



TOGETHER

In the Diocese of

Wagga Wagga

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FREE

- April 2018 -

inside

FATHER LU'S
ORDINATION
CEREMONY



p.4

ACROSS OUR
DIOCESE
SCHOOLS



p.12

CATHECHESIS
OF THE GOOD
SHEPHERD



p.20



Lest we forget

More images on page 3...

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Making the Church the home and the school of communion

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Apostolic Administrator
of the Wagga Wagga Diocese



I continue the pastoral reflections on the upcoming Australian Plenary Council 2020/21 that I began in the March edition of Together.

Having established that the journey to the Plenary Council of 2020/2021 is marked by a pilgrimage of conversion, we need to then remind ourselves that we do this as Catholics.

St John Paul II, in one of his wonderful documents at the turn of our new millennium, reflected that the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning is precisely this “to make the Church the home and the school of communion.” (Novo Millennio Ineunte, 2001, n.43)

Reflecting on this key term of promoting a spirituality of communion, Pope Francis comments:

“The pastoral journey of the local community has as an essential reference point the pastoral plan of the diocese, which is to be placed before the programmes of the associations, movements and any particular group. This pastoral unity, of everyone around the bishop, will create unity in the Church.”

Catholics have a particular theological understanding of this term “pastoral plan”.

For example, the documents of the Vatican II Council make it quite clear that our Church has both a hierarchical and a collegial structure. It is this living experience of communion – of all of the baptised working in the service of the Kingdom of God among us – that is essential.

Following from this is the understanding that we all have equal dignity but we serve in different tasks. The Lay Faithful direct the entire world towards the Kingdom of God. The Clergy specifically serve in the governance, teaching and sanctification of the Church. Even in this they are assisted by the Lay Faithful. The Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, serve under the leadership of the Pope, and become signs of unity and communion of their entire diocese. We are all part of this school of communion.

This is different from viewing the Church purely from the prism of a parliamentary democracy. The principle in a democracy rests on the understanding that all power comes from the people. In the Church, however, all power comes from Christ. It is the power of the Holy Spirit to serve.

There are many wonderful examples in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

over the years of the practical living out of this ecclesial vision of communion and service.

For example, there have been several attempts in the Archdiocese to articulate a pastoral plan for herself. In more recent years, diocesan-wide and regional deanery assemblies have moved towards a vision of encouraging our people in the crucial areas of married and family life. So many of our diocesan agencies give incredible service in this area. This pastoral plan needs further development.

Diocesan Pastoral Councils have also been created to flesh out pastoral plans over the years. These have lapsed over the years. They need to be re-freshed in a manner that involves as many as possible. Similar observations could be said too about a new Diocesan Commission for Women.

In this Year of Youth, our common vision too must be focussed on the place of youth in the Archdiocese. Surprising to some, this is a very dynamic pastoral area in the Archdiocese at present. Let us encourage it together.

These and other possible examples, especially responding to the incredible thirst for prayer among so many, the pastoral care and dynamic contribution of our migrants and refugees, care for the poor and marginalised, and the welcome of new Catholics via the RCIA, ought be areas of our communion in listening and practical charity to ensure that all find a “home” in our Archdiocese.

Our pilgrimage to the national Plenary Assembly in 2020/21 offers us increased Gospel urgency to focus on these vital pastoral areas.

(In the next edition of Together I will continue on these reflections in preparations for the Plenary Assembly).

God bless us all in the exciting times ahead.



“We must therefore make the Church the home and the school of communion.”

Blessed Pope John Paul II
Novo Millennio Ineunte, 2001, n.43

Prayer Intention for April...

Pray with Pope Francis

Universal: For Those who have Responsibility in Economic Matters

That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.



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Scripture

Revelation 12:7-10 “His angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have salvation and power come, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Anointed.’”

Visit this link to hear the Pope deliver his April prayer:
<http://popesprayerusa.net/2018/04/06/april-pope-video-responsibility-economic-matters/>

TOGETHER

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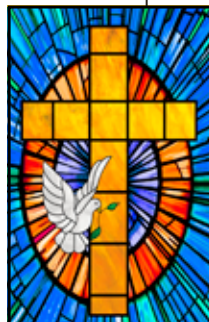
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Prayer for the election of a Bishop

O God, eternal shepherd, who govern Your flock with unfailing care, grant in Your

boundless fatherly love a Bishop for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga who will please You by his holiness and to us show watchful care. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

'Tireless worker' Australian nun Sr Patricia Fox released but facing possible deportation

by Mark Bowling Originally published in the Catholic Leader



A group of religious Sisters embrace Australian missionary nun after her release by Philippines authority following her arrest on April 16.
Photo: UCANews/Mark Saludes.



Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo praying over Sister Patricia Fox in the immigration bureau detention in Manila.

A 71-year-old Australian missionary nun has been released by Philippines authorities after a day in detention, but still faces possible deportation.

Bureau of Immigration agents arrested Sr Patricia Fox, mother superior of the Our Lady of Sion congregation in the Philippines, on April 16 because she was deemed an "undesirable alien" for joining "political activities and anti-government demonstrations".

Sr Fox was released and returned to her convent in Quezon City a day later. However the bureau still holds the nun's passport as part of an ongoing investigation to

determine if deportation charges should be filed against her.

Under the immigration law, foreigners are barred from joining mass actions or political activity as the act amounts to violating the conditions of their stay in the country.

Sr Fox admitted to BI officials she had joined demonstrations in solidarity with peasant groups but "not anti-government rallies".

"She was shown pictures of herself joining rallies and present in fact-finding and mercy missions among the indigenous and plundered ecological environment," the congregation's region co-leader Sr Mary Barbuto

said from Melbourne.

"She is certainly not out of the woods yet. They (BI officials) will certainly interview her further.

"They were using the word deportation when they first talked to her. But we just don't know at this point."

Sr Fox co-founded the Our Lady of Sion congregation in the Philippines in 1990. Much of her work since has been helping impoverished farmers and indigenous peoples.

She recently joined an international fact-finding and solidarity mission investigating alleged rights abuses in Mindanao, almost a year after President

Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law on the southern island.

Human rights advocates and Church leaders including Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo raised the alarm over Sr Fox's arrest.

Bishop Pabillo visited Sr Fox after she was taken for questioning, and said her arrest could be part of a crackdown against government critics.

"There's no martial law yet but they are already going after people who oppose them," he said.

Sr Barbuto described Sr Fox as "a tireless worker amongst the poor and marginalised people of



Sister Patricia Fox

the Philippines".

"She (Sr Fox) is a frail, little old lady, but she can certainly make her presence felt," Sr Barbuto said.

Anzac Mass at St Michael's Cathedral



Photography by Steven Vella



Father Paul Lu becomes Wagga's Newest Priest



Image 1 and 2: Scenes on the sanctuary during Father Paul's First Mass.

Image 3: Paul waits with his sisters, Lucy and Anna, for the call to 'step forward'.

Image 4: Paul promises obedience to his bishop.

Image 5: The candidate prostrates while the congregation prays for him.

Image 6: Bishop Kennedy silently lays hands on Paul.

Image 7: The Prayer of Consecration.

Image 8: The newly ordained Father Paul Lu is clothed in priestly vestments.

The ordination to the Priesthood of Father Paul Phu Van Lu at St Michael's Cathedral on Friday, 13th April was a joyous and grace filled occasion.

The ordaining bishop was Bishop Michael Kennedy of Armidale, formally a priest of the Wagga Wagga diocese, and a native of the Wagga district. Many Vietnamese priests and laity were there to share the joy with their fellow countryman. Most of the priests of the Wagga diocese, other priests who have known Paul, and a large number of people from the Wagga parishes who have got to know

Paul's friendly personality were also there to pray for him and support him.

As usual, the Liturgy of the Ordination Mass was organised by the staff and students of Vianney College, who provided both servers and singers, Mr John Sloan was in charge of the choir and the Wagga Serrans provided practical support with regard to the refreshments afterwards.

Paul was born in Vietnam, one of seven children. Two of his sisters are nuns and his uncle is Father Joseph Nguyen, currently working in the parish of Camden in

continued on page 5...





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the Wollongong diocese. Paul recalls with gratitude the devout Catholic faith instilled into his family by his parents and it was a source of sorrow for him that his parents were not granted a visa to join him in Australia for his ordination.

Paul completed primary and secondary studies in Vietnam where he also completed University degrees and began his study of Philosophy in preparation for priestly formation.

He was accepted as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 2010 but in 2014 transferred to Wagga and to Vianney College. He was ordained a deacon on 20th August 2016 by Bishop Gerard Hanna and after completing his Theological Studies at Vianney College has been part of the Pastoral Team at St Michael's Cathedral. He will remain at the Cathedral Parish pending an appointment in the near future.

Father Paul Lu celebrated his first Mass, a Mass of thanksgiving, at St Michael's Cathedral on Saturday, 14th April in the presence of many of his fellow priests and a large congregation. Paul's uncle, Father Joseph Nguyen preached and several choirs, including some exclusively of Vietnamese, added to the multicultural flavour of the celebration. "Brunch" was later served to all guests in the grounds of St Joseph's School.

Image 9: Father Lu leaves the Cathedral amid scenes of joy.

Image 10: Father Lu takes his place among the priests with Father Peter Thompson and Archbishop Carroll.

Image 11: Father Paul Lu stands beside Bishop Kennedy.

Image 12: The Concelebrated Mass following the Ordination ceremony.

Image 13: Following the First Mass, Father Paul poses with the full body of Vianney Seminarians for this commemorative photograph. Father Paul Lu is the 50th priest to come from Vianney College.



Celebratory images above from top left:

A: Visiting friends of Father Paul.

B: Father Lu with immediate family before cutting the ordination cake.

C: Barbara Parnell with Father Michael Gallacher.

D: Father Paul with Robert and Gloria Vella.

E: Guests from Melbourne.



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The Democratic Republic of the Congo: The people are well and truly on the Via Dolorosa

Since the mid-1990s, entire areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and particularly the eastern parts of the country, have been caught up in a never-ending nightmare: the people are well and truly on the Via Dolorosa! Just like Jesus on the Cross, the deeply devout people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have every reason to call out to God in desperation: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Among other groups, a Muslim guerrilla organisation that originated in Uganda and goes by the name of ADF-Nalu (Allied Democratic Forces) is responsible for the massacres. The rebels have been in the diocese since 1995. The contact person further reported that “analyses have shown that the manner in which the killings are being carried out is similar to that used during the Rwandan genocide in 1994.” This has convinced a number of observers

“A climate of terror reigns in the diocese, which is maintained by the armed groups that have moved into the region since 1995.” The source emphasised that the situation is even worse in a number of parishes that are located in the region that journalists call the “triangle of death”.

“Yes, in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one can really speak of a Via Dolorosa,” a contact person from the diocese of Butembo-Beni, who remains anonymous out of safety concerns, said to *Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)*. “A climate of terror reigns in the diocese, which is maintained by the armed groups that have moved into the region since 1995.” The source emphasised that the situation is even worse in a number of parishes that are located in the region that journalists call the “triangle of death”. This concerns four parishes, “namely Eringeti, Mbau, Oicha and Buisegha in the commune of Beni. The parishes Kipese, Kagheri, Bingi and Luofu are located in the territory of Lubero. A number of residents of these parishes have spent more than twenty years constantly fleeing from one place to the next!”

The cause of this never-ending nightmare is the presence of rebel groups that have been slaughtering the population since 1995. “These massacres are taking place in the northern parts of the diocese of Butembo-Beni, or, to be more precise, in the commune of Beni as well as the environs of the city of Beni,” the source told ACN. “These massacres have now spread to the neighbouring province of Ituri, which is located in the northern part of our province of North Kivu.”

that a “Rwandan mastermind” could be behind the massacres that have been terrorizing the people in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for more than 25 years.

“These villains use machetes and axes to mercilessly kill young and old people, women and children,” the informant said.

He also mentioned, “a project for Balkanization” that is being promoted by unknown forces with the goal of literally creating a “Tutsiland” that would reach “over our entire province of North Kivu, across South Kivu and across the province of Ituri. These would then join Rwanda. That is the reason why the peaceful population is being massacred: to obliterate all traces of the indigenous peoples who are cultivating the land. This is what has turned these populations into a flood of refugees. We don’t know at which level the complicity [of the different state agencies] is happening – on a regional, national or even international level,” the informant continued.

He also explained that the exploitation of natural resources and the control over these riches as well as “greed” also play a role in these massacres and have led thousands upon thousands of people to flee. According to estimates provided by Doctors without Borders, since December 2017, 50,000 people



have crossed Lake Albert, a large lake in Ituri province, to escape the massacres, the raping of the women, children and old people and the destruction of their villages. They are finding shelter in Uganda on the other side of the lake.

How is it possible to proclaim the Gospel here?

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Church continues to be one of the strongest moral and social powers. “Our church in Butembo-Beni is working on sensitising the people so that the refugees are taken in by families,” the contact person explained. “The diocese has called for donations of money and goods (food, clothing, equipment) several times. However, the never-ending war has so impoverished the people that almost nothing is collected anymore in response to these calls for donations.”

The Church remains strong in spite of the atmosphere of terror and persecution under which it is suffering. The source explained that the passage in the Gospels “Love your enemies and pray for them which persecute you” (Mt. 5:44) helps the people keep going. He also made reference

to a well-known biblical figure: Job. “We have taken as an example the tenacity and the witness in suffering as well as the perseverance and patience of Job.”

During Holy Week, ACN specifically calls for prayers for the inhabitants of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as for the Church that works for the Congolese people and is being persecuted for this reason. Since 2015, the international

Catholic pastoral charity Aid to the Church in Need has been supporting 823 projects with over 11 million euros.



Directly under the Holy See, Aid to the Church in Need supports the faithful wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. ACN is a Catholic charity – helping to bring Christ to the world through prayer, information and action. The charity undertakes thousands of projects every year including providing transport for clergy and lay Church workers, construction of church buildings, funding for priests and nuns and help to train seminarians. Since the initiative’s launch in 1979, Aid to the Church in Need’s Child’s Bible – God Speaks to his Children has been translated into 172 languages and 50

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For more information or to make a donation to help the work of Aid to the Church in Need, please contact the Australian office of ACN on (02) 9679-1929. e-mail: info@aidtochurch.org or write to Aid to the Church in Need PO Box 7246 Baulkham Hills NSW 2153.

Online donations can be made at www.aidtochurch.org/together

An excellent spiritual inspiration has become the upcoming Oz Rosary #53



On Sunday 13th May, 2018, the final day of the Centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, throughout Australia there is the initiative whereby states, cities, rural areas and families will celebrate the recitation of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Holy Mother asked this of us during the apparitions of Fatima and required this of the children, Sr Lucia and Saints Francesco and Jacinta.

On 13 July 1917, Our Lady of Fatima said: "Pray the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace in the world . . . for she alone can save it." Jacinta, one of the seers in Fatima, said shortly before her death: "God has placed peace in her hands, and it is from the Immaculate Heart that men must ask it." Mary said to the children at Fatima that the Rosary would work miracles in their lives.

The public recitation of the Holy Rosary and personal consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary are always praiseworthy and fruitful. Like various Rosary crusades and different consecrations over the last century, the praying of the Rosary and imploring the aid of our holy Mother not only reminds us of the great miracle associated with the Fatima message but also encourages us in our own personal and familial problems.

Numerous Rosary rallies and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary took place on local, state and national levels throughout the world during 2017, the centenary year of Our Lady's Apparitions in Fatima. In October last year, 2017 on the Feast of Our Lady of Victory, later to be known as Our Lady of the Rosary, well over one million lay people gathered in Poland around the Polish borders to pray the Rosary for the protection of their country and to intercede for their young people. This event was on October 7, 2017, and called "Różaniec Dogranic" (Rosary on the Border).

Ireland then followed with well over thirty thousand lay people gathering at 53 venues around the country, many of them on the coastal beaches and hills overlooking the ocean. The number 53 is a reminder that there are 53 Hail Marys in the Rosary.

After Ireland, Italy's coastal parishes organised the Rosary. Organisers in England had over 60 groups volunteering to gather and pray on beaches, cliffs and in public places around the entire coast of the U.K. Similar efforts were realised with a "Rosary on the Coast for Faith, Life and Peace in the British Isles" throughout the United Kingdom during late

and have a 'cuppa' afterwards. Country people from isolated properties are meeting with others on their farms to join in. One group of young people are in the process of organising their prayers on the Harbour Bridge, while other groups are in the process of coordinating prayer at mountains, parks, beaches and lookouts.

Wagga Wagga will hold its own OZ Rosary #53 on Sunday, May 13 at 3pm in Holy Trinity Church, Ashmont. It will be a Holy Hour with all 20 decades of the Rosary starting every 15 minutes, interspersed with hymns and finish with Benediction. Join in at any time or complete the hour. A free 100-page devotional book will be distributed with rosaries and Rosary cards.

April. France also organised its big Rosary event for April 29. Pope Francis has already given an Apostolic Blessing to this initiative, which is being called 'The Coast to Coast Rosary.'

On Sunday 13th May, Fatima day, Australia will hold its big national Rosary right around the country. A group of Sydney people under the patronage of Bishop David Cremin have been busy organising the event since November last year. Already many groups have registered on the Oz Rosary Facebook site to participate in this initiative. The Legion of Mary, Fatima, youth, prayer and Rosary groups are coming on board right across the nation to pray the Rosary for the protection of Australia, families and youth.

Major centres like Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Tasmania and Perth, all have multiple venues. St Mary's Cathedral in Perth has a Living Rosary with numerous young people participating. Darwin Catholics are meeting at Lee Point on the beach, as are the faithful in Coogee. One parish priest in Canberra is leading a gathering of people up to Black Mountain to pray for the city, while parishioners in Esperance in Western Australia are heading to the local lookout over the ocean with their local parish priest to pray. Another town in Western Australia, Manjimup, will see their congregation gather at the local church to pray the Rosary

From small venues like Wattle Flat and Black Springs to larger places like Gympie, Toowoomba, Cairns, Bathurst and Orange, people are meeting before and after regular Masses to pray their rosaries on Fatima Day. Schools and Pilgrimage Centres are also participating in the event. Some gatherings are having Rosary groups while others are considering launching a helium balloon Rosary.

Others are organising to say their rosaries before or after their parish Masses. Many are arranging to conduct their parish or family event. Currently, more than 106 parishes have registered to participate. A map and more information can be seen at ozRosary.wixsite.com/ozRosary53 Or view a video clip at christthepriestmedia.com/2746/OZ-Rosary-53/; log on to Oz Rosary#53 Facebook site or contact Jane Chifley on 0476 535 595.

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Oz Rosary #53

A virtual rosary around Australia
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John is a full time music missionary who travels throughout many parts of the world providing inspirational music and faith witness to all ages through concerts, workshops, retreats, missions, conferences, and worship. He is originally from Clarksburg, West Virginia, and now resides in Franklin, near Nashville, Tennessee. He is a graduate of Chicago Theological Union, West Virginia University and the U.S. Military School of Music, where he was a member of the U.S. Navy Band as lead vocalist.

His message is clear: There is hope, healing, and truth with the love of God. This message not only extends to churchgoers, but also to those in the world who have not been reached by a liturgical worship or Christian music experience.

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It's all about Community!

by Paul Jensen
Chief Executive Officer
Centacare South West

“It’s the economy, stupid” is the phrase popularised by James Carville, Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign strategist. Carville’s crafting of Clinton’s election campaign around the exclusive focus on the economy at a time of recession was credited as the key factor in Clinton’s successful 1992 presidential campaign against sitting president George H. W. Bush.

While the economy is the key platform for wealth creation and redistribution, I would argue that, at heart, it is actually “all about the Community, stupid!”

The foundational importance of Community was reinforced recently when a dear friend gave me a copy of an August 2017 edition of the Tablet article that contained an interview with Jean Vanier entitled ‘Surprised by Joy’.

Vanier, a Canadian Catholic philosopher, theologian, and humanitarian is credited with founding in 1964 L’Arche, an international federation of communities spread over 37 countries, for people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them. Subsequently, in 1971, he

co-founded Faith and Light with Marie-Hélène Mathieu, which also works for people with developmental disabilities, their families, and friends in over 80 countries. Over the years, he has authored 30 books on religion, disability, normality, success, and tolerance. Vanier’s seminal text ‘Community and Growth’ had a profound impact on me in mid 1980s and was one of those books that set me on my vocational path.

In essence, the philosophy of ‘L’Arche’ and ‘Faith and Light’ is to place people with and without disabilities in Community with each other. What Vanier found was that when people with different abilities and from varying social backgrounds live together under the right conditions it is transformative. Instead of viewing others through the lens of intellectual and/or physical disability, people living in Community encounter in one another Christ and that which is fundamentally human without judgement. Consequently, L’Arche becomes a model for how we can live together as families and neighbourhoods. In fact, L’Arche is Gospel living in a nutshell.

The seismic shifts in disability funding and service provision under the NDIS promise much and there are also inherent

Instead of viewing others through the lens of intellectual and/or physical disability, people living in Community encounter in one another Christ and that which is fundamentally human without judgement.

risks ... namely to consistent service provision and Community. When disability funding is clustered around the individual, we can forget that the most transformative disability intervention – indeed any psychosocial intervention – is reconnection with Community; namely the individual’s family, peers, friends and neighbourhood.

Consequently, Centacare take account of the Community and systems within which an individual lives in service design and delivery. Centacare’s fourth and last Strategic Direction is ‘Building Community’. For example, when an individual with an NDIS funding package comes to Centacare, staff not only respect and support the individual client to achieve their desired goals but their families and/or carers as well.

Vanier understood the importance of Community to provide the Gospel human platforms for transformation. Vanier, a devout Catholic, understood the importance of a universal welcome of people of all religions and none. He got it right when he writes “My feet are rooted in my Catholic faith, but my arms are wide open;” It is time to strengthen the bonds that enhance human relationships across categories that often divide such disability, ethnicity and gender. Perhaps the Diocese could consider a L’Arche type approach, funded under the NDIS, here in the Riverina?

On a personal note, thank you to people across the Diocese of Wagga Wagga for offering me Community over my time as CEO Centacare South West NSW. It has been a rich and transformative experience. Shortly I will be moving to Brisbane to support my wife and aging and infirmed parents – a different experience of Community.

As I remember my time in the Wagga Wagga Diocese I will join with the sentiment expressed by St. Paul in Philippians 1:3 ‘Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God’



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Catholic sector welcomes report on regional, rural and remote education



The National Catholic Education Commission welcomes the report of the Independent review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education undertaken by Dr John Halsey, Emeritus Professor, Flinders University.

The NCEC’s acting executive director Ray Collins said the report took into account the views of key stakeholders including submissions from the Catholic sector.

“It is a thorough report which was informed by an extensive literature review and 340 submissions including the NCEC and other Catholic education authorities,” said Mr Collins.

“Professor Halsey and his team also visited many regional rural and remote schools and education providers across the length and breadth of Australia and it is clear from the recommendations that the needs of these communities resonated with the team,” he said.

“I was particularly impressed

by the report’s identification of the needs of RRR schools in relation to the provision of teachers in these schools, the quality of the learning experiences for students, the importance of experienced and creative leadership and the important links between schools and their communities.”

Mr Collins said it was good to see that the difficulties young people face in accessing University and vocational education providers far from their homes was clearly addressed in the report.

“A significant feature of the

report is the identification of initiatives that clearly address the issues raised, including the Diocese of Cairns’ innovative approach to encouraging students from Brisbane to consider teaching in far North Queensland schools, and the Diocese of Wagga Wagga’s weekly boarding program allowing students to return to their home communities each weekend, retaining their connections with families and their local communities,” he said.

“The nine themes identified by Professor Halsey and his

team ensure that the range of concerns for Regional, Rural and Remote communities are identified and, most importantly, a large number of recommendations and actions are put forward for governments and education authorities to consider,” Mr Collins said.

Mr Collins commended the government for undertaking the independent review and said the “challenge is now for governments and education authorities to address the recommendations”.

Cut for cancer



Crowds gathered at a centred stage at Marian Catholic College, with unsettled feelings eager to see the Cut for Cancer campaign featuring James Moore and Alexander Mulrooney Castellano. The pair had grown their luscious locks for over two years and made the noble decision to snip their precious hair for a worthy cause. A whopping \$3320 has been raised so far due to the tremendous generosity of friends, family and the Marian community, truly demonstrating Marian’s desire

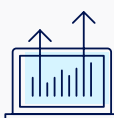
to assist fundraising efforts and rewarding the effort of the two men. The funds are going to be donated to The Australian Cancer Research Foundation to allow continued research to expose cures for ruthless cancers. The Foundation was part of one of the Year 12’s chosen charities and is a worthy charity to support. The lunch time activity consisted of a student raffle with the winners cutting off a section of hair, as well as an auction to bid on who shaves the heads of the two volunteers. Thanks to Kara Howard from La Perla Salon Griffith, the two men ended up with stylish shaved heads. **This was a successful fundraiser for Year 12 which shows the true community spirit within Griffith.**



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PROJECT COMPASSION

FOR A JUST FUTURE

The Caritas network supports recovery after PNG earthquake

Caritas Australia with its partners on the ground is responding to the impact of a 7.5 magnitude earthquake which has killed 150 people and has left, according to the UN, 270,000 people including 125,000 children, in need of emergency aid.

Caritas is providing urgent shelter and health support, especially in the form of clean water, sanitation and hygiene support (WASH) as well as trauma counselling.

An outbreak of dengue fever is of particular concern for the local population as are cases of diarrhoea and dysentery. Access to clean water, food and medical resources is still strained and tribal conflict has been exacerbated by these stresses. As a result the numbers of displaced peoples are on the rise and the Papua New Guinean military and security personnel have moved in to protect a number of state owned assets including a hospital in Hela province.

“The Caritas network is working alongside church partners to respond. At the moment some agencies have suspended response efforts due to the escalating conflict. However, the churches are continuing to provide support despite the ongoing challenges. This highlights the importance of the church network in the response,” said Milton Tyotam Kwaipo, Caritas Australia’s Disaster Response and Management Officer, Papua New Guinea.

Caritas is additionally investing in rebuilding, with efforts already underway to rebuild schools, hospitals and houses throughout the Central Highlands Region.

Caritas Australia is grateful for the AUD \$1.5 million support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the NZ \$900 000 support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

Caritas Australia is supporting the relief effort in Papua New Guinea through the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) consortium. CAN DO comprises Act for Peace, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency Australia,



Locals affected by the earthquake in PNG’s Central Highlands. Photo: Milton Tyotam Kwaipo

Anglican Board of Mission, Anglican Overseas Aid, the Australian Lutheran World Service, Transform Aid International (Baptist World Aid Australia), UnitingWorld, and Caritas Australia.

Responding church agencies include UnitingWorld, Caritas Australia and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Through the PNG Church partners, Caritas Australia has capacity to reach and support more people affected by the earthquake.

If you would like to assist the people of Papua New Guinea, you can donate to the Caritas Australia

Pacific Emergency Appeal by calling 1800 024 413 or by visiting www.caritas.org.au/pacific-appeal





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TOGETHER April 2018

THEME: **What is our Catholic identity?**

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Things to do...

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Lawn Bowls
Fishing
Golf Club
Heritage Walks
Juru Walking Trail

and see...

Artspace Gallery - Local Art Gallery
Ashworths - Treasures of the Earth Rock Display & Jewellery
Ayr Nature Display - Australian zoology in an artistic display
Bi-centennial Fountain
Burdekin Bridge "Silver Link"
Burdekin Falls Dam
Burdekin Library
Burdekin Machinery Preservationists Display
Burdekin Prawn Farm
Burdekin Theatre
Charlie's Hill - WWII historic site
Cane Cutters - Giant Sculptures
Gubulla Munda - Giant Snake Sculpture
Brandon Heritage Precinct - Machinery Preservation and Historical Display
Mutchings Lagoon
Lilliesmere Lagoon Wetlands
Lions Diorama
Living Lagoon Sculptures
Lynch's Beach, Alva
Mt Inkerman Lookout
Mt Kelly Lookout
Murals
and more....

Conference Schedule

Friday	14	Opening Mass 5.30pm Meet & Greet 6.30pm @ Burdekin Theatre Foyer
Saturday	15	Conference Saturday Evening Formal Dinner
Sunday	16	Conference Sunday Evening Closing Mass & BBQ
Monday	17	Touring the Burdekin district

Transfers available Friday from Airport to Ayr

ONLINE REGISTRATIONS AVAILABLE EARLY APRIL 2018

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Catholic Women's League State of Queensland

'The gap between rich and poor is widening'

by John McLaurin
Editor Catholic Voice

Archbishop Christopher Prowse will take part in this year's St Vincent de Paul CEO Sleepout.

He will join with hundreds of others under the stars at the Garden of Australia Dreams at the National Museum of Australia on the night of Thursday June 21, to help to raise funds to tackle the ever-growing problem of homelessness.

'Vinnies' Canberra are holding an official launch for the Sleepout at the same venue beginning at 11am on Wednesday, April 18.

The National Museum, which is in Acton, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, hosted Canberra's first CEO Sleepout in 2010.

Archbishop Prowse said he is looking forward to his involvement.



"My prayer is the hope that it will highlight the huge problem of homelessness in our country and lead to practical assistance for the needy," he said.

Bernie Fehon, the founder of the sleep-out 12 years ago, said every year participants take a step out of their comfort zone to a part of the solution and he is encouraging as many as possible to get involved either by donating money or by sleeping out themselves.

"Since it began, the

Sleepout has raised more

than \$34 million," he said. "Last year alone, it gave assistance to almost two million people, and provided over one-and-a-half million meals, but there's so much more to do."

Those individuals and businesses who would like to make a donation or who would like for their CEO to take part are asked to register at www.ceosleepout.org.au/fundraisers/christopher-prowse/canberra

Renewal Day

'Discovering Who I Am In Christ'

Healing of our Self-esteem

Presented by Maree Sobolewski

Saturday May - 12th - 2018

St Brendan's Parish, Shepparton
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Please bring a shared lunch and afternoon tea.
Tea & Coffee provided
Donation kindly appreciated for the day



MEDITATION DAY

An Introduction to CENTERING PRAYER

Saturday 12 May, 9.30am-3.30pm

Nagle Room, ErinEarth, Kildare Ave, Wagga Wagga

For anyone interested in:

- the history of western contemplative prayer
- current practice of centering prayer
- regular meditation practice

"Centering Prayer is simply a wordless, trusting opening of self to the Divine Presence -- listening to God..." (Cynthia Bourgeault)

Morning tea and 'all day' tea, coffee, water available.
BYO Lunch

Cost: Donation only

For further information contact: Sr Carmel Wallis: email: carmel.wallis@preswagga.org
<http://www.erinearth.org.au/>

Participation in this activity will contribute 6 hours towards currency of accreditation to Work, Teach, Lead in Catholic Education. There will be a CSO sign on sheet available. Please sign on if you attend.

Shared thoughts from the 2017 Centering Prayer group at ErinEarth:

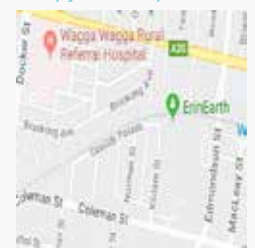
"Contemplative prayer- a new lifeline for me. While I enjoy praying alone, & derive benefits I have not experienced before such as peace, love, and forgiveness, I find gathering with others to pray in silence seems to strengthen this...the mystery of silence energises me to be faithful to my daily practice."

"... has given me a peacefulness that has permeated my life. I am very grateful".

"A gentle way to sit quietly, be open to God and learn so much about traditions with a supportive group."

"... I have a new energy and urgency to pray each day as it stimulates me to want more and be calm."

"I sit quietly, constantly bringing my wandering mind back to a place of 'no thought'. After this meditative time, I am calmer, refreshed and ready for the day."



St Francis De Sales Regional College, Leeton



Our schools across the Diocese celebrated Harmony Day on March 21. Harmony Day and the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Day is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, united by a set of core Australian values.



Congratulations are extended to Year 11 student Tyler Patten who has been awarded first place in the youth section of the annual Leeton Art Society competition. Tyler presented an impressive series of 4 drawings of athletes in action. Congratulations too are extended to Danielle Terblanche who gained 2nd place with her entry.




We hope all our students and their families had a great two week break.



Term 1 has been very busy with the Easter Hat Parade, Kinder Information morning, Stage 2 fundraisers, Athletics training, Dance with Miss Dunn, Fairy Tale morning and Mindful Student of the Term assembly.


Sacred Heart Primary, Koorringal



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Friday 29th June - 7.30 pm
Saturday 30th June - 2.00 pm, 7.30 pm

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Congratulations to Koby Jones who is the 2018 Australian Billy Cart Champion 9yrs and under. Check out the very impressive "All Schools Challenge" Trophy and the fantastic Billy Cart!

St Patrick's Parish School, Albury

Progress is being made on the transformation of the new library. Note the bright colours applied to the pillars and walls.



St Mary's Primary, Yoogali

On April 11 the year 5 students visited Jerilderie to walk the Ned Kelly touring track. They were accompanied by our tour guide, Gaila, who was a wonderful wealth of knowledge. The students enjoyed visiting the historic sites and learning more about the fascinating, folklore character that was Ned Kelly.



St Patrick's School, Holbrook

On April 11 school Principal Mrs Marie Cameron welcomed to St Patrick's Holbrook Mr Mark MacLean - Acting Director of Schools and Mr Chris Cotter Assistant Director - Catholic Life and Mission. We were pleased to share some of the great things happening in our classrooms with them.



In Term 1, K/1/2 have been designing and making animal enclosures during their Science time. Here are some pictures of their great teamwork in action.



St Joseph's School, Culcairn

Holy Spirit School, Lavington

On April 5th Holy Spirit School had their school athletics carnival which was held in glorious conditions. Well done to all the competitors and a massive thanks to all parents, teachers and other volunteers who made the day so special. Special mention must go to Mr Sanson for organising the carnival. Congratulations must go to the McRae House who won the carnival.



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After Hours Tour - 4:00 pm & 5:30 pm

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14 VIRTUE MINISTRY

Tribute to
feminine
genius

by Emily Shaw
Virtue Ministry graphic
designer and writer



This is a tribute article to all the women out there, especially those who have embraced what it means to have and behold femininity in all its genius. We're not just talking women who are wives and mothers who raise children of their own, we're also talking those who care for children spiritual or otherwise, those who mentor people, those who teach and nourish, those who care for and support in all walks and states of life.

In a world that is keen to objectify women, or minimise their contribution as mothers in the home, it is easy to lose sight of the profound beauty of the feminine genius.

But just because the world is losing sight of the unique and complementary characteristics of women does not mean that we need to. And Mother's Day is the perfect time to reflect

on the women in our own lives who have been mothers, sisters, mentors and friends and to take the time out to appreciate the unique gifts and impact they have had in our own lives.

"Having moved a number of times," muses Stina Constantine, Founder and Managing Director of Virtue Ministry (VM), "and living away from my own family,

I've experienced this love from a variety of women; mums, mentors, sisters and friends."

"Women have a powerful way of intuitively knowing when something is off, and when you're surrounded by people who care, there is no hiding from it. Instead of using that against you, these women use it as an opportunity to shower you with love."

Women, it would seem, are capable of loving in a way that's very different.

Certainly, the writings of many in the Church argue the case for the beautiful maternal and nurturing traits that women possess, the gift of motherhood and their ability to perceive things intuitively on the emotional plane.

Mothers, in all their forms;

biological, foster, adoptive and spiritual, possess these qualities. Those very qualities that necessitate the very celebration of Mother's Day so as not to take them for granted.

Their sacrificial love is at times demanding and unrelenting, but crucial to our own development as a 'whole person'.

Even outside this sphere of maternity, women, suggests Constantine from her own experience, make significant impacts as mentors because of those heightened senses of empathy and emotional intuition as well as their quiet inner strength and wisdom.

"Those who have walked this path before, and are happy to walk the path with you; comforting at every turn that is

deflating, encouraging at every turn that is frightening, and joyful at every new discovery. This kindness is irreplaceable and helps us to grow into a holistic person uncovering all our potential. "

For a ministry that as all about helping young people uncover and maximise their potential, the role of mentor is vital and one that cannot be understated.

And so, on the second weekend of May we celebrate the gift of all those who 'mother' to us and recognise the feminine genius in all its beauty and potential.

In doing so, we see a willingness to accept love in all its forms; a virtue we would do well to emulate.



MAY VIRTUE
CHALLENGE:
*Receiving love
in all its forms*

GOALS
WRITE DOWN:
3 practical and realistic ways in which
you can grow in this virtue
as well as
3 obstacles you can foresee
to growing in this virtue

EVALUATE:
Check your progress every night and
see how you went and where you can
improve.

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partner or with us on our Facebook
page - we're doing this challenge too!


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TOGETHER April 2018

New ambulance the most vital delivery yet for Saint Luke's

It wasn't quite the delivery they are used to, but for Sr Mary Goretti and her small staff at St Luke Health Centre in Bujuni, it is one that will save hundreds of lives.

The maternal health centre, located three hours from Kampala, can finally celebrate the arrival of its long-awaited ambulance, which supporters across Australia helped to fund during last year's Catholic Mission Church Appeal.

Catholic Mission's supporters together raised nearly \$2 million for the appeal, which contributed towards critical staffing, infrastructure, and equipment upgrades for St Luke's, including the much-needed ambulance.

John Goonan, the Wagga Wagga Diocesan Director of Catholic Mission said "Our Diocese can hold its head very high and be very proud of this wonderful generous effort."

Lawrence Gigliotti, Catholic Mission's Programs Manager, said 'Our (Catholic Mission) supporters faithfully responded to the need there and they will be thrilled to hear that with the arrival of the ambulance and other life-saving equipment at St Luke's, mothers and their babies will be much safer.'

Due to the remoteness and economic situation of the small village in the central-west of the country, access to the health centre can be restricted and often dangerous. The Church Appeal last year told the story of local woman Evas, who lost her baby after riding for hours on the back of a motorbike while in labour. 'I think if we get a vehicle it will really help us to save the life of the mother



Sr Mary accepts delivery of the new ambulance

and the baby,' Sister Mary said at the time.

After a short customs delay, that vehicle has now arrived, much to the relief of Sister Mary and her staff. 'Finally, the ambulance has reached St Luke Health Centre,' she said. 'Thank you very much for your effort, and may God bless you abundantly.'

Along with the ambulance, St

Luke's received an ultrasound machine and a humidicrib, while key structural improvements are ongoing, including the expansion of the maternity ward.

The Wagga Wagga Diocese raised approximately \$101,700 toward the appeal. \$67,000 of this was raised through parish appeals and \$34,700 was raised by schools.

Beside the Church and school appeals, many individuals also made private donations in excess of \$60,000.

To donate to the Catholic Mission please contact John Goonan Catholic Mission Director Diocese of Wagga Wagga phone 0428 970 445 or email wagga.wagga.director@catholicmission.org.au



Sr Mary with the new ultrasound machine and humidicrib



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Catholic Mission wishes to sincerely thank all those in the Diocese who contributed in any way to this wonderful result. Catholic Mission is the Australian arm of the Pontifical Mission Society which comes under the Vatican Congregation for Evangelisation.


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Sophie Church - Age: 8
Holy Spirit School, Lavington

A huge thanks to Sophie Church from Holy Spirit School in Lavington for sending in all of her great work.

We love receiving mail!



Q. How many Easter Eggs can you put into an empty basket?
A: None! Because it won't be empty anymore.



LEST WE FORGET

Recipe...



Anzac Biscuits

Crunchy and delicious, Anzac biscuits made with oats are a lower GI alternative to many packet biscuits and are cheap to make. Containing coconut, golden syrup and butter, these biscuits do not use egg as a binding agent.

Ingredients:

2 cups rolled oats
2 cups flour
2 cups coconut
1 1/2 cups sugar
250g butter
4 tbsp golden syrup
1 tsp baking soda
2 tblsp boiling water

Method:

- Turn oven to 160°C. Lightly grease oven trays.
- Place oats, flour, coconut, sugar in big mixing bowl.
- Melt butter and golden syrup in saucepan. Take off heat.
- Mix baking soda and boiling water in a cup. Add to melted butter mixture in the pan. Quickly add to big mixing bowl. Mix well.
- Roll tablespoonfuls of the mixture into balls. Place on trays 5cm apart. Press lightly with fork.
- Bake for 20 minutes.

Send your coloured picture, word search or joke ideas with your name, age and school to:

Together Editor
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We'd love to hear from you!



Word Search

S	R	E	M	E	M	B	E	R	A
G	O	P	O	P	P	I	E	S	N
A	I	L	A	R	T	S	U	A	Z
O	T	E	D	E	V	A	R	B	A
L	T	X	I	I	S	L	E	A	C
E	H	T	G	N	E	R	T	S	A
B	U	N	C	O	U	R	A	G	E
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Remember
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Brave

See page 18 for the answers

Wild Hearts 2018



Most of the Wild Hearts in the final session!

During Lent this year, seventeen eager boys and young men attended five sessions of the Wild Hearts 2018 program at the wonderful Escencia café, Urana Road, Lavington. Conducted by Fr Peter Murphy and Mark Mannering, the sessions covered living out the

virtues, the important aspects of dating and courting, manners and etiquette, exercising humility and discovering the roles in your life and setting worthwhile goals. After the sessions on the cardinal virtues - prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance - the Wild Hearts discussed the perils and pitfalls of

pornography, and not just ‘hard-core’ pornography. Some of the worse type of pornography can be the ‘soft’ version, seen nearly everyday on television, in movies, and on magazines stands, that can render one almost numb to its negative effects and which can cause a slow regression into harder pornographic media

without being aware of it. Some strategies to avoid such occasions were covered as well as being a protector, not a predator, of girls and women. An excellent presentation by Marcus Shaw about his courtship with now-wife, Regina, had the Wild Hearts spell-bound. Marcus spoke of how he and Regina knew each other just as friends from an early age, how they celebrated the True-Love-Waits commitment with others as teenage friends, the boundaries he and Regina put in place to protect their courtship, and the difficulties of a long-distance relationship. Finally, he emphasised that the depth and strength of their relationship now as husband and wife, and the extra fruits and graces they experience every day, are a result of the hard work and discipline exercised during their courtship. The final Wild Hearts session covered humility, the so-called ‘Queen of the Virtues’. What it means to be a humble young man in today’s world, whilst

maintaining and demonstrating strength and courage, was eagerly discussed with lots of examples, questions and answers. Then, in effectively carrying out and exercising the virtues previously discussed, the Wild Hearts were challenged to at least begin thinking about the various roles they have in their lives. Many listed the obvious examples, such as student, son, brother, part-time worker and sportsman. An introductory lesson on setting ‘smart’ goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) in each of their roles was then covered, goals which should be based on providing service to others and living out their lives as great Catholic, young men. **The Wild Hearts were encouraged to discuss what they had learned from the program with their parents at home to maintain and reinforce the important lessons learnt. It is planned to run the program again.**

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New program launched to form young women in Leadership for Mission

Thirteen young women from across Australia gathered in Sydney recently as part of the inaugural intake for an inspiring new education and formation program called **Leadership for Mission**.

Leadership for Mission, which was launched at a special event at Mount St Benedict, Pennant Hills on April 5, is an initiative of the Council for Australian Catholic Women (CACW) with the support of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), Catholic Mission, Australian Catholic University (ACU), and Catholic Church Insurance.

Andrea Dean, Director of the ACBC's Office for the Participation of Women, said the new program grew from the successful Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship, which was offered five times from 2006 to 2016.

"The YCWIF educated for leadership within and beyond the Catholic Church," she said. "The graduates work within organisations such as Catholic health, Catholic education, and in a variety of professions, including law, chaplaincy and

social work."

In February 2017, the Council for Australian Catholic Women discerned that a revision of the program was necessary, to create a more fiscally sustainable model with a focus on leadership, rather than interfaith engagement.

"Leadership for Mission is an initiative that has been specifically developed by women for women who are inspired by the Gospel vision of justice, freedom and the dignity of the human person," Andrea said.

"During a time of renewed calls within the Catholic Church for the participation and diversity of women's voices in decision-making, leadership and ministry, this graduate program seeks to further embrace, enhance, and theologically ground the leadership capabilities, skills and aspirations of women in the Church and the broader community."

ACU Executive Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Professor Dermot Nestor said the Faculty has developed a purposefully designed curriculum.

"This program, and the



learning design that anchors it is thus a direct contribution to the pastoral practice of a Church for the third millennium," Professor Nestor said.

Amelia Beckett, a Catholic high school teacher from Sydney, said she was encouraged to undertake the program by the Program's Coordinator, Rachelle Smith.

"I'd always thought about studying Theology and so when this came along, it was an opportunity I had to take. The Holy Spirit seemed to be working there," she said. "I

hope to gain some skills to be a leader within the Catholic Church and to foster a sense of community that is welcoming and inclusive."

Sarah Dixon, an occupational therapist and chaplain in Catholic schools, says the opportunity to take part in the Leadership for Mission program fitted in with her faith and her vision for social justice.

"I've been very social justice orientated and involved with social justice movements as a young person, so the opportunity to learn more

about the theological side of my faith and to use that in the social justice space and truly put your faith into action was very attractive to me," she said.

"Also, the leadership side of it attracted me – as a young woman, to help others with their faith and be a companion to them, as well as to personally grown in my own faith. **It's great that as a woman today you can be a leader in the Catholic Church. It's important for young women to know they can be a part of that.**"

Chrism Mass

The three oils to be used in sacramental anointing over the coming year were blessed at St Michael's Cathedral's Chrism Mass on March 27 in Wagga Wagga.

Mr Unsworth and year 6 student leaders from St Patrick's Parish School in Albury took part in this important part of Holy Week and met Archbishop Prowse afterwards.



Word Search answers from page 16

S	R	E	M	E	M	B	E	R	A
G	O	P	O	P	P	I	E	S	N
A	I	L	A	R	T	S	U	A	Z
O	T	E	D	E	V	A	R	B	A
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Reflecting on the role of Serra in the church today

Early in April the Commonwealth Games were played in Australia and broadcast around the world. Locally, members of the Wagga Serra Club hosted a reception after the ordination of Fr Paul Lu and a brunch after his First Mass. Although the local events won't draw the same sized audiences as the Games, our faith and actions might help us win the ultimate prize.

Consider how the Games have, at an international and national level, committees to guide them. Referees, judges, coaches and competitors for each event. Events to compete for Gold in front of spectators in buildings, arenas and electronic media. All within two weeks.

In contrast, our journey to heaven has God and His church guiding us, is unique, and is played at home, work and at social events taking a lifetime to achieve.

On the one hand, to compete at Commonwealth level, competitors overcome adversity and celebrate wins leading up to, and during,



Bishop Kennedy and newly ordained Fr Lu with Wagga Serrans after the celebrations.

their event at the Games. On the other hand, throughout our lives we experience our joys and trials in the everyday things we do.

Our trials might remind us of our champion, Jesus, who fell three times under the weight of the Cross but who also got up three times. Our victories reminding us of Pentecost where the Holy Spirit came upon Our Lady and the Apostles and continues to work through the Church today. Not the buildings but the people, both laity and clergy, who journey with us through joyful and sad times.

As a community we can pray for each other as teammates and coaches help each other prepare for a Gold medal

event.

The prayer intentions of Serrans and others could include first, our Pope, clergy, religious and lay communities, who might otherwise be placed at the bottom of the list. Then being true to their vocation the priestly arm of the Church will offer the perfect sacrifice, Jesus, who wants to assist us win our Gold medal: Heaven.

The charism of the Serra Club is to foster vocations, assist clergy and religious, and encourage members in the faith.

To find out more about the Wagga Serra Club call Letitia Hackett (VP Membership) on 0439 868 461



Part of the community enjoying brunch following Fr Lu's First Mass.

Theology at the pub:

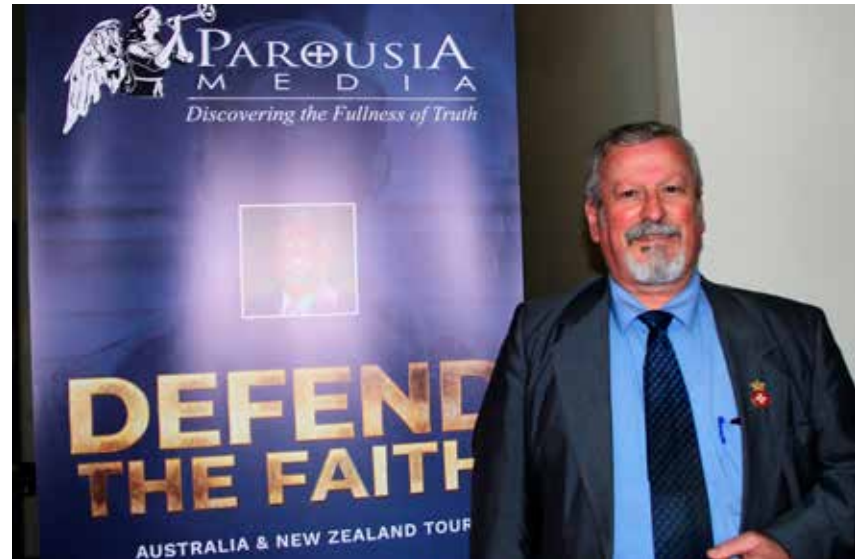
Did Jesus truly rise from the dead?

Raymond De Souza KM came to the Astor Hotel in Wagga Wagga on March 14th for an evening to discuss questions such as: Did Jesus truly rise from the dead? How can we know? Can we be sure? What difference does it make?

Raymond de Souza KM is Brazilian by birth, Catholic by grace and American by choice. He is the Special Missions Coordinator for Human Life International and regularly travels to countries in all continents to represent HLI to refute the culture of death and promote the Gospel of Life. He is also the President of the Sacred Heart Institute in the United States; EWTN program Host; Knight of Magistral Grace of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and Coordinator of the Blessed Karl von Habsburg Catholic Knights' Network.

Raymond has distinguished himself as an international Catholic Pro-Life activist, Apologist, author and broadcaster. Fluent in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese and also having conversational ability in Italian and Afrikaans, he has given over 2,500 talks on issues of Pro-Life, Catholic Apologetics and related topics, in person, on radio and television. His work has assisted religious education programs at parishes, schools, and lay organizations in 15 countries of five continents. He has a syndicated weekly column on Catholic Apologetics in the national Catholic newspaper, the Wanderer.

It was a real honour to have Raymond in Wagga Wagga addressing a very inquisitive audience on such a fascinating subject.



Raymond de Souza KM hosted the event in Wagga Wagga

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Preparing children to encounter God



Over the week of April 16-21 this year a Level One Part One Training Course for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Course was held in Wagga Wagga. One of the graduates of this course, Mrs Caronne Vella, shares her experience below.

What a week! I have today completed 6 days of study of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS). Our group of 6-9 candidates met at the St Michael's Cathedral from Monday through to Saturday from 9am to 5pm. We were ably presented by Angela Hague who travelled all the way from Sydney to share her knowledge and love of this Montessori Method of presenting the Good News for children aged 3-6.

My first thought is what a

treasure for the Church! The Montessori Method is a gentle and peaceful way of teaching that invites the child to experience with joy and confidence a prepared environment (called an Atrium) that they can explore freely as a child of the Good Shepherd. This prepared environment is made up of furniture and items of natural textures, that is, no plastic.

Angela took us through a series of talks, presentations of the different works which included gestures and singing, and practical exercises, bringing alive the beauty and love of God, as we thought about God's message, and the early life of Jesus through to His Death and Resurrection, from a child's perspective via contemplation of Holy Scripture, prayer and practical work.

The concept is of a prepared environment where a child can come and experience God as He wants to show them. We are not there to 'teach' the child so much as to 'get out of the way' and allow the child to build a relationship with God by themselves, and where they are at by giving them space and time to 'listen'.

On Saturday, the final day of the course, we spent time in the Atrium as 'children'. I chose 3 different works – The Annunciation – which helped me to think about God's amazing love for the young Virgin girl, Mary. God spoke to me of the value He places on Virginity and Humility – He chose this simple girl for such an important job – what might He ask of me – how will I respond to His call in my life? I wondered why as

a society so many seem to not value virginity anymore whereas to God it must be so important if He could choose a Virgin girl to be the Mother of His Son.

Another 'work' I chose was the Parable of the Precious Pearl. Again, God helped me to understand what is 'valuable' in my life – what am I prepared to 'pay' or 'give up' to gain that most priceless gift of Heaven. The Rich Merchant was prepared to sell everything he owned so he could have the most precious pearl. What would that be like? To let everything else go? There is freedom in it and a burden seemed to lift from my heart in a profound way.

My third work was drawing. Having the time just to sit with the coloured pencils and freely make a picture was so enjoyable – I really did feel like a child again! My drawing began with the sky and the sun, a beach and the water – there was a tree and it reminded me of the mustard seed parable so I drew a bird in its nest and then it seemed that I needed to add Jesus in so I drew Him as the Good Shepherd leading His Flock along the sand toward the shade and grass by the tree. Obviously a 3-year-old is not going to draw anything quite so specific, but I was grateful for the

time to let myself be little again and express my feelings and thoughts through drawing.

A Catechesis of the Good Shepherd session goes ideally for 2 hours and caters for 3-6, 7-9, and 10-12-year-olds; at their own times.

Now that we have a newly trained group of people it is hoped that a space will be found in Wagga Wagga to set up a permanent Atrium.

Thank you to Angela Hague, Fr Justin Darlow and Emily Shaw for organising this course and I hope we can continue through the other age groups very soon! **Ideally it would be great for every child to be able to experience time in the 'Atrium'.**



Clockwise from top:
Elizabeth Vella at the Baptism work.
Angela Hague presenting one of the Practical Life Works, Pom-pom Sorting, to Elizabeth and Stephanie Vella in the Atrium.
Sr Maria Ina is presented with her completion certificate by Angela Hague.
L-R Course participants Diane Reichl, Margaret Shaw, Sonia Valera, Trainer Angela Hague, Caronne Vella and Nick Morgan.



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