower that points to heaven. When pondering this awe inspiring church, whose grandeur uplifts worshippers and admirers alike, the words of Scripture ring true, “You have kept the best wine till now” (John 2:10).

On 1 February 2017, Bishop Peter Ingham and Fr Caruana, joined by over 500 faithful, including clergy, religious and laity, celebrated a Mass of Dedication for the new church.

Bishop Peter opened his homily with, “At last, the long awaited day has come! Here we are by God’s grace and the diligent selfless saving by your parish priest, Fr Peter Caruana.” Bishop Peter continued, “Holy Family Church is now a very visible building in this neighbourhood – a sign of the presence of God amongst his people.

“You and I are God’s building, built on the foundation who is Jesus Christ. The Church is people – this building is the house where the Church gathers ... So, if a visitor wandered in and said to a parishioner, ‘What a beautiful church!’ the parishioner would respond, ‘Yes, and the building is nice too.’ The church building should be as beautiful as the church people are!”



... So, if a visitor wandered in and said to a parishioner, ‘What a beautiful church!’ the parishioner would respond, ‘Yes, and the building is nice too.’ The church building should be as beautiful as the church people are!

BISHOP PETER INGHAM

In giving thanks, Fr Caruana acknowledged all his beautiful parishioners, past and present, who contributed to the building of the new church. He also paid tribute to the architects of the building, De Angelis Taylor & Associates, and the builders, FAL Construction Group.

Holy Family Church consistently draws many comments regarding its impressive size and design. In this post-Christian age where church attendance is on the decline, Fr Caruana has responded to this spiritual drought with Noah-like faith. “If we are true to the Gospel of spreading the good news and Pope Francis’ call to the new evangelisation, all our actions, including planning the future size of our churches, needs to reflect this,” Fr Caruana said.

Since the projected population growth of Ingleburn and Minto is predicted to

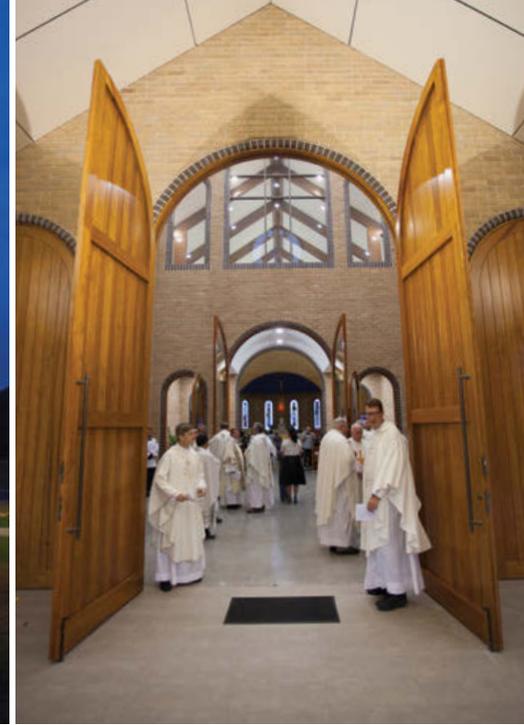
double over the next few decades – due to the many new housing estates going up in the area – Fr Caruana will hopefully have enough space to take everyone on board.

In a heartwarming response that shows how this shepherd counts each and every one of his flock, regardless of age or stage, Fr Caruana said, “We have about 400 schoolchildren, and they all fit comfortably in the church along with their teachers and parents ... It has a really nice and bright atmosphere, and was designed perfectly to accommodate for the extra space we needed.”

During the Dedication Mass, Fr Caruana spoke about the rich history of the Ingleburn Parish. He recounted how 60 years ago the area was rural, consisting mainly of cattle and beef, stud, poultry, and agricultural farms connected by a railway line from Liverpool to Campbelltown and Camden.

During World War II, on the Ingleburn Army Camp site, there were two small Catholic and Anglican chapels attended by the soldiers and local resident farmers.

When the population started spreading south of Liverpool from Western Sydney, Bishop Thomas McCabe of Wollongong, gave permission to Fr Thomas Grant of Campbelltown to erect small churches north of Campbelltown, namely Holy Trinity at Minto, Our Lady of Sorrows at Macquarie Fields, and Christ the King at Glenfield – all blessed and opened on the same day in 1962.



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

**It is edifying to see how the parish persevered in faith – praying and planning, watching and waiting – until the time was right to build a church that was large enough to bless, not only the family at the wedding, but all the guests as well.**

As housing and industry grew along the railway line, Bishop McCabe decided in 1968 to divide Campbelltown into two parishes. Ingleburn was thereby formed as the first parish after Campbelltown, consisting of the suburbs of Minto, Ingleburn, Macquarie Fields, and Glenfield.

Fr Frank O’Hara, the first parish priest of Ingleburn, came up with an inventive idea to solve the problem of no funds

and no church building by setting up one of the old army huts near Ingleburn Railway Station. In 1968, the first parish church, named St Christopher’s, came into being. Fr O’Hara stayed until mid-February 1972 when Fr Leo Kearns arrived.

Fr Leo Kearns used frugal foresight to construct a temporary building which could be easily converted into a parish school hall when funding permitted a more permanent church. This church and the parish then took on the name of Holy Family. It was blessed and opened by Mons Herbert O’Reilly, Vicar Capitular of the Diocese of Wollongong on 26 January 1975.

Following-on from that time, the suburbs of Ruse, Eagle Vale, Varroville, and Macquarie Fields formed their own parishes and were able to build their parish churches ahead of Ingleburn. The historical significance of this is, that even though Ingleburn was the first parish to be formed after Campbelltown, it is the last of these

parishes to have its own proper dedicated parish church after nearly 50 years.

Father Caruana said the delay had happened because building the school had been the first priority, and only when those loans had been paid off, could saving for the new church begin. In fact, 27 years of patient saving!

During those long years, there must have been many times when Fr Caruana – like Mary at the wedding of Cana – prayed, “They have no church.” Like Mary, in the face of an apparent disconnect with God, a lack of response with timing, it is edifying to see how the parish persevered in faith – praying and planning, watching and waiting – until the time was right to build a church that was large enough to bless, not only the family at the wedding, but all the guests as well. ■

*Anne Sutherland is a freelance writer for the Diocese of Wollongong*



# creatin connect

BY LOUISA COURT

**H**i! My name is Louisa Court and I'm the new Secondary Special Religious Education (SRE) Assistant for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) Wollongong.

I recently completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Notre Dame, where I majored in Media Studies and Theology. I loved studying theology and I hope to bring my love for the faith to my work here in the Diocese. While I was studying, I was a volunteer catechist in the Archdiocese of Sydney where I taught beautiful kindergarten students around my university classes. I also worked part-time as a Youth Ministry Support Officer for the Diocese of Wollongong. I have many years of volunteer youth ministry experience in my previous parish in Sydney and on the Youth Mission Team in Perth. I am working in this role two-days a week whilst also working as the Youth Minister at St Mary's Cathedral College in Sydney.

My primary role is coordinating the *Student Catechist Program*. The program trains Catholic high

**“ I find it simply irresistible to share the things I love with the people around me. I can't help but tell everyone I meet how much I love coffee, or music, or how knowing God has changed my life. ”**

school students and mentors them in teaching SRE in public primary schools alongside our excellent catechists. It's such an exciting project to be a part of! It's been awesome to see how the program creates connections between high school aged youth, the primary school children they're teaching, and their local parishes.

Through their engagement in the work of our catechists, the young people see first-hand what living the gospel looks like and they are encouraged to model it themselves. They're also challenged to wrestle with the content they're teaching and discover more about the teachings of the Church and the love of God for them. It's an honour to be working for CCD in this important mission of spreading the gospel to our young people and the children they teach.

Lately, I've been going out to visit the student catechists, both at lunchtimes in their high schools, and also observing them teach SRE in the primary schools. I love catching-up with them and hearing how they are enjoying the experience of teaching. It has been a great opportunity to encourage them in their journeys, particularly in nurturing their own relationship with God. I've also been sharing the vision for the program with a few new schools and parishes who are



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

# What really matters?

BY JUDE HENNESSY

I recently visited a wonderful catechist, Mary Greco, in hospital. She was terminally ill. She was one of the first catechists I got to know when I started working in the Diocese eight years ago. I would regularly bump into her at the Cathedral in the various comings and goings of work, ducking in for a prayer, or after morning Mass. She loved being in and around the Cathedral, and as a skilled seamstress and “sower”, she spent countless hours preparing beautiful things to make our diocesan Cathedral a fitting place of prayer and worship.

She would come to Mass and often wander around afterwards, dusting, rearranging, scraping, and cleaning. She was seemingly always busy about many things, but in a way that was behind the scenes, not wanting to be noticed. How true is it that the ones who don't want to be noticed, in fact are the ones that we should take the most notice of – for their humility, simplicity, and solid faithfulness.

**I was reminded that in the end, the thing that really matters is how much we've loved, and how we have shared the love that God has revealed to us, with those he brings into our lives.**

It is always a shock when you walk into a hospital room and see someone who you've known to be vibrant and full of life, emaciated by cancer. I sat by her bedside, grabbed her hand, and could see that her eyes were the same as ever. I was quite embarrassed that she was so surprised that I would come to visit, and I responded with what I thought was appropriate “small talk about the weather”. She let me get away with that for a minute, but there was no way she was going to settle for that. It would seem in my experience that people who are dying, cut to the chase and say what matters, and Mary certainly did that. She spoke about how she had spent some time talking to her family and



friends from the parish about her funeral, her “send-off” to heaven. She wanted it to be joyful. She wanted her kids and her grandkids to know that grandma is going to be with Jesus, and that there is nothing to be afraid of. I went along thinking that I'd be reassuring her that everything is going to be okay. Yet, I got “schooled” by the depth of her faith.

I had forgotten that the Office of the Bishop had bought her some flowers which I put beside the big hospital bed. They really were beautiful and she beamed at the sight of them. Then she gave me a little bouquet of her own. “Jude,” she said, “Sharing with those little children in schools how much God loves them has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I have loved them. I will miss them. I have loved being a catechist.”

I asked if I could pray with her. Her brother joined us at her bedside and we thanked God for her life, for his love and mercy, for her family and friends. I thanked God for the gift of faith he had given her, and the power of her witness to others. We prayed the Hail Mary, and then, as she was tiring quickly, it was time for me to go. I knew I really was saying goodbye.

When I got back to the car, I realised that this was one of those occasions in life that would be burnt indelibly into my memory, and I broke down. I couldn't help but wonder how do our wonderful priests, day-in and day-out, sit with their parishioners – their friends who they journey with in faith – when they are dying? And then my thoughts went to Mary. I was reminded that in the end, the thing that really matters is how much we've loved, and how we have shared the love that God has revealed to us, with those he brings into our lives. ■

interested in being involved in 2018. There is a strong sense of enthusiasm about having student catechists in more schools and parishes throughout the Diocese, and we're excited to make it happen.

I find it simply irresistible to share the things I love with the people around me. I can't help but tell everyone I meet how much I love coffee, or music, or how knowing God has changed my life. There are not many people who get to share something that they are so passionate about as part of their job description! So, I feel extremely blessed to be able to work with young people and share the overwhelming love of God with them day-in and day-out. ■

*Louisa Court is a Secondary SRE Coordinator, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Diocese of Wollongong*

*Jude Hennessy is the Director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Diocese of Wollongong*

# Scripture classes get a big tick



BY JUDE HENNESSY

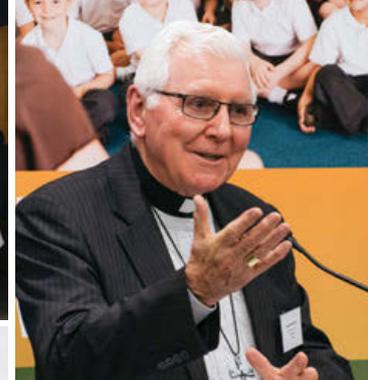
The independent review of Special Religious Education (SRE) recently released by the NSW Government has provided strong evidence that highlights the incredible contribution made by parish catechists (SRE teachers) to the religious education of young people in public schools.

On 30 May 2017, representatives from most major providers of SRE across all faiths, gathered at NSW Parliament House with the Education Minister Rob Stokes, Shadow Minister Jihad Dib, and other members of parliament, to be presented with a summary of findings by one of Australia's leading research agencies, McCrindle, into the NSW Government's independent review of SRE.

Most striking amongst the research presented by Ms Eliane Miles of McCrindle was the levels of satisfaction regarding SRE from schools and parents. The research presented showed that of the 780,600 students that attend the 2,152 government schools in NSW – with SRE taught in 87% of these schools – 84% of parents are satisfied or mostly satisfied with their student's learning experiences in SRE.

As can be seen in the McCrindle infographic included opposite, the other results were also just as encouraging and in stark contradiction to the now discredited criticisms of SRE by a small, but vocal, minority who have been aided in their criticism by unfair and unbalanced reporting in the mainstream media.

The Review also highlighted how SRE contributes to students' understanding of their cultural heritage and is an avenue for their spiritual care. Further, it noted that the work of SRE teachers



**It is wonderful that we have in our schools an understanding that humans are made up of three parts, mind, body and spirit, and we need to provide sustenance to each part of what makes us fully-human.**

MR ROB STOKES  
NSW EDUCATION MINISTER

builds tolerance in schools, promotes multiculturalism, contributes to a well-rounded education, and connects schools with their local community.

In addressing the gathering, Mr Stokes, said, "It is wonderful that we have in our schools an understanding that humans are made up of three parts, mind, body and spirit, and we need to provide sustenance to each part of what makes us fully-human. SRE has a very important role to fulfil in our schools."

Mr Dib expressed strong bipartisan support for the value of SRE. In thanking SRE teachers and providers, Mr Dib went on to articulate the importance of ensuring, "Every single student should have an opportunity – for at least one hour in a week – to reflect about the person that they are and the way that they can actually better themselves."

In NSW, there are 5,000 Catholic parish catechists who see around one in five students in NSW public schools. On behalf of all major faith providers, Bishop Peter Ingham gave a vote of thanks to

Mr Stokes, Mr Dib, host Mr Paul Green from the Christian Democratic Party, and all the MP's who attended, .

"For providers of SRE, there is much to celebrate in the findings of the Review and it will prove enormously helpful in highlighting areas that might need to be strengthened and improved so as to make SRE even better," Bishop Peter said.

SRE providers have eagerly awaited the findings of the independent review into SRE, quietly confident that it would show the serious nature in which SRE is taken by providers, evident in the resources they pour into developing curriculums, resources, and training. In particular, Bishop Peter noted that, "Most major providers already have the key recommendations in hand," including ease of public access to curriculum outlines, and training in effective teaching practices.

Bishop Ingham also explained how the major faiths – including the Christian denominations – had effectively pre-empted the results of the review with the establishment in 2016 of a multi-faith group for SRE to "support all faiths through resource sharing of such things as policy and process documents, teacher training, curriculum development, and support".

Bishop Ingham concluded the evening, noting that the existence of SRE in NSW was indicative of "a mature and inclusive education system". ■

*Jude Hennessy is the Director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Diocese of Wollongong*

# SRE IN SCHOOLS

Data summarised from '2015 Review of Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics in NSW Government Schools', Department of Education & ARTD Consultants, 2016.

## An overview of New South Wales



**1,194,188**  
Students in NSW

**35%**  
ATTEND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS



**65%**  
ATTEND GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

**2,152**  
Government Schools

Government Schools



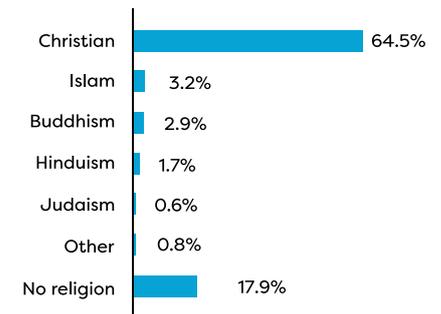
**780,600**  
Government school students

Government school students

**477,098**  
Primary

**303,502**  
Secondary

## Religion in NSW

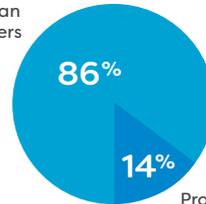


## Special Religious Education (SRE) in NSW govt. schools

THERE ARE:

**101** SRE providers

Christian providers



Providers from 7 other faith groups

THESE REPRESENT:

**29** faith groups

## Student participation in SRE



**71%**

OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTEND SRE



**30%**

OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTEND SRE

SRE CLASSES WERE HELD IN:

**87%** OF ALL SCHOOLS\*  
**92%** Primary schools  
**81%** Secondary schools  
\*that responded to surveys by ARTD

## SRE teachers in NSW



99% of SRE teachers have completed a **Working with children check**.



95% of SRE teachers were given **authorised materials and workbooks**.



83% of SRE coordinators indicated that **complaints processes and procedures work well in practice**.



96% of principals agree/mostly agree that their school has a **good working relationship with most SRE providers**.



% of providers that offer training:

Child safety/child protection - **90%**

SRE pedagogy - **82%**

Classroom behaviour management - **80%**



Training provided to SRE teachers:

Yearly training updates - **91%**

Mentoring by experienced SRE teachers - **78%**

Observation and feedback on lessons - **70%**

IN SCHOOLS THAT HOLD SRE:



**WEEKLY SRE CLASSES**

**95%** Primary schools

**52%** Secondary schools



**AT LEAST FORTNIGHTLY SRE CLASSES**

**99%** Primary schools

**87%** Secondary schools

## Benefits of Providing SRE

### NSW Dept. of Education Framework

Spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose. It can include our connection to culture, religion or community and includes the beliefs, values and ethics we hold.

### ARTD Review of SRE and SEE

"SRE contributes to students' understanding of their cultural heritage and is an avenue for their spiritual care."



Connect

Students are connected with their cultural, religious or spiritual backgrounds.

"SRE builds tolerance in schools around diverse communities and promotes multiculturalism through joint celebrations of different faith groups and the recognition of different cultural heritages."



Succeed

Students develop strong positive character traits that are reflected in their behaviour decision making and relationships.

"SRE contributes to a well-rounded education and provides students with a values perspective to make informed ethical choices."



Thrive

Parents and the broader community support and enable the aspirations of every student.

"SRE is community building and helps connect schools with the local community."

## Parents choice

**77%** of parents agree/mostly agree that they are able to exercise their right to nominate an **alternative** religious persuasion for their child to attend where SRE cannot be offered.

**92%** of parents agree/mostly agree that they understand their right to **withdraw** their child from SRE.

**73%** of primary principals and 74% of parents support enrolment choice of SRE **continuing** from the previous year.

**84%** of parents are satisfied/mostly satisfied with their student's **learning experiences** in SRE.

Infographic by:

**mccrindle**

Demographic data source: ABS 2017

# deeds not words

INTERVIEW  
BY DEBBIE GATES

We continue our series in Journey of profiling the many volunteers in our Diocese who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Michael Brearley resides in the Southern Highlands region of the Diocese and is a member of the St Paul's Catholic Parish, Moss Vale, community. Michael currently serves his parish as the Chairman of the Finance Committee, a catechist, an acolyte, and a member of the Sacramental Team.

Michael is also a former Chair of Moss Vale Parish Pastoral Council, former Member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and, perhaps most notably, the former Director and Narrator of the Good Friday Passion Play at the Pauline Fathers' Monastery at Penrose Park.

When not busy with his commitments to his large family, his Church, and his business, Michael has been the immediate past Vice President of Wingello Village Association, and is the current President of Cardinal Newman Faith Resources, and a volunteer firefighter for Wingello Rural Fire Brigade.

Michael is a consultant civil engineer and manages his own company, Mike Brearley and Associates Consultant Civil Engineers. Prior to this, he was the Director of Infrastructure Services for Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Recently, I was able to keep Michael in one place for an hour to ask him some questions about his life and faith.

## an interview with Michael Brearley

**Busy is one word that would describe you Michael! It seems for a large part of your life, you have been very involved with organisations and committees in your Church and local community. Why Church?**

For me, part of being a Catholic is putting my "money where my mouth is". This cliché not only refers to money, but more importantly it refers to putting time and expertise into building up the work of the Church and supporting our Bishop and clergy. We are called to contribute to the work of the Church, and serving on one of its committees is just one way that I can assist.

**What have you learnt about our Diocese since you became involved with these various Church roles?**

The Diocese has diverse regions, from areas of heavy population growth in the Macarthur, to the more rural communities in the south and west. I see the workload that is expected

**For me, part of being a Catholic is putting my "money where my mouth is". This cliché not only refers to money, but more importantly it refers to putting time and expertise into building up the work of the Church ...**

from a small number of clergy, and acknowledge that there is a need for all of us to foster, nurture, and support them.

**What is something that you are proud of that has happened under your "watch"?**

The 10 years that I served as Director and Narrator of the Good Friday Passion Play at Penrose Park is something that I am particularly proud of. The Passion Play is now in its 26<sup>th</sup>



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

**So I guess what I'm trying to say is I am passionate about living my faith, about my salvation, about the salvation of my family and that of those around me. So anything I can do to assist people in their journey is what I am passionate about!**

Some remote areas are lucky to see a priest once a year. Bishop Columba is a great Australian – an inspiration in his passion for his people and his Diocese, and he has so many stories to tell. As an engineer, I spend a lot of time working with councils in rural NSW. I really have a great respect for the people who reside in these areas, and their challenges.

**Your “claim to fame” moment?**

Helen and I are very proud of our seven children – that’s our claim to fame!

On a lighter note, and not really a “claim to fame”, I do have a certain reputation through volunteering with my local fire brigade. We all know that we are expected to respond to our pager as soon as it goes off. But it seems that despite me living close to Wingello Fire Brigade Station, I struggle to get there on time.

On one occasion, I was hungry and my family ribbed me for making a peanut butter sandwich before responding and, of course, I was the last person to arrive at the station. Thankfully on this occasion, it was just a minor incident, but I am forever reminded of the occasion.

Even worse than this, I recall the pager going off at 3am one morning, and I subconsciously turned it off and went back to sleep. I was awoken five minutes later with flashing lights quite close to my house! ■

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*Debbie Gates is the Director of Development and Community Engagement, Diocese of Wollongong*

year, and I am encouraged by the involvement of many enthusiastic youth and young adults in this two hour performance. Followers of the play continue to grow in number, with around 5,000 people attending each year. I have now quite happily handed this work onto others. These days, my directing role is limited to directing the 2,000 or so cars to a parking space and making sure the traffic queues don't bank up onto the Hume Highway!

**What are you passionate about?**

We are all on a journey and we are all at a different stage of that journey. The Second Vatican Council talked about the universal call to holiness and Saint John Paul II talked about the new evangelisation. So I guess what I'm trying to say is I am passionate about living my faith, about my salvation, about the salvation of my family and that of those around me. So anything I can do to assist people in their journey is what I am passionate about!

**A “God” moment?**

Hartzer Park, Bowral, in January this year, where I attended a five day silent retreat. I was confronted with the realities of improving my relationship with God and my relationship with those around me.

**A “bucket list” item?**

The Camino Walk in Spain. Somehow, I'd like to fit that in with a visit to my three grandchildren in Alberta, Canada – I guess it involves an around-the-world trip!

**Special dinner party guest?**

Bishop Columba MacBeth Green. Bishop Columba was our parish priest in Moss Vale a few years back. He was always a great dinner guest and inspiration, particularly for my children. He still has strong ties with our Diocese, but is now responsible for the vast outback Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, which is sparsely populated with few priests and little funding.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
TOM VAN KINTS

# “Go to Galilee”



EDITED BY  
DANIEL HOPPER

On Thursday 4 May 2017, family, friends, clergy and colleagues gathered at St John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Campbelltown to farewell one of the Diocese’s great servants, Mr Tom van Kints. Tom worked as the Wollongong Diocesan Director of Caritas for the past 18 years.

Bishop Peter Ingham presided at the Funeral Mass which was celebrated by Tom’s brother-in-law and parish priest of the Bowral and Mittagong parishes, Fr Sean Cullen. It was a beautiful and fitting celebration of the life of a faith-filled, family man who lived to enrich the lives of others.

Fr Sean delivered a deeply personal and powerful homily on where we can go to find those that we have lost to death. Reflecting on the Easter Sunday Gospel on the first news of the resurrection, Fr Sean said, “The women go to the grave ... instead of finding Jesus, they are confronted by two angels asking them why they are looking in a cemetery for someone who is alive?”

“For any of us who are looking for Jesus or looking for Tom or looking for those we have lost through death, the

“**‘Go to Galilee, you will find him there.’ Galilee was an important place for the disciples of Jesus. Not only was it a beautiful part of the country, it was also the place where Jesus first called them.**

question of the angels and the following instruction is valid, ‘Go to Galilee, you will find him there.’ Galilee was an important place for the disciples of Jesus. Not only was it a beautiful part of the country, it was also the place where Jesus first called them.

“Looking back, it was the place where the disciples grew in their character and were challenged in their ideas, and were taught about love through their contact with Jesus. And now they were being told to go back to that place to encounter the risen Jesus. That’s what our faith tells us to do.

“We will find and relate to our loved ones we’ve lost through death, by

injecting ourselves back into life, by rediscovering those places and revisiting them, that were the source of our learning and passion and encouragement.”

Fr Sean explained that the family was gathering together for the first time at St John the Evangelist Church since the funeral of his own father in 1988. He then gave a personal testimony on how he finds his own father in death, “[My father] was a man of quiet dignity, gentle, gracious, steady, with an understated yet deep love for his faith. When I live my life with a similar dignity, gentleness, graciousness, and steadiness, that’s when he becomes very real and alive to me. When I can be his son in those things, then I am in ‘communion’ with him ...

“So it is with Tom. Later on, we will bury him, but we then have to move on and ‘go back to Galilee.’

“We have to find him in those places that were unique to him in terms of love and faith and virtue. We ask ourselves: what was his great gift to us? If it was his hospitality, then we will find him when we are hospitable; if it was his passion for justice, then we will find him when we get involved in issues



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

of justice; if it was his bringing peace, then we will meet him when we are willing to forgive and start again.”

Tom’s son, Thomas, representing his family – including his mother, Therese, and his five sisters – gave a moving eulogy on his father’s life. Thomas said, “Each of you had your own relationship with my dad, whether as a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, a colleague. I am not privy to all that was between you; the experiences you shared with him. But what I do know is that he valued each of you. I know this because he valued the relationships and the connections he made with people. And the family would like to thank you for the companionship you provided to my father throughout his life ...

“Early in his career, it was his work that took him to far-flung places: South Africa during apartheid, for example. These experiences shaped his ethical foundation and he grew to detest the world’s indifference to injustice. The work he did with international aid and development organisation, Caritas Australia, over the last 20 years was the most valuable work experience of his life ...

**“When we are faced with adversity, it is easy to be frustrated, or mean, or entitled, or uncharitable. It takes courage to be gentle and kind. And, by that measure, Dad was the most courageous man we could ever have hoped to have known.”**

“My father didn’t say a lot, but he felt a lot, and observed a lot ... he proved his love every day through his actions ...

“I was at a service on Good Friday. At the service, the priest reflected briefly on the Passion of Christ. The priest stated simply that Christ had died, and the manner in which we live our lives is our eulogy to him. We write it every day.

“In reflecting on my father’s life, it has struck me that his was a great eulogy. He taught our family so much about suffering and pain and adversity; about determination and compassion and

justice; about dignity and integrity and humility; doubt and faith ... Dad beat his illness; he won victory over death because of the legacy he left in each of us. His quiet courage and strength is the enduring memory that lives in all of us who loved him.

“When we are faced with adversity, it is easy to be frustrated, or mean, or entitled, or uncharitable. It takes courage to be gentle and kind. And, by that measure, Dad was the most courageous man we could ever have hoped to have known.”

Tributes have been pouring in throughout Australia for Tom, especially from colleagues that worked with him over the years, including Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan Director of Caritas, Patricia Banister, who wrote, “Tom’s love for Caritas was evident in his diligence, love and support of all things Caritas especially Project Compassion. He will be sadly missed.”

Upon hearing of Tom’s passing into eternal life, Bishop Peter wrote, “May Tom rest in the Lord’s peace and enjoy the reward of his goodness.” ■

*Daniel Hopper is the Director of Media & Communications, Diocese of Wollongong*

# Year 12's gather with the Bishop

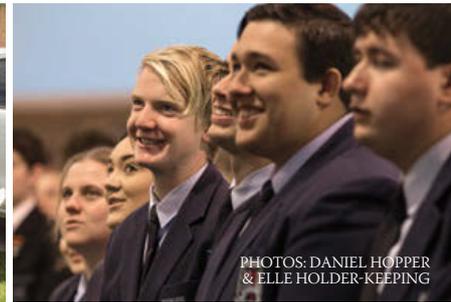
BY CATHY BROWN

The opportunity for Year 12 students to gather, discuss, and celebrate their personal journeys as students of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong, promised to be a wonderful occasion, and it didn't disappoint! Over the past few years, a number of opportunities have been made available for students in the Diocese to gather with Bishop Peter Ingham in prayer, conversation, and in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. In 2016, student leadership teams from each diocesan school gathered for "Breakfast with Bishop Peter", engaging in prayer and conversation with our Bishop and with each other as they reflected on their Year 12 journey.

These events have been most enlightening for the students who have participated, and have been a source of inspiration and enjoyment for Bishop Peter. Following the success of these significant events, the Bishop expressed a desire to meet with every Year 12 student from our diocesan schools through a series of "Year 12 Gatherings with the Bishop". So, in 2017, all Year 12 students from each school have been invited to a three-hour gathering to converse and pray with Bishop Peter and each other whilst acknowledging the journey they have experienced as students of our Catholic schools.

The first two of these gatherings were held at the beginning of Term Two at Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville; and Holy Spirit Catholic College, Bellambi.

As host school, Mount Carmel Catholic College demonstrated a strong sense of Marist hospitality where everyone "was welcome at the table" with Bishop Peter and the students and staff from Chevalier College, Bowral; Magdalene Catholic High School, Narellan; and their own school of Mount Carmel Catholic College. The three principals



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER & ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

**They bore witness to the influence of Jesus Christ in their lives, where a sense of welcome and acceptance of everyone was evident.**

of the schools along with the Director of Schools, Mr Peter Turner, and Catholic Education staff, witnessed students praying together, listening to words of encouragement and inspiration from their Bishop, and joining with each other in table fellowship.

The same could be said of the second gathering at Holy Spirit Catholic College, Bellambi, where Year 12 students from Edmund Rice College, West Wollongong; St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong; and St Joseph's Catholic High School, Albion Park, joined Bishop Peter and the students and staff from Holy Spirit in celebrating the journey that has been theirs. Holy Spirit's ability to make everyone welcome exemplified the theme of the gatherings explored in the Gospel of Matthew, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20).

Bishop Peter listened to the Year 12 students, he explored their questions with answers that were rich, honest, and authentically Catholic, and he challenged them to live lives that are extraordinary. He invited them to be young people who persevere with their studies, so that at the end of their education, they would be satisfied with their efforts. This would be reflected in their ability to "live life to the full". At the conclusion of each gathering, students were able to network with each other while sharing a meal – listening to music provided by the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, Seth Harsh, and talented diocesan vocalist, Michaela Rose (pictured bottom right on the cover of *Journey*) – and personally connecting with Bishop Peter over lunch.

The two gatherings showcased the fine young men and women who are present in our Catholic schools. They bore witness to the influence of Jesus Christ in their lives, where a sense of welcome and acceptance of everyone was evident. Bishop Peter, once again, became known to – and loved by – the Year 12 students through genuine prayer and conversation, as he inspired them to live a life of which they are worthy. ■

*Cathy Brown is a Education Officer – Secondary, Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong*

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# New horizons for Wollongong Youth

BY DANIEL HOPPER

With only six months to go, the Diocese of Wollongong is gearing up to send over 800 young people to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) in Sydney from 7-9 December 2017.

The Festival – at Sydney Olympic Park including Sydney Showgrounds, Qudos Bank Arena, and the final Mass at The Domain – is expected to be the largest gathering of Catholic young people in Australia since World Youth Day 2008. With 10,000 registrations already secured in just one month, ACYF will draw more than 15,000 young people from every state and territory to explore, deepen, and celebrate their Catholic faith on local soil. Organisers are pulling out all stops to ensure the festival will bring a rich variety of speakers, entertainers, workshops, and formation opportunities.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney and the Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Youth, recently announced that internationally acclaimed Canadian songwriter and worship leader, Matt Maher, and his band, will be headlining the music and providing engaging input for the festival. Matt Maher is arguably the biggest Catholic name in global contemporary Christian music.

Archbishop Fisher said, “Matt Maher’s music is a powerful tool to reach young people and we’re so pleased to be welcoming this highly acclaimed artist for the ACYF.

“His strong faith and courageous witness, right in the heart of contemporary culture, is an encouragement to all young people to use their gifts and youthful energy in service of the gospel.”

Matt Maher expressed his excitement to be visiting Sydney again. “There is a lot happening Down Under and I can’t



Wollongong youth with Bishop Peter Ingham, Fr Duane Fernandez and Sr Hilda Scott OSB at ACYF 2015 Adelaide.

**Matt Maher’s music is a powerful tool to reach young people and we’re so pleased to be welcoming this highly acclaimed artist for the ACYF.**

ARCHBISHOP  
ANTHONY FISHER OP

wait to get to Sydney with my band for ACYF to celebrate with the young heart of the Church,” he said.

Maher was awarded the Songwriter of the Year at the 2015 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards, has been named iTunes Best Christian and Gospel Single, and is an eight time Grammy nominee.

Maher has penned songs recorded by Chris Tomlin, Crowder, Third Day, Matt Redman, Hillsong and Passion, among others. He continues to perform and speak as a part of global high-profile events, including performing on stage with Pope Francis in front of more than 3 million people at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro.

Among the first to register for ACYF were a number of the bishops of Australia, including Bishop Peter

Ingham, while gathered in Sydney for their biannual plenary meeting in May.

While registering online for the Festival, Archbishop Fisher said, “The Festival will be a national expression and joyful celebration of the young Church in Australia. I encourage young people across Australia to go online and register with a local group today or visit the festival website to find out about other opportunities and the pre-festival competitions. If you are between Year 9 and 30 years, the festival is for you.”

The festival registration process can be completed online, including on mobile and tablet devices at [acyf.org.au](http://acyf.org.au). Groups are encouraged to register prior to the closure of early bird registration on 18 August 2017. Individuals over 18 years can register as part of a local group or directly as an individual participant. All aged under 18 years must register as part of a group. ■

*If you would like to be one of the 800 young people from the Diocese of Wollongong going to ACYF, contact Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, Seth Harsh, [seth.harsh@dow.org.au](mailto:seth.harsh@dow.org.au) or call 4222 2460*

*Daniel Hopper is the Director of Media & Communications, Diocese of Wollongong*

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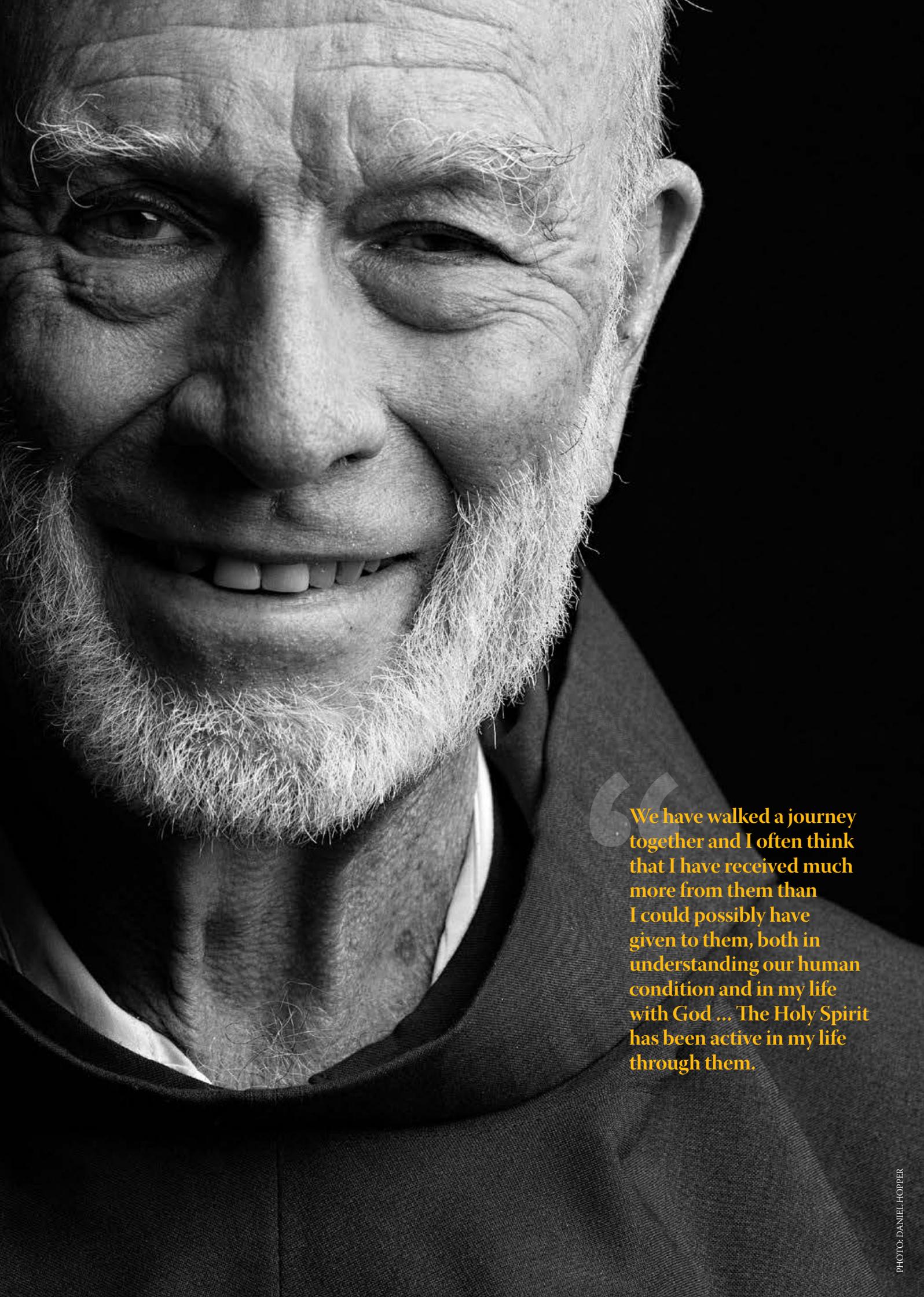
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“We have walked a journey together and I often think that I have received much more from them than I could possibly have given to them, both in understanding our human condition and in my life with God ... The Holy Spirit has been active in my life through them.

# FIFTY YEARS *a servant*

INTERVIEW BY DANIEL HOPPER

**W**hen celebrating the life of one of our clergy – whether it be a significant anniversary or at their passing to eternal life – we often repeat the beautiful words from the Parable of the Talents, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). Now, I am not suggesting that this passage is inappropriately applied or overused. However, every now and then, we are blessed to celebrate the life of a person who encapsulates the words to such a degree, that you would be forgiven for thinking that they were written specifically about them.

Fr John Pickering OFM is one such a person in our Diocese. Over the past 50 years, Fr Pickering has lived a life of humble service to those that others often forget in our community – the deaf, those living with a disability, the Aboriginal Community, and the many migrants that have landed on our shores.

His story serves as a demonstration of St James’ exhortation, “So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (James 2:17). Yet, as you will see, when I sat down with Fr Pickering to discuss his life as a priest over the past 50 years, his passion for service has not dissipated, and he truly believes that it is he who has been ministered to.

**How did you know you wanted to be a priest and why the Franciscan Friars?**

An uncle of mine was a Christian Brother, and an auntie a Josephite sister, and all of us eight children looked up to them. During my first year of teaching with the Department of Education, I was on the Brisbane Archdiocesan Executive of the Young Christian Workers (YCW). I think it was a combination of the chaplain’s theological teaching as well as the founder of YCW, Cardinal Joseph Cardijn’s plan of “see, judge, act” that helped me see meaning in a life dedicated to the gospel. I also lived a lot of my social and sporting life as a youth in the Franciscan parish of Kedron, QLD. As the eldest of eight, life in community appealed to me as did St Francis’ ideal of the human family in which all human beings are brothers and sisters.

**You began working with the Deaf Community 44 years ago in Brisbane, and then continued working as Chaplain to the Deaf Community in the Diocese of Wollongong for 33 years. How did this come about?**

In 1973, I was teaching at Padua College, Kedron. About 9pm one Saturday night, some catechists from the Buranda Parish – where the School for Deaf Children was located – rang the Franciscan Friary asking for a priest to celebrate Mass for about 60 children on Bribie Island, as the priest who had agreed to help was sick. I volunteered. The Mass was a disaster! The children could not hear nor understand me, so they communicated with each other in Sign Language across the room throughout the whole Mass. After Mass, I apologised to the catechist who replied, “Don’t worry Father, it is always like that.”

**Unable to communicate with the parish priest, the deaf person has no access to what is going on in the parish and cannot experience the richness of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.**

So, I decided to do an eight-week course at the Queensland Deaf Society in Sign Language. Some time later, the catechists contacted me and invited me to celebrate Mass again at Bribie Island. I worked out how to make some sense of the Mass with my very poor and inadequate Signing. To my surprise, the children gave rapt attention to the whole Mass! I then became involved with two other priests in a monthly Mass at the Deaf Society. Following this, Archbishop Rush invited me to become their full-time chaplain. Realising that I knew nothing about the Deaf Community, I

insisted on studying a Graduate Diploma of Special Education before beginning.

**What are some of the misconceptions people have about the Deaf Community?**

There are many. I will mention two:

Firstly, that the same Sign Language is used by all deaf people throughout the world. That is not true. Sign Languages are real languages with their own rules of grammar and syntax just like all other languages. In essence, they have nothing to do with the local spoken language. In Australia, we sign AUSLAN (**Australian Sign Language**).

Secondly, people think that it just means you cannot hear. The effects of not being able to hear are a much greater disability, as many people born deaf only learn rudimentary English. We learn our mother tongue, English, through hearing – beginning when our ears develop at three months in the womb. Two and a half years later, the structures of our mother tongue are set down in the brain. Those early years are critical for language learning. For many of the deaf people that I know who were born deaf, their mothers contracted viruses such as rubella when they were three months pregnant, which damaged the developing ears of their child, resulting in the loss of critical language foundations

for learning English. Consequently, deafness is a very isolating disability. Most deaf children are born to hearing parents which means that many children are even isolated from their parents unless the parents learn to Sign English to their children. Requiring deaf people to attend Mass in their parish can further isolate them. Imagine what it would be like to be at Mass and not understand what the priest is saying, not being able to hear the readings, nor sing the hymns, or converse with anybody after Mass? Unable to communicate with the parish priest, the deaf person has no access to what is going on in the parish and cannot experience the richness of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Ideally, it would be great if there was one Sunday Mass in AUSLAN in each deanery in the Diocese where the deaf can truly be members of the Church – as readers, leading the intercessions, participating in the Signing, and socialising together with a “cuppa” afterwards. As adult members of the Church, they should have a full and active participation in the life of the Church through ministry, eg, as catechists to the deaf units in public schools.

**“The family was from Colombia and spoke almost no English. I anointed the dying grandmother ... After the grandmother’s death, I visited their home where the ten year-old was on the phone trying to organise the funeral. I took over with him as my translator.**

Deaf people have the same range of intelligence as hearing people, with the same intellectual abilities and gifts as hearing members of the Church. They have jobs, get married, buy their own cars and homes, socialise and live independently like the rest of us, and some become priests. They are more like migrants living in a dominant culture that is not theirs, but with the added disadvantage of not being able to learn to hear.

**You also worked for a number of years in the Diocese as Chaplain to People with a Disability.**

As with the Deaf Community, the first requirement is to understand the people you are working with and their family. When I began this work, it was providential that I had studied a Graduate Diploma of Special Education. This did not mean that I knew everything, but I did have some insight. Our understanding of disability is growing and the Church needs suitably qualified and experienced lay people, religious, and priests in this pastoral area to appreciate that no two people with a disability – even with the same disability – are the same. We also need to be educating our Church

communities in the value and needs of people with a disability, a necessary task which we would expect to find in a Church based on the gospel. People with a disability and their families need support throughout the life of the disabled person. Baptism and other sacraments should be celebrated in such a way that the parents know that the child is valued and welcomed as a member of the Church community as much as any other child. As is the case with the Deaf Community, there needs to be an understanding of, and practical approach to, the communication needs and abilities of those with disabilities other than hearing loss. Children and adults with intellectual, sensory, and multiple disabilities may communicate expressively in different ways – verbally, by vocalisation, signing, gestures, eye pointing, or whole body movement.

**You are known to many in the Diocese for your current role as Chaplain to the Spanish-speaking Community which you have now held for over 30 years. How did you get involved in this ministry?**

The parish at Campbelltown asked the Friars at Maryfields to visit an unconscious, dying grandmother in Campbelltown Hospital. The family was from Colombia and spoke almost no English. I anointed the dying grandmother with her ten year-old grandson acting as translator to his mother. Afterwards, the mother and I said the Rosary together – half-English, half-Spanish. After the grandmother’s death, I visited their home where the ten year-old was on the phone trying to organise the funeral. I took over with him as my translator.



Unwittingly, I had stumbled across an influx of Spanish-speaking migrants who had moved into the Macarthur area. I alerted the Scalabrinians and a chaplain began working in the area. As people kept coming to me, I began to learn Spanish for fun in order to mix with them. When the chaplain left the Diocese, I took over as their chaplain.

Like other non-English speaking communities, the Spanish language is of utmost importance to migrants from the Spanish-speaking world. Through it, they express their mentality, thought, culture, and the characteristics of their spiritual life and the traditions of their Church of origin. Language does not just have meaning which we understand with the intellect. It also carries associations and with their attendant emotions which touch the whole person. In multilingual South Africa, Nelson Mandela said,

“When I speak to someone in English, I speak to their intellect. When I speak to someone in their own language, I speak to their heart.”



After my first three years with the Spanish-speaking Community, I realised that learning on the job was not enough. I needed to spend time in Latin America and Spain, away from English and immersed in their cultures. I put in for a sabbatical year and was granted 15 months – nine in Chile and six in Spain – and for my penance, a month in Assisi! The experience gave me some insights into what it is like to live outside one's own culture and language as I lived with the native-born Franciscans wherever I was. Everywhere I went, the Franciscans and the people made me so welcome and were very helpful.

Back in Australia, the Spanish-speaking Community was the same. I have learnt so much from them about living the gospel. One outstanding example was after I fell down the steps at Windang Church and completely ruptured the quadriceps tendon in my right leg, resulting in an operation and six months recuperation. The Spanish-speaking Community organised themselves to ensure I was fed, the house cleaned, washing done etc. One man drove me on my many visits to the physiotherapist over the whole time.

**You also celebrated Mass for the Aboriginal Community in Campbelltown for eight years? In 1986, Pope John Paul II said to the aboriginal people, “The Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.” Have you see this become a reality in your time?**

I think that the Pope could have said these words to each and every one of the communities with whom I have worked with over the past 50 years. Very often, not only their contribution, but also their very presence is not joyfully

received by others. Rather, they experience indifference, prejudice and hostility. I do not think it has become a reality for any of these communities, much less the Aboriginal Community.

I grew up in “White Australia” and was educated in all the prejudices and misunderstandings that justify that concept. From primary school, I can still remember William Dampier's evaluation of the aboriginal people in 1699, “The most miserable people on earth.” Much of the literature used the word “savages”.



Fortunately for me, we always had a get-together after Mass where I could talk to people, many of whom shared the story of their lives. When I began working with the Aboriginal Community, I asked myself, “How should I celebrate Mass adequately and appropriately for this community of aboriginal people?” While in Townsville to visit one of my brothers, I asked the Chaplain to the Aboriginal Community, Fr Mick Peters.

He suggested I spend a week as a guest of one of the aboriginal families on Palm Island. I stayed with Bill and Edna Coolburra. That was a week of intense education, a sort of condensed postgraduate course, building on what I was learning in Campbelltown.

It also intensified my reading. The renowned anthropologist, W E H Stanner says that underlying the great aboriginal stories is a profound philosophy. These were no “savages” nor “the most miserable people on earth”, but sophisticated human beings. I believe it would be great to see these stories preserved, studied, and revered alongside the foundational stories of western civilisation such as “The Iliad” or “The Odyssey”.

**When looking back at 50 years of service, how have the communities you have worked with actually ministered to you and enriched your life, including your life with God?**

They have enriched me and changed my life tremendously. We have walked a journey together and I often think that I have received much more from them than I could possibly have given to them, both in understanding our human condition and in my life with God. God is a mystery – more mysterious than we can even imagine. They have led me into this great mystery. That does not mean that I understand more of the mystery, but more that it is an impenetrable mystery and I am happy to be at home with that.

Beyond that, I could mention friendship, company, support, challenge, inspiration, and understanding of what it means to be human, as some aspects of the gifts they have given me. The Holy Spirit has been active in my life through them. ■

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*Daniel Hopper is the Director of Media & Communications, Diocese of Wollongong*



**Light to the Nations**  
EASTER YOUTH PILGRIMAGE



A PILGRIMAGE OF

# Hope



PHOTOS: KATE NG

During Easter this year, over 200 young people from Wollongong, including members of the Wollongong Youth Mission Team and Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong, joined with over 1,000 other young people to celebrate the events of the Easter Triduum. It was a powerful experience. In this article, Sr Therese Mills MGL tells us why.

BY SR THERESE MILLS MGL

It is Easter Monday – a fine low mist has settled-in on the Southern Highlands and the scene is one of peace and tranquillity. The Light to the Nations (LTTN) team is at Chevalier College in Bowral, finishing the clean-up after *Light to the Nations 2017*. It is impossible to believe that less than 24 hours earlier, over 1,000 young people had been sent home to their families, parishes, schools, colleges, communities, and workplaces encouraged to spread the Easter message of hope and joy.

From Holy Thursday, the serene Southern Highlands setting had been transformed into a bustling tent city. All day, a constant stream of pilgrims registered, set-up tents, and gathered to chat as they waited in anticipation for the 7pm start. The introductory session was followed by a moving celebration

of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, which ended traditionally with the beautiful Gregorian chant, *Pange Lingua*.

Good Friday dawned bright and sunny, and we were led in a powerful re-enactment of the Passion and death of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross, followed by a prayerful time of preparation for the solemn ceremonies of the afternoon. Veneration of the Cross continued until after 6pm, followed by a celebration of Reconciliation, Healing and *Tenebrae* – an ancient and prayerful chanting of the Psalms.

Later that evening, Bishop Peter Ingham addressed the young people and then joined over 20 priests gathered around fires administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation to a constant stream of people, with gentle music playing in the background in an atmosphere of worship.

Easter Saturday began with a Marian Procession and concluded with *Taizé* prayer and the Rosary.

The Easter Vigil Mass – the high point of the weekend – commenced with jubilant singing of the *Exultet*. The sight of hundreds of candles illuminating the huge circus tent was spectacular and enhanced the atmosphere of celebration. A wonderful liturgy followed, drawing the congregation further into the celebration. At the end of Mass, the worship team led the youthful participants in a two-hour celebration focussing on the joy of the Risen Lord.

It is impossible to believe that less than 24 hours earlier over 1,000 young people had been sent home ... encouraged to spread the Easter message of hope and joy.

Sunday morning was a time of preparation for returning to families and friends, praying for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, renewing the commitment to spread the good news, and finishing with a commissioning ceremony.

Young people from all over Australia and beyond came in large numbers to this event organised by Disciples of Jesus Community. Friendships were formed or re-established, faith was renewed and deepened, and all left with a fresh sense of purpose and encouragement to blaze more brightly as a "light to the nations". ■

You can check out all the photos at [ltnn.org.au](http://ltnn.org.au)

Sr Therese Mills MGL is a sister of the Missionaries of God's Love

# try alpha

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PHOTOS: DARREN MCDOWELL

BY DARREN MCDOWELL

Alpha is being adopted in many places around the Diocese as a tool for invitation to encounter genuine community and to hear the basic gospel message. Support for parishes doing this is a key focus of the newly established diocesan *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation*.

The acclaimed Canadian author of *Divine Renovation*, Fr James Mallon, describes Alpha as the “heartbeat of evangelisation”. In reflecting on his own experience of running over 30 Alpha courses with around 2,000 participants, Fr Mallon explains that usually around one-third of the guests are non-churchgoers, and the other two-thirds are church-going Catholics. He says that 50% of those who attend Alpha have a life-changing experience and lukewarm Catholics have a deep re-awakening of their faith. Alpha provides them with a profound experience of community and a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Locally, this has also been the experience at the parishes of Albion Park and Oran Park who have both ran Alpha courses over the nine weeks leading up to Easter this year. During that time, participants experienced the fun of Alpha, building new friendships around food and a short film, and deepening their relationship and encounter with Jesus Christ. The testimonies from the 100 participants at

**Alpha has refreshed my belief in Jesus. I loved the videos as they explained very important topics in an easy way to understand. I loved being together during the nine weeks to share a meal and have group discussions.**

Albion Park and Oran Park have been very touching:

“Alpha quickly became the highlight of my week. Just hearing about Jesus from such wonderful speakers, enjoying a meal and connecting in a small group, has been a great experience, and has brought me closer to God and others.”

“Alpha has allowed me to reflect upon my personal relationship with Jesus and to cement even deeper the need I have for him within my life. I would love my family (children included) to experience all God has in store for them and the personal message he has for them.”

“Alpha allowed me the freedom to ask questions without feeling like I should know the answer.”

In conducting Alpha, both parishes closely followed the tried-and-tested

recipe of success: ensuring that people felt comfortable to relax, have fun, and share their stories in a safe small-group environment. As one local participant said, “Alpha has refreshed my belief in Jesus. I loved the videos as they explained very important topics in an easy way to understand. I loved being together during the nine weeks to share a meal and have group discussions.”

Alpha leads people into becoming disciples. People become disciples when they encounter Jesus Christ and they experience the Holy Spirit. They are awakened – their lives are changed. They realise that there’s so much more to the Christian life than they thought. As Pope Francis says, “When you become a disciple, you immediately have a missionary impulse.”

So where to next? Keep running Alpha! Alpha is an ongoing process – the “pump” as it were for building communities of faith, hope and love, who are missionary in their outreach and impulse.

It is indeed exciting times in the Diocese of Wollongong as many parishes are in the process of forming *Evangelising Ministry Teams* to be trained-up in delivering Alpha. So, look out for an Alpha course running in a parish near you, and don't forget to invite someone who thinks a relationship with God is just for crazy people! ■

*Darren McDowell is the Coordinator of Evangelisation and Discipleship, Diocese of Wollongong*

BY DARREN MCDOWELL

In April 2017, the results of the *National Church Life Survey* (NCLS) were published. The results have identified that parishioners in our Diocese want more attention given to:

- Building a stronger sense of community
- Nurturing people's spiritual growth
- Welcoming new people to church
- Ministry to children and young people

In order to have the energy and focus to bring about this task of transformation, we must first ask ourselves the questions, “why” and “for what purpose” are we doing this? While answers will differ slightly, I believe the principal reason that unites us all is the desire to transform peoples' lives so that they are more fully alive, and more fully capable of achieving their unique God-given potential. As Jesus said, “I have come that you may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Essentially, we are responding to the Great Commission of Jesus to “go make disciples” (cf Matthew 28:19) for the Kingdom of God.

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, highlights this same reality. Our parishes do not exist for themselves, for their own preservation. Rather, they exist for something greater. Francis describes our parishes as “sanctuaries where the thirsty come to drink ... field hospitals ... training schools” for disciples and apostles sent forth to bring transformation to the world.

### Embracing with Passion

Embracing with *passion* the core identity and vision of the parish is the first stage of parish renewal. We encounter such passion when we get in touch with our deepest desires, our deepest yearning for ourselves and those around us – family, community, nation and world. Have you ever noticed how time, struggle, and worry slip away when you're engaged with your passion? Whether it's sport, holidays, cooking, family, work, or a community of faith, when

# Transforming parish culture

we are operating out of a passionate enthusiasm, everything else pales into the background. We seem to have an abundance of energy and time to give to this pursuit because it touches something deep inside us that pulls and pushes us to keep going.

But what is the identity of our parishes? Fr James Mallon, in his book, *Divine Renovation*, reminds us that our true identity is found in *mission*. We are missionary disciples sent by Jesus to “go and make disciples of all nations”. Fr Mallon draws on the last four popes – including Pope Francis – for this inspiration. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis does not hesitate to say that, “I am a mission.” Each one of us, through baptism “is a mission”. Thus, in the words of Francis, parishes “are places of constant missionary outreach”.

**In order to have the energy and focus to bring about this task of transformation, we must first ask ourselves the questions, “why” and “for what purpose” are we doing this?**

### Renewal of Culture

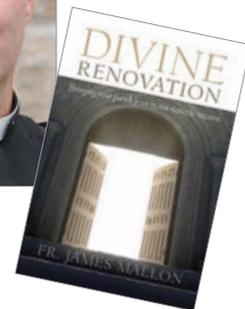
In order to achieve this vision and identity, Fr Mallon suggests the second stage of parish renewal is a *renewed culture*. In healthy and growing parishes, a number of common values exist, namely: giving priority to the weekend, hospitality, uplifting music, homilies, meaningful community, clear expectations, strength-



It's not until someone personally comes to you and says, "Would you like to come?" that you feel a sense of invitation. We all know the feeling of being personally invited – it gives us a feeling of joy, a sense of being wanted and needed.



Fr James Mallon, author of *Divine Renovation*



that you feel a sense of invitation. We all know the feeling of being personally invited – it gives us a feeling of joy, a sense of being wanted and needed. If our communities are not personally inviting others, then how will they grow in numbers and strength of relationship?

In our own Diocese, we are highlighting *Alpha* and *MenAlive* as two options which will assist parishes in becoming stronger and more invitational.

*Small groups*, especially those born of the Alpha experience, operate on the model of "belong-believe-behave". As Fr Mallon constantly points out: in today's culture, people will not believe or behave simply because someone/something "says so". People need to experience and to feel a sense of belonging and connection before they will engage and behave according to the vision and values of the group.

Small faith-sharing groups are a fun way to build relationships. They bring people together to share their lives and the ways in which Jesus is working in them through the Holy Spirit. They provide a place where each person can grow in their faith journey. They are not support groups for dealing with problems, issues, or addictions. Rather, they focus on the ways in which the Spirit is calling us to live a more active, loving, and joyful relationship with God, our Church, and our world.

In any organisation, *leadership* is vital. This is just as true in the Church. Fr Mallon points out that strong leaders help move a community or group from one place to another. Their keen sense of vision, ability to communicate this vision, and then build a team around them that moves this vision towards something that is owned by everyone, is crucial.

Whether as ministers or ministry coordinators, our level of intentionality as leaders will positively affect those around us. If we are intentional, focused, and communicating a vision, then we will gradually engage and excite others towards that same vision.

The third stage of parish renewal is *planning*. Without a plan, we plan to fail. Fr Mallon points out five critical systems that can guide our thinking and planning as we work towards achieving our community vision. They are:

1. Worship – celebration of the liturgy
2. Community – where people are known and cared for
3. Discipleship – growing and being equipped for ministry
4. Ministry – serving in any capacity
5. Evangelisation – explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ

Each of these systems work together to build strong, mission-focused communities that welcome and nurture people so they can grow into their full potential. ■

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*The Office of Renewal and Evangelisation exists to help parishes form disciples who are ready to embrace the mission of the Church. If you to know more, contact Darren McDowell on 4222 2463.*

*Darren McDowell is the Coordinator of Evangelisation and Discipleship, Diocese of Wollongong*

based ministry, formation of small communities, experience of the Holy Spirit, and becoming an inviting church. These values can be summarised into three principal areas:

1. A culture of personal invitation
2. Small groups as places for discipleship growth
3. Intentionality of leadership

*Personal invitation* is the key to everything. For example, let's say your local community centre is holding a street fair. You see signs everywhere announcing the upcoming celebration and festivities. However, whilst the event has been promoted successfully, do you feel invited? Probably not. It's not until someone personally comes to you and says, "Would you like to come?"

# Jesus, is that you?

BY JOSIE COOKS

Travelling recently on a Holy Land pilgrimage with colleagues from Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong, I was incredibly excited about the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. I was also mindful that the experience would raise questions that could both deepen and challenge my faith.

Like many people, life had thrown me some serious heartache. And while studying for a degree in Sociology and Politics, part of which proposed that aspects of religion can be a form of social control, I can honestly say my Catholic faith had been under question. My own understanding of faith and who I thought Jesus was, based on my religious education at school, had diminished. I struggled with what I believed to be true. I entered into this pilgrimage with a blank slate, hoping the journey would provide me with the opportunity to explore and reconnect with my faith with a more mature, adult perspective.

I wasn't sure what to expect, but I did promise myself to enter the experience with an open mind. I couldn't help but wonder if – while walking in the footsteps of Jesus – I would better understand him? Would I gain insight into what his life was like? Would I be like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, unable to recognise him as he stood beside me throughout our travels?

Starting in Bethany, beyond the Jordan, where John baptised Jesus, I expected to encounter some challenges in trying to separate fact from fiction in the stories and places we visited. While celebrating Mass at the River Jordan, in what was the first of many realisations, it became clear that it didn't really matter whether or not this was the exact spot where Jesus was baptised, but that in this vicinity, Jesus made a conscious decision to participate in that baptismal initiation, something that changed history. While renewing



our baptismal vows, I surprisingly felt this connection to him. While not the same, here we were participating in a similar ritual to the one Jesus had, thousands of years before.

The days were full, travelling between holy sites and churches. Whilst appreciating their sacredness and significance, some encounters were underwhelming, but others moved me to my core. One such moment occurred at the Mount of Beatitudes. The Beatitudes had always held a special place in my heart, as our parish priest used them to describe my father at his funeral. But the words took on a whole new significance while listening to Bishop Peter's explanation. I now understood these words weren't just prayer, but a set of ideals Jesus "blessed" his followers to aspire to.

I had never fully considered the human nature of Jesus, but as I discovered more about him, the scriptures were no longer mythological stories in some old book. As each day passed, I grew more excited about our visits, not just for the historical

**I entered into this pilgrimage with a blank slate, hoping the journey would provide me with the opportunity to explore and reconnect with my faith ...**

and cultural aspect, but also for the anticipation of an overwhelming "I got it!" moment. I longed for an epiphany, that light bulb moment where suddenly everything made sense.

Gradually, I began to understand not only who Jesus was, but also what a significant role he had played in my parents' lives. High atop Mount Tabor, the human nature of the Transfiguration was revealed to me. Here, Jesus told his friends that his time on earth was soon to end. This was the place where Jesus revealed his true identity to his companions.

I understood why Jesus chose this place to break this news. These men had given-up three years of their lives for him, so what they heard would have been devastating. This mountain-top provided solitude



PHOTOS: JOSIE COOKS

and peace, allowing the disciples time and space to come to terms with what they had been told and witnessed. I understood how it felt to receive such terrible news and felt the weight of the events that took place here.

With the story ringing in my ears, I felt like I'd travelled back in time reliving my father's cancer diagnosis. Sitting in a doctor's office, hearing my father had three months to live, was painful. I broke down and curled up inconsolable on my father's lap. Here was a man that had just been given his death sentence, comforting me, when it should have been the reverse. Wandering around the gardens I imagined Jesus doing the same for his friends, comforting them, even though he knew what lay ahead.

Bishop Peter explained how the disciples needed to experience the Transfiguration to strengthen them for the challenges to come. These words resonated and I suddenly understood why my parents' faith had been so important to them and how daily Mass gave them moments of peace – strengthening them for the oncoming storms.

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One brisk morning in Jerusalem, we rose at 4:30am and headed off to pray the Stations of the Cross. As we gathered ourselves, the city was still, apart from a few quiet whispers and the sound of the Call to Prayer reminding us where we were. The streets of the old city are narrow, paved in large uneven stones, making it easy to imagine the moments leading up to Jesus' death. As we moved slowly, I felt the heaviness of his cross and the pain he endured on his way to Calvary. The noise of footsteps on the cold stones sounded like soldiers marching, and as our movements echoed through

the streets, I was reminded of Jesus sitting alone and afraid in the dark at Gethsemane, anticipating the end.

We learnt the extent of the barbaric cruelties inflicted on Jesus. The Pharisees made an example of him and punished him in the worst possible way. As we entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, I had my light bulb moment, I finally got it and began to understand what all this was about. Here had existed a man whose love for us was so strong that he willingly sacrificed himself, so we could have life to the fullest. I had been looking at his teachings and what he stood for through the wrong lens. God wasn't trying to control me through the construction of religion, or punish me through the burdens and heartache that life gave me. But, as Fr Richard Rohr OFM writes, "God uses tragedy, suffering, pain, betrayal, and death itself, not to wound me, but in fact to bring me to him." ■

*Josie Cooks is the Community Development Officer for Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong*

# You are not alone

How do you deal with the tough times in your life? Sometimes it's as simple as wishing there was someone out there to listen to you and help you walk through these challenges. At times, talking with family and friends doesn't always help the situation, or we simply don't want to burden them with our problems.

CatholicCare's experienced and compassionate counsellors provide a safe and private place where you can talk about your concerns with no judgement. They provide affordable counselling services to children, young people, adults, couples, and families who are experiencing personal challenges such as grief, family and relationship difficulties, work-related stress, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and changes in personal or family circumstances.

CatholicCare's counselling service has been operating since 1984 and has a strong record in supporting people within the Diocese of Wollongong regardless of the client's background or financial circumstances. Their priority is to give support in difficult times and provide a listening ear; focusing on strategies for coping with stress and major life changes.



“Love needs time and space; everything else is secondary.”

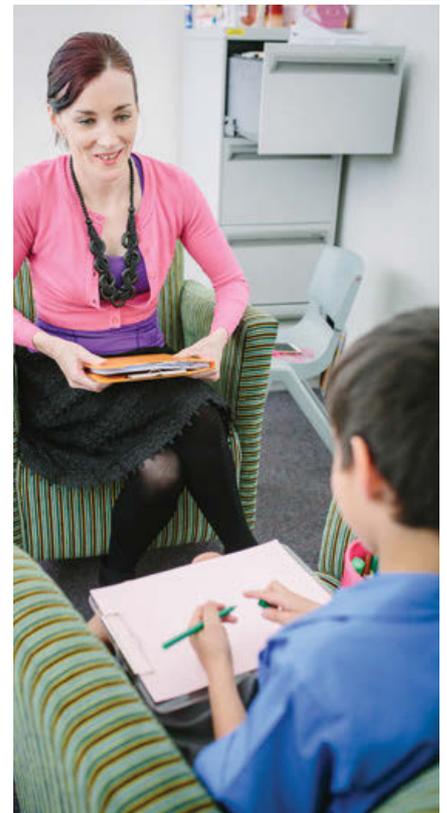
POPE FRANCIS  
*Amoris Laetitia [224]*

## CASE STUDY 1

José\* and Anna\* have been married for 22 years, and in recent times, had found they were less patient with each other and unhappy in their relationship. After a heated argument, José suggested they seek some relationship counselling. Although a difficult step for both, the sessions helped them communicate in a safe and respectful place, and also taught them to work on strategies together. Counselling gave them the opportunity to discuss some confronting issues that they had previously found hard to manage on their own. While Anna had been reluctant to attend counselling, she expressed that it had given her a place to express her feelings and be heard and understood without judgement, allowing her to understand their differences.

## CASE STUDY 2

James\* had cared for his terminally ill mother for a number of years. When his mother died, he was greatly affected and he came to counselling to talk through the strong feelings he was experiencing. Grief counselling helped James understand the grief process, to accept his mother's death, and talk through the things he missed about her. He learnt ways to better manage his feelings and adjust to life without her. He thanked the counsellor for helping him to talk freely and openly about his personal experience and for providing strategies to help him cope in the future. ■



PHOTOS: DAVID ROCHE



If you're experiencing a personal, family or work related matter, you should consider counselling. CatholicCare understands that it takes a lot of courage to pick up the phone and make that call. They have qualified and highly professional counsellors with a wide range of expertise waiting to hear from you.

Phone CatholicCare  
on 4254 9316 | 4254 9357

*\*Names and circumstances have been changed to protect the clients' identity.*

“... there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems.”

POPE FRANCIS  
*Amoris Laetitia [57]*



It's never too late.

Let's talk.

If you're experiencing a personal, family or work related matter, all you need to do is make that call.

**We'll help you with the rest.**

CALL US ON  
**4254 9316** or **4254 9357**  
[catholiccare.dow.org.au](http://catholiccare.dow.org.au)



## Volunteers serving humbly

To celebrate National Volunteers' Week, and to honour their dedicated volunteers, CatholicCare held a luncheon on 19 May 2017 at the Xavier Centre in Wollongong.

Bishop Peter Ingham and Mr Michael Austin, Director of CatholicCare Wollongong, joined the large group of dedicated volunteers and distinguished guests.

Bishop Peter led the group in prayer and conferred the Lord's richest blessings on all volunteers working in the Diocese.

The devoted volunteers were acknowledged for their generosity of spirit and compassion.

"It's evident that you all have an innate desire to help others, and not for accolades, but with a strong commitment to the common good," Mr Austin said on the day.



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

"With your commitment, CatholicCare will remain a reassuring, enabling presence in the lives of those we serve. You make our communities better places to live in, and again, I'd like to thank you for volunteering." ■

*If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with CatholicCare, please call 4227 1122 or visit [catholiccare.dow.org.au](http://catholiccare.dow.org.au).*

# why teaching?

Q & A WITH EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

In 2017, over 130 new staff members began working in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wollongong. Fifty-one of these staff members are early career teachers. These men and women – full of hope for the future – are committed to sharing and living the good news of the gospel as they set out to open the minds and hearts of the young people in their care.

We asked three early career teachers to reflect on their experience so far, after having completed the first two terms at a diocesan school.

## Ronelle Peardon

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH  
PRIMARY SCHOOL, THIRROUL

### **What or who inspired you to become a teacher?**

In my former role as a School Support Officer, I was surrounded by many fabulous teachers who all encouraged and inspired me to further my career. If it had not been for the support of these people, as well as my family and friends, I would not be in the fortunate position I find myself in today.

Working in school administration, as well as on the playground forming relationships with the students, helped give me a valuable insight into school life and a realistic view of the demands on a primary school teacher. With this in mind, I find it difficult not to mention my true inspiration, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, who implored, "Never see a need without doing something about it."



### **What motivated your decision to teach in a Catholic school?**

Like all vocations, I believe it's not something you decide, but is something you feel called to. Having completed my primary and secondary education in Catholic schools, I didn't know any different. However, after having the opportunity to work in schools where Jesus is not at the heart of the school's mission, I started to appreciate that you can really feel his presence in every

corner of a Catholic school. It is a great privilege that we choose to light the way for the students entrusted to our care.

### **What challenges do you anticipate that you may face?**

Time management is a big one for me; having the time to do a great job and making sure that I can still appreciate my beautiful family. Another challenge is to be a better listener; to not just hear my students, but really listen. They have a lot to say! ■

# Kurt Phipps

ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PARISH  
PRIMARY SCHOOL, CAMDEN

## When did you decide to become a teacher?

It was during the time I was studying for my Bachelor of Arts that I began to contemplate a career path that would provide me with the opportunity to influence young people in a positive way. It was also important to me that my work would provide new and varied experiences and not have me sitting at a desk all day.

But, before going too far down this path, I thought I would do some volunteer work in a school. After a couple of days volunteering at a local Catholic school, I knew it was the right career for me. The fun and excitement of learning, and the infectious smiles of the children, were the things that attracted me the most.

## What motivated your decision to teach in the Catholic system?

Associations with Catholic institutions has been a part of my life for a long time after having attended Catholic



PHOTOS: JENNY JANCETIC

schools and a Catholic university. At the time, I was not a Catholic. But, after undertaking my teaching studies, I witnessed first-hand the impact of the values that Catholic schools instill in their students. I could see how these values were shaping the students' attitudes and behaviour, and helping them to grow into just, caring, and respectful young people. All of these experiences confirmed my decision to undergo RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) and I became a Catholic last year.

## What are your hopes for your students?

I hope that my students will be inspired to think critically and creatively and to develop as resilient young learners. I hope they are able to move on to Year 6 next year having the knowledge and skills to be the best people they can be – socially, intellectually and physically. I also hope they can have a fun, engaging, and stimulating year along the way with me. ■

# Bharti Sharma

MAGDALENE CATHOLIC HIGH  
SCHOOL, NARELLAN

## What motivated your decision to teach in a Catholic school?

Catholic education in Australia recognises and deeply values our country's journey towards reconciliation. Programs and frameworks are in place to ensure that the Catholic education community works towards justice and equity for every student, which is something I feel very strongly about. I believe there can be no better place to work for than an organisation that strives to shape the hearts, minds, and actions of its young people in this way.

## What are your goals for the future?

Firstly, I want to become an excellent orator where I can confidently and passionately express myself in an assembly of teachers, parents, or the



wider community. I want to connect with my audience at a deeper level, painting a picture through storytelling every time I speak.

My long-term goal is to be a principal of a Catholic school. A principal holds a very important and

privileged position of being able to influence the direction of faith, learning, and culture within a school community. Having responsibilities such as establishing and overseeing community service, pastoral care, and mentorship programs, as well as dealing with the business side of running a school, appeals to me.

## What advice would you give to someone considering a career in teaching?

As a parent, my golden rule is to treat each student in your class as your own child. Think of what you would do for your own child if they were struggling and help them in the same way. Students may be difficult at times, but persevere and don't begrudge them. Instead, look inside at their tender hearts. Our students are like clay, and we can help shape them. This is how we make a difference in their lives. ■

# faith circles



BY DARREN MCDOWELL

We have been inundated over the past couple of months with people asking what they can do to continue their small-group now that the Lenten Program has wrapped up. Others have further stated that they would love to extend the group to those who don't regularly come to Church, but may welcome the opportunity to simply share their week with others and reflect upon how God may be at work in their lives.

Well, we have the perfect solution for you! *Faith Circles* – a free weekly small-group resource. Faith Circles is a double-sided A4 sheet based on the Sunday Gospels with two reflections (including one by Pope Francis) as well as accompanying reflection questions and prayer points.

Think of Faith Circles like a shortened version of the Lenten Program. However, it is free, no strings attached. We just want Catholics to be nurtured by doing life and faith in groups, not on their own!

Faith Circles is available to download via email subscription, or on our website at [faithcircles.dow.org.au](http://faithcircles.dow.org.au). We send out an email every month containing the downloadable resources for the upcoming month, and you can print as many copies as you like.

“Through sharing and reflection, our faith is deepened, knowledge increases, and insight happens. This growth in intimacy with others and with the Spirit gives us the courage to live our lives as Christ has taught.”

## Why small faith-sharing groups?

Small faith-sharing groups are a fun way to build relationships and to bring people together to share their lives and the ways in which Jesus is working in them through the Holy Spirit.

In small faith-sharing groups we can especially invite those who are not regular church-goers. They are places where we can safely share our lives and faith with one another in a welcoming and friendly environment. Through sharing and reflection, our faith is deepened, knowledge increases, and insight happens. This growth in intimacy with others and with the Spirit gives us the courage to live our lives as Christ has taught.

Small faith-sharing groups provide a place where each person can grow in their faith journey. They are *not* support groups for dealing with personal problems, issues or addictions. Faith-sharing groups focus rather on the ways in which the Spirit is calling us to live more lovingly, actively, deeply, joyfully, and fruitfully in our relationship with God, our Church, and our world.

## How to start and run Faith Circles

We have recently published a great resource giving tips on how to start and run a *Faith Circles* small-group in your community setting. It is available on our website for download and provides an easy-to-use way of setting up a small-group. The resource covers:

- creating the environment
- leading the group
- using the resource

So, sign up and get started using Faith Circles today! ■

[faithcircles.dow.org.au](http://faithcircles.dow.org.au)

*Darren McDowell is the Coordinator of Evangelisation and Discipleship, Diocese of Wollongong*

# As easy as smiling at a baby

BY MARILYN RODRIGUES

Most parents and teachers in Catholic schools would agree that they want their children to grow up having experienced the best that the Catholic faith has to offer. Theologians such as Thomas Groome point out that faith is “caught” as much as “taught” – that children need to see faith expressed as something that greatly improves their experience of life. There’s no better way for this to happen, he says, than within the context of their own family life.

## We show our kids how life is done

Parents are their children’s very first educators. In the weeks after our first child was born, one of the first things my husband, Peter, and I taught her, without even realising it, is how and when to communicate with us by smiling.

Babies are actually born able to smile; 3D imaging shows babies smiling in the womb. After birth, they begin learning our social rules about smiling. We spent so many hours modelling smiling behaviour at our daughter, and we didn’t have to try very hard. In our happiness, we couldn’t not smile at her, or each other, when she was around! In just a few weeks she’d learnt to smile back when we spoke and smiled at her. It’s very similar with our Catholic faith.

Just like with the smiling reflex, as children, we are born with the innate ability to know and love God, and to share the love of God with others. But we need to learn how to do this. We need to be taught first, who God is and how does God love me, and then, how I can share God’s love with others.

We can begin doing this during 20 minutes in a Sunday liturgy, and maybe an hour a week (or fortnight) in a religion or catechist lesson at school.



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

**In our happiness, we couldn’t not smile at her, or each other, when she was around! In just a few weeks she’d learnt to smile back when we spoke and smiled at her. It’s very similar with our Catholic faith.**

This is often where children receive necessary formal information in what the Church teaches and what it means to be a Catholic, and where they see examples of faith-filled people. But it comes nowhere near the number of hours children spend with their family.

It doesn’t matter so much if we get all the facts right, or can answer all our children’s questions about religion and faith. If the environment at home is infused with the Catholic values and life, just because of who we are and how we do things, we will raise adults who are faith-filled, and with the desire and the ability to make a difference in the world.

Pope Francis has called the Church “a family of families”. It’s in the domestic church that we develop our “Catholicness”. Also, it is not only the parents who form their children in a living faith; we parents are given plenty of food for spiritual growth through our children!

## CathFamily – Making the Home the Heart of the Church

For the last couple of years, I’ve worked with the team that produces CathFamily – an Australian-based online resource library for passing on the Catholic faith to kids. A highlight is CathKids, a weekly series of short animated kid-friendly meditations on the Sunday Gospels. Also on the CathFamily website are:

- Colouring pages and craft templates to download and print
- Simple recipes to try that relate to a feast day or a Catholic theme
- Prayer rituals and blessings
- Games and drama scripts
- Gift ideas for Mother’s Day, Fathers’ Day, grandparents and teachers
- Articles for adults wanting to grow in their faith



The best way to use CathFamily is by visiting [cathfamily.org](http://cathfamily.org) and signing up

for the free weekly email. You will then receive the weekly CathKids Gospel meditation and a selection of items that relates to the events of the coming week in the Church’s calendar. ■

*Marilyn Rodrigues is the Editor of [cathfamily.org](http://cathfamily.org), an Australian-based online resource dedicated to assisting families in making the home the living heart of the Catholic Church.*



PHOTOS: ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

## Covenant of compassion

**P**roject Compassion demonstrates how love for our neighbours can transform lives. This year, and throughout the Lenten period, Caritas Australia – the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church – has received widespread support from communities and supporters across Australia, including in the Diocese of Wollongong.

On Shrove Tuesday, 28 February 2017, Caritas Australia launched its annual Lenten fundraising appeal, Project Compassion. The launch of Project Compassion, which was organised with the assistance of Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, saw over 200 students, parents, and teachers, representing 37 different schools, gather at St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park.

The launch was presided over by Bishop Peter Ingham, and during the service, guests were addressed by Caritas Australia’s Manager of Southeast Asian Programs, Kath Rosic, who shared with them the story of Filipino mother-of-five, Dinia, the face of the 2017 Project Compassion campaign.

The unexpected death of Dinia’s husband in a mining accident, and the consequent loss of his small income, plunged Dinia and her five children into a perilous state of financial insecurity. Alone and struggling, Dinia was encouraged by her neighbours

**I was blown away by the amazing commitment shown by the Diocese of Wollongong during the Project Compassion launch. The Diocese take their fundraising very seriously.**

to participate in a Caritas Australia supported program run by the Socio-Pastoral Action Centre Foundation Inc (SPACFI).

“SPACFI’s Integrated Community Development program helped Dinia to secure a reliable income by making cassava chips, farming pigs, and growing and selling rice. Dinia has been able to educate her children and contribute to her community,” Ms Rosic said.

Following Ms Rosic’s address, six representatives of Wollongong’s Catholic community participated in the ceremonial signing of the “Covenant of Compassion”, publicly declaring the commitment of school communities throughout the Diocese to support the world’s poor through Project Compassion during Lent.

“I was blown away by the amazing commitment shown by the Diocese of Wollongong during the Project Compassion launch. The Diocese take their fundraising very seriously. Each school received a Caritas candle and a Project Compassion collection box. The service was beautiful and the singing by the children terrific,” Ms Rosic said.

Caritas Australia is a part of one of the world’s largest humanitarian networks, Caritas Internationalis. Through effective partnerships, Caritas works to end poverty, promote justice, and uphold dignity.

Running over the six weeks of Lent, Project Compassion funds humanitarian and long-term projects in more than 29 countries across Asia, Africa, the Pacific, Latin America, and First Australian communities. Last year, Caritas Australia programs helped 2 million people directly.

The Project Compassion 2017 theme is *Love your Neighbour*, sharing human stories from the Philippines, Timor Leste, Australia, Vietnam, and Fiji. It’s not too late to support Caritas’ work globally. ■



To donate to Caritas Australia please call 1800 024 413 or visit [caritas.org.au/donate](http://caritas.org.au/donate)

# Improving women and children's health

BY DAVID HARRISON

If you've ever been in an ambulance or known someone who has, Catholic Mission's 2017 Church Appeal might have added meaning.

This year's annual appeal focuses on Uganda and the Daughters of Mary, a local order, who are trying to improve women and children's health through Jesus' life-giving mission.

At St Luke's Health Centre in Bujuni, a small village three hours west of Kampala, Sr Mary Goretti manages a small staff to prepare expectant mothers for safe delivery of their babies.

With prenatal and postnatal education programs, general health check-ups and a maternity ward for new deliveries, St Luke's provides an invaluable service for the local community; yet many young women risk their lives to receive essential healthcare.

Evas Masanyu is a 24-year-old woman who lives on the outskirts of Bujuni. Last year, as she went into labour, Evas' only option to get to the nearest health centre was on the back of a motorbike.

Despite the heavy rain and dangerous conditions, Evas made it to St Luke's. But, needing a C-section, which is beyond the capacity of the small centre, Evas was referred to a larger hospital. She gave birth, but the baby was very ill, and two days later, he tragically died.

Sr Mary, who visited Australia in May, said it is a tragedy that should have been avoided. "When she's very weak, the mother cannot sit on a motorcycle which is the only available means of transport," she said.

"I think if we get a vehicle it will really help us to save the life of the mother and the baby. People come with hope



**Evas' tragic story brings to light the need of women and children in Uganda, even despite the committed efforts of missionaries like Sr Mary.**

that you are going to help them. Then you look at the condition, it's beyond our care here."

The appeal – hosted in Catholic parishes around Australia – will support plans to expand the health centre's maternity ward, build a new children's ward, and bring in vital scanning equipment and the desperately needed ambulance.

Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission, says Evas' tragic story brings to light the need of women and children in Uganda, even despite the committed efforts of missionaries like Sr Mary.

"Many of us here in Australia can recall times of grief in our lives, but Evas' journey, on the back of a motorbike through treacherous conditions to give

birth to her first child, is difficult to fathom," he said. "That she lost her child is especially devastating because it should never have come to that.

"This appeal is about ensuring that St Luke's Health Centre, and other projects like it around the world, are supported so that the dedicated Catholic missionaries who run them can provide the most effective and life-saving services to their local communities."

The 2017 Church Appeal video tells the story of Evas and the incredible work of Sr Mary and her staff at St Luke's Health Centre. You can see their story and find out more about the appeal at [catholicmission.org.au/ugandavideo](http://catholicmission.org.au/ugandavideo) ■



*Reach out. Give life.*

*To make a contribution towards the vital work of Catholic Mission in Uganda and around the world, please visit [catholicmission.org.au/uganda](http://catholicmission.org.au/uganda).*

*David Harrison is the Director of Catholic Mission for the Diocese of Wollongong, 02 4222 2482.*

# To the ends of the earth

BY SANDRA PURCELL

We are excited to share that *The Catholic Guy Ministry* has started this year in spectacular fashion with the building of a world-class studio in Campbelltown where we now broadcast our program into thousands of homes across the USA, Europe, and many other places. We are very grateful to the Diocese of Wollongong, including the Campbelltown Catholic Club, for their support over the past couple of years. Without their contribution, our ministry would not be continuing to grow locally as well reaching so many people across the world.

On Tuesday 23 May, we were honoured to have Bishop Peter Ingham – joined by local clergy, board members from the Campbelltown Catholic Club, and staff from the Office of the Bishop – bless the studio in a beautiful celebration that will be broadcast around the world as part of our program.

It's not just on international television that *The Catholic Guy Ministry* is proclaiming the gospel. Our weekly services out of Campbelltown are also beamed live to multiple sites around Australia. Each week, the messages by Bruce Downes go up on our website, **TheCatholicGuy.com**, along with materials to help people reflect on the scriptures and develop their faith. This is done by individuals as well as small groups called "Impact Groups".

Impact Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word. They aim to achieve the following four primary objectives:

1. Sharing our lives
2. Studying of scripture (from that week's message)
3. Supporting and caring for each other
4. Serving and making a difference locally



... we now broadcast our program into thousands of homes across the USA, Europe and many other places. We are very grateful to the Diocese of Wollongong, including the Campbelltown Catholic Club, for their support over the past couple of years.

In the Macarthur region, there are groups for families, men, women, young adults, and couples. We recently asked a few group members to let us know how this ministry has impacted their lives:

**Bek:** I joined a young families Impact Group with my three children nearly a year ago and it was the best decision I have made in my life. I have connected with people who have God at the centre of their lives. People who experience the presence of God within them. People reaching out and serving others with kind and generous hearts. People striving to be better Christians. Since joining this group, I have encountered God and have developed a personal relationship with him. I also pray more, I read the scriptures more, I give more, I serve more, and I love more. I feel so blessed to be part of a group making such an "impact" on the lives of others.

**Adam:** Week-after-week we grow closer to each other and talk about things that we usually can't talk about. I don't know what I would do without Impact Group. It's become an integral part of my life now.

**Lai:** Impact Group provides me with a source of belonging where I feel I can safely share my struggles, believing that people will respect, support and guide me to connect with Christ. It is a very important place in my journey of faith.

**Colin:** When I returned to the Catholic Faith through *The Catholic Guy Ministry*, I joined an Impact Group. It helped build me up by the giving and receiving of prayer support and encouragement and hearing how God is at work in others. I love to attend Impact Group.

**Bruce:** After a serious accident a few years ago, I suffered serious anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and the last thing I considered was joining an Impact Group. Even though God is at the very centre, what really made the difference was the people in it. It has done miracles for me, worked wonders in my married and family life. ■

*Being in an Impact Group has become an essential part of people's lives in parishes across Australia.*

*If you want more information, email [info@TheCatholicGuy.com](mailto:info@TheCatholicGuy.com) and we will set you up in a group close to you.*

*Sandra Purcell is the National Events Coordinator for the Catholic Guy Ministry*

# Heart, Character, Passion

*Yura jauiang yulang.  
Yura budbut.  
Bindadhan mareiin yabun.*

The people will come to ceremony.  
Giving their hearts.  
Giving to God sacred time.

BY TIM GILMOUR

These lyrics, Dharawal language sung to the echo of the didgeridoo, opened the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass celebrated by the Diocese of Wollongong at St John Vianney's Co-Cathedral in Fairy Meadow.

From the north, south, east and west; from the Yuin, Dharawal, and Gundungurra; over 800 staff from our diocesan Catholic schools gathered together to give thanks and praise to God and celebrate the “great learning” and the “great communities” of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong.

With the congregation overflowing along the aisles and doorways, Bishop Peter shared how his life was changed through learning to listen to the voice of God in the silence and solitude of prayer. He encouraged the faithful to make prayer an active and conscious part of their lives especially during the season of Lent.

Bishop Peter said, “We, as clergy, and you as teachers – we lead students in prayer ...

“We must not assume that we can do without God when we don't specifically need God, and then call God in when everything else has failed. Certainly God will help even then, but in times of crisis, it's so much easier to go to someone who has been cultivated as the familiar friend of our life and not a stranger. Remember God can hardly answer a prayer that has not been prayed!



PHOTOS: ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

**“I wonder if at times we think of prayer as a kind of hot line to God ... But, if we feel our prayer is not answered unless God grants our request for a favour, then we've missed the meaning of prayer.”**

BISHOP PETER INGHAM

“I wonder if at times we think of prayer as a kind of hot line to God by which we apply for what we need but often it seems rather difficult to get through. People say, ‘I pray to God but he never answers me.’ If we really pray to God, we give ourselves to God, and this God always answers. But, if we feel our prayer is not answered unless God grants our request for a favour, then we've missed the meaning of prayer ...

“I think it is true to say that our lives change when our habits change. My life changed when I began to prioritise time for prayer – getting up earlier to do so. In those quiet moments of reflection given over to God, we can stumble upon the big question: ‘God, what do you think I should do?’”

As is tradition, new principals were commissioned and new staff received the Bishop's blessing. Director of Schools, Mr Peter Turner, inspired those gathered to “display heart, character and passion” as they light the way for students formed and educated under their care.

The liturgy was a true celebration. All gathered lifted their hearts and voices (and the roof) in song and prayer as they were sent forth to continue their work as educators in Catholic schools. ■

*Tim Gilmour is the Professional Assistant to the Director of Schools Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong*

# Fanning the flame of faith in the south

BY FR MICHAEL DYER

In recent times, the Milton Parish has been responding to the call of Pope Francis and Bishop Peter to be Missionaries of Mercy to one another and to the local region, particularly those not actively engaged in parish life.

As the new resident priest of the three church communities of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Milton; St Patrick's, Sussex Inlet; and Holy Family, Ulladulla, it has been wonderful to witness the parish engage in a process of renewal and evangelisation. By the grace of God, each community is gifted with creative lay leaders who collaborate closely with me. Moreover, the parish has been blessed with multiple visits by lay ministry leaders from the Office of the Bishop, including, Jude Hennessy, Darren McDowell, Paul Mason, Seth Harsh, Trish McCarthy, Peter Gilmore and Rebecca Miller, as well as the Youth Mission Team.

Two *Cornerstone* events – Christ Jesus himself is our Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20) – have been hosted locally: one last September with a focus on the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, and a second in May 2017 focusing on Divine Renovation. The goal for both events was to enable individuals and the parish communities to explore the Church's mission, celebrate what is being done well, and consider ways to make parish life more vibrant; so that our faith is constantly growing and we reach out in confidence to welcome those who are disconnected from church.

Through a series of workshops, scores of parishioners have prayerfully considered a variety of subjects including:

- What does a vibrant Australian parish Look Like
- Growing in faith for missionary discipleship
- Welcome and inclusion: a parish that is attractive to "outsiders"



BLESSING OF THE FLEET PHOTOS: LISA HARDWICK – MARINE RESCUE NSW ULLADULLA  
OTHER PHOTOS: DARREN MCDOWELL

**There were dynamic prayer moments interlocking the workshops, liturgy radiating with a noble simplicity, and delicious food and drink which proved a recipe for success!**

- Liturgy: making the Sunday experience great
- Go make a mess: youth ministry connections and possible initiatives
- Discovering your gifts for mission
- New wine into new wineskins: Fr James Mallon on a game plan for missionary discipleship

There were dynamic prayer moments interlocking the workshops, liturgy radiating with a noble simplicity, and delicious food and drink which proved a recipe for success!

Currently, the parish is establishing a number of initiatives, including:

- An *Alpha* Program
- Spiritual pilgrimages to Mary MacKillop Place, St Mary's Cathedral, and the Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo, just to name a few
- A series of adult faith formation initiatives incorporating the teachings of recent Popes

- Restoring its buildings for mission purposes, including a *Poustinia* – a hermit house for retreats
- Strengthening its collaboration with a dynamic parish primary school and group of catechists
- Launching Suppertime at the Bayleaf – a monthly justice oriented nutritious dining occasion for people in need and involving a local restaurant, Vinnies, and other community agencies
- Consolidating its relationship with the local Italian Fishing Cooperative, Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce through being front and centre for the Annual Blessing of the Fleet Festival (see photos above) which offers the Catholic community a splendid way to witness to its faith and to invite others to re-join its Holy Spirited ranks.

In solidarity with Pope Francis, the parishioners of Milton, Sussex Inlet and Ulladulla pray that their parish will be, "A community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 28). ■

*Fr Michael Dyer is the resident priest at St Mary Star of the Sea Parish, Milton.*

# Leaving a legacy of faith at Macquarie Fields

BY DEBBIE GATES

Many of us have a special connection to our parish. Recently, Mary, a long term parishioner of Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Macquarie Fields, left a valuable gift in her Will “to care for the elderly parishioners in the parish”. A meeting between Mary’s daughters and parish priest, Fr Linh Nguyen, agreed that the best way to care for the elderly in the parish was to provide transportation for the aged and mobility restricted parishioners to attend Mass as well as other parish and diocesan events.

In March 2017, stewarded by members of the parish’s newly formed *Outreach Ministry*, Mary’s wish became a reality when the brand new 10 seater and wheelchair accessible commuter bus commenced its mission and outreach.

Fr Linh said, “We celebrated the life of Mary and the work of our Outreach Ministry with a special ceremony



and thanksgiving Mass. Each week, our whole community benefits from Mary’s vision as our older and mobility restricted parishioners rejoin us for Mass and other community celebrations.”

### Think about it

... the Catholic Church has been present at most of the important milestones in your life; your Baptism, your First Communion, at times of great celebration and at times of great sadness.

The work of the many ministries of the Catholic Church are far-reaching, life-giving and life-saving.... every day. By leaving a gift to your church in your

Will, you will leave a legacy of faith – a legacy to help ensure that the mission and pastoral outreach that has been important to you will continue both for today’s needs and for those of our children, our grandchildren and beyond. ■

*For information about leaving a gift in your Will to your local parish or a ministry of the Church, please visit*



*bequests.dow.org.au or call 4222 2446 to receive a copy of our new brochure: “Leaving a Legacy of Faith”*

# Silver Jubilee celebrations at Varroville

BY PATRICIA WICKS & CONCETTINA GANGEMI

On the weekend of 11 March 2017, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, celebrated in style as they ushered in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their beautiful church that was opened on 14 March 1992 by Bishop William Murray.

Bishop Peter Ingham was present on the Saturday evening to celebrate Mass with the parish, followed by a celebration dinner at the Campbelltown Catholic Club. During the dinner, a young member of the parish, Maria (aged 21), gave a heart-felt speech on the special role the parish has played in forming



her strong Catholic identity through her participation in many facets of parish life including altar serving, sacramental preparation, youth group, and children’s choir. Maria now plays the organ and teaches singing to the children in the choir. She is a wonderful role model and mentor to the many young members of the parish.

The weekend celebrations concluded on the Sunday evening with the *At Once: Lenten Concert* presented by the parish and Nella Luce Studio. It was a brilliant and moving musical presentation, with so much beauty and story revealed to the audience by every single artist that performed. The variety of music touched the hearts

of many who came to listen, and all appreciated the professional standard and sacred atmosphere that was created. The Lenten Concerts have been prepared for the community since 2012 in order to reflect on the diocesan Lenten Program by combining Scripture, music, art, and charity. Many thanks to the Sponsors: Nella Luce Studio (Into the Light), See Thru Cleaning, Dolphin Web Design, Nutrishous 'n' Delicious, FJ Removals, and Sam's fruit shop at Casula. ■

*If you wish to sponsor the next Lenten Concert, please contact Connie on 0478 018 918.*

# Catholic Women's League

BY ANNE KELLY

Welcome to Catholic Women's League (CWL) News for 2017. We began the year with a diocesan St Patrick's Day lunch held at Murphy's Bar & Grill in Unanderra attended by "green-attired" members from many of our Branches.

The annual Mass for the Unborn was concelebrated on Friday 31 March at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, by Dean of the Cathedral, Fr Ron Peters, and CWL Diocesan Chaplain, Fr Patrick Vaughan. The Mass is offered for babies who did not reach full term or died at birth and for the families affected. Lunch followed Mass and both were well attended.

I have great pleasure in advising that on Thursday 22 December 2016, past State President of CWLA NSW Inc., Moya Potts AM, was presented with the Honour of Dame of St Gregory the Great for distinguished services to the Church in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Peg McEntee OAM (a member of The Oaks Branch) joined me at Lithgow on March 26 to attend the Bathurst Diocesan Conference. Mass was held in St Patrick's Church celebrated by Bishop Michael McKenna. Sr Patricia Powell RSM, the conference speaker,



The Diocesan Executive, from left: Isabel Fitzgerald, Mary Smith, Diana Lyon, Sue Meehan, Anne Kelly (President), Ann Dawes, Lynne Harrison, Margaret Frew, Mary Murphy and Helen Waterworth.

spoke on the words of Pope Francis on "care for our common home and to ponder them in our hearts".

On Friday July 7, we will hold our Diocese Conference at the Wollongong Xavier Centre commencing at 9am. The theme is, "Be a Gift of Love and Compassion for one another" (Saint Pope John II, at the Beatification of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop).

The conference speakers will be Fr David Orr OSB, Prior of the Benedictine Monks in Arcadia Sydney, also past National CWLA Chaplain, and Mr Michael Moran from Canberra, Head Archivist for St Vincent de Paul. We will also launch an updated version of our diocesan History Book. The Mass in the Cathedral at noon will celebrate the Feast Day of St Maria Goretti. To attend please contact Diocesan Secretary,

Mary Smith on 4226 5588 or at [marysmith@exemail.com.au](mailto:marysmith@exemail.com.au). The Conference fee is \$30, including morning refreshments and lunch. ■

Anne Kelly is the President of the Catholic Women's League, Diocese of Wollongong [cwlwollongong.org.au](http://cwlwollongong.org.au)

**Catholic Women's League**  
Triennial Conference  
FRIDAY 7 JULY 2017

**XAVIER CENTRE**  
Harbour St Wollongong  
**9.30am-2.30pm** (Mass at 12 noon)  
Guest Speakers & History Book Launch  
Reg: \$30 (inc. refreshments and lunch)  
Bookings: Mary Smith 4226 5588  
by 16 June 2017



## Good Friday Appeal

BY LISA METCALFE

The annual Good Friday Collection which supports the Christian people in the Holy Land, and provides for the upkeep of sacred places, was even more poignant this year with the continued violence and unrest in the region. In Jerusalem today, there are 65

historical churches, but only 5,000 Christians remain among the one million residents. The Custody of the Holy Land embraces not only Israel and Palestine, but also Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Rhodes and Cyprus.

Since 2011, the civil war in Syria has inflicted unspeakable suffering on the population. Keeping hope alive is vitally important. Constant prayer is the first and greatest assistance the residents of

the Holy Lands seek. Also required is concrete economic aid. The Diocese of Wollongong is a strong supporter of the Good Friday Holy Land appeal with over \$47,000 donated last year. In a letter to Bishop Peter Ingham, Fr Carl Schafer OFM, Commissary of the Holy Land, Australia, wrote, "The situation impresses upon all of us that there is an absolute and urgent need to support our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land who continue their pastoral service to the poor, the needy, refugees and asylum-seekers, people of all ages and religions hit by the horrors of war ...

"Your support is a meaningful sign of the spiritual link which unites all Christians to Jerusalem and to the land of Jesus". ■

## The unsung heroes of our parishes

BY FR RON D PETERS

Our Church has flourished for centuries because of the generosity of so many women and men that have worked tirelessly “behind-the-scenes” on our many liturgies and parish events.

Our volunteers are the unsung heroes of our parishes who give of their time, talent, and resources in so many different ways. The list of generous and faithful parishioners who build the life of the Church is an extremely long one.

The sacristans who keep our churches clean, those who arrange the flowers, the ushers who meet and greet, those who maintain the church grounds and turn up to do the odd jobs that need doing, those who come to cut the palms for Palm Sunday, those who make the PowerPoint presentations for Sunday Mass, the musicians and singers who spend time rehearsing every week, the money-counters, prayer group leaders, and the list goes on.

Our churches rely heavily on the goodwill of our parishioners. Every time we celebrate Mass or participate in a church events, we need to adopt an “attitude of gratitude” for those who have worked behind-the-scenes. This is the stewardship which is the foundation of a vibrant church community.

As we pay tribute to all our volunteers, we especially remember the wonderful Mary Greco, of whom Jude Hennessy wrote so passionately about on page 15 of this edition of Journey. Mary, a resident and parishioner of Holy Family Parish, Ulladulla, had made the Lumen Christi Parishes in Wollongong her second home. She would spend half the week in Ulladulla and the remainder of the week in our community.



**Mary was a dedicated catechist at Fairy Meadow where she taught the children a simple love for God and his Blessed Mother. Praying was a special feature of her classes. Mary was often busy creating new resources for the children.**

Mary was a dedicated catechist at Fairy Meadow where she taught the children a simple love for God and his Blessed Mother. Praying was a special feature of her classes. Mary was often busy creating new resources for the children.

She was also a reliable volunteer at the Cathedral, doing all those little jobs ensuring that the church was cleaned and looked its best. Mary was well-known for making and laundering the various cloths for the altars, and albs and vestments for many priests. At a time when people are so busy with various commitments, Mary showed that volunteering – doing the simple behind-the-scenes jobs – is a worthwhile way of contributing to the life of the community. Thank you, Mary, for the great contribution to the life of our pastoral region. Mary was a great steward in every sense of the word. *Rest in Peace.* ■

*Fr Ron D Peters Adm is the Dean of the Cathedral & Administrator of Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong*



## Sr Joan Goodwin RSJ celebrates 60 years of love and service

BY LISA METCALFE

On Sunday 12 February 2017, St Francis Xavier Cathedral hosted a Diamond Jubilee Mass celebrating Sr Joan Goodwin RSJ's 60 years of dedication, love, and service to educating children.

The Mass commenced with a warm and rousing welcome from Sr Margaret Paton RSJ inviting the congregation to a full and active participation in the liturgy. The Cathedral was filled with Sr Joan's friends and colleagues, many of whom have been catechists working under her guidance and Level One CCD training courses in the Diocese.

During her time as a Sister of St Joseph, Sr Joan has held many roles, including, Director of CCD in the Diocese of Broken Bay, teacher, catechist, and creator of catechist programs suitable for all abilities in the Diocese.

Watching Sr Joan in action at the Para Meadows School for students with special needs and complex disabilities, or breaking open the Word at children's liturgy at her parish of the Immaculate Conception, Unanderra, is an amazing sight that belies her age – a demonstration of her conviction that the love of Jesus Christ is a message that must be shared with everyone. ■

*Lisa Metcalfe is the CCD Support Officer, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Diocese of Wollongong*

## Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

Bishop Peter Ingham welcomes the religious sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who have recently taken-up residence in the parish of Mary Mother of the Church, Macquarie Fields.



## Clergy appointments and retirements

### Ordination to the Diaconate

Deacon Victor Vincent, Corpus Christi College Seminary, Melbourne

### Parish Priest appointments

Fr Richard Green OSPPE  
St Paul's Parish, Moss Vale

Fr Michael Healy  
St Thomas More Parish, Ruse

Fr John Ho, St John the Evangelist Parish, Campbelltown

Fr Martin Mai OFM Conv  
St Francis of Assisi Parish, Warrawong, and St Mary's Parish, Berkeley

### Assistant Priest appointment

Fr Joseph Dondeti SVD, Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Macquarie Fields

### Administrator appointments

Fr Mark De Battista  
St Anthony's Parish, Picton-Tahmoor

Fr Bernard Gordon  
St Aloysius Parish, The Oaks

### Deacon appointment

Deacon Sam Gennaoui (Deacon of the Melkite Catholic Eparchy), St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park

### Other Appointment

Fr Damian Mosakowski OSPPE  
Prior and Rector, Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, Penrose Park

### Retirements

Fr Rick McCann  
St Aloysius Parish, The Oaks

Fr Emmanuel Gatt OFM Conv  
St Francis of Assisi Parish, Warrawong, and St Mary's Parish, Berkeley

Fr Hugh Dowdell, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Rosemeadow

## Fr Michael Healy PP



There have been a number of clergy appointments and retirements so far in 2017.

Parishioners of St Thomas More Parish, Ruse, have been very blessed with supply priests for the past 12 months. However, their prayers were answered on Sunday 12 March when Bishop Peter Ingham formally installed Fr Michael Healy as their new parish priest.



# Getting Involved

There are many ways that you can enable the mission and vision of your Diocese.

One way is to consider a gift to one of the following funds. A gift that will *teach, serve, help* and *heal*. Your generosity is very much appreciated. Gifts can be made online at [www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au) or via the form below:



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
WOLLONGONG

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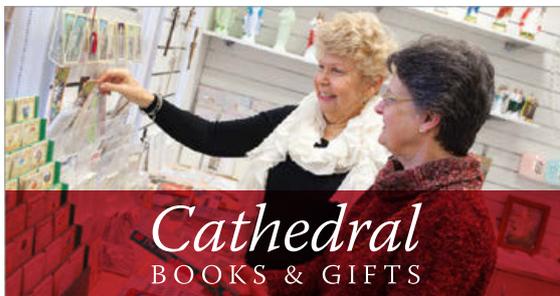
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PO Box 1239 Wollongong NSW 2500 **or email to** [giving@dow.org.au](mailto:giving@dow.org.au)

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# USEFUL CONTACTS

## Been away from Church?

Please contact your local parish or phone (02) 4222 2400

*May you experience welcome, support and understanding.*

## Looking for Catholic Resources?

### Cathedral Books and Gift Shop

(02) 4222 2484

38 Harbour St Wollongong  
(entry via Crown St)

### Diocesan Ministry Resource Centre

*Books, DVDs and more for borrowing*

Xavier Centre

(02) 4222 2481

38 Harbour St Wollongong  
(entry via Crown St)

### CCD Resource Centre

(02) 4640 8550

Micah House

35a Cordeaux Street, Campbelltown

## Office of Renewal and Evangelisation

Faith formation, liturgy, youth ministry, CCD, planning & outreach  
[jude.hennessy@dow.org.au](mailto:jude.hennessy@dow.org.au)  
or (02) 4222 2407

## Vocations Support

General information can be found at:  
[catholicozvocations.org.au](http://catholicozvocations.org.au)  
For enquiries contact: (02) 4222 2400

## Marriage Tribunal

Support for those divorced, remarried or seeking to remarry: (02) 4222 2409

## Needing Help?

CatholicCare Wollongong provides a range of services: (02) 4227 1122

## Mass Times, Churches and Upcoming Events

[www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au)  
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### CONTACT FOR DETAILED ITINERARY

Fr Graham Schmitzer PP

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CHATEAUX OF LOIRE VALLEY



ANZAC DAY AT VILLERS-BRETONNEUX



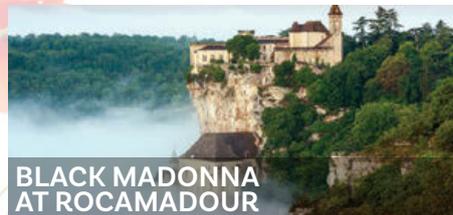
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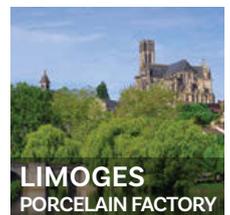
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[Home](#) [Contents](#) [Car](#) [Personal Accident](#) [Travel](#) [Landlord](#) [Caravan](#)



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