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- December 2017 -

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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.



# No room in the inn

**Dear Friends in Christ,**  
**SURELY one of the saddest lines in the Gospel is when Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem and Joseph and Mary had to find emergency accommodation at a stable as there was "no room in the inn" (Luke 2/7).**

Right from the first moments of his life on earth, Jesus is found to be on life's periphery. He seems homeless. There is a lack of hospitality from those in the town to the Holy Family's situation.

We can easily sentimentalise these moments but, in fact, they hide a harsh reality that still ought to trouble us even today.

In more recent times, our chief social welfare agencies in the Archdiocese have reported to me that homelessness in our part of Australia is increasing as is a most troubling associated reality. This real poverty in our midst is becoming younger and involves more single mothers.

The St Vincent de Paul Society report to me that 8% of the visits to our Night Patrol this past

winter were from young people under the age of 18.

**They comment: "The lack of pay increases since the GFC; the impact of cuts to penalty rates and reactive policies addressing affordable housing in an environment where a roof over your head could be as high as 40% of income, creates the second largest group of our companions seeking assistance who**

**Our CatholicCare (formerly CentaCare) Archdiocesan social welfare agency report to me that so many young mothers whose marriages have ended are now too often with their children using their cars as the principal means of "housing".**

**are between the ages 20-39 years. This group makes up 43% of the requests for emergency support..... 19% of our companions identify as Indigenous."**

Our CatholicCare (formerly

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse**  
*Apostolic Administrator  
of the Wagga Wagga Diocese*

CentaCare) Archdiocesan social welfare agency report to me that so many young mothers whose marriages have ended are now too often with their children using their cars as the principal means of "housing".

There are tragic stories behind these facts!

Like Jesus, there seems to be

"no room in the inn."

Let us be more highly conscious of this over the Christmas and New Year holiday time. At least, let us give generously to Christmas appeals that request our practical charity.



There is also the practical Christmas charity of not simply the giving of our money but our time and efforts towards greater hospitality.

All of us can do something practical here – in our families, in our neighbourhood and in our wider communities.

**The Christmas practical charity of contacting by phone or message those who have become distant from us is to be a priority. Better still, a face to face "catch up" with those who are on the "periphery" of our families or communities is a great Christmas gesture.**

**Make sure there is a genuine smile on our face and a deep resolve to start afresh in our relationships and communications.**

**Then Christmas today will begin to reverse the inhospitality of the first Christmas at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago!**

May I take this opportunity to ask sincerely the choicest blessings of the Infant Jesus upon you and your loved ones in our Archdiocese.

I do pray that this time of refreshment and hopeful distance from our daily routines will revitalise us all. May we return later to our commitments after finding more time to pray and be revitalised for the important challenges that await us all in 2018.

Happy Christmas and New Year to you all! Particular thanks to all who have assisted practically in the Archdiocese over the past year.

**Let us pray for each other in these wonderful days of joy and peace!**

See Paul Jensen from Centacare's article on homelessness on page 18.

**TOGETHER**  
IN THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

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**Prayer Intention for December**  
**Pray with Pope Francis**  
**Universal: The elderly**

That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

**Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network**  
APOSTOLIC PRAYER  
[www.popesprayerusa.net/2017-intentions/](http://www.popesprayerusa.net/2017-intentions/)

## Popes Prayer

*A people that does not take care of grandparents, that does not treat them well has no future!*

*The elderly have wisdom.*

*They are entrusted with a great responsibility: to transmit their life experience, their family history, the history of a community, of a people.*

*Let us keep in mind our elders, so that sustained by families and institutions, may with their wisdom and experience collaborate in the education of new generations.*

**Visit this link to hear the Pope deliver his December prayer:**  
<http://cathnews.com/cathnews/30915-jazzy-focus-on-the-elderly>

**Thank you from Archbishop Carroll**



On the occasion of my recent Golden Jubilee, I received many messages of congratulations, prayers and good wishes.

It is not possible to respond to all of them individually, but I ask that each and everyone will accept this note as a personal thank you.

I appreciate and am deeply grateful for your thoughtful kindness and pray God's special blessing on each one of you.

**– Father Francis (Emeritus Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn)**



# Come to Bethlehem

by Fr Gerard Ryan CCS  
West Wagga Wagga Catholic Parish



**The city of Bethlehem, complete with camels and children's crafts, will be recreated again this year in the grounds of Holy Trinity Primary School, Bardia Street, Ashmont from Friday December 22 to Christmas Eve.**

This event comes immediately after the Golden Jubilee of the parish of West Wagga Wagga which will be celebrated on Saturday December 16. The special 6pm Saturday Mass at Holy Trinity Church will be followed by a parish meal in the hall to celebrate and acknowledge the many wonderful achievements of parishioners and priests over five decades.

*Come to Bethlehem*, which has attracted more than 30,000 patrons over the years, is one of those great achievements which began in 2003 when the Confraternity of Christ the Priest assumed West Wagga Wagga Parish.

The *Come to Bethlehem* display reconstructs the famous ancient city of Bethlehem and the various scenes depicted among its many exhibits are a synagogue; a carpenter's shop; a pottery shop and a mill. On the

outskirts of the city is a small baby lying in a manger.

Now in its fourteenth year, the event is a unique celebration of Christmas that focuses on that time long ago when a small baby was born. *Come to Bethlehem* is aimed at keeping the rustic baby Christ at the centre of Christmas festivities. Over 50 people dressed in costumes will take part in the display; as they participate in the various scenes, they recreate the atmosphere of the bustling marketplace of a time long ago.

The display is designed to appeal to families and many of the scenes are interactive. The young, the not so young but the young at heart are invited to try their hand at activities including cane basket weaving, mosaics and writing in Hebrew.

After walking through the city of Bethlehem, visitors are invited to step into the school hall to see a display of the history of various Christmas symbols including the Christmas tree, mince pies and nativity displays.

All Wagga Wagga and district residents are invited to attend the display and will be most welcome.

*Come to Bethlehem* can be included when out and about looking at the Christmas lights which are especially impressive around Ashmont.

***Come to Bethlehem* will be operating on the evenings of Friday December 22; Saturday December 23 and Sunday December 24 (Christmas Eve) from 8pm to 9.30pm. Admission is \$2 for adults and children are free.**

**The event is wheelchair and stroller friendly. For more information please phone 6931 3601.**

***Come to Bethlehem* and see the wonders of a great event.**



Holy Trinity School Grounds are transformed into the Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.



**The poem written by Father Norman Duck was sent to Wagga woman Nita Buswell (nee Salmon) and her family in January 1964 while Fr Duck was studying in Nova Scotia, Canada.**

In 1967 Fr Norman Duck was appointed first parish priest of Wagga's fourth parish, West Wagga Wagga which included the new suburbs of Ashmont and San Isidore.

**West Wagga Wagga Parish will celebrate its Golden Jubilee on Saturday, 16 December with a special Mass at 6pm at Holy Trinity Church, Ashmont followed by a communal parish meal in the hall in Bardia Street.**

While he was parish priest of West Wagga Wagga, Fr Duck was also chaplain to the soldiers stationed at the IRTB Kapooka Army Base.

The oval at San Isidore is named the Norman Duck Oval in honour of Fr Duck who was appointed chaplain and director of the newly established community settlement of San Isidore in 1955. Fr Duck died on August 2, 1975.

*Pictured: Father Norman Duck in his Army Chaplain's uniform. Photo courtesy Diocese of Wagga Wagga Archives 2017*



## The meaning of Christmas



This is the meaning of Christmas, the feast of the rich and the poor.

The reason we gather together, light trees and hang bells on the door.

The excuse for singing and candles, for the gifts that we got and gave.

If you honestly search you will find it concealed in a crib in a cave.

You won't find the reason for Christmas unless you escape the din,

For Jesus, Mary and Joseph there wasn't a room in the inn.

Refugees, weary and homeless they rest with the ox on his hay.

In Mexico, Egypt or China are millions no richer than they.

When I was naked you clothed me, and I was the hungry you fed.

I was the homeless infant who slept in the animals' shed.

The Kingdom of Heaven is opened by co-operating with God.

As you do unto others, said Jesus, so will be my measuring rod.



# Royal Commission to deliver its Final Report this week



**The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will deliver its final report to the Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove this Friday, December 15.**

The Royal Commission sat for the last time on December 14 to publicly mark the end of the five-year-long inquiry.

Royal Commission CEO, Philip Reed, said the sitting which was open to the public was a chance for Commissioners to thank the community for their continued support of the Royal Commission and its work.

“When we began in 2013, we had no idea just how widespread or prevalent child sexual abuse in institutions was in Australia or how many people would come forward to share their story,” Mr Reed said.

“Since then we have held 57 public hearings, where we sat for 444 days and heard evidence of more than 1,300 witnesses. Commissioners have also listened to the personal accounts of almost 8,000 survivors of child sexual abuse in institutions through ‘private sessions’.

“Combined with our

comprehensive policy and research program, the Royal Commission has been able to contribute to the community’s understanding and awareness of institutional child sexual abuse.”

Mr Reed said that during the life of the Royal Commission, thousands of individuals, including survivors, academics, legal practitioners, government representatives and advocacy and support groups have contributed to its work.

“We couldn’t have achieved what we have so far without the input and support of so many,”

Mr Reed said.

The Hon. Justice Peter McClellan AM, Chair of the Royal Commission, will present the National Library of Australia with a book of around 1,000 messages written by survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

**The book titled, *Message to Australia* is a collation of personal messages written by those who shared their story to the Royal Commission in a private session. The messages, addressed to the Australian community, tell of survivors’ experiences and**

**their hopes for creating a safer environment for children in the future. Once handed to the National Library, the book will be accessible to members of the public.**

Once the Royal Commission’s Final Report has been handed over to the Governor-General arrangements regarding its tabling and public release are a matter for the Australian Government.

Once tabled, the Final Report will be made available online on the Royal Commission’s website: [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au).

## Wagga Wagga Diocese establishes permanent Professional Standards Office



*David Collie, Safeguarding Children Officer*

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has been working with, and responding to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse since it commenced in January 2013.

**The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Officer, Mr David Collie believes that the release of the Royal Commission’s recommendations marks a significant turning point for the diocese and an opportunity to renew its absolute and abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.**

“The Commission’s recommendations will contribute to how we review the improvements the diocese has made as well as respond to additional areas identified by the Royal Commission,” Mr Collie said.

While it is as yet unclear when the full report will be made public, the diocese will respond to it through its newly established Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office, replacing the temporary Safeguarding Children Office that has been in place for the last two years.

“The diocese has now endorsed the establishment of a permanent Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office which will be responsible for the prevention of abuse and for the management of complaints,” Mr

Collie confirmed.

In working with the Royal Commission, the diocese has responded to all of its requests for information and endorsed its research into child safe standards, using them as a benchmark for diocesan action.

These nationally and internationally recognised standards have led to improvements in how diocesan personnel contribute to communities that are safe for children, the young and vulnerable and assist Diocesan workers and volunteers to recognise abuse, to know how to respond to complaints of abuse and what can be done to prevent it.

The new Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office’s response to the Royal Commission will benefit from the work of the office it replaces. The existence of appropriate policies and procedures, clearer leadership roles, improved recruitment and training practices, together with new accountability measures and an existing strategic plan will provide a strong foundation from which it will operate.

Mr Collie emphasised that while improvements have been made there is no room for complacency.

“Safeguarding is everyone’s business and there is still much to do to ensure that our communities are and will always be, safe places,” Mr Collie said.

Mr Collie completes his two-year secondment to the temporary Diocesan Safeguarding Office at the end of 2017. He will move into the role of Consultant for Catholic Schools having completed the groundwork for a permanent diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office.

Recruitment for the Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Officer has commenced. It is hoped that an appointment will be made in time for commencement as early as possible in 2018.

## Sullivan urges government not to bury sexual abuse report

**The CEO of the Catholic Church’s Truth, Justice and Healing Council (TJHC) Francis Sullivan, has called on the Prime Minister, state premiers and chief ministers to immediately set up a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committee to implement the recommendations in the Royal Commission’s final report.**

Mr Sullivan says once the report is in the public domain, which is expected to be this Friday, all participants including the Catholic Church need to start working immediately on implementing its recommendations.

“And it is up to Prime Minister Turnbull to lead the way,” Mr Sullivan said.

“The Prime Minister has to show that this report is going to be taken 100 per cent seriously - that it’s not going to be put in a drawer,” Mr Sullivan said.

“Governments should consider announcing the establishment of a joint COAG working party very soon after the release of the report, then institutions and others need to set up their own implementation processes to engage with the government process.

**“We cannot afford for this to get lost over the summer; to get shouted down by the current political point scoring that’s going on.**

“How many times have we seen extensive, historic processes, which could and should contribute significantly to public policy development, effectively binned because governments can’t get their act together?

“The Catholic Church is currently considering how best to manage its response to the Commission’s final report and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to a careful, systematic government response that could include valuable contributions from all institutions involved in the inquiry over the past five years,” Mr Sullivan said. .

**Meanwhile the TJHC CEO called on grass roots Catholics to take up the challenge of Pope Francis and be a church that is engaged, inclusive and messy.**

Speaking at a meeting of around 80 people,



*Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council*

hosted by the *Community of the Way*\* at Trinity College in Perth last month, Mr Sullivan said the revelations from the Royal Commission have been devastating not only for victims and survivors of sexual abuse but for the whole church community.

**“While church hierarchy must address the recommendations from the Royal Commission, it is also up to lay people to push for change and to hold the leadership accountable,” Mr Sullivan said.**

**“In the lead up to the 2020 Plenary Council, it’s important that all Catholics are heard, and that is only going to happen if people like yourselves find a voice and contribute,” he said.**

While the church has made changes in the wake of the Royal Commission, the need for reform is far from over, Mr Sullivan said.

“Church leaders can apologise until they’re blue in the face but until they demonstrate by their actions that they sincerely want to atone for what’s happened, no one will listen to them.”

Those attending asked how ordinary Catholics can influence the agenda of the Plenary Council. They also sought clarification on canon law, the seal of confession and training and formation of priests.

\**Community of the Way* is a group of Catholics in the Perth Archdiocese concerned about the future of their Church.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church’s response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



# 'I have loved every minute of my 44 years in education': Alan Bowyer signs off as Director of Schools

Alan Bowyer, Director of Schools for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Catholic Schools Office (CSO) was officially farewelled this month after 32 years working in Catholic education in the Diocese, the last 11 as Director of Schools.

Mr Bowyer began his career as a primary school teacher majoring in special education with the NSW Department of Education in the western suburbs of Sydney. He then taught in Narrandera before taking up the role of assistant principal at St Joseph's School, Narrandera in 1985.

Mr Bowyer said his proudest

achievement was to have been foundation principal of Mater Dei Primary School in Wagga Wagga.

"I had the unique experience of being appointed principal of the newly established Mater Dei Primary School in October 1989 although at that stage the school had no buildings, no staff and no pupils," Mr Bowyer recalled.

"Mater Dei actually began on the site of Sacred Heart Primary School, Koorungal as a series of demountable buildings in the carpark. They were then moved to the Mater Dei site in Gregadoo Road and pupils started there after Easter in 1990."



'So long, farewell...' McAlroy House staff say goodbye

Mr Bowyer was also principal of Sacred Heart School for three years before becoming an education consultant with the CSO. He was appointed Director of Schools in 2006.

As Director of Schools, Mr Bowyer said his passion and what energised him in the role was that students in rural and remote communities should have the same advantages as those in metropolitan schools.

"This has been my motivation and mission. The recent music initiative across all diocesan schools is an outcome of this passion," Mr Bowyer said.

"I believe music education should be available to all

children not just to those who can afford it because it makes for a complete education for life."

**"I have loved every minute of my 44 years in education but I am determined to burn out not rust out!"**

In the next phase of his life Mr Bowyer will pursue his other passion of singing with the Cantilena Singers as well as continuing to work in education consulting and mentoring.

Mark MacLean will act as Director of Schools for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga for the next 12 months until a permanent appointment is made.



Alan Bowyer cuts his farewell cake surrounded by family and friends, clockwise from front left, granddaughter Lucy, 6; daughter-in-law Lisa; grandson Bailey; brother-in-law Martyn Crick; Alan's wife Helen; sister Helen Bickett; Fr Wilf Plunkett; son Nick; sister Judy Crick and grandson Jimmy 6.

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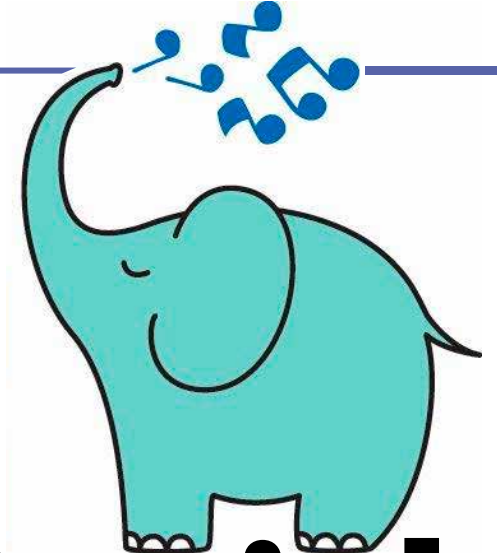
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# Music makes community at Sacred Heart Parish



by Virginia Gawler - Editor of Together



Mainly music team, back row from left: Barry Kennedy, Anne Cummins, Maree Jelbart; Middle row: Anne Carmichael, Bernadette Kennedy, Janet Moriarty, Veronica Menz, Ellen Brazier; Joan Douglas; in front: Marsha Reilly. Team members absent from photo: Angela Maidment, John Gray, Vicky Donoghue, Lynne McDonnell, Bob and Di Smith and Paul Smith.



Joan Douglas plays with one of the younger mainly music fans.

**It's appropriate that a baby elephant is the new logo for the mainly music program which has just celebrated its third birthday at Sacred Heart Parish, Koorinal.**

According to the mainly music website <https://www.mainlymusic.org/> elephants have a strong sense of extended family. When an elephant calf is born, the aunties have a lot of input into the care of the newborn and the mother. The bond between a baby elephant and

its mother is one of the closest of any animal on earth.

Building community and creating bonds between parents and their young children and between generations is at the heart of the philosophy of mainly music.

The weekly program at Sacred Heart Parish Centre which regularly attracts between 35-50 children along with parents or carers, epitomises ministry in action.

"It's like a playgroup with a

purpose," explained founder Bernadette Kennedy, a former teacher and active member of Koorinal parish.

"Mainly music provides a way for our parish to connect with and support young families through music, play and friendship. In so doing we model the life of Christ in our words, deeds and actions."

Mainly music began in New Zealand in 1990 and the program has since spread to numerous parts of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. It was started by Jo Hood when her first child, Rebecca was young and she was looking for a community-based music program that was fun and interactive.

More than 25 years later, Jo still leads the mainly music organization. Over the years the mainly music concept has grown and developed into the finely-tuned structure it is today.

"The dream we have for your mainly music experience is that you'll find the session a safe, nurturing space where connections occur," Jo said.

"You can connect with your young one and you can expect to connect with others who are at the same life stage....connecting

with adults in your week is pretty important. Being able to finish a conversation or even a sentence! Knowing you're not alone in this role of 'parent' and receiving genuine encouragement during the journey," Jo writes on her mainly music blog.

The philosophy underpinning the mainly music program is based around five core principles or values: generosity; honour; creativity; celebration and connection.

There is an expectation that team members will have an active Christian faith which both powers their motivation to be involved and powers a sense of hope.

Bernadette Kennedy was inspired to establish mainly music at Sacred Heart Parish when she attended a Women's Colloquium at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney in 2013 organised by the Council for Australian Catholic Women (CACW).

After discovering a mainly music group was operating at St Paul's Anglican Church, Turvey Park Bernadette approached now retired parish priest of Koorinal, Father Bernie Thomas with the idea of setting up a group at Sacred Heart.

At the same time the parish council



Sacred Heart Parish Centre is transformed for mainly music playtime



Photos: Marcus Grundy



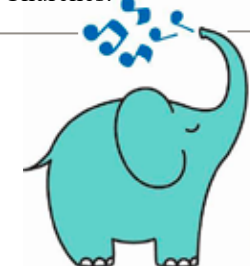


From left, Razia Zafari and daughter Sarah, 3; Mary Victor holding Nathan and Constance Okot with granddaughter Angila enjoying mainly music.

had been looking for possible ways to build community in Sacred Heart Parish by connecting young and new families to the wider parish community.

Two members of the parish council, Marguerite Smith and Janet Moriarity, joined the team to make mainly music a reality and the first session was held in November 2014.

Sacred Heart Church is the only Catholic parish in Australia to host a mainly music program as the groups are still predominantly run in Anglican or other Christian Churches.



“Mainly music provides a way for our parish to connect with and support young families through music, play and friendship. In so doing we model the life of Christ in our words, deeds and actions.”

Each Tuesday morning at 10am during the school term a team of about 15 volunteers lead the children in singing and dancing to the music while they experiment with different musical instruments.

The children are then served a healthy morning tea and return inside where a variety of activities are provided for them to enjoy while members of the team are on

hand to guide and support.

The real highlight for the morning for the parents and carers is the cooked morning tea which is lovingly prepared each week by another group of volunteers. Parents pay just \$5 each session which includes everything.

“This is about looking after the mothers and it’s at the heart of the mainly music philosophy of caring for the parents or carers,” Bernadette said.

It’s a precious time-out for the parents or grandparents to get to know each other over morning tea while their little ones are playing.

In her submission to the Sacred Heart Parish Council to establish mainly music Bernadette wrote:

“The volunteer team joining in prayer before the families arrive helps to ensure they understand the program is not just a form of playgroup but that it is living the love of Jesus. At the end of each session when the team reflects on the word of Christ ... this



Above: Parents and grandparents get into the rhythm. Right: Mary Turner, left and volunteer Anne Carmichael on nursing duty.

reinforces mainly music’s purpose of living the Gospel.”

“As one mother said to me: ‘I have been coming to church at Sacred Heart for a number of years but it was only once I came to mainly music that I really felt that I belonged.’

Through their involvement with mainly music many of the volunteer team members have formed and renewed old friendships within the parish which is also helping them to feel part of the faith community.

Having just celebrated its third birthday this month at Sacred

cover for holidays and sickness.

“If you are not sure about mainly music please come and visit,” Bernadette said. “You will be surprised! Everything is organized and planned – you just have to turn up.”

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about mainly music please contact Bernadette Kennedy on 0477 887 783.



Janet Moriarty leads story time.

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 Part 1 (3-6 year olds) Training



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a faith formation process that honours the spiritual values of childhood and the child’s covenant relationship with God. Founded by Dr. Sofia Cavalletti and Professor Gianna Gobbi in Rome, this method draws on the discoveries of childhood development made by Dr. Maria Montessori and implements Montessori principles of education, such as the use of concrete materials, spontaneous choice of work and freedom of movement.

**Date:** Monday 16th to Saturday 21st April 2018 (6 days)

**Trainer:** Angela Hague from Chatswood Sydney

**Location:** St Michael’s Parish Centre WAGGA WAGGA

**Cost:** \$320

### Course Description and Aims:

The Level One Formation Course is the foundation course for all three levels of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It aims to:

- Explore with participants the general developmental characteristics, religious nature and religious needs of the 3 to 6 year old child.
- Meditate on the Biblical and Liturgical themes of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.
- Offer guidelines and assistance to catechists in setting up an atrium for the 3 to 6 year old child, preparing presentation album pages and making materials.
- Experience being formed as catechists by the Word of God and deepening our ability to observe and learn from the children, the joy of the Gospel!

Participation in the course is not a commitment to working in an atrium. Course content is also helpful for those working in other catechesis settings or for parents interested in understanding what the CGS is and what their children will experience in the atrium.

For more information or to express interest please contact Emily Shaw 0400 524 190 emily-shaw@live.com.au or Fr. Darlow 0269 276 438



# A beacon of hope on the other side of the wall

By a special correspondent in Bethlehem



*Bethlehem University campus in Palestine*

**The Holy Land is filled with astonishing stories and deeply moving experiences however none are more stirring than visiting the Christian oasis of Bethlehem University where Jesus' message of bringing 'life in all its fullness' takes on a tangible meaning.**

"I want to do everything. I want to live." These sentiments of a 22-year-old university student are unremarkable. A young woman with the world and her future at her feet.

But for her and for several thousand of her fellow students what she wants is not as easy to achieve as it might seem.

She is a student of Bethlehem University, an institution set up more than 40 years ago in Palestine following the visit of

Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land, and run by De La Salle Christian Brothers. It is the first university founded in the West Bank.

This unashamedly Catholic university is no ordinary institution with upwards of 75 per cent of its more than 3,300 students Muslim and a similar proportion female. The holy city in which it stands is no ordinary place. Bethlehem is a Palestinian city south of Jerusalem in the West Bank. Palestine is under Israeli occupation.

Nearly half of the students come from East Jerusalem. They travel through Israeli military checkpoints on the separation wall each day and face the humiliations associated with that, along with delays that often mean they are late for class. For students living in Bethlehem or elsewhere

in the West Bank, restrictions on travel permits mean they cannot freely go into Jerusalem or into Israel. Some live in refugee camps.

A female student tells how she keeps her bus fare in her hand, "so I would not need to open my bag while I am standing beside the checkpoint waiting for my bus, so the soldier would not think I had a weapon and I would be shot."



**"We go back 2,000 years when Jesus was walking this land," he says. "There were no Christians at all there, so what was he doing? 'I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness.' That's what Jesus was doing. That's what Bethlehem University is doing.**

In all of this, university vice-chancellor Br Peter Bray, a New Zealander, talks about wanting students to "experience our campus as an oasis of peace in the midst of the occupation and the harshness".

The university itself has been occupied by Israeli troops; closed from 1987 for three years; its buildings damaged by missiles; had four of its students killed including one on campus and one of the brothers narrowly escaping with his life when fired on by a soldier.

**Graduate Raghed says the university has "trained my heart on peace. It gave me all I needed to be who I want to be. Bethlehem University taught me to be a human being before anything else."**

Many students were born under Israeli occupation and have never been to the holy places in Jerusalem and elsewhere in

Israel because the Israeli authorities will not permit them.

Bethlehem University came into being as a place of higher learning in 1973 following the historic visit of Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land in 1964. The rather circuitous route to the establishment of Bethlehem University originated with the desire of the Pope to do something to help the Palestinian people.

Br Peter articulates what that something is.

"I can't believe this oppression is going to go on forever. When peace does come, what Palestine is going to need is educated, resourceful, creative people. I think Bethlehem University is making a huge contribution to help create that pool of people who are going to create the new Palestine."

Peace seems impossible but it happened in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Germany and East Timor, he says.

"That is the hope I hold on to. That peace will come to the land where Jesus walked."

An Arab taxi driver offers his take on when the oppression will end. "This land has never been occupied for long," he says optimistically. "A hundred years, maybe, then the invaders go. It's been 70



*A stretch of the hundreds of kilometres-long separation wall near Banksy's famous 'Walled Off Hotel' in Bethlehem.*



*One of the many personal stories posted on the wall.*



(years since the state of Israel was formed in Palestine). God willing, we won't have to wait much longer."

A question Br Peter is often asked is why the Church would bother to run a Catholic university in Palestine where less than 2 per cent of the population is Christian.

"We go back 2,000 years when Jesus was walking this land," he says. "There were no Christians at all there, so what was he doing?"

"I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness." That's what Jesus was doing. That's what Bethlehem University is doing.

"We are seeking to create an environment, to build an atmosphere, to provide an opportunity for our students to learn the skills, to acquire the attitudes and values to enable them to live life as fully as they possibly can, given the circumstances."

One of the biggest challenges facing the university is funding. About 60 per cent of its operating budget comes through fundraising. As a result, Br Peter spends some of his year globetrotting to raise awareness of the university and to persuade organisations and individuals to support the work.

"I have never been involved in an organisation where the finances are so fragile," he says.

Somehow the work not only goes on but thrives from year to year.

The university offers faculties of the arts, business administration, education, nursing and health sciences and science, as well as an institute of hotel management and tourism.

On a visit to Jerusalem, Pope Benedict singled out the university's "outstanding achievements. You daily demonstrate your belief that our duty before God is expressed not only in our worship, but also in our love and concern for society, for culture, for our world, and for all who live in this land".

So, as Br Peter points out, it is "difficult not to become involved in seeking to right the injustice being meted out" to Palestinians young and old.

It is also impossible as a visitor to the Bethlehem campus not to be overwhelmed by the positivity of the students; the passion of the small international community of religious brothers following in the footsteps of St John Baptist de la Salle and the power of the message of hope they all live out every day.

#### Bethlehem University statistics:

- 112 students enrolled in 1973
- 3,318 students enrolled this year
- 17,197 degrees conferred
- \$4,000 cost per student
- 1893: the year the De La Salle Christian Brothers opened a school in Bethlehem
- 3.5 hectares the size of the campus.

If you wish to find out more about Bethlehem University please visit their website:

<https://www.bethlehem.edu/>

#### How to make a gift:

You can help to support the remarkable work of Bethlehem University in Palestine by making a donation via Catholic Mission Australia.

Visit the Catholic Mission Australia site at:

**[www.catholicmission.org.au/bethlehemuniversity](http://www.catholicmission.org.au/bethlehemuniversity)** to make a donation to a project for supervising nursing students doing clinical placements.

*This gift is tax deductible.*

**OR**

**Send a cheque to Catholic Mission Australia marked "To Bethlehem University" and mail to Catholic Mission Australia PO Box 1668 North Sydney NSW 2059**

جامع بيت لحم



*The university is an oasis for its many students ... with an Israeli settlement across the wall in the background.*



*Vice-Chancellor Br Peter Bray of New Zealand chats with students on campus in Bethlehem*



*Off the wall ... the Palestinians have not lost their sense of humour.*

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# Seminarians take next step on journey to priesthood



Four seminarians from Vianney College publicly declared their resolve to complete their preparation for ministry in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga at a simple ceremony at St Michael's Cathedral on 16 November.



Main picture: Pictured after the ceremony, from left: Rosan Vettikombil, Connell Perry, Archbishop Carroll, Simon Greet and Cyprian Onuorah.

**Simon Greet, Cyprian Onuorah, Rosan Vettikombil and Connell Perry, having completed two years of philosophy and a sixth month pastoral placement, are already one or two years into their theological studies at St John Vianney College in Wagga Wagga.**

The ceremony which is called the Rite of Admission to Candidacy was held during the annual Vianney College End of Year Mass.

The Diocese through its Apostolic Administrator, represented on this occasion by Archbishop Francis Carroll, accepted their resolve and promised to support and assist the new candidates in their continued journey to the priesthood.

A recent document from the Holy See (*The Gift of Priestly Vocation*; 8 December 2016) has clarified the meaning of the Rite of Admission to Candidacy. Rather than a final step before Diaconate, the document sees it as marking a turning point in the journey to Major Orders.

At the end of his philosophical studies, the seminarian should have reached sufficient maturity in his intention to offer

himself to the Church to continue his priestly formation, the document says.

“For her part, in accepting the seminarian who offers himself, the Church chooses him and calls him so that he may prepare to receive Holy Orders in the future. Since it presupposes a responsible decision on the part of the seminarian, admission among the candidates for Orders is an invitation for him to continue with his formation, in configuring himself to Christ the Shepherd, through a formal recognition on the part of the Church.” (*The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, paragraph 67).

Following the Mass, members of the Serra Club of Wagga Wagga hosted a BBQ for seminarians and guests at St Michael's Parish Centre.

**Vianney College final-year seminarian, Jomer Calma will be ordained to the order of Deacon by the Apostolic Administrator of Wagga Wagga Diocese, Archbishop Christopher Prowse, on Thursday, 15 February 2018 at 6pm in St Michael's Cathedral – Rev. Peter Thompson CM, Rector, St John Vianney Seminary College.**

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# Finley/Tocumwal communities farewell Fr Martin Cruickshank



Fr Martin said he has felt deeply privileged to be invited into the personal moments and movement of people's lives, particularly in times of sadness, loss and grief.

**After 18 years of pastoral ministry in the communities of Finley and Tocumwal, Father Martin Cruickshank will take up the position of administrator of Sacred Heart Parish, North Albury in January, 2018.**

Fr Martin previously served as assistant priest for five years at St Joseph's Parish, Leeton.

For Fr Martin, the sense of the sacred present in the communities of Finley and Tocumwal has been a source of great blessing.

Reflecting on the past 18 years, Fr

Martin said he has felt deeply privileged to be invited into the personal moments and movement of people's lives, particularly in times of sadness, loss and grief. He said this has been regardless of religious affiliation or belief.

More than 300 people attended Fr Martin's farewell at the Finley Bowling Club in late October including members of local sporting bodies such as golf and bowling clubs and all schools plus representatives from every charity organisation in the town.

Rev. Stephen Davis of Finley Anglican Church spoke on behalf of the whole

community when he said Fr Martin would be deeply missed by people from all denominations in the Finley and Tocumwal communities.

Fr Martin was born and raised in East Albury and is looking forward to working cooperatively with the faith community of Sacred Heart, North Albury.

**Fr Martin expressed his gratitude to Fr Gabriel Murray for his pastoral presence within the Sacred Heart parish community since the retirement of Fr Kevin Flanagan in July.**

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**For many the Christmas period is a crazy time of gift giving and searching for the perfect present but each year many millions of those gifts are actually unwanted.**

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But what if we could make sure our Christmas gifts had more meaning? What if they were guaranteed to bring joy and change lives globally?

This year Caritas Australia, is encouraging Australians to help to create a lifetime of change for some of the world's poorest communities. Last year Caritas helped more than 2 million people directly through our emergency and development programs.

Caritas Australia's Head of Engagement and Sustainability, David Armstrong, said Caritas Global Gifts, offer a way of showing our compassion to those in need, while rediscovering the true meaning of Christmas.

"Caritas is working globally to alleviate poverty and assist people to live healthier, happier lives," Mr Armstrong said.

**"When you send a Global Gift to a friend or loved one, you're helping to spread the message that is the very essence of Christmas - that we're all part of the one human family, working to make the world a better place."**

Global Gifts can be purchased from as little as \$10 and come with a card for a friend or family member.

"Whether you buy one gift or many, you will touch the life of a community. Thanks to your support, entire communities are empowered to create better futures for themselves and their families," Mr Armstrong said.

Doney, a young woman living in a remote Malawan village, is

a great example of how lives can be transformed when compassion is put into action.

Malnutrition plagues a third of Malawi's 19 million people, but thanks to farming methods introduced with the support of Caritas Australia, Doney's community is benefitting from a bumper harvest.

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# 'Largest Rosary in the Riverina' Links Yoogali with Fatima

by Fr. Peter Stojanovic  
Administrator  
Parish of St Francis, Yoogali



Top: Fr Peter Stojanovic in Fatima, Portugal with fellow pilgrims for the centenary celebrations in May 2017

Right and below: The newly completed Rosary Garden beside Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii Church, Yoogali.



**"The family that prays together stays together."**

The year 2017 has marked the centenary of the Blessed Virgin Mary's appearances at Fatima, Portugal as well as the centenary of our Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

In a fitting way, St. Francis Parish near Griffith has created a Rosary Garden beside Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii Church, Yoogali to celebrate these milestone events. This year our Church is also celebrating the 80th anniversary of its construction in 1937.

Fatima was a village in 1917 and St Francis Parish is comprised of five villages: Yenda, Yoogali, Hanwood, Beelbanga and Bilbul. Our Lady has shown time and again in her worldwide apparitions that she likes to visit small places. From the village of Fatima, Our Lady's message has gone out to the whole world.

Fatima is now on the map for one of the most famous claimed visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From May 13 to October 13, 1917 Our Lady is said to have appeared six times at noon on the 13th of the month in the field of Cova da Iria, to three shepherd children - Lucia Dos Santos, 10 and her cousins Francisco Marto, 9 and Jacinta Marto, 7. At the first apparition only the children were present but by the time of the final apparition, the crowd had grown to an estimated 70,000 people.

At the heart of Our Lady's message at Fatima, which was a message for the world, was "pray the Rosary every day". It is hoped that the new Rosary garden feature in little Yoogali, 'the largest Rosary in the Riverina', will inspire many to pray the Rosary especially children from the nearby St. Mary's School.

It was a great blessing for me this year to

have been in Fatima on May 13 to celebrate the centenary with Pope Francis and more than one million people from all over the world. On that day the visionaries, Jacinto and Francisco Marto were proclaimed the youngest canonized saints in the history of the world. The rosary, as seen in the photo below around the holy water stoop, is the official centenary rosary and was blessed on the tomb of St Francisco Marto.

From an early age at home, I learned and prayed the rosary often with my family before a blessed image of Our Lady of Fatima that has hung in our home since 1972.

The framed image (see photo below) of Our Lady in Fatima is one of 50 which were blessed in Fatima on May 13, 2017 and distributed in this parish to inspire families to pray the rosary in the home.

Our Lady said in 1917 that if many people prayed the rosary wars could end and peace would prevail. Our world surely needs the rosary in 2017 as much as in 1917, if not more than ever before.

**"The family that prays together stays together." The rosary is a powerful prayer for individuals, families, society and countries.**



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# Exclusive Cardinal Cassidy interview: 'Friends in high places'

by **Jordan Grantham**

Journalist - Catholic Outlook  
Diocese of Parramatta



**The 93 year old was the most highly-ranked English speaking Cardinal of the 20th century, meeting Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero, Kings, Queens and all Holy Fathers since Pope Pius XII.**

The Parramatta High School old boy had an unlikely journey to the Vatican, let alone the Catholic faith and priesthood.

"That was 20 years ago," the retired Cardinal Cassidy said with self-deprecation about his time in the Vatican.

He served mostly as a Vatican Diplomat, then as Substitute of the Secretariat of State in the Vatican in 1988 and finally as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

**His official appointments included:**

*Substitute of the Secretariat of State*  
(1988 – 1989)

*Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Netherlands*  
(1984 – 1988)

*Apostolic Delegate to South Africa* (1979 – 1984)

*Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Lesotho*  
(1979)

*Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Bangladesh*  
(1973 – 1979)

*Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to China*  
(1970 – 1973)

Cardinal Cassidy had a difficult childhood, born to non-Catholic parents who divorced when he was one-year-old, leaving him to be raised by his maternal grandparents.

His grandmother, Mary Cassidy, was Catholic and she had him secretly received into the Catholic Church while on holiday with relatives in the country.

Young Edward attended public schools throughout Sydney, winning entrance to the selective Parramatta High School, which he studied at until his grandfather died. Financial difficulties required him to work to support his grandmother and himself.

**Cardinal Cassidy was initially discouraged for the priesthood because of his family background and lack of Catholic schooling.**

He eventually worked up the courage to approach the Archbishop of Sydney directly, who encouraged him to finish his high school education, which he did at night and then gained admittance to St Patrick's Seminary, Manly.

"And then my grandmother died...I then used to stay [during seminary holidays] with my father there in Surry Hills," where his father was a boarder, Cardinal Cassidy said.

His mother and father both converted to the Catholic faith before his ordination to the priesthood.

His Eminence, **Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy** kindly granted *Catholic Outlook* an exclusive interview about his extraordinary life, faith and work for the Holy See, speaking to journalist, Jordan Grantham.



His mother surprised him by attending the ordination and his father converted one year prior.

"I was not aware that my mother was at that Mass, but afterward she came to congratulate me. Very reluctantly, she accepted to stay on for the reception," he said.

He only really developed a relationship with his mother after ordination, Cardinal Cassidy wrote in *My Years in Vatican Service* (Paulist Press, 2009).

Cardinal Cassidy's most senior role in Australia was Assistant Parish Priest of Yenda, Diocese of Wagga Wagga. When the Diocese of Wagga Wagga requested clergy support from the Archdiocese of Sydney, he took the opportunity for a fresh start, without the stigma, at that time, about his family history.

**His talent was spotted when Wagga Wagga sent him to study Canon Law at the Lateran University in Rome.**

**Cardinal Cassidy's most senior role in Australia was Assistant Parish Priest of Yenda, Diocese of Wagga Wagga. When the Diocese of Wagga Wagga requested clergy support from the Archdiocese of Sydney, he took the opportunity for a fresh start, without the stigma, at that time, about his family history.**

Popes had a habit of taking Cardinal Cassidy by surprise.

The first was when he found out Canon Law was not the end of his time in Rome. "I had no intention of staying beyond my doctorate. It was only when the Rector at the time of Sant'Apollinare said to me 'The substituto wanted to see you' and I said to him 'Whatever for?'"

"It was Montini of course, who was later to become Pope [Paul VI] and he said to me 'we would like for you to finish your studies and to go then to the Pontifical Academy,'" Cardinal Cassidy said.

"And I said of course, 'No way, my Bishop sent me over and I would owe it to him to go back' and he said 'But we've asked your Bishop' [Cardinal Cassidy laughs] 'and he thinks that it's a very good idea'."

50 years of service to the Church followed, all of it outside Australia.

"I didn't miss much because I was having wonderful new experiences. I didn't get home much because we went by boat back then. I found that I could fit in very well wherever I was," he said.

Cardinal Cassidy's experiences included meeting Mother Teresa, now St Teresa of Calcutta and Archbishop Oscar Romero, now Blessed Oscar Romero.

"She was very wonderful to meet, with all the work she did."

"There was a little concern of course. You want to make sure people aren't going to be taken in and abandoned. There was a little bit of that feeling," Cardinal Cassidy said, referring to the huge growth of St Teresa of Calcutta's Sisters of Charity.

"She laughed at me."

Blessed Oscar Romero was a closer friend of Cardinal Cassidy, while he worked in the Nunciature in El Salvador.

"He had been in contact with the Nunciature and was a great help to me because of my Spanish."

"A lovely fellow to work with, we became very good friends."

This was followed by consecration to the episcopacy and work as Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the Republic of China, Bangladesh, Apostolic Delegate to Southern Africa and Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Lesotho and finally to the Netherlands.

As Substitute of the Secretariat of State, he received another surprise from a Pope, this time Pope John Paul II.

"We were discussing who was going to take over the ecumenical movement. He said 'I've made a decision. I've found the right man.' I said, 'Well... after all the discussions... who is the right man?'"

"He said 'You are.'"

**Cardinal Cassidy had a talent for building bridges between the Church and other faiths, even across the most wounded of relationships.**

He became renowned for his contribution to ecumenism with the Eastern Orthodox, interfaith dialogue with Judaism and for the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Lutheran World Federation and the Church, signed in 1999.

Upon retirement from 50 years of Vatican service he said Mass at the Hunter Valley Gardens winery chapel for the annual blessing of the harvest and at several local nursing homes.

What is it like having friends in high, heavenly places?

"I hope they're looking after me and I hope to join them!" Cardinal Cassidy said with a smile.

**"I don't have the idea that I'm good enough for that, but I do my best."**



A young Edward Idris Cassidy.  
Photo: Jordan Grantham / Diocese of Parramatta



+Edward Idris Cassidy in 1984, while Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the Netherlands.  
Photo: Wikimedia Commons / Dutch National Archive



Cardinal Cassidy greeting Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: Supplied.



Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy in 2017. Image: Jordan Grantham/Diocese of Parramatta



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# Wagga students share the joy at ACYF 17



All 100 students and 24 teachers plus Catholic Schools Office (CSO) personnel from Wagga Wagga had a wonderful time away in Sydney for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) from December 7-9.

We participated in multiple workshops, conferences, music events, debates, panels and morning and evening plenaries.

The Wagga Wagga group accompanied by Christopher Gilroy, the Albury Youth Worker and chaplain Father Reece Beltrame, of St Michael's Cathedral Parish, meet regularly. The Festival gave the students the opportunity to meet other students from all of our five Diocesan high schools.

Each day the students gathered in their small groups to check-in

with each other and reflect on their experiences, God moments and discuss how they can help spread joy in all they do, reflecting the 2017 ACYF theme: *Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy*.

Thanks to Matt Humphrey (CSO Media, Policies and Communications Officer) for the amazing photo (left) of the whole Wagga Wagga Diocesan delegation under the giant ladder.

To see more from our time away at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival please visit the Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga Facebook page (CSOWagga) for more photos and videos from the festival.

*Charlene Robson, Religious and Mission Coordinator, Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Wagga.*

# Becoming your true self is the best New Year's resolution

by Emily Shaw  
Virtue Ministry graphic designer and writer

**New Year's Eve has the unique distinction of making the single person feel decidedly alone.**

Life as a 20-something is already hard enough without trying to find and maintain authentic relationships as well.

What most fail to recognise, explain the team at Virtue Ministry (VM), is the potential of New Year's as an opportunity to unleash our capacity and unlock our potential.

Clichés of New Year's resolutions abound and most are usually discarded by February. But growing in virtue will last longer than the first four weeks of 2018 if we are willing to take that first step.

**"It's high time to break the mindset that New Year's Eve is a time of reflecting - or dwelling on - how alone we feel," says VM founder and director, Stina Constantine.**

**"If we can approach New Year's Eve with the attitude that this year is going to be epic and focus on the good that we can achieve then everything else will follow."**

Constantine and her team strive to help people become all that they were made to be. Fittingly New Year is traditionally a time for enacting change and one the VM team don't want to pass up.

"There is never a better time to start than right now," she explains. "What could be timelier than a specific time of year when we naturally make resolutions?"

When it comes to approaching the New Year and all its promise, VM suggest posing the following questions: *Who am I? Who am I made to be? And what steps can I take to start becoming that person?*

"Once we begin to reflect on these answers," explains Constantine "we can start to formulate a plan of attack based on our individual needs."

The VM team stress the plan

should be both simple and realistic. It should include a list of where we can make improvements by challenging ourselves to work on one habit or virtue over a three-week period; examining our success and failures each night and looking at practical ways to help us progress in these areas.

For the night owl who is frequently late for work, the plan might include gradually bringing bedtime forward each week to arrive at an earlier bedtime that allows enough rejuvenating sleep and investing in an excellent alarm that's not easy to hit snooze on.

Another practical area that is more likely to see success in achieving New Year's resolutions is to link up with an accountability partner. Someone you can trust to not only support you in your quest but someone who will call you up when you fail and help you persevere.

It's also important to keep a check on your intentions. Becoming our best rather than trumping another is vital.



*The VM Team, clockwise from top left: Emily Shaw; Matthew Bagley; Stina Constantine and Andrew Flores*

"It's counterintuitive to be entering into the new year with the desire to be the best by competing against others and upholding a 'façade'.

**"Each of us has the choice," muses Constantine, "to make New Year's Eve into something wonderful and have the guts to become who you were made**

**to be this year because being authentic is about knowing who you are and being brave enough to live it."**

For more information about becoming all you were created to be visit [www.virtueministry.org.au](http://www.virtueministry.org.au) or follow Virtue Ministry on Facebook or Instagram.



**DECEMBER VIRTUE CHALLENGE:**

*Practise gratitude this festive season*

**GOALS**

**WRITE DOWN:**

3 practical and realistic ways in which you can grow in this virtue *as well as*

3 obstacles you can forsee to growing in this virtue

**EVALUATE:**

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

**SHARE:**

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



# O God of Loveliness: The Poetry of Saint Alphonsus

Reviewed by **Sr Noela Fox PhD, pbvm**



Redemptorist priest  
Father Patrick Corbett CSsR

**Events in our times have revealed the darker side of religion, with significant failures by Church ministers and terrible acts committed in the name of religion.**

All of this has clouded for many people the beautiful aspect of religious faith - an aspect that has inspired hope, compassion, courage and remarkable acts of love. Over many centuries writers and artists imbued with deep religious faith have produced works of beauty and spiritual insight that have lifted the hearts of people.

**A beautiful book, both in content and visually, it could reach out to each person who desires love, peace and good relationships. It would appeal to artists, musicians, poets, theologians and to all who are interested in mysticism and spirituality.**

A recently published book, *O God of Loveliness: The Poetry of St Alphonsus* reminds us of this beautiful heritage of the Christian faith.

**Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Bishop Terry Brady, launched *O God of Loveliness*, a collection of the poetry of Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696 -1787) at the Italian Forum Cultural Centre, Leichhardt, Sydney in August this year.**

The book was edited by Redemptorist priest, Father Patrick Corbett CSsR who was Rector at St Clement's Retreat Centre, Galong from 2000-2011.

One of the most significant figures of the 18th century, St Alphonsus Liguori of Naples, gathered around him a group of men who would dedicate themselves to preaching the good news of inclusion and blessing for all. Their special concern was society's poor and most abandoned.

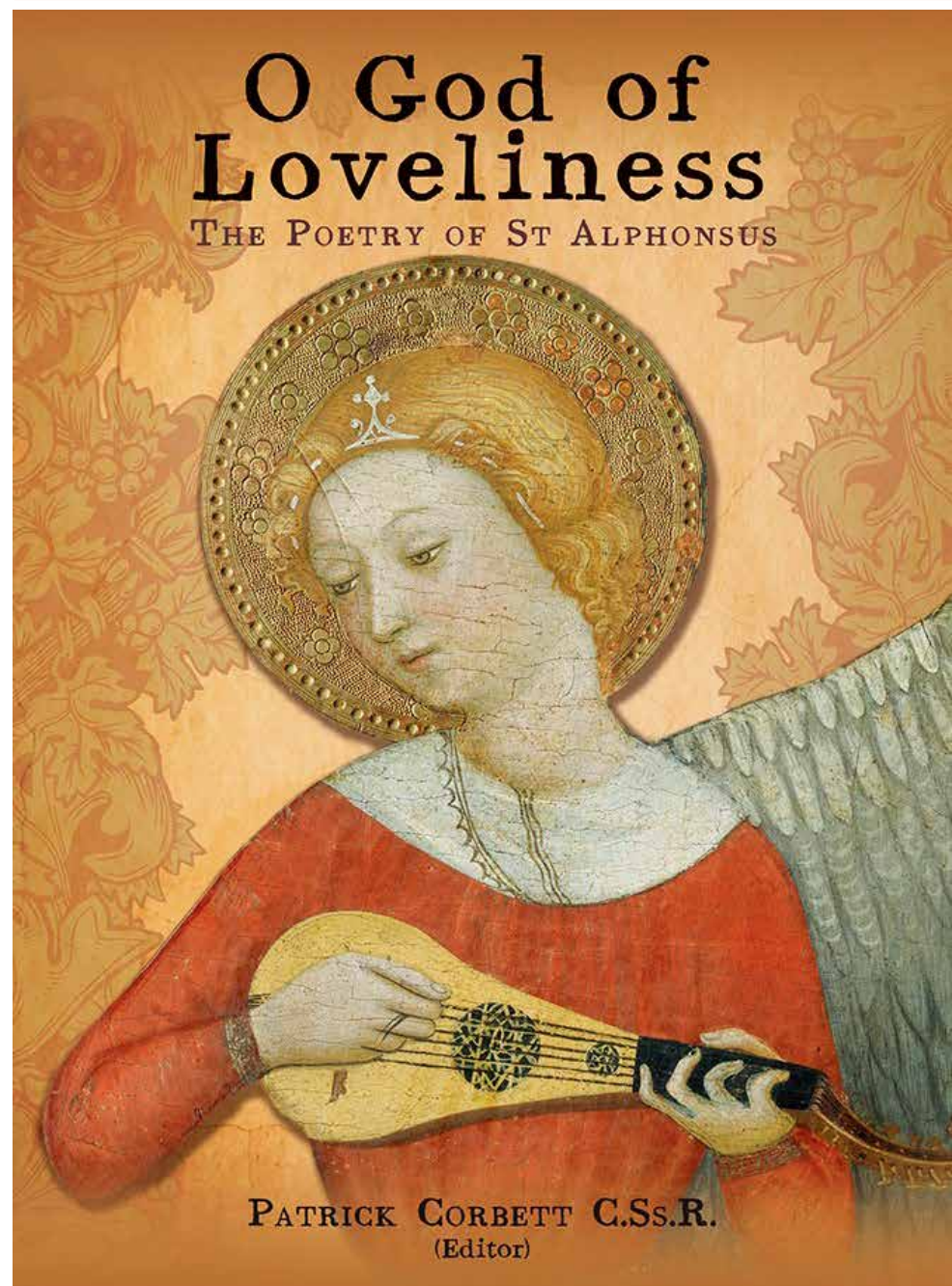
This little band grew to become the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known the world over as The Redemptorists or simply 'The Reds'.

Alphonsus was also an artist and a musician and the book contains many of his etchings and paintings along with other classic works of religious art.

A beautiful book, both in content and visually it could reach out to each person who desires love, peace and to be able to form good relationships. It would appeal to artists, musicians, poets, theologians and to all who are interested in mysticism and spirituality.

The text, in Italian and English, allows the reader to hear and experience Alphonsus' love

and appreciation of a God who is "Crazy! ... Insane with love for us"; a God who "desires our love" more than we seek his." ("The Soul Enamoured by the Beauty of God"). Alphonsus stated that his aim was to reach the hearts of all people with this message; to tell of God's all-consuming love which gave birth to the universe, to our world, to everyone and everything in it, including of course ourselves.



## O GOD OF LOVELINESS

### AVAILABLE NOW

Besides being a renowned moral theologian, St Alphonsus Liguori was a talented artist, poet and musician. This beautifully presented, full colour book, contains a fresh English translation of his poems, together with the original Italian texts, revealing a rich, deep and tender spirituality.

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Following the Introduction, the book is divided into eight sections, the poems providing thoughts for reflection and contemplation on God's desired relationship with us and on our response. It begins with poems on the Holy Spirit and concludes with Section Eight on the Dormition of Mary. Each section includes a classical engraving or painting accompanied by a reflection. The whole book - text, print, script - is a symphony of love.

Today we are still familiar with some of Alphonsus's poems/hymns, for example the Vieni Spirito Sancto (Come Holy Spirit) and the Salve Del Ciel Regina (Hail Queen of Heaven) which are included in the selection. His meditative poems on the Canticle of the Song of Songs is a truly beautiful, inspirational reflection on the mystery of the "crazy" love of God for us which found expression in the Incarnation, life and death of Jesus, and, as mentioned earlier, all creation.

***O God of Loveliness* is therefore for the reader a source of inspiration on the meaning of God's love as seen in the seasons such as Christmas and Lent and in the lives of the saints, for example Saint Joseph and Saint Gerard.**

For the Christmas season the poem, The Birth of Our Saviour calls us to return God's love. Alphonsus addresses God who became a baby "in order to be loved"; a God who says to us as we reflect on his birth: "Courage, I have forgiven you."

This poem, as they all do, expresses a theology of a God of love who became human out of love, and in a desire to be loved. In a Lenten poem, The Mother of Sorrows (p.107) Mary, as she accompanies Jesus to the crucifixion, speaks to us: "This is my son who doesn't deserve this scorn and sorrow, but only love."

Alphonsus's wish "to draw all hearts to love" is a constant theme throughout these poems. His own craving to love God throbs through Father Corbett's selection. In this present historical period Alphonsus provides us with insights (which we all yearn for) into the meaning and purpose of love, where to find it, how to live it.

For Alphonsus, God is a God of Loveliness, not a God of Harshness, Pettiness, Greediness, Selfishness, Competitiveness or any other "ness," save that of Love. Father Corbett is to be thanked for opening to us these profound reflections from Saint Alphonsus.



# On Christmas Eve more than 100,000 Australians will be homeless

The phenomena of homelessness and housing/rental stress is on the rise in 'the lucky country'...

The Salvation Army estimate that over 100,000 Australians will be homeless tonight. Of these, 42% are under 24-years-old and 17,845 are children under 12. The largest 'immediate' social factor associated with homelessness in Australia is domestic and family violence.

The twice-yearly rental affordability index, compiled by National Shelter, Community Sector Banking and SGS Economics and Planning, concludes: "There's virtually no affordable housing in any capital city for people on low incomes."

Housing stress is evident even among renters further up the income scale, too.

"There are moderate-income Australians as well, paying 40, 50, 60 per cent of their income just to rent housing," National Shelter's executive officer Adrian Pisarski says.

Various economic factors have exacerbated the homelessness and housing/rental stress problem: investment policy levers like negative gearing; investors, particularly foreign ones who purchase properties and leave them vacant; lack of government investment in public housing; rapidly appreciating property prices; low wage growth and the failure of welfare payments to keep up with even a modest increase in wages.

**The gross impact of these factors is growing economic inequality. What I am contending here is hotly contested. In July the Federal Treasurer, Scott Morrison said he did not accept "this idea that people and inequality and incomes have been going in the wrong direction – that's not borne out by the facts".**

According to the accepted global measure of inequality, the Gini coefficient, said Morrison, "it hasn't got worse ... it's

actually got better". It's a view supported by the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA).

**While there are 'lies damned lies and statistics' about the growth or otherwise of income inequality, it's clear that wealth inequality is growing fast, despite what the IPA, Scott Morrison or the bankers of the rich might say.**

Consequently, younger Australians are increasingly locked out of home ownership. Further - because our whole retirement incomes policy is predicated on people owning their home outright at retirement - there has been a real increase in the amount of homelessness among older people and particularly older women, who don't have much super and don't own a house.

Providing adequate housing for the community is an important mission in the Judeo Christian tradition. The prophet Isaiah foresees God's community as being a place where "They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Isaiah 65:21-22.

**"They will not build and another inhabit; they will not plant and another eat;" 65:21-22.**

As we prepare for Christmas, we focus our attention on the Holy Family. Seen without the lens of faith, Mary is an unmarried pregnant teenager. In their journey to Bethlehem and after their arrival, Joseph, Mary and the new born Jesus are homeless, having to fend for themselves in a lean-to. Yet, as Christians, we also see in Mary, Joseph and Jesus the very nature of God. And by extension we encounter God in the faces of the growing homeless here in Australia and the plight of the Rohingya - and we are invited to respond.

Perhaps a personal story will help here - embellished to illustrate the point.

My uncle and aunt volunteered for the Exodus Foundation, founded to support the 'homeless' around Ashfield, Sydney. A Christmas some 25 years ago my aunt was heartbroken. Due to the unexpected cyclone, the airports were closed and their son in North Queensland, the one for whom she had baked the turkey, and the pies and all the rest would not be joining them for Christmas.

When the coordinator of Exodus called to see if she had heard any news, my aunt told her the sad story, barely able to fight back her tears.

**Providing adequate housing for the community is an important mission in the Judeo Christian tradition. The prophet Isaiah foresees God's community as being a place where "They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Isaiah 65:21-22.**

"Jack may not get here for two or three days," she said. "What was to be our very best Christmas is on the way to being our very worst," said my aunt with some bitterness in her voice.

"I'm very sorry that the storm will keep him away from home," said the coordinator "but maybe this bad news can come to some good."

"How?" asked my aunt.

"I've just found out that we have nobody to work at the Homeless Shelter tonight. George always does it, every Christmas, but George is in bed with the flu. There's just no one else. Everyone else is with - well, family. Is there anyway that you might help?" asked the coordinator.

My aunt felt some resentment that the coordinator would be so cold as to move

so quickly from sharing her disappointment to asking her to do this job. But what had she to lose? She said yes and included my uncle in on the deal. In an hour, they were down at the Homeless Shelter, serving soup, opening out cots. Normally, she had helped at the Shelter during the day on Thursday mornings. This was her first time at night, and Christmas Eve, of all nights.

She thought of Jack and her disappointment at how Christmas had turned out. The Shelter was not too crowded tonight; some of the regulars had managed to find a place to go. But



there was plenty to do, being sure that the dozen or so men who had gathered were fed, folding out the cots, explaining the rules again.

About 10 or 11 that night, a couple appeared at the door, a man and a woman no one had seen before. They were on their way to Kempsey, they explained,

when their car broke down. For a couple of nights they had stayed at a cheap hotel in Sydney. Then their money was gone and the car was still not fixed. They had nowhere to go. Could they stay here?

"Of course," said my aunt as she welcomed them in. They were hungry, tired and pitiful looking as they slurped up the soup she served them. She talked with them. They told her about their car. She told them about the cyclone and her disappointment because Jack could not be with her. They had a daughter they said, living somewhere they weren't sure where. They each consoled one another on the difficulties of parents and grown children.

My aunt found a box of biscuits on one of the shelves. They opened them, passed them around the room and there was an amazing degree of cheer, considering the place, the night, the circumstances.

Then it occurred to her. Here. Christmas Eve. A shelter for the homeless. The couple before her could have been on their way to Bethlehem as easily as they were on their way to Kempsey. Here, before her, thought Martha, were Mary and Joseph.

When all were asleep, about midnight, before she lay down on her cot by the kitchen counter to try and sleep, my aunt looked out the window of the Centre. It was night, but a bright moon was shining. The city was quiet, very quiet. And my aunt found herself at peace. Despite everything, this Christmas Eve had not been a waste. God had been here, even here.

**Before slipping off to sleep, she heard herself say, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favours."**

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# Kildare puts a fresh spin on a Shakespeare classic



Claudio (Sam Campbell-McCrea), Hero (Briar Kurta), Beatrice (Molly Garry), Benedick (Sam Butt)

**Fifteen Kildare Drama students from Year 9 to Year 11 worked hard after hours in the first half of Term Four to bring Shakespeare's famous comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* to life.**

The play is full of misunderstandings, moments of unrequited love, witty altercations between jilted lovers and a group of bumbling security guards to top things off.

For some of the cast such as Sam Butt (who played Benedick); Molly Garry (Beatrice); Briar

Kurta (Hero) and Meg Emery (Margaret) this is their second Shakespeare performance after acting in last year's *Twelfth Night*.

For others like Gabby King (who played Dogberry) and Tom Gardiner (Don Pedro) this was their first time on stage. Meanwhile Jordan McDonald (Leonato) and Tom O'Brien (Don John) crossed over from the backstage world to the onstage world for this year's production.

Stage crew Jacinta Byrne,



Borachio (Clare Gaynor) is arrested by Seacoal (Hailie-Jane Leddin)

Catherine O'Brien and Josiah Gray took the opportunity to develop skills and timing delivering ambient music and evocative lighting for the show.

The production ran for seven nights in the Kildare Hall in November and had excellent audience attendance.

Next year we will be working on the 'Scottish Tragedy' *Macbeth* for Kildare Catholic College's Shakespeare production – **Michael Mack, Head of Drama, KCC, Wagga Wagga**



Above: Claudio (Sam Campbell-McCrea) confronts Don John (Tom O'Brien). Below: Ursula (Clare Gaynor), Hero (Briar Kurta) & Margaret (Meg Emery) plot a way to trick Beatrice



Above: The cast and crew of *Much Ado About Nothing*  
Below: Ursula (Clare Gaynor) shares some good news with Beatrice (Molly Garry) and Benedick (Sam Butt)



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# Christmas Mass Times 2017

## Cathedral Parish

### St Michael's Cathedral

24 December - 12:15pm, Vigil 6:00pm, 8:00pm and Midnight - Carols commencing at 11:30pm  
25 December - 8:00am, 10:00am and 5:30pm

### Carmelite Monastery

24 December - 9:00pm Vigil  
25 December - 9:30am

### Mt Erin Chapel

24 December - Midnight Latin Mass

### St Mary's Chapel - Vianney College

25 December - 9:00am

### St Michael's Cathedral Reconciliation

19 December - 12:00pm-12:40pm  
20 December - 12:00pm-12:40pm  
21 December - 12:00pm-12:40pm  
22 December - 12:00pm-12:40pm  
23 December - 11:00am-12:00pm; and 4:30pm - 5:30pm

## Koorinal Parish

### Sacred Heart Church

20 December - 7:00pm 2nd Rite of Reconciliation  
24 December - 8:00pm Vigil Mass  
25 December - 8:30am and 10:00am

### Mater Dei Primary School Hall

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil Mass

## South Wagga Parish

### Our Lady of Fatima Church

20 December - 10:00am Second Rite of Reconciliation  
24 December - 7:00pm Outdoor Family Mass - Henschke Primary School Oval; 9:00pm Our Lady of Fatima Church; and 10:30pm Syro Malabar Rite  
25 December - 10:30am (in Church)

### St Patrick's Church Uranquinty

25 December - 8:30am

## West Wagga Parish

### Holy Trinity Church

Confessions: 21 December - 7:30pm and 22 December - 11:00am-12:00 noon  
24 December - Christmas Vigil 6:45pm; Midnight Mass 12:00am  
25 December - 9:00am and 5:30pm

### San Isidore

25 December - 8:00am

### Collingullie

25 December - 9:30am

### Loretto Home of Compassion

25 December - 10:30am

### Come to Bethlehem

22, 23 & 24 December - 8:00pm - 9:30pm Holy Trinity School Grounds

## Albury Parish

### St Patrick's Church

24 December - Sunday morning Masses as usual, 5:30pm Family Mass, 7:30pm Vigil Mass, 12:00am Midnight Mass  
25 December - 9:30am and 5:30pm  
**Latin Adoration Chapel**  
25 December - 12:00am Latin Mass  
Reconciliation 30 mins before and during Masses.

## Coolamon Parish

### Marrar - St Patrick's Church

24 December - 6:00pm

### Coolamon - St Michael's Church

24 December - 8:00pm (School Grounds)  
25 December - 9:00am

## Corowa Parish

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil

## Culcairn Parish

### Culcairn

24 December - 8:00pm

### Henty

25 December - 9:30am

### Walla Walla

25 December - 11:30am

## Darlington Point Parish

### Coleambally

24 December - 8:00pm Christmas Vigil

### Darlington Point

23 December - 6:00pm  
24 December - 6:00pm Christmas Vigil

## Finley Parish

24 December - 6:00pm Children's Mass  
25 December - 10:15am

## Holbrook Parish

### Bowna

24 December - 6:00pm

### Holbrook

24 December - 8:00pm  
25 December - 8:00am

## Howlong Parish

### St Brigid's Howlong

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil

### Walbundrie

25 December - 9:00am

## Ganmain Parish

### Ganmain

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil  
24 December - 12:00am Midnight Mass  
25 December - 9:00am

## Ganmain Confession Times:

23 December - 9:00-10:00am (Visiting Priest)  
24 December - 5:00-5:55pm; 11:30-11:55pm

## Griffith Parish

### Sacred Heart Church Griffith

24 December - 6:00pm and 10:00pm  
25 December - 7:30am, 9:00am (Italian), 10:30am and 6:00pm

### Marian Catholic College Chapel

24 December - 6:00pm  
25 December - 9:00am  
Confessions every Friday 4:30pm-5:30pm; every Saturday 11:30am-12:30pm 21 December - 7:00pm Second Rite (5 Priests)

## Jerilderie Parish

24 December - 10:30am Weekend Parish Mass  
25 December - 9:00am

## Junee Parish

### St Joseph's Church Junee

24 December - 7:00pm Vigil  
25 December - 9:30am

### St Joseph's School Hall

24 December - 5:00pm Vigil Mass for children and their families

## Lavington Parish

### Holy Spirit Church Lavington

24 December - 6:00pm and 9:00pm  
25 December - 9:00am

### St Mary's Church Jindera

24 December - 6:00pm  
25 December - 9:00am

## Leeton Parish

### St Joseph's Church Leeton

Confessions - Every Friday 4:45pm-5:15pm; Every Saturday 5:30pm-5:50pm (before Mass)  
21 December - 6:00pm Communal Penitential Service with Reconciliation  
24 December - 10:00am, 6:00pm Christmas Vigil  
25 December - 10:00am

### St Patrick's Church Yanco

24 December - 8:00am  
25 December - 8:00am

## Lockhart Parish

### St Mary's Church Lockhart

24 December - 9:00pm Vigil  
25 December - 9:00am

## Mulwala Parish

24 December - 8:30pm

## Narrandera Parish

### Narrandera

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil  
25 December - 9:30am

### Grong Grong

24 December - 8:00pm Vigil

### Galore

25 December - 8:00am

## North Albury Parish

### St Anne's Primary School Hall

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil

### Sacred Heart Church

24 December - 9:00pm  
25 December - 9:30am

## The Rock Parish

### The Rock - St Mary's Church

24 December - 6:00pm Carols; 6:30pm Vigil Mass  
25 December - 8:00am Latin Mass; 10:00am

## Thurgoona Parish

24 December - Vigil 7:00pm, Midnight Mass  
25 December - 9:30am

## Tocumwal Parish

24 December - 8:00pm Vigil Mass  
25 December - 8:30am

## Tumbarumba Parish

24 December - 6:00pm Vigil  
Midnight Mass 12:00am  
25 December - 9:00am

## Urana Parish

### St Fiacre's Church Urana

24 December - 6:30pm Vigil

## Yenda Yoogali Hanwood Parish

### Yoogali

24 December - 8:00pm  
25 December - 10:00am

### Hanwood

24 December - 5:00pm  
25 December - 8:00am

### Yenda

24 December - 6:30pm

Please note that Christmas Mass times were true and correct at the time of printing. For further clarification, please check parish bulletins and noticeboards closer to the date.

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# One hundred years later, St Joseph's, Leeton celebrates its centenary

by **MaryJane Simms**

*Principal, St Joseph's, Leeton*

**When St Joseph's Primary School, Leeton opened in October 1917, the settlement of Leeton was just six years old.**

Three young Sisters of St Joseph arrived in town in October and within days were providing an education to the children of the growing community of Leeton.

The first classes were held outdoors under the shade of a tree. There was no school and no playground - just three courageous young Sisters of St Joseph, here to do God's work.

In the years to follow, countless Sisters of St Joseph continued their fine tradition.

**To celebrate 100 years since the Sisters of St Joseph began teaching the children of Leeton and district, a weekend of celebrations took place on October 21 and 22.**

The weekend's activities began with a barbeque organised by St Joseph's School Council. After the barbeque, past and present staff, students and families took the opportunity to take guided tours of the school. A very popular stop on the tours was the Music Room where a memorabilia display of desks,

uniforms, photos and schoolbooks through the ages was set up.

St Joseph's Principal, Mrs MaryJane Simms thanked the Leeton community for sharing their St Joseph's memorabilia with the school for the centenary weekend, particularly local historian Chris Senti who provided desks and other items from as far back as the 1930s.

The official centenary ceremony included a performance by the St Joseph's School Band and a polished address by the 2017 school captains. In his address, the Director of the Catholic Schools Office, Alan Bowyer celebrated the work of the Sisters of St Joseph throughout the history of the school.

A highlight of the celebrations was the opening of a time capsule from the Bicentenary Year, 1988. Former principal Sr Gerardine Agnew, who was principal of St Joseph's in 1988, said: "I remember when we laid this time capsule in and I did not expect to be here when it was opened again!"

Apart from smelling slightly musty, the items retrieved from the capsule were in absolutely perfect condition. During the official ceremony, families with personally addressed letters from the 1988 time capsule were called forward

and were presented with these letters. Those gathered also had the opportunity to place a letter in the 2042 time capsule and many people came forward to do so. Mrs Lydia Reberger, a former St Joseph's pupil, aged 91, and Violet Nardi (the youngest St Joseph's student), came together to cut the centenary cake. The official ceremony concluded with the choir performing the St Joseph's school song, *The Light Inside Us*.

The centenary dinner at the MIA Club was attended by 170 past and present families and staff. A wall of photos of former staff and students caused great interest among those gathered, and a laminated placemat at each place setting contained photos and historical trivia questions across the 100 years of the life of our school. MC Rob Houghton did an outstanding job, roaming the tables and eliciting memories ranging from hilarious to poignant.

On Sunday morning the St Joseph's community gathered for Mass to give thanks for 100 years of Catholic education at St Joseph's school. Former St Joseph's student, Father Tony Schipp gave the homily, returning to his old school to concelebrate Mass with Father Anthony Dunne.

The music ministry was a highlight, led by former St Joseph's staff member, Irene Arnold. Past and present members of staff took on leading roles in the liturgy alongside St Joseph's school captains, parents, grandparents, school council and parish council members. The sisters of St Joseph were well represented at the Mass.

Following Mass, a relaxed morning tea was held in the school grounds, organised by Jenny Houghton, Polly Greatz and St Joseph's Parents and Friends Association. Tours of the school brought the weekend of celebrations to a close.

The centenary weekend was an unqualified success and was the result of many months of planning and organisation. So many people gave their skills and talents to bring each of the parts of the weekend together.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the centenary committee, particularly Michelle Naimo, whose leadership throughout the planning of the centenary events was inspirational.

**I would also like to thank every member of the St Joseph's community for making the centenary such a wonderful success.**



Above: Former students, parents and current students enjoyed the Centenary weekend

Below: Students admire the Centenary pathway at St Joseph's School



## Word Search answers from page 22

M	R	U	C	H	P	E	S	O	J
W	I	S	E	M	E	N	B	E	A
H	M	R	S	A	W	N	T	R	D
O	S	T	A	B	L	E	U	E	V
Y	R	A	M	C	R	E	R	G	E
Y	H	B	M	A	L	Y	S	N	N
A	N	G	E	L	V	E	C	A	T
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	J



Michelle Naimo, St Joseph's RE Coordinator and Louise Dooley



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# KIDS corner

Thank you so much for your wonderfully coloured pictures and word search entries:



Claire McLaurin - Age: 5



Amelia McLaurin - Age: 9  
St Joseph's Primary, Lockhart



Millie Mott - Age: 8  
Lake Albert Primary, Lake Albert



Yvette McLaurin - Age: 7  
St Joseph's Primary, Lockhart



## Recipe...

### Berry Santas

- Cut the top third off each berry and put aside. Stand berry bases on a serving platter.
- Beat cream cheese and icing sugar with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy.
- Pipe or spoon 1 teaspoon of mixture onto flat tops of berries on platter. Top mixture with reserved berry tops. Use the smallest piping nozzle to pipe mixture onto the tip of each strawberry 'hat' to form pompom and onto chest to form buttons.
- Use tweezers to place 2 choc bits, flat-side facing out, onto each cream face to form eyes. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

#### Ingredients:

20 medium to large strawberries,  
hulled to form a flat base  
100g Philadelphia cream cheese  
4-6 teaspoons icing sugar  
20 mini dark-choc bits

## Jokes...

**What keeps rock stars cool?**  
Answer: Their fans!

**How did the ocean say goodbye?**  
Answer: It waved.

**What has two hands but no arms?**  
Answer: A clock.

**What type of jam can't be eaten?**  
Answer: A traffic jam!

**We had these two funny jokes sent to us from the McLaurin children:**

**What animals didn't come in pairs on Noah's Ark?**  
Answer: Worms, they come in apples.

**What do you call an apple crumb when it's tired?**  
Answer: Apple grumble!

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

Together Editor  
PO Box 473  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

**We'd love to hear from you!**

## Word Search

M	R	U	C	H	P	E	S	O	J
W	I	S	E	M	E	N	B	E	A
H	M	R	S	A	W	N	T	R	D
O	S	T	A	B	L	E	U	E	V
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Bethlehem  
Manger  
Miracle

Wise Men  
Stable  
Angel

Advent  
Joseph  
Mary



# Pope Francis names Fr Brian Mascord fifth Bishop of Wollongong



**The Holy Father has appointed Fr Brian Mascord, currently the Vicar General of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, the fifth Bishop of Wollongong.**

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Denis Hart said Bishop-Elect Mascord brings a wealth of experience in parish ministry, education, chaplaincy and governance.

“Fr Mascord has been a fine, hard-working parish priest for many years and will be a worthy Bishop of Wollongong. I congratulate him on his appointment on behalf of the Australian bishops,” Archbishop Hart said.

“I also wish to acknowledge Bishop Peter Ingham, who is in his 25th year as a bishop and has spent the last 16 years as shepherd to the faithful in Wollongong. Bishop Ingham has been a source of energy and joy and holiness for his people, his priests and his brother bishops.”

Bishop-Elect Mascord said priests who have spent time with Bishop Ingham have often sought to emulate his approach.

“I look up to Bishop Ingham as a pastoral priest and a pastoral bishop, and the example he gives in his ministry and life as priest and bishop is something I’ve admired,” he said.

Bishop-Elect Mascord said he will come to a Church with which he is familiar, with the Wollongong Diocese taking in cities, towns and country areas, as Maitland-Newcastle does.

“I look forward to encountering people who have that ‘down-to-earthness’ that comes with the diversity of the people who live in coastal, city and rural areas,” he said.

“As Bishop-Elect of Wollongong, meeting the people of the Diocese, getting to know them and sharing in their faith journey is my first priority. That process will begin next week.”

**“Fr Mascord has been a fine, hard-working parish priest for many years and will be a worthy Bishop of Wollongong. I congratulate him on his appointment on behalf of the Australian bishops,” Archbishop Hart said.**



*Fr Brian Mascord*

Bishop-Elect Mascord was born and raised in Newcastle. After being educated in Catholic schools, he gained a diploma of teaching at the Catholic College of Education in Castle Hill, spending six years teaching in a Catholic primary school.

He later continued his studies at St Patrick’s College in Manly and was ordained for the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle in 1992, where he has spent his entire priestly ministry.

In addition to parish appointments across many parts of the Diocese, Bishop-Elect Mascord has served as vocations director since 2007 and has been Vicar General since 2012. He has been a long-standing member of the Council of Priests and is currently a member of the diocesan Clergy Life and Ministry Team and the National Council for Clergy Life and Ministry.

In announcing Bishop-Elect Mascord’s appointment, Pope Francis also accepted Bishop Ingham’s resignation. Bishop Ingham will serve as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Wollongong until Bishop-Elect Mascord’s Episcopal Ordination. A date for the Ordination has not yet been confirmed.

## Principals to swap schools for two years

**Two primary school principals in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga have agreed to participate in a new professional learning opportunity by sharing their experiences and skills in another school setting.**

**Mr Paul Spain will be Acting Principal of St Brendan’s Primary School, Ganmain for the 2018 school year.**

Paul has been with the Diocese of Wagga Wagga since 2013 and has been Assistant Principal at St Joseph’s Primary School, Wagga Wagga since 2014. Prior to commencing with the Diocese, Paul worked overseas as a teacher and team leader at the Australian International School in Hong Kong from 2005-2012; St Kevin’s College, Toorak, Melbourne; Canberra Grammar School and McAuley Catholic Central School, Tumut.

**Mr Peter Hunt has been appointed Acting School Service Officer, Learning and Teaching – Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Catholic Schools Office, Wagga Wagga for the 2018 school year.**

A graduate of Charles Sturt

As of 2018, **Mr Rob Unsworth**, principal of St Patrick’s Primary School, Holbrook and **Mrs Marie Cameron**, principal of St Patrick’s Parish School, Albury will swap schools accordingly for a period of two years’ secondment.

University, Peter successfully completed the Emerging Principals program through QELi in 2017.

After commencing as a teacher at St Michael’s Regional High School in Wagga in 2001, Peter has been a member of the Kildare Catholic College staff since 2004. At Kildare he has been Pastoral Care Leader; Leader of Academic Care and Wellbeing and Leader of Curriculum as well as Acting Assistant Principal.

**Mr Danny Malone has been appointed Acting School Consultant at CSO for 2018.**

Danny has been with the Diocese of Wagga Wagga since 1991 when he commenced at Henschke Primary School as a teacher and then Co-ordinator. In 1996 Danny was appointed Assistant Principal at Mater Dei Primary School and then Acting

Mr Mark MacLean, Acting Director of Schools, said it is an exciting model of leadership which will benefit both principals, the two schools and most importantly all students.

Principal in 2003, followed by the Principal position in 2004.

Previously Danny worked at Coleambally Central School and Junee and Tolland Public Schools.

**Mr Sam Heffernan has gained the Sport and Recreation Traineeship for 2018 at the Catholic Schools Office, Wagga Wagga where he has commenced work.**

Sam was a Year 12 student at Kildare Catholic College where his sporting achievements included being captain of the Hardy Shield Team; representing Kildare in the Carroll Cup; swimming; athletics; soccer; touch; cricket and playing Rugby Union.

He has also worked for the Wagga Touch Association as a referee and as a sales representative and tour guide at the Junee Licorice Factory.

## Tony Hickey and Fr Louis Guardiola C.P.M. to visit Diocese in 2018



*Luisa Piccarreta*

**English Catholic Professor of Theology and Sacred Scripture from Manchester, Tony Hickey will visit Wagga Wagga Diocese in January to give a series of talks on the message of the Divine Will as presented by the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta.**

Tony gave a number of talks at St Michael’s Cathedral Parish Centre, Wagga Wagga in January 2017 and is returning to give talks in Griffith, Ganmain and Albury with the permission of the priests in their respective parishes.

Since 1992 Tony Hickey has been giving retreats and conferences in many places including England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the United

States, Australia, New Zealand and Samoa. Before embarking on giving conferences and retreats full-time, Tony was Examiner and Coordinator for Religious Studies with NWREB (North West Regional Examination Board, England).

Tony has visited a number of dioceses in Australia during the last several years to speak about the message of the Divine Will as presented by the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, an Italian mystic also known as “The Little Daughter of the Divine Will” who was born in 1865 and died in 1947.

Tony will speak on the following dates and times:

Griffith: Tuesday 23 January 7:30pm-9:30pm;

Ganmain: Wednesday 24 January 12pm-3pm;

Albury: Wednesday 24 January 6:30-8:30pm and Thursday 25 January 9:30am-12pm.

**For further information please contact Fr Justin Darlow on (02) 6927 6438.**



*Fr Louis Guardiola C.P.M.*

**Parish Missions**

Fr Louis Guardiola C.P.M. from the Fathers of Mercy is scheduled to visit the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in April and May 2018 to conduct parish missions over three weeks in the following locations:

Ganmain: April 14-19;

Narrandera: April 21-26;

Lavington: April 28 - May 3.

The usual format of a parish mission consists of evening talks with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the opportunity for Confession.

**For details please contact the individual parishes.**



# Secret Recipes Shared

*These beautiful recipes have been passed down through the generations and have been gifted exclusively to us under strict instructions not to reveal the source. We hope you enjoy adding these to your family traditions at Christmas.*



## Rum or Brandy Balls

### Ingredients:

- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup brandy or rum
- 1 packet vanilla wafers crushed
- 2 cups finely chopped walnuts
- 1 cup icing sugar

### Method:

Over simmering water melt chocolate chips and milk stirring until smooth. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla wafers and brandy or rum until well blended.

Roll dough in small balls and roll in chopped walnuts and icing sugar. Store covered in refrigerator.

## Rum Balls

### Ingredients:

- 125 grams margarine
- 250 grams icing sugar
- Rum to taste
- Few crushed nuts, sultanas or raisins, some crushed biscuits or sponge

### Method:

Place all ingredients in a bowl, stir well with a knife. Roll into balls and roll in chocolate sprinkles. Place in patty pans and refrigerate to set.



### Ingredients:

- 5 cups (1kg) mixed dried fruit
- 1 cup brandy
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup (200 grams) firmly packed brown sugar
- 300ml sour cream
- 2 ¼ cups (335 grams) plain flour
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon bicarb of soda

### Method:

Grease a 2 litre (8 cup) pudding steamer and line base with baking paper. Place mixed fruit and brandy into a large bowl, stir, cover and microwave on high for 3 minutes, stirring once or until fruit is plump.

Beat eggs and brown sugar with electric mixer until thick and creamy. Add egg mixture to the fruit. Stir in sour cream and sifted dry ingredients. Spoon mixture into prepared steamer.

Place 30cm x 40cm sheet of foil on bench top, top with a sheet of baking paper. Fold 5cm pleat crossways through the centre of both sheets. Place sheets of baking paper side down over steamer, secure lid and seal well.

Place steamer in a large boiler with enough boiling water to come half way up the side of steamer. Cover boiler with tight lid and steam for 5 hours. Replenish water as necessary and stand pudding 15 minutes before turning out to cool.

## Easy Christmas Pudding



## Easy Fruit Slice

### Ingredients:

- 3 ozs margarine melted
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups self raising flour
- 1 cup mixed fruit
- 1 beaten egg with a little milk

### Method:

Mix all together, add more milk if needed, until mixture is just smooth. Put into a greased and lined slice tin and bake in a moderate oven 180 degrees for about 25-30 minutes depending on oven.

# Switch off power and help save our koalas



**William Langridge is a young man on a mission to save Australia's endangered koalas.**

**The Year 5 student at Sacred Heart Primary School, Koorngal has written, published and distributed a leaflet to educate people about Koala conservation especially the impact of CO2 emissions on gum leaves which are the koala's staple diet.**

Will's leaflet reads:

‘Hi my name is William. I’m aged 11 and I want to be conservationist with Australia’s native animals like the Koala Bear. I learnt there are less than 100,000 left in the

wild and many of the reasons are habitat destruction, domestic dog attacks, bushfires and road accidents.

‘However the reason why I wrote this is we can all help save the koalas by simply turning off a power switch in your home when not in use.

‘When you turn on your power, CO2 emissions are released that take out all the nutrients in the gum leaves. This is a major impact on the Koala Bear’s life.’

**So turn off your power switches when you are not using them and help to save Australia's koalas form starvation.**



*Will Langridge discovered his love of koalas at a young age*



# Presentation Sisters Remembered



Wagga Wagga Presentation Sisters beside the cemetary at Kildare with Gus the dog.



The Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga celebrated their Feast Day, the Presentation of Mary last month with a pilgrimage to their sisters' gravesites across Wagga Wagga.

A moving liturgy and

memorial ceremony was held at Kildare Catholic College to celebrate the restoration of the cemetery where 12 of the first Sisters who were members of the Mount Erin Convent community are buried. Full report in the February 2018 Together.


The entire team at

# TOGETHER

would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very


# Merry Christmas

and to remind you that there will be no issue of Together in January and the next issue will be available in February 2018.



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# The 5 Day Catholic Parenting Challenge

*The 5 Day Catholic Parenting Challenge is an online video challenge designed to joyfully encourage Catholic parents in their sacred task.*

### How Does It Work?

Once someone signs up at <https://evango.net/catholic-parenting-challenge/> the participant receives their daily challenge via email, where they can either watch the video or read the text.

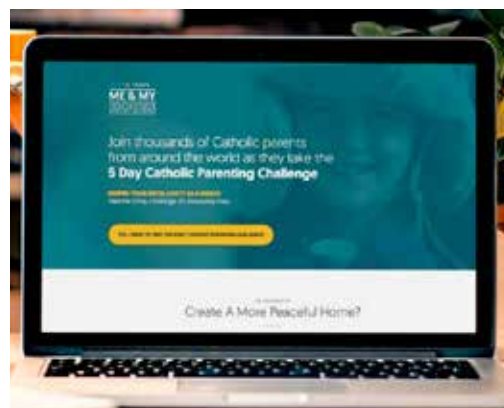
It takes less than 5 minutes to view the Challenge for the day. The daily challenges are simple to do, and for the most part can be accomplished in a matter of minutes.

The participant also has access to other parenting handouts.

The participant has access to a Facebook group with Catholic parents from around the globe, who are intent on sharing, encouraging and brainstorming how to be better Catholic parents.

### How Could a Diocese Use It?

Dioceses (and their parishes) are encouraged to create a permanent link for the 5 Day Catholic Parenting Challenge on their websites, and make the Challenge known throughout Diocesan channels.



## evango

### Why Was the Challenge Created?

The Challenge was created because our apostolate has consistently heard from parents that they need help implementing the Faith in practical and simple ways. We thought that the Challenge would be a great way to get started.

### What Are We Hoping For?

We are hoping that dioceses and their parishes use this resource to encourage and motivate Catholic parents in their care. By making the Challenge known and available to them, we are confident that we will see more and more families engaged in the Faith.

### Who Created it?

The Challenge was created by Evango, a Catholic media organization which has as its aim to inspire and encourage Catholics to join in the New Evangelization.

The Host of the Challenge is Patrick Sullivan, a Catholic Lay Evangelist (also founder of Evango). Patrick is an author and international speaker who has appeared on EWTN and Shalom World Television.



# Pope: Let go of grudges, stop whining, find joy with Jesus

by Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service -  
National Catholic Reporter

**Vatican City — Christians must be strong and let go of all the bitterness and negativity that prevent them from experiencing God’s consolation and joy, Pope Francis said.**

“So many times, we cling to what’s negative, we hold on to the wound of sin inside of us, and many times, the preference is to stay there, alone,” he said in his homily Dec. 11 at morning Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Instead, Jesus always tells people to “get up” and have no fear, because he is there to offer salvation, consolation and joy, the pope said.

The pope’s homily focused on the day’s reading from Isaiah (35:1-10) in which the prophet foresaw the glory of the Lord, who will come “with vindication; with divine

recompense, he comes to save you.”

This is why people must “strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak” and “be strong, fear not” because of the coming of the Lord, the pope said.

Often it is easier, however, to console others than to let oneself be consoled because “we are afraid.”

“We are masters” when it comes to the negative, and impoverished “beggars” when it comes to the positive, he said.

There are two things that prevent people from letting themselves find solace with God: resentment and complaints, Francis said.

When people choose to be resentful and bitter, “we stew our feelings in that broth of bitterness,” preferring to

be left alone to sulk undisturbed and defeated, he said.

Then there are people like Jonah -- “the Nobel Prize winner of complaints” -- who choose to make griping and grumbling the soundtrack accompanying their lives, he said.

Francis said he once knew a priest who was a very good man, but he was “pessimism incarnate.”

He said this priest would always “find the fly in the milk,” that is, point out whatever was wrong or out of place.

His brother priests, the pope said, would joke that instead of greeting St. Peter in heaven, this priest would probably ask to see hell and then complain, “Oh, salvation, what a mess!” because of the lack of condemned souls there.

Instead, God asks people to be strong, get up and trust in him. People need to ask themselves, “How is my heart? Do I harbor some bitterness

there? Some sadness?” the pope said. And what is on one’s lips, he asked. “Is it praise to God, beauty or always complaints?”



Pope Francis prays during a prayer service at a statue of Mary near the Spanish Steps in Rome Dec. 8. (CNS/Paul Haring)

## Iraq: It’s now or never - please help Iraqi Christians return home

**FOR displaced Iraqi Christians forced from their homes and living in displacement camps, the moment they have been longing for has finally come.**

After three years of occupation, the terrorist group Islamic State (IS) has been driven out of the area. Now, thousands upon thousands of people have the chance to go back to their villages in the Nineveh Plains – their families’ homeland since before the time of Christ.

But the task of repair and renovation is huge and the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) – the largest contributor of emergency help since their escape from the Nineveh Plains – is determined to continue to stand with them.

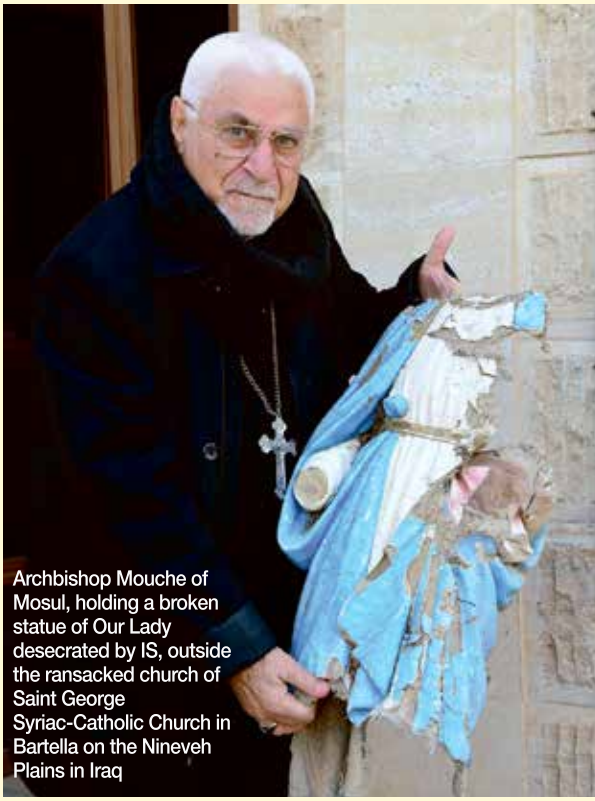
**It is now or never. Their future is in your hands.**

With your help, we can fulfil two key objectives. The first is to assist the work of the Christian Churches to roll out plans to restore thousands of homes devastated by IS, a vital step to enable the families to go back. The other is to continue providing emergency and pastoral aid for Christian families awaiting resettlement.

**Displaced communities in Erbil and elsewhere in Kurdish northern Iraq have been totally dependent on their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to survive.** Bishops and faithful alike are encouraged by the recent successes against IS in Mosul.

Thanking Aid to the Church in Need, Syriac Catholic Archbishop Petros Mouche of Mosul, whose flock make up 60 percent of the displaced community, said: “I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who can assist this work. **With your help, we will be able to rebuild our houses. It is a great mercy to know that we can count on your support.”**

**A beautiful olive wood Comfort Cross made in Bethlehem, will be sent to all those who assist this cause with a donation of \$20.00 or more and tick the box in the response coupon below.**



Archbishop Mouche of Mosul, holding a broken statue of Our Lady desecrated by IS, outside the ransacked church of Saint George Syriac-Catholic Church in Bartella on the Nineveh Plains in Iraq

The Comfort Crosses are handcrafted in Bethlehem from olive wood pruned from olive trees in the Holy Land. Comfort Crosses are designed to fit comfortably into the palm of one’s hand as an aid to prayer or meditation. It is ideal as a spiritual companion for easing children’s fears, comforting the worries and stresses of adults and focusing the prayer of the sick and elderly. The Comfort Cross would also be a lovely gift idea for someone you love or care for. The Comfort Crosses (also known as the Hand Cross, Palm Cross or Healing Cross) are lovingly hand carved by poverty stricken families in Bethlehem and your donation helps them survive. (Size: 9 cm x 4.5 cm) If you would like to receive the Comfort Cross **please tick the box below.**

Send to: **Aid to the Church in Need, PO BOX 7246 Baulkham Hills BC, NSW 2153**

Phone/Fax No: (02) 9679-1929 E-mail: [info@aidtochurch.org](mailto:info@aidtochurch.org) Web: [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)

**I/We enclose \$..... to help Iraqi Christians return to their ancient homeland**

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to Aid to the Church in Need or please debit my Visa or Mastercard

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The Comfort Cross will be sent out to all those who can assist this cause with a donation of \$20.00 or more and tick this box ☐

Aid to the Church in Need .... a Catholic charity dependent on the Holy See, providing pastoral relief to needy and oppressed Churches

## Caritas Kitchen raises awareness and funds for most desperate

**More than \$2,000 was raised for Caritas Australia at a luncheon in St Michael’s Parish Centre, Wagga Wagga last month.**

The Caritas Kitchen fundraising initiative was organised by two friends, Michelle Fernon and Ruth Bailey, both of Wagga who were delighted with the success of the event.

About 50 people enjoyed the luncheon and were inspired by guest speaker Lulu Mitshabu, of Canberra who is Caritas Australia’s Africa Program Coordinator and Diocesan Engagement Coordinator.

Lulu spoke about her escape from her home in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1989 which she was forced to leave with two small children aged five and three and while pregnant with her third child.

Eventually Lulu and her family were resettled in Australia and lived for

several months at San Isidore near Wagga.

Lulu spoke about the Caritas Centre project in the DRC which supports and trains women to start a small business making crafts which they can sell to support their families and take control of their lives.

It is one of many international projects supported by Caritas Australia to empower women who are 55 percent of the world’s poor.

Michelle and Ruth are hoping the Caritas Kitchen will be an annual event in Wagga and others will host their own Caritas Kitchen fundraisers. **For more information about hosting a Caritas Kitchen visit [caritas.org.au/kitchen](http://caritas.org.au/kitchen) to register and receive your host pack.**



Group: From right Jenny Knowles, Marsha Reilly and Peggy Adamson with Caritas guest speaker, Lulu Mitshabu. From left: Michelle Fernon, Lulu Mitshabu and Ruth Bailey.



# Marian Catholic College farewells the class of 2017



*Marian Catholic College Class of 2017*

**Griffith's Marian Catholic College (MCC) community said goodbye to the graduates of Year 12, 2017 on Friday 17 November.**

It was a beautiful day that left each of us with lasting memories. A Graduation Mass at Marian Catholic College Chapel was shared by students, parents, family, friends and staff followed by a beautiful dinner at the Yoogali Club in Griffith. Many thanks to Fr Andrew Grace and our college chaplain Fr Christian Obiekwe for celebrating Mass.

This occasion was the final time our community would see Alan Bowyer, Director of Schools, Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Diocese of Wagga Wagga. Alan is retiring on December 31. He has been "at the helm" for the past 11 years and we thank him for his leadership. Eighty students graduated and were presented with their Graduation Diplomas by Mr Alan Le Brocque, principal of Marian Catholic College and Mr Alan Bowyer.

*Francine Dilorenzo,  
Marian Catholic College, Griffith*



*College Vice Captains Megan Beecher and Jack Martin at the MCC Graduation Mass*



*From left, Heath Neville, MCC Director of Mission; Alan Bowyer; Alan Le Brocque, MCC principal and Angela Morris, acting Year 12 coordinator at the graduation dinner.*



*Above: MCC Year 12 graduates, from left: Laura Raccanello, Ashley Piccinin, Lauren Zanesco, Sarina Napoli, Briana O'Keefe, Emma Papaolo and Khalia Ippoliti.*

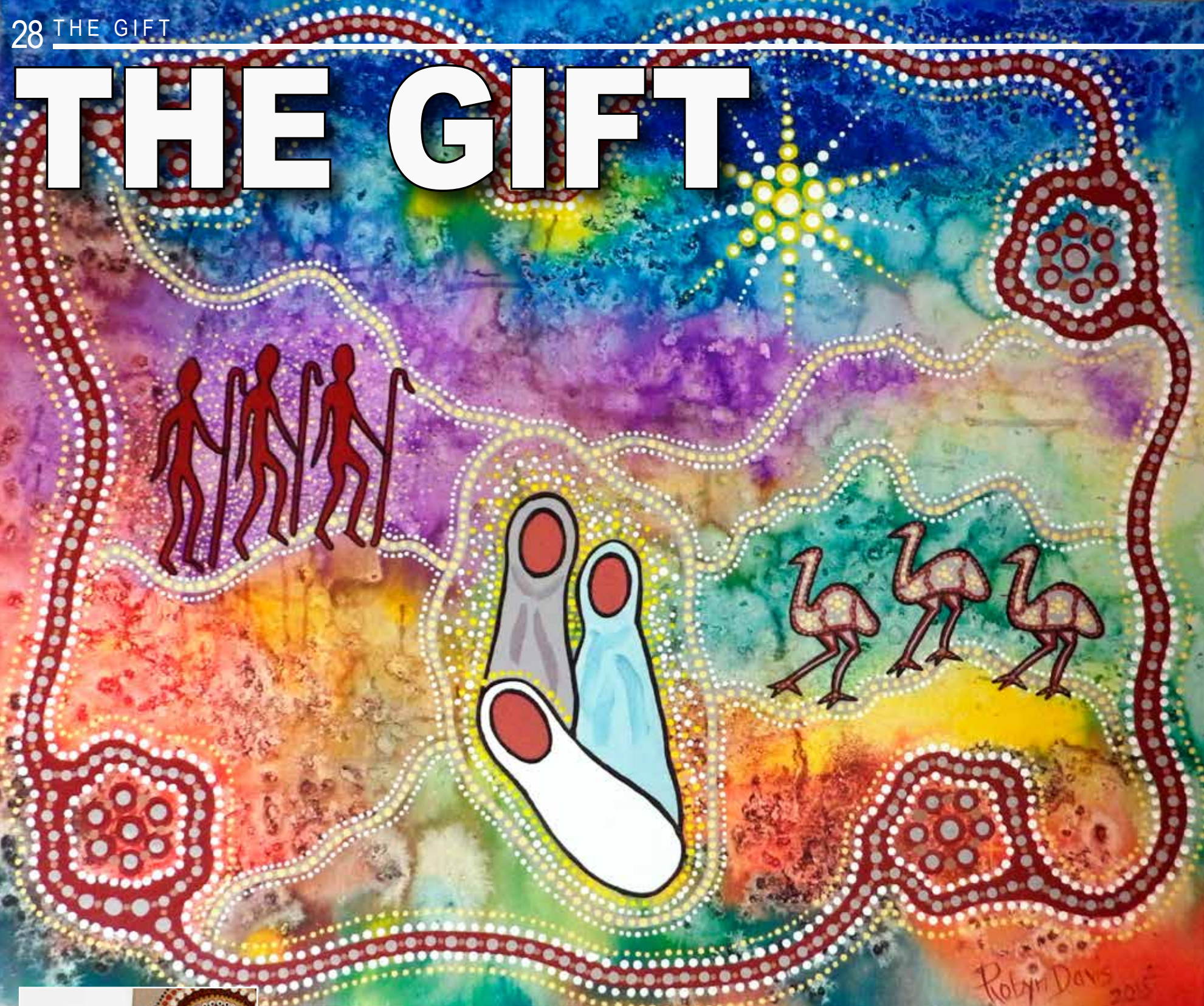
*Right: Left to right back row:*

*Joyal Abaham, Deap Singh, Sarah Connelly, Matthew Cercone, Gorav Bains, Erin Golden, Aiden Snaidero, Tom Catanzariti, Bradley Eldridge and Jack Martin. Front: Elizabeth Portolesi and Georgia De Paoli.*





# THE GIFT



Artist - Robyn Davis.

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby... an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them... The angel said to them “Do not be afraid I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today a savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord...” Luke 2:8-12

**The Gift by Balranald-based artist Robyn Davis is one of several artworks by aboriginal artists featured in Our Mob, God’s Story: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists Share Their Faith which has been published this year to celebrate the 200th anniversary of The Bible Society in Australia.**

The Bible Society’s Rural Indigenous Ministries Support Project (RIMS) is a major undertaking to provide scriptures to Australia’s first people in traditional languages. Proceeds

from the sale of *Our Mob, God’s Story* (<https://www.bibleshop.org.au/our-mob-god-s-story>) will support translations of the Bible into more aboriginal languages.

Robyn is a Wadi Wadi woman from the Balranald and Swan Hill area.

She has been painting and drawing for as long as she can remember.

“Painting is part of my life, my nature, my being and my spirit; it is inseparable from my Christian faith and Indigenous heritage.”

Her paintings are often of a spiritual nature and tell the

stories of life, relationships and culture and are internationally known.

“I have strong ties to the river and the bush. I love the red sand, the beautiful stunted forms of the mallee trees and the soft bluegrey of the saltbush. They are all part of my dreaming.”

Her clan totem is the platypus and personal totem is the sand goanna so she is truly a woman of the land and water.

Robyn is the Director of Walkabout Ministries; Indigenous Adviser to the Anglican Bishop of Bendigo; Koori liaison officer for

Bendigo Diocese; member of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council and board member of South West Arts NSW.

Robyn was ordained an Anglican priest in 2009 and believes that God has given her this gift as he gives all of us gifts.

**You will find a small gold cross in each of her paintings to acknowledge the true creator.**

**For more information about Rev. Robyn Davis artwork please contact her on 0431 155 456.**

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- Staff of John Hossack Funerals congratulate Wagga Wagga Diocese on it’s 100th Anniversary -