

JOURNEY

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG



Celebrating
our Parish
Secretaries,
on the *front line*
of our churches

PAGE 20



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EDITORIAL

- 3 Being the Voice and Face
of Christ by Our Service

FROM THE BISHOP

- 4 The Highest Honour of our Race

FEATURES

- 6 Why Porn Kills Love
10 Our Pilgrimage
to the Promised Land
14 A vote for the voiceless
16 There's something
about Mary Ellen
18 Love in the Family
20 Parish Secretaries
on the Front Line
22 What Happened at Appin?
24 I was a Stranger
and you Welcomed me

DIOCESAN & PARISH LIFE

- 5 St Francis Xavier Cathedral
Under Lights for Chrism Mass
9 Catholic Youth Revolution
Ready for Take-off
12 Packed to the Cathedral Rafters for
Fr Michael Dyer's Ordination
28 Ruse Parish Farewells their
"Good and Faithful Servant"
30 'Home Sweet Home' for Diocese's
Newest Parish in Oran Park
31 St Mary MacKillop's Sisters of
St Joseph Celebrate 150 years
36 Amazing Response to Diocese's
Weekly Small Group Resource
38 Growth and Strength

ROYAL COMMISSION

- 33 The Bad, the Good, and the Future

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- 8 Threads of Mercy
in our Catholic Schools
34 Wollongong to Los Angeles - 40,000
Experience God's 'Boundless Mercy'

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

- 32 Ignorance is *Not* Bliss

CATHOLIC CARE

- 26 Fillies and Fashion at the Races
27 CatholicCare Celebrates Volunteers

CATHOLIC MISSION

- 35 Guest Speakers Visit Wollongong
for Catholic Mission Church Appeal

CARITAS

- 37 Diocese Helping the Vulnerable
Through Project Compassion

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Being the Voice and Face of Christ by Our Service

BY JUDE HENNESSY



I had the great privilege last year of attending a Global Leadership Summit in the USA. It felt like I was drinking from a fire hose listening

to amazing experts such as Dr Brene Brown (Author of "Rising Strong"), Bill Hybels, (Willow Creek Church), Ed Catmull (President of Disney-Pixar), Jim Collins (Author of "Good to Great") and Liz Wiseman (CEO on Wall Street).

One of the speakers who most impressed me was Mr Horst Schulze. He is the former president of Ritz-Carlton International and now CEO of Capella Hotel group. What this guy doesn't know about service is not worth knowing. He started in the hotel industry as a 14 year old bell boy having come from a life of poverty in Germany in the post war period.

A couple things he said had a huge impact on me. One was the motto he had for all his staff. He wanted his staff to think of themselves as "ladies and gentlemen who served other ladies and gentlemen". In other words, he wanted the respect, care and service that were features of his hotel chains to be a result of those doing the serving knowing their own true worth.

Schulze would then go further and stress the point to all staff present – the waiters, the cleaners, the reception staff and the bell boys – saying, "If I don't turn up to work, no one will notice, but if you don't turn up to work, it's a disaster!" He was serious that if he, the head of the most successful international luxury hotel chain in the world, didn't turn up for work, no one would really care and the impact would be minimal. But he recognised that if his front-line staff were not there, as the face of his organisation, as ladies and gentlemen serving others, it would be catastrophic.



If I don't turn up to work, no one will notice, but if you don't turn up to work, it's a disaster!

Like Schulze, I've come to recognise that if I don't turn up for work no-one really notices, well not straight away! But if one of our catechists doesn't turn up, the students, the school and the parents notice and it has an impact on the mission of the Church.

If the volunteers for the many good works of CatholicCare stop putting their hands up to help, then the Church's witness to love by doing hard things with love and sacrifice, suffers massively.

If the teachers in our Catholic schools don't continue to go the extra mile and do the many things they do "when no-one is looking" because of their commitment to Catholic Education, then our schools lose their unique flavour and mission. If the Sisters of St Joseph don't get up and each day live out the vows that they made to serve God's people, particularly the most vulnerable, then our Church faces a crisis.

If the work of our parishes via our Refugee Response Coordinators, school communities and the work of CatholicCare was put in the too-hard basket, then we as a Church ignore the call of the Gospel to reach out in love to all people. If our parish secretaries who are at the front line of our local parishes don't turn up with a dedicated sense of vocation by being the voice and face of Christ each day to so many different people, then the care and love that is the authentic first point of evangelisation suffers dramatically.

For us as Catholic Christians, our love of God cannot be separated from love and service of our neighbours. As you read this edition of Journey, I hope that the many articles focusing on service, bring you a sense of pride in our Church and gratitude for those who are so dedicated to use their gifts and talents for the building up of the body of Christ. ■

Jude Hennessy is the Co-editor of Journey, Director of CCD & Evangelisation and Director of Parish Services, Diocese of Wollongong



BY BISHOP
PETER
INGHAM

Many of us
may not
be aware that
the Patron of
our Diocese is

the *Immaculate Heart of Mary*. What
a powerful thought that our Diocese
rests in the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

St Luke writes that Mary didn't
understand, yet treasured the memory
of her experience of giving birth to
the Son of God. Mary is the keeper of
memories. We need wise people to help
us keep alive the memories of God's
presence and activity in our lives, how
God delivered his people in difficult
times. We need people who, like the
Blessed Virgin, will tell over and over
again the old stories of faith that give
us hope again. Mary, the keeper of
memories, is still needed today.

Mary has remained persistent
through the twenty-one centuries
we have been around as the baptised
People of God. This is because the
Blessed Virgin is the first believer, the
first disciple of Jesus, the first one to
receive the Good News. Mary said
"yes" to the Angel Gabriel's message
and remained loyal to that "yes". For
this, right from the beginning, Mary
earned the place of deep respect
and honour in the early Church
community.

When asked about his mother, Jesus
said, "The one who does the will
of God is my mother, my brother,
my sister." (Mark 3:35) Being Jesus'
biological mother is secondary to
Mary's greatness in being faithful to
God's will, even when it cost her.

Think how Mary, on the edge of the
crowd, would have seen her Son
publicly humiliated carrying the cross.
She stood beneath the cross of her only
Son to try and give him some comfort.
I imagine Mary tearful, broken-hearted
and sobbing with grief. This is why
people can identify with Mary. Anyone
who is hurting, who knows loss, who
is oppressed, who has to suffer in
silence, can see in Mary a reflection of
themselves.



ARTWORK: 'IMMACULATE HEART' BY CHARLES BOSSERON CHAMBERS (1882 - 1964).

The Highest Honour of our Race

Remember how
Mary quizzed the Angel
Gabriel, "How can this be?"
(Luke 1:34) Haven't you and I
asked ourselves at times: How
can I attack this problem?
How can I start again? I don't know
what I am going to do? How can I
keep going? Aren't we asking the very
question that Mary asked?

Eastern Christianity called Mary
"Theotokos" – the God Bearer –
because she brought forth for the world
our Saviour. It is through her most basic
title, "Mother of God", that we identify
Mary. It is your role and mine also to
be a Christ bearer, to share Jesus with
others by our word and example – to be
a bearer of Christ's love.

Mary keeps-on-keeping-on because she
is ours. Jesus, dying on Calvary, gave her
to us. He turns to John to take care of
his mother after he is gone, "Son, this
is your mother." (John 19:27) Through
John, Jesus makes us the recipients of
his last and most treasured possession.
Jesus' mother is our mother. We are
never alone. You and I have a heavenly
mother – a mother of mercy.

So, behind the varied titles of Mary,
the many shrines to her around the
world, this woman is human like us, a
refugee from Herod, a wife of Joseph, a
mother, a widow, a parent nursing her
dead Son. You and I can identify with
Mary's hurts, her pain and suffering.
We love the Blessed Virgin because
she is one of us. She loves us because
her Son gave her to us. In the words
of William Wordsworth, "She is the
highest honour of our race." ■

Yours in Christ

+ Peter Ingham



Most Rev Peter W Ingham DD
Bishop of Wollongong

St Francis Xavier Cathedral Under Lights for Chrism Mass



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER



BY DANIEL HOPPER

It was an historic night for our annual Chrism Mass this year (23 March) as the Cathedral was lit up in a wash of purple and yellow in celebration of Pope Francis' Jubilee Year of Mercy. The joint production between *Pro Sound and Lighting Wollongong* and *Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong* marked the first time the Cathedral had ever been lit up in such a way. Bishop Peter Ingham said, "It is exciting to see the Cathedral under lights because it is a wonderful opportunity to highlight one of the great heritage and spiritual landmarks of Wollongong."

"Purple and yellow are deeply meaningful colours for the Church this

time of the year, as the former signifies a time of preparation, reflection and transformation, and the latter evokes the radiance of Christ and his life-giving power through his act of redemption and forgiveness at Easter."

The Chrism Mass, held each year at the Cathedral on the Wednesday night of Holy Week, gathers the entire Diocese (Bishop, priests, deacons and lay faithful) as the Bishop blesses the Oil of Chrism, the Oil of Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick, which are used for the Sacraments in the local parish communities throughout the year.

At the conclusion of the Chrism Mass the colours at the Cathedral were changed to the colours of the Belgian flag in tribute to the victims and

families of the terrorist attacks in Brussels that occurred the day before the Chrism Mass.

During the Mass, Bishop Ingham said, "It feels as if Good Friday has come three days early. I share the sentiments of Brussels Auxiliary Bishop Jean Kockerols, 'It's a great mystery that this has all happened on the threshold of Holy Week, the most sacred time for Christians, when we are about to mark Good Friday and Easter. In the face of such madness, we should adopt the courageous attitude of Mary, who remained at the foot of the cross in silence.'"

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



BY PETER GILMORE

The Dirty Little Secret

Are you in high school or going to university? Wait, before you turn the page, there's something that we need to talk about and it's not going to be easy.

Let's get over the awkwardness first because we're going to be talking about something that, for the most part, is a dirty little secret. It's that thing that lots of people are involved with but rarely talk about. You might have had a cringe-worthy conversation with a parent or carer, maybe some small talk with an older brother or sister, or perhaps jokingly with a group of friends.

Porn.

There. We said it.
We can all breathe a sigh of relief.

Back in the Day

When I was growing up porn was confined to the top shelves of corner shops and hidden in the 'Adult' section at the video store or newsagent. If you wanted to look at it you had to do the walk of shame to the front counter where you tried to cover up the video or magazine by simultaneously buying something more innocent.

Trust me, I used to work in a video shop and I've seen every weird combination of video rentals. And this wasn't even that long ago – fifteen years or so when I first got out of high school.

Now, I'm in my thirties. I am a gamer and on the internet more than I am asleep.

I remember that to get porn you had to go out of your way. It was a mission. It involved stealth and usually some teamwork with your closest of friends.

Now, one in five mobile searches is for porn. People freely pass it to each other via an instant message with a link to the latest bizarre thing discovered online.

Let's be Real

The stats are in. Last year there were more than 3 billion (that's billion with a 'b') searches for porn on Google. Nine out of ten boys have seen porn before they are 18. Don't worry girls, I won't leave you out. Six out of ten girls have seen porn before they are 18 too.

It gets worse: 51% of male students and 32% of female students first saw porn

Now, one in five mobile searches is for porn. People freely pass it to each other via an instant message with a link to the latest bizarre thing discovered online.

before they were teenagers; and 61% of young men and 18% of young women use porn at least once a week.

For more stats, see:
covenanteyes.com/pornstats

This isn't just a guy thing. It isn't just a small subset of people. These stats are going up. Not down.

Who cares, right? It's just some harmless porn. We are sexual beings and our sexuality should be celebrated and explored. What's wrong with viewing a little bit (or a lot) of porn?



In 2015, there were 3 billion
Google searches for porn



9 out of 10 boys have seen
porn before the age of 18



6 out of 10 girls have seen
porn before the age of 18



88% of pornographic scenes
contain physical violence

The Silent Teacher and the New Normal

What we don't realise is that porn is a silent teacher. As it is consumed, it is forming the mind in a new set of norms. Porn teaches us that it's perfectly normal to engage in physical aggression with a partner (after all, 88% of pornographic scenes contain physical violence of one type or another.) Or that it's okay to demean, belittle or verbally assault our partner (49% of scenes). Or that with the increasingly bizarre types of pornography on the internet, that the thrill is more important than the commitment. My enjoyment can be at the expense of someone else's pain. Each new partner to be consumed is just another click away.

Neuroscientists now know that as our brain releases dopamines (the pleasure sensation) whilst viewing porn, that new pathways are fused in the brain. Literally like addictive substances, our brains get rewired to look for pleasure in certain ways. The problem is that with porn, you have to keep upping the ante, increasing the riskiness, stepping over the line or it doesn't have the same effect.

The problem with pornography is not that it shows too much of the person, but that it shows far too little.

ST JOHN PAUL
THE GREAT

All the while, our hearts are learning another lesson. In order to be attractive, you need to look like this, be willing to do this or that. For men, our hearts are learning that women are disposable objects, nameless, without a story, hopes or a future – a machine designed to fulfil my pleasure whenever I feel like it. For women, their hearts are learning that in order to be wanted by a

man, this is what you need to be willing to do. This is what it looks like to *really* love a man. If he hits you, so what? That's real love, right?

The Problem with Porn

You can't say it much better than the late Pope, Saint John Paul the Great (what a name! Let's just call him JP2). He said, "The problem with pornography is not that it shows too much of the person, but that it shows far too *little*."

Wait. What? I thought the problem was that we were seeing too much? Not for JP2. For the late Pope, you aren't just a physical being, an animal. You are a human being and that means all at once you are physical, emotional, spiritual and mental – all tightly wrapped up into a neat little present.

You are a gift. You are a gift for the world, and should you be called to marriage, family and parenthood, you are a gift for your spouse and your children.

The problem with porn is that it takes one part of a person – their sexuality – and puts it up for sale to the lowest bidder. It reduces everything they are to a means for other people's pleasure. We have a word for this. It's called *using*.

When someone uses you for something, whether it's for a lift somewhere, your notes for class, food, or even sex, something rises up in us. We know in our innermost being that we aren't meant to be used. It doesn't matter for what.

Just for Now

I think I've heard every excuse as to why a person is the exception to the rule.

"I'm just looking at it now but when I find a girlfriend/boyfriend, I'll stop." Or, "When I get married, I can have sex all the time, so I won't need porn!"

The excuses go on and on. And that's exactly what they are, excuses. Nothing more, nothing less.

The truth is that viewing pornography is habitual. Because of the pleasure response of the brain, it becomes an addiction. We become slaves.

Freedom and Hope

If you are someone who feels stuck in a rut – in an endless cycle of habit, shame, and loneliness – it is a really difficult place to be and it can feel like there is no way out. You can feel like the damage has already been done, so who cares?

There is hope. There is a version of living that is full of freedom where you make yourself a gift for your future partner and for the world. A version of living where you won't be looking for, "What I can get from this relationship," but, "What I can give to this relationship."

As a little tip to start us off, if you are trying to change the habit, remember the acronym **HALTS**. When you are **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired** or **Stressed**, you are more likely to look at pornography. So when you sense yourself feeling like this, go for a walk, call a friend, get off the computer or help an old lady to cross the street. *Do anything* except sit by yourself.

For more strategies and help go to:
fightthenewdrug.org ■

*Peter Gilmore is a Faith Education
Officer for the Confraternity of Christian
Doctrine, Diocese of Wollongong*

Threads of Mercy

in our
Catholic Schools



BY JOSIE COOKS

In the busy-ness of daily life it is easy to overlook the good things that happen, small though they may seem. At a recent spirituality day Suz Marden, Staff Spiritual Formation Team Leader for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, spoke about the “threads of mercy” that make up the intricate tapestry of who we are. Fr Ken Barker MGL claims mercy takes us, “Into the world of love, where we become the image of God.” For Sr Joan Chittister OSB, mercy is more than just forgiveness, it is also, “What we do or feel when we should least feel it, to make the lives of others more liveable.” So when Suz asked if we had ever experienced a thread of mercy, I couldn’t help but think of all the amazing and selfless things that take place in our Catholic schools that the media and the general public don’t hear about; the incidental actions and ways of being, that have become second nature or the *norm* in our schools.

There are continuous demands placed on school staff to go above and beyond their initial role of educators and these demands are increasing in volume and complexity. Whether it be organising and supervising a social justice event during a rare lunch break or free period, or staying back after class to help a student, staff are committed to do their best. Working in the area of Community Development, I have had the privilege of seeing humanity at its best; the generosity of spirit fuelled by threads of mercy and compassion that make our Catholic schools special and something of which to be enormously proud.

I’ve sat across the table from a school principal during the enrolment of a

newly arrived refugee family with no spoken English language and very few possessions, and have witnessed compassion in action. The generosity and gentle manner of this principal helped ease the fears and worries of a mother wanting the best for her children, restoring the dignity of a fellow human being displaced from their homeland through no fault of their own.

I have also witnessed the love and joy that two incredible teachers in our schools have given to children living on the margins of society. By extending the threads of mercy and compassion to three impressionable teenage girls from a remote area in Western Australia, their lives have been changed forever.



Jenna Hogan and Murray Cleal opening their home to girls from remote WA.

Over the past few years, while many look forward to spending time away from students and slowing down during the school holidays, the family of Jenna Hogan and Murray Cleal generously opened up their home and their hearts to host the girls for a period of time during the Christmas holiday break. These acts of kindness, provide the girls with an opportunity to view life through a different lens and experience a family structure different to their own. The thread of mercy and compassion

extends long past the visit, as the family continues to offer support throughout the year to help the girls through school and on their journey through life.

The last few years have been a difficult time of grief and loss in our Diocese, with a number of our school communities experiencing the loss of a student, a parent, or a colleague. The threads of mercy have been modelled by staff, who, while dealing with their own grief and pain, have supported students and families in a variety of ways, to ensure that the stability of school life continued.



Mrs Elise Burns and Miranda Moffat in solidarity and support for cancer victims.

The threads of mercy recently joined a female teacher and two students together while they celebrated their school feast day. Mrs Elise Burns, Miranda Moffat and Lily Nicholl threw vanity aside and courageously shaved their heads as a sign of solidarity and support for cancer victims. Their acts of courage gave a voice to those who don’t have a choice about losing their hair while undergoing chemotherapy and allowed the whole school community an opportunity to experience a thread of mercy.

As we journey through this Year of Mercy, may the threads of mercy continue to weave their way into the tapestry of who we are, so that the goodness that quietly takes place around us is celebrated, the pain and suffering of people are healed, and our schools increasingly become beacons of faith, hope and love in the community. ■

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

Catholic Youth Revolution Ready for Take-off

BY SETH HARSH

Youth ministry needs a facelift. No, I am not extolling the merits of cosmetic surgery, nor am I suggesting that beauty is merely skin-deep, but what I do wish to convey is my conviction that youth ministry has been perceived by the majority of young people for too long as ugly, boring and irrelevant.

At its heart, youth ministry presents nothing substantially new. It merely seeks to present the Catholic Faith in ways that are relevant, palatable and intelligible to young people. So, if youth ministry is but a youthful face of Catholicism – and this face is perceived as unattractive – young people will find Catholicism unattractive. Some may object to this reasoning stating that people should not practise their faith on the basis that it is attractive, but rather, because of what it offers at its heart. This objection works for those who know that Catholicism has a “beautiful personality”, but for those who do not know this, the argument is unhelpful at best. Youth ministry presents an opportunity for young people to encounter the Catholic Faith and begin an ongoing journey that leads to a deep appreciation of her “personality”. In short, youth ministry needs a facelift if we want young people to hear the Gospel and grow in their faith.

Not just a Facelift – a Revolution

The title of this article uses the term “revolution” which the Oxford Dictionary defines as, “A dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation.” This is exactly what Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong hopes to achieve through relevant, exciting, intelligible and personal opportunities for young people to encounter Jesus Christ, develop a sense of ownership of their faith, and share what they have received with others. It is through this revolutionary plan that youth ministry in this Diocese will receive its much needed facelift.



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Seth Harsh (Left) working closely with Youth Mission Team Wollongong (Right).

... youth ministry needs a facelift if we want young people to hear the Gospel and grow in their faith.

So what are we doing about it?

As mentioned in the last edition of *Journey* magazine, the Diocese has procured a mobile stage. The primary purpose for the stage will be to take the timelessly relevant Gospel message into our high school communities and present it in a way that excites and inspires. A festival model will be used for these engagements, complete with live music, games, drama, testimony, fellowship, and catechesis all directed to meeting the young people where they are at and creating an opportunity for encounter between young people and the person of Jesus Christ.

The exciting opportunities presented by the mobile stage augment the amazing work already being done by the Youth Mission Team here in Wollongong. Through their school-based reflection days and regional youth group *iSTAND*, the Team have impacted the lives of thousands of students in our high schools

over the last nine years, and their ministry will continue to flourish throughout 2016. The partnership between Youth Mission Team and the Diocesan Youth Office is key to the success of the plan for youth ministry in this Diocese.

The Disciples of Jesus Community continue to provide the much needed young adults' initiative, *Pub Theology*, which is now in its second year and going strong. This is yet another way the Church in this Diocese is meeting the needs of young people in ways that are engaging and relevant.

There are other initiatives that will appear in the Diocese very soon, including a worship night for youth and young adults in the Macarthur region as well as a Catholic Music Academy. More details of these initiatives will be released in due course.

Unlike a facelift, a revolution takes some time, but the wheels are well and truly in motion. This is only the beginning of “a dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation” for youth ministry, and I look forward to working with you under the grace of God to bring the plan for youth ministry to its full potential. ■

Seth Harsh is the Youth Ministry Coordinator, Diocese of Wollongong (Ph: 4222 2460)

OUR PILGRIMAGE TO THE Promised

BY KEN BRYANT

In January 2016, a long-held dream – a pilgrimage to the Holy Land for teachers, principals and leadership personnel – became a reality for 27 pilgrims from Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong.

It was a weary but uniquely energised group, under the leadership of Bishop Peter Ingham, that stepped off the plane some twenty hours later into the freshness of a winter's day in Amman, Jordan. Any latent tiredness soon dissipated as we quickly ascended Mount Nebo, the mountain to which Moses brought the people of Israel after forty years in the wilderness; and like Moses, we gazed in awe upon the expanse that lay before us – the Promised Land of Israel.

Each [of the 21 days] was grounded in the knowledge that Jesus himself had once walked this same land. At times, the presence of the living Christ seemed so very real and tangible.

Far below lay the River Jordan, winding its distant path through a pale wilderness of never-ending limestone, bringing to life patches of fertile agricultural land that stood out as beacons of green in the harsh beauty of the landscape. This promised land seemed unworthy of any such title – yet as we were soon to realise, it was a land with a mesmerising allure – a promise of manna to the Spirit. Our pilgrimage had truly begun!

And so we celebrated the first of our daily Eucharists. Such celebrations became our source of nourishment and celebration; the highlight of our day and truly the source and summit



of our experience. With Bishop Peter as the presider, Mass was celebrated in a host of places; from simple chapels alongside the River Jordan where Jesus had been baptised, to the inner sanctum of the tomb of the Holy Sepulchre where hearts soared and tears flowed in abundance; from the simplicity of Mass in a cave within the Shepherds' Field where the Good News was first proclaimed to shepherds tending their flocks, to a Eucharistic celebration upon a boat drifting on the same Sea of Galilee where Jesus had called forth his first disciples.

Each of the 21 days brought forth joys and challenges. Each was grounded in the knowledge that Jesus himself had once walked this same land. At times, the presence of the living Christ seemed so very real and tangible.

Whether we were gathering under the arches of ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, or watching shepherds tend flocks as of days of yore, or drawing water from Jacob's well where once Jesus met the woman of Samaria, we were able to embed ourselves into the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yet at other times, a great imagination was needed. Where once the Christ child lay in swaddling clothes in a manger, a vast and ancient church now stood. The temple to which Jesus was called in Jerusalem had long been destroyed by the Romans with its remnants now lying in silent ruin at the foot of its ancient walls. The hill of Golgotha where Jesus had been crucified was now encased by the stained walls and vaulted ceilings of the Holy Sepulchre Church.

Land



Mass was celebrated in a host of places; from simple chapels alongside the River Jordan ... to the inner sanctum of the tomb of the Holy Sepulchre where hearts soared and tears flowed in abundance.

Despite these self-evident changes that two millennia of human living had rendered upon this historical land, the mists of time cleared whenever Scripture was proclaimed and we were drawn into the person of Jesus, the culture into which he was born and the land on which he walked.

Scripture took on new meaning and the Gospels new life – a life that continues whenever we found ourselves hearing the Word of God proclaimed.

In this land of tension and turmoil, the land of the sacred and the profane, it was the people of the land, the living people of God whose presence and lives spoke so hauntingly of our merciful and eternal God.

We were welcomed, not as stranger but as guest, not as one who was different but as sister and brother. We despaired at the sight of the wall that divides and separates this land and its people, one from the other. We broke bread with Christian, Jew and Muslim alike, hearts open to their stories and their search for peace.

TEACHER TESTIMONIALS

“A journey in the unknown, where we were fed manna from heaven.”

“Leaving the home of heart, mind and spirit to travel into a world I have never been – new heart, opened mind, fresh spirit.”

“Being in the place Jesus was baptised and celebrating Mass by the Jordan River profoundly touched me and re-connected me to the Sacrament of the Eucharist.”

“This has been a journey of yearning, finding answers to the questions of my heart.”

“Scripture is living and seeing the Scriptures in context was extremely powerful. They will never be read the same again.”

“In a very profound way, this pilgrimage has renewed my own personal faith ... it was a sacred journey, one in which I encountered God in the places, people and situations we experienced.”

“I commit to a more meaningful and honest socially just life – as Jesus modelled.”

“It brought to life my faith and I will draw on this pilgrimage for strength and guidance in my work as a teacher, with my family and with my community.”

This was a sacred time, offering moments of deep reflection and intimate connectedness with an ever-present God. We give thanks for the privilege of being a pilgrim people that walked in the footsteps of our Lord! ■

Ken Bryant is the Head of Service, Catholic Life, Education and Mission for Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong

Packed to the Cathedral Rafters for Fr Michael Dyer's Ordination



On Saturday 23 April 2016, Fr Michael Dyer was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Peter Ingham in the presence of over 500 family, friends and clergy in what can only be described as a joyous and emotional liturgy. Bishop Ingham said, "Ordinations always make me feel like a proud parent welcoming a new member to the family. I am delighted to see Michael realise his dream of becoming a priest."

Fr Michael was ordained a Deacon in June 2015 and served at St Francis Xavier Cathedral Wollongong (before his current appointment to St Michael's Parish Nowra assisting at Milton-Ulladulla.) Prior to his ordination as

Deacon, Fr Michael was a Christian Brother, teaching in secondary schools and adult faith formation programs for young and older students.

The following are excerpts from Fr Michael's beautiful *Word of Thanks* that he gave during the liturgy:

Meister Eckhart, a 12th century German theologian, philosopher and mystic taught that, "If the only *prayer* you ever say in your entire life is 'thank you,' it will be enough!" Please view these moments as more than a laundry list of people to thank. Rather, see it as a *Litany of Praise and Thanksgiving* to a gracious God who has worked marvels through the many talented and generous people responsible for today's proceedings ...

To all of you who have shared in this outstanding occasion I am deeply grateful! It is a particular joy for me to recognise in our midst my loving family, my dearest friends and my closest colleagues ...

I express my deep appreciation to Bishop Peter for presiding with panache at our Eucharist and for enabling us to be "fully conscious and active participants" in a celebration "resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity"! ...

I thank our concelebrating priests and Deacon Peter Presdee. I acknowledge my former Parish Priests and Dean: Fathers Patrick Faherty, Francis Tran and Ron Peters. I pray that



forevermore, we the Presbyterate, will be conscious of the special relationship which exists between the sanctuary of our churches and the broader world. Furthermore, let us remain fully committed to ministering at the altar of the Lord and at the table for the poor ...

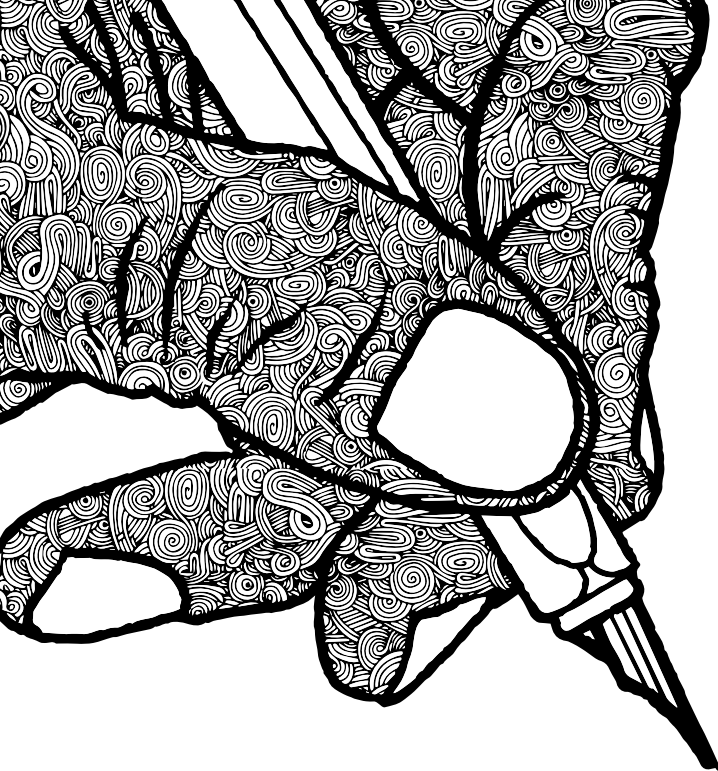
The Scripture readings I chose for today's liturgy are deeply meaningful to me as I embark upon my priestly mission and ministry ... I am grateful to Tim Dyer and his family and to Br Tony Hempenstall for processing so elegantly "the fruits of the earth and the work of human hands" to the altar; together with the chalice and paten gifted to me by my beloved confreres, the Christian Brothers. Into the base of these sacred

vessels are lasered gold bangles from India bequeathed by Marie Dyer, my dearly departed mum. The tinkling of her bangles alerted me to her presence. May the new creation of my chalice and paten be a reminder of the Real Presence of Christ our Risen Lord: for through, with and in him the promise of eternal life has been bequeathed to each and every one of us ...

I conclude this Litany of Praise, Thanksgiving and Mercy by expressing publicly my love for and my gratitude to the God of Jesus in whose Spirit "I live and move and have my being". My friends, it is "God alone" whom I seek

forevermore, the Christian God, the Word made Flesh who dwells amongst us. To continue seeking and selflessly serving Jesus through the Sacrament of his Church is my primary reason for requesting that the Sacrament of Holy Orders be conferred upon me in your presence. It has been a breathtaking occasion ... may you always know, however mysteriously, that you are loved by our Trinitarian God! ■

You can view all the photos from Fr Michael's Ordination on Bishop Peter Ingham's Facebook page: facebook.com/BishopPeterIngham. Don't forget to like Bishop's Facebook page while you are there!



A vote for the

voiceless

A STATEMENT BY THE
CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE FEDERAL ELECTION

Australians are again going to the polls. We do so thankful that the electoral process will be free of the violence found elsewhere. our political system may have its problems but we have a stable democracy, which is not to be taken for granted. Nor is the quality of those who put themselves forward for election to the federal parliament. We are in their debt for their willingness to serve.

During the long election campaign there will be much talk about the economy and the need for good economic management at a time of some uncertainty. Both sides of politics will state their economic credentials in a bid to win power.

The economy of course is important and there does need to be sound management. But, as Pope Francis has pointed out, there is also a danger that the economy can become a kind of false god to which even human beings have to be sacrificed.

This leads to what the Pope has called the throwaway culture – a culture of over-consumption where all kinds

of things are thrown away, wasted, even human beings. The voices of the thrown-away people will not be heard in the long and rowdy campaign. Their faces will not be seen in all the advertising. Yet unless their voices are somehow heard and their faces seen, we will not have a truly human society in which economic management serves human beings rather than the other way round.

That is why we bishops want to speak a word as part of this campaign – not in order to push an ideological line or simply to defend the Church's interests, but to give a voice to the voiceless and make their faces seen, however briefly in a statement such as this.

Among the people discarded in this throwaway culture are these:

- **Refugees and asylum seekers** who are often seen as a problem to be solved rather than as human beings in need of our help.
- **Indigenous peoples** whose cry for recognition has barely been heard and who suffer injustice at the hands of our justice system.
- **The survivors of sexual abuse** who have emerged from the shadows and whose voice is now being heard, crying out for redress and healing.
- **Those who suffer family violence** who are often unseen and unheard, behind closed doors with nowhere to go and no-one to turn to.
- **Those in the womb** who are among the most defenceless, at risk of being deprived of the most basic of all human rights, the right to live.
- **The elderly** who are seen at times as an economic burden now that they are unable to “produce” or consume in the way the economy demands.
- **Those suffering mental illness** who seem not to fit in with accepted patterns of social behaviour and are often presumed to contribute nothing to society, thus ending up in the too-hard basket.
- **Those suffering addiction** who can see no way out of the destructive grasp of alcohol or other drugs, gambling or pornography.

- **Those entrapped in new forms of slavery** who are the victims of sexual or workplace enslavement.
- **The desperately poor beyond our shores** who look to wealthy Australia for the help they need – often simply to survive – but find our nation less and less generous.

This leads to what the Pope has called the throwaway culture – a culture of over-consumption where all kinds of things are thrown away, wasted, even human beings. The voices of the thrown-away people will not be heard in the long and rowdy campaign.

There are others in our community, near and far, whose voices are unheard, whose faces are unseen. They are seen as politically irrelevant. They will not decide any marginal seats or determine the result of the election. Yet any society is ultimately judged not on how well it manages the economy, but on how well it treats the thrown-away people.

Who then are the people unheard and unseen? What does it mean for Australia to care for them? If we fail to ask these questions and to try to answer them, then much that goes on in this or any other election campaign will be political theatre that does not address the real issues.

But it is not just individual people who are thrown away. The same can happen to the environment, both social and natural. At the heart of a healthy social environment there is marriage and the family. Yet political decisions can end up undermining marriage and providing less and less support for families despite a rhetoric that claims otherwise.

The fact is that economic decisions have been less and less favourable to families in recent years; and it may be that political decisions in the future will undermine further the dignity and uniqueness of marriage as a lifelong

union of man and woman. Support for marriage and the family does not look a big vote-winner, so that even the most basic human institution, upon which the health of a society depends, can become part of the throwaway culture or at best an optional extra.

Pope Francis has said that the earth too cries out for justice at this time. The natural environment – the land we live on, the air we breathe, the water we drink – even this can become voiceless, so that the earth's cry for justice can go unheard. Now is the time to act, so that the natural environment is able to meet human needs rather than be sacrificed to the god of the economy. We need an economy that is truly human, not falsely divinised. This does not mean divinising the natural world, but it does mean treating it with respect and seeing it as a gift to be received gratefully rather than as a resource to be plundered at will.

Neither can we as Christians afford to be voiceless through this campaign. On all kinds of issues we need to make our voices heard. But to do that we will have to listen first – not only to the voice of the voiceless, but even to the voice of God. That is why for Christians and others, prayer is an essential part of this long journey to the election. By prayer, we mean first listening to God who has a word to speak in all this – the God who is neither voiceless nor faceless. If we can listen to God's voice, then there is a chance that we might be able to speak with a voice that is not just our own.

To listen to God and to the voiceless, is in the end, the same thing. In hearing their voice, we can hear the voice of God. That is where the real God is; that is how the real God communicates.

We hope that this campaign – for Christians at least and especially for Christian politicians – will be a time not of spin and bombast but a time of wise and true speaking that comes from deep and humble listening. Then our vote may be a vote in favour of a community where no-one is thrown away, where all the voices are heard and all the faces seen. ■

To download a copy of this statement and accompanying prayer, visit: catholic.org.au/election



There's something about Mary Ellen

BY DEBBIE GATES

We begin our series in *Journey* of profiling the many wonderful volunteers in our Diocese who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Mary Ellen Bland resides in our Macarthur region and is a member of St John the Evangelist Parish Campbelltown. Since retiring as an early childhood and primary school teacher and leader, Mary Ellen has kept herself busy serving as a volunteer for the benefit of many in the Diocese and further afield. Mary Ellen currently serves as a:

- Member of the Catholic Development Fund (CDF) Advisory Council
- Member of the Good News Support Program for ex-students of Mater Dei School Camden and adults with special needs
- Member of the Brother Clarence Foundation, a Marist Brothers organisation providing financial support for students in need in Macarthur schools
- Director of the Campbelltown Catholic Club Board.

In addition, Mary Ellen has recently retired from the position of Board Chair and Director at St Patrick's College Campbelltown; Member of the Pastoral Council in her parish; and Board Director of Mercy Works Ltd – a not-for-profit working to improve health, enhance social well-being and expand educational opportunities for people living in Australia and the South-East Asia Pacific region.

You are one busy lady Mary Ellen! How do you get so involved?

For the CDF and the Campbelltown Catholic Club I was identified and approached. I think it may have been because I was very interested and involved with many elements of parish life (eg, RCIA, St Vincent de Paul Society, Parish Pastoral Council, Minister of Liturgy and a member of a working party for the establishment of Catholic schools in the new parishes in Campbelltown in the 1970s and 80s) and that I also had training and management experience in my leadership roles in education. Maybe it was because I also invested with the CDF and was a member of the Campbelltown Catholic Club? Or maybe it was because I was asked nicely and they knew I wouldn't say no!

For the other organisations, I approached them. I am a graduate of the Institute of Company Directors and undertake annual corporate governance training through seminars, workshops and professional reading.

What have you learnt since becoming involved with these organisations?

The Diocese is very Illawarra centric and this is historically so. However there is an upsurge in awareness of the other three regions of the Diocese – the Macarthur, Shoalhaven and Southern



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

My grandkids reckon I'm a legend! I reckon they just like my cooking. They think that because I was at university in the early 60s, I must have been a hippy and political activist, and so far it benefits me to keep up the illusion!

in all its organisations and ministries. This is evidenced by the spread of diocesan agencies into areas outside the Illawarra region.

I am also very aware of the new challenges that the massive growth in the Macarthur region presents to the Diocese. New schools and parishes have to be and are being established. I am very connected to the 16 – soon to be 18 – schools in the Macarthur region in my role as School Liaison Director for the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

In particular, I note these diocesan initiatives:

- Micah House, CatholicCare's office in Campbelltown
- the establishment of the Catholic Education Centre Macarthur
- the growth in loans made available through the CDF to build and refurbish schools
- the improved communication between all agencies that has resulted in better strategic financial planning and management of diocesan assets
- a greater willingness for all stakeholders to share information and data
- the ongoing professional education of diocesan personnel
- the emphasis on pastoral planning at parish and diocesan level
- a growth in the focus on youth services (besides primary and secondary education).

Highlands – and this is not solely because these are massive growth areas in our Diocese. The current Diocesan Pastoral Plan has identified this as a responsibility and I think that collectively we have become far more aware and appreciative of the huge number of people and organisations dedicated to being *Bearers of Christ's Love* in our Diocese. I see our Bishop and priests being faithful to their vocation, dedicated hard workers and caring servants to their people. I am constantly impressed by the genuine dedication of diocesan staff who bring professional expertise and enthusiasm to their roles and by the commitment of the laity who, on a voluntary basis, take on the many ministries of parish and diocesan life, both at "grass root" and leadership levels.

What are some changes that you have seen during your time with the Diocese?

I am very pleased to see the genuine growth in awareness of the breadth of this Diocese

What makes you tick?

I have a thankfulness for the wholesome loving Catholic family into which I was born. God was an ever-present fact of life and so was prayer, which really was conversation with Him. Mass particularly sustains and enriches me.

We kids learnt from our parents that there was no reason we should not strive for the best in everything we did. There was no reason not to be generous with our time, ability and worldly goods. What a gift that has been and indeed it is very satisfying to see this being exhibited in the next generations of my extended family.

I just have to say that my husband, Bruce, has brought such richness to my life through his love, companionship and guidance in all aspects of raising a family.

God moment?

It took many years for it to become a moment. Now when I wake each day I pray that I will see the face of God in every person I meet that day.

Ideal dinner party guests?

Vicar of Dibley, a piano tuner, my parents, Father George Condookala (now Parish Priest at Port Kembla), Max Walker, my husband Bruce, Kasey Chambers, and the Kerrigan family from the movie "The Castle" ("Dad reckons fishing is 10% brains and 95% muscle and the rest is just good luck!" and "Tell 'em they're dreamin'" – my favourite quotes from the movie.)

Claim to fame?

My grandkids reckon I'm a legend! I reckon they just like my cooking. They think that because I was at university in the early 60s, I must have been a hippy and political activist, and so far it benefits me to keep up the illusion! ■

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



Love in the FAMILY

The joy
of love
experienced
by families is
also the joy of
the Church.

POPE FRANCIS'
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

BY FR BILL MCCORMICK SJ

*"The joy of love experienced by families
is also the joy of the Church."*

With these words, Pope Francis opens *Amoris Laetitia*, his exhortation on love in the family. The joyful and life-giving love of the family arises from the experience of the joyful and life-giving love of God. The Church's teaching on the family, therefore, is in itself a joyful act. For that teaching is in the first place the passionate proclamation of the "Gospel of the Family," the simple yet profound truth that God loves all persons in and through the family. [63]

Amoris Laetitia, or "The Joy of Love," is Francis' highly anticipated Apostolic Exhortation on the *Synods on the Family* that met in the Autumns of 2014 and 2015. Those synods, which were meetings of bishops from all

over the world, met amidst great expectations and concerns about the future of the family. Particularly controversial, at least in the West, were knotty issues surrounding the reception of Communion by those who divorced and remarried.

As Francis' "exhortation" on those synods, the document is his reflection on the proceedings of those meetings. But the Pope goes far beyond the synods in this text. For while the bishops at the synods made many observations and recommendations, it was for Pope Francis to weigh in with the decisive conclusion to the proceedings.

The document both exceeds and defies expectations. Indeed, Francis signals as much when he warns that too much commentary on these issues reflects either "an immoderate desire for total change without sufficient reflection or

Francis nowhere denies the validity of Church doctrine. He wants to revisit, rather, how it ought to be applied in a way that mercifully re-incorporates people into the Church.

grounding," or "an attitude that would solve everything by applying general rules or deriving undue conclusions from particular theological considerations." [2] The pope rejects both.

One learns a great deal about the exhortation from its structure. The exhortation starts gradually and builds up to its central point, only then taking on the polemical and heated questions that engaged many onlookers of the synods.

In the introduction, the Pope notes that Chapters 4 and 5 are “central”. They concern love. What comes before those chapters is meant to prepare for that discussion of love. Those chapters are on (1) Scripture, (2) the experiences of family today, and (3) doctrine. Thus, before Francis moves to the core of the document, he has initiated a three-way dialogue between the Word of God, the world today, and Church doctrine. What shines through this dialogue is the joy of family life, the experience of God’s love that allows us to love others.

The “central” chapters, in turn, are a beautiful exposition of love in all of its forms. The two chapters are divided roughly between the unitive and procreative dimensions of marriage, but they are richly contextualised in the relationality of marriage to avoid being reduced to “functions” or “duties”. And while the emphasis is on marriage, one can see sideways glances to many other sorts of relationships, including that of the Church to the world.

It is only after these five chapters that Pope Francis moves to the “pastoral considerations” for which many anticipated the document. Most will be disappointed. On the one hand, Pope Francis affirms the doctrine of the Church. As he writes: “In order to avoid all misunderstanding, I would point out that in no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God’s plan in all its grandeur...” [307]

On the other hand, and not surprisingly, he thinks Church doctrine has been taught with the wrong emphasis:

“Many people feel that the Church’s message on marriage and the family does not clearly reflect the preaching and attitudes of Jesus, who set forth a demanding ideal yet never failed to show compassion and closeness to the frailty of individuals like the Samaritan woman or the woman caught in adultery.” [38]

Conversion requires an experience of mercy and forgiveness, an encounter with another that cannot simply be substituted by “a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases”.

Rather, the situation calls for “a renewed encouragement to undertake a responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases”. [300]

Pope Francis speaks with sympathy of those “who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion”. [308] But the deeper confusion, he argues, is one that obscures the primacy of love in the Church’s teaching of the Gospel. The Pope makes this point many times over:

“Our teaching on marriage and the family cannot fail to be inspired and transformed by this message of love and tenderness; otherwise, it becomes nothing more than the defence of a dry and lifeless doctrine.” [59]

But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching,

**God is with all of us, not only the sinless.
He calls us to perfection, but he also cares
for us in our frailties and weakness.**

“Always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.” [308]

Francis nowhere denies the validity of Church doctrine. He wants to revisit, rather, how it ought to be applied in a way that mercifully re-incorporates people into the Church. Thus, he repeatedly invokes John Paul II’s “law of gradualism”. [294]

Throughout the text, the Pope takes his own advice that the Church must (1) recognise the complexity of the contemporary family and (2) offer “truth and hope”. [57] Francis highlights this complexity from the beginning of the text, seeking to ensure that the Church’s understanding of that situation is “firmly grounded in reality”. [6] With this analysis of the family’s conditions, Francis can make clear that the causes of the family’s distress are diverse, and that no single response to them will prove a silver bullet.

The Church forms a critical part of that reality. But the Church has not always supported families, Francis argues. At times lacking humility and

realism, the Church has too often been content “simply decrying present-day evils”, seeking “to impose rules by sheer authority”. [35-6]

In all of this sober realism, however, lies real grounds for the “hope and truth” that Francis says the Church must proclaim. Indeed, emphasising the difficulties of family life allows Francis to make a crucial point: “The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes.” [315] God is with all of us, not only the sinless. He calls us to perfection, but he also cares for us in our frailties and weakness. As the title of Chapter 8 indicates, the Church is therefore called to accompany the weak, to discern with them and to integrate them into the Church.

We have left many topics in this exhortation unexplored: gender equality; the parallel between Trinitarian and familial communion; the relationship between work, poverty and nature; the deft handling of contraception; erotic love in married life; celibacy and virginity; and his “spirituality of the family”; and Francis’

fundamentally Ignatian engagement with Scripture. Further, as in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si’*, Francis shows a zealous enthusiasm for engaging with a panoply of thinkers, from Erich Fromm and Josef Pieper to Jorge Borges and Martin Luther King, Jr, along with numerous bishops’ conferences, St Thomas Aquinas, Pope Leo the Great and, of course, St Ignatius of Loyola.

In short, the text is vintage Francis. It is most appropriate that this exhortation should emerge in the context of the Year of Mercy. Francis envisions the Spirit’s grace of mercy being implanted in our hearts. That merciful love, in turn, will change – heal, deepen, elevate – all that we are and do. For then we will see, know and love as God does. ■

This article was originally printed in the Jesuit Post (thejesuitpost.org). Fr McCormick is a Jesuit and scholastic at Fordham University (New York). He entered the Society of Jesus in 2013, having studied politics at Chicago and Texas.

You can download a copy of Amoris Laetitia at dow.sh/joyoflovepdf

BY JUDE HENNESSY
& DANIEL HOPPER

In the editorial of this edition of *Journey*, Jude reflects on how if he doesn't turn up to work, no one really notices, and the daily good works associated with our Church get done anyway. He also mentioned Horst Schulze, the founder of the most successful luxury hotel chains in the world, who said the same thing about his own role, but he went further by saying "it is a disaster" if the people at the coalface of any organisation don't turn up, so critical and immediate is their role if you are in the "business of service".

This concept was driven home to us very strongly at a recent diocesan Parish Secretaries Inservice Day at the Xavier Conference Centre in Wollongong. Essentially, the role of a parish secretary is to be both Mary and Martha in the Gospels. (Luke 10:38-42) That is, to have the listening ear of Mary combined with the hospitality of Martha. That's quite a task!



Yet, you only need to spend five minutes with the parish secretaries of our Diocese to realise that these are people who love God, love the Church and come to work, not simply because it is a job, but because their faith is central to who they are. Mary Jennings, Parish Secretary of St Paul's Parish Albion Park, said, "I feel that I am not just doing a job, but that this is a vocation – a part of 'who I am'. The parish secretary is the 'face of the Church' to anyone who telephones or visits the office, and we should be a friendly and welcoming presence." This sense of vocation is shared by Kate Lee, Parish Secretary at St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bowral, "I have met some truly wonderful people who I have laughed with, celebrated

PARISH SECRETARIES

ON
THE

front

with – especially newly-engaged couples and young families who have welcomed a child – and at times I have even cried with them. You can't say this is merely a job. It is a vocation, and it holds a special place in my heart."

For Mary and Kate, the vocational aspect of their role is real. They are the people who are often the first to answer the phone when someone's mum has died and they need comforting and reassurance that the local Church is there to help the family. They are there answering the front door for those families in crisis coming to the Church for assistance as they arrange a contact visit with the local St Vincent de Paul Society, so that the family can get access to the basics needed for living with dignity.

This need to be a compassionate listener is something that Vicki McHale from Mary Immaculate Parish Eagle Vale believes is key to role of parish secretary. "You must have a listening ear and compassion for what people are going through, as well as rejoicing in their good news! I have been known to shed a tear or two over the years as I hear their stories," Vicki said.

But Vicki also maintains that hearing the stories of others requires establishing trust, and with that comes a great, "Responsibility to be discreet with information and sensitive to the needs of others," says Vicki. Mary agrees, "People tell us their life stories – their joys and their struggles – automatically trusting us to be kind



Bishop Peter Ingham with many of our Parish and Diocesan Secretaries who were able to attend a recent Inservice day at the Xavier Conference Centre, Wollongong.



Line

OF OUR CHURCHES

I feel that I am not just doing a job, but that this is a vocation – a part of ‘who I am.’

MARY JENNINGS

Parish Secretary, St Paul's Parish
Albion Park

and forgiving. People tell us things they would never tell anybody else. We handle these stories with reverence and tender loving care and, of course, in strictest confidence.”

Our parish secretaries are also evangelisers as the first point of contact when someone who hasn't been to Church for years, tentatively makes an inquiry about coming back to the Sacraments, perhaps for themselves or their children. They are the ones who need to deal with the cranky fall-out and phone calls if something has gone wrong in the parish, and they speak with empathy and grace to those who, without knowing the full picture, want someone to complain to.

Being an evangeliser is something that Carmel Munro, Parish Secretary at St Thomas More Parish Ruse, recognises as being part-and-parcel of her job, “I love my job. I listen for that click of the gate or the ring-tone, thinking to myself, ‘How can I be of assistance to this person?’ I then take a deep breath wanting to make sure they have my full attention, empathy, support and confidence. I love the feeling I get when I have helped someone or when I see their smile and they know my name.”

As well as ministering to parishioners and the general community, the role of the parish secretary also involves ministering to the parish priest. Mary said, “I minister to the parish priest as well as to the wider parish. By undertaking the daily tasks that lighten the many demands placed upon our clergy, the ministry of parish secretaries allows our clergy to be our priests and bring us Jesus through the Sacraments and life of the Church.”

Therefore, the relationship between parish secretary and parish priest is crucial. Jenny Gibson is the Parish Secretary at St John's Parish Dapto,

a role she has undertaken for the past 18 months. Compared to many of the other parish secretaries at the Diocesan Inservice day, Jenny is still a ‘new kid on the block’ Yet, she has already established a great working relationship with Parish Priest, Fr Francis Tran. Jenny said, “I have a great respect for Fr Francis and admire all he does in the Parish. I think that Fr Francis and I get along and work together well. He is very easy-going so it makes working together enjoyable.

“Compared to other administrative roles I have held, this one allows me to have more interaction with various people on many different levels. It has been very different to what I had expected. Every day is different to the day before which I love, it keeps my job interesting and challenging.”

As can be seen, our parish secretaries deserve to be celebrated for all that they do to make Jesus known and loved in our local faith communities. Spending the day with them at the recent Inservice gave us an even stronger understanding of why our parish priests hold them in such high regard. So, next time you get the opportunity, take the chance to say thanks to your parish secretary, because they really are quite amazing. ■

Jude Hennessy is the Director of CCD & Evangelisation and Director of Parish Services, Diocese of Wollongong.

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



WHAT HAPPENED AT APPIN?

TWO-HUNDRED YEAR
ANNIVERSARY OF
THE APPIN MASSACRE

BY DANIEL HOPPER

On Sunday 17 April 2016, the Wunga Myamly Reconciliation Group coordinated the 200th anniversary of one of the darkest days in our region's early European history – the Appin Massacre.

The group was joined by over 1,000 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from across the Macarthur area and beyond, including Bishop Peter Igham and several dignitaries from other Sydney areas.

Responsible for the deaths of at least 14 Dharawal men, women and children – with some shot or decapitated and others driven over cliffs near Cataract River – the massacre was one of the first government-ordered killings of Aboriginal people in Australia's settlement records.

What happened?

Below is an excerpt from *Appin: The Story of a Macquarie Town* by Anne-Maree Whitaker, pp 11-12, (www.kingsclearbooks.com.au):

The start of European settlement of Appin and surrounding districts after 1810 led to conflict with local Aboriginal people. This increased in 1814 as Aborigines began to eat the farmers' crops. The first violence broke out in May 1814 on the farms of Milehouse and Butcher at Appin. In a series of skirmishes over two days, an Aboriginal woman and three children were killed, and three Europeans died in retaliatory raids. These deaths created greater tension and

in June 1814 the Jervis Bay Aborigines assembled in the district while white settlers formed an armed guard to protect Andrew Hume's farm at Appin. The attack instead came on William Broughton's farm where two servants were speared to death.

Further Aboriginal attacks resulting in deaths occurred in Bringelly in June 1814. It was generally believed that the violence was committed by Gandangara people from west rather than the local Dharawal people. Two years later the Gandangara returned from the mountain in search of food. Four men were killed at the Nepean and three at Mrs Macarthur's Camden property. Governor Macquarie ordered the military to round up all Aborigines in the Hawkesbury and southern districts. If they resisted they were to be shot and the men's bodies hung from trees. The bodies of women and children were to be buried.

Captain James Wallis of the 46th Regiment was in command of the soldiers sent to Airds and Appin. For a month Wallis and his soldiers marched around the district between Glenfield and Appin, guided by Dharawal men

Budbury and Bundle. Wallis later complained to the Governor about the support for the Dharawal people by the local settlers which had frustrated his efforts to round them up. When Wallis reached Appin he found that several Aborigines were sheltering at Kennedy's farm, including two men whose families had previously been killed. Yellooming and Bitugally, Kennedy and Hamilton Hume argued that they would take personal responsibility for the men and persuaded Wallis and the soldiers to leave.

Wallis then travelled to William Redfern's property, chasing rumoured sightings of Aborigines there, only to find that there was no-one at the property. He spent several days searching the Georges River in Minto and Ingleburn before receiving word that seven outlawed Aborigines were camped at Broughton's farm. He marched his soldiers through the night only to find a deserted campsite.

PHOTOS: JEFF MCGILL, JEFFMCGILLPORTRAITS.WORDPRESS.COM





Bishop Peter Ingham's Speech and Prayer at the 200th Anniversary

The Appin Massacre 200 years ago today was one of the earliest, officially-sanctioned, mass killings of Aboriginal People since white settlement 28 years earlier.

Governor Macquarie's diary describing this reprisal makes shocking reading to us today, with benefit of hindsight and a more enlightened understanding. That's why I want to commend and thank you General David Hurley, Governor of New South Wales, for being here today. I see your presence here today as a great symbol of healing the wrongs of the past and of showing respect and good faith, not only towards the descendants of those massacred but also to the Aboriginal people today.

May we learn to respect the human dignity of each and every person of whatever race or culture, because we are all made in the image and likeness of God.

Let us pray:

Lord, as we gather here today to commemorate the massacre of Aboriginal people 200 years ago, we pray and ask for the gifts of your Holy Spirit – wisdom, understanding, right judgement and courage – so that we may learn from this travesty of justice and tread the path of recognition of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters as equal in human dignity to each and every one of us.

We pray you, Lord, to touch our hearts so that we may become leaders in reconciliation, seeking the unity in Christ that acknowledges but also transcends all differences of culture, status or race.

We commit ourselves, Lord, to influence the minds and hearts of the people of Australia to achieve justice and harmony in our land and to uphold the dignity of the Aboriginal people. We commend to your mercy, Lord, the souls of the victims and also perpetrators of this massacre. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.


At least fourteen were killed and the only survivors were two women and three children.

Hearing a child's cry and a barking dog in the bush, Wallis lined his soldiers to search for the fugitives. In the moonlight they could see figures jumping across the rocky landscape. Some of the Aborigines were shot and others driven off the cliffs into a steep gorge. At least fourteen were killed and the only survivors were two women

and three children. Among those killed were the mountain chief Conibigal, an old man called Balyin, a Dharawal man called Dunell along with several women and children. Heads of two Aboriginal men were removed and sent overseas. The skulls have recently been repatriated back to Australia. The event which occurred on 17 April 1816 was to become known to history as the Appin Massacre. ■

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





I WAS A *STRANGER* AND YOU *WELCOMED* ME

MATT 25:35

SUPPORTING REFUGEE ARRIVALS
IN THE DIOCESE

BY DARREN McDOWELL

*Refugees are not numbers,
they are people who have faces,
names, stories and need to be
treated as such.*

This is the description Pope Francis gave to people who seek shelter and refuge from violence, war, devastation and persecution.

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis

The war in Syria and conflicts in surrounding countries have displaced millions of people. Our hearts have been moved by the images of destruction, starvation, fear and anguish suffered by people who are fleeing the situation in their homeland.

In response to this humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq, the Federal Government has committed to settling some 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Australia. Some have already arrived.

A number of organisations have been contracted by the Government as Settlement Service Providers. In the Diocese of Wollongong, those agencies are Navitas English (Illawarra/South Coast/Southern Highlands) and Macarthur Diversity Services (Macarthur).

As a Church community drawing on the example and teaching of Jesus, we too are called to play our part.

A collaborative venture between the Settlement Service Providers, CatholicCare, Office of the Bishop and Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, is supporting and coordinating our diocesan response to this important need.

Who is coming?

People who are persecuted in their homeland. They are displaced. They have lost everything. Many of them have lost family members. Many will be widowed women with dependent children. All of them will have experienced trauma. They are coming to Australia for their safety and for the safety of their children.

People coming to Australia will be from a range of ethnic and faith traditions. Some will be Christian; many will be Muslim. English will be a second language for nearly all of them and all will be in need.

How Can I Help?

As a Catholic Church community we are called to be a people of mercy, hospitality and hope for those who seek our protection and care.

There are three major areas through which we invite you and your parish community to offer support. These areas are:

1 Donating Small Household and Personal Goods

The Commonwealth Government is providing funding to cover the major costs associated with settlement. This support comes in forms including a basic household goods package and assistance to secure affordable accommodation.

However, many items will still be needed such as the following:

- Linen, especially new sheets and blankets, towels, tea towels and table cloths
- Curtains
- TV stands
- Personal effects such as handbags, wallets, and the like.

Drop off point: Vinnies Warehouse (110 Montague St, North Wollongong)

2 Social Connection and Conversation

English will be a second language for almost all of them. They will not know many people and will be keen to become familiar with the Australian environment and way of life. TAFE is offering professional English classes.

However, parishes are encouraged to offer social gatherings and smaller more personal opportunities such as:

- Coffee catch-ups for English language skills
- Parish Welcome Dinner or BBQ
- 'Buddy System' to show them around the suburb and location of facilities such as public transport, shops, libraries, chemists and doctors.
- Parish Playgroup
- Parish Youth Group



3 Affordable Rental Accommodation

Navitas English is providing refugees with short-term accommodation. However, there is a need for longer-term (6-12 months or more) accommodation where families can truly settle and begin their lives anew in our community.

If you are a landlord and have a property with good access to shops, schools, public transport and amenities, then Navitas English would be interested in speaking with you. They would be hoping for a significantly reduced rent and surety of tenure.

Who do I contact?

Parishes in the Illawarra Region have a nominated person who will support and coordinate the efforts of each parish in playing our part to make refugees and asylum seekers welcome within our community. If you are in this region please contact your Parish Office for more information and offers of assistance for refugees being settled within your area.

For those outside this area, you may like to contact Darren McDowell, 4222 2463 or darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au who will be able to provide you with further information. ■

Darren McDowell is the Coordinator of Parish Services, Diocese of Wollongong

REFUGEE WEEK

19-25 JUNE 2016

Refugee Week, occurring between the 19 and 25 June, provides your parish with an excellent opportunity to offer some kind of enhanced support for those newly settling within your community. Take up one of the ideas mentioned above, or visit the Refugee Council of



Australia website: refugeeweek.org.au where you will find more information on how you can take action during this week.

*Refugees are not numbers,
they are people
who have faces, names,
stories and need to be
treated as such.*

POPE FRANCIS



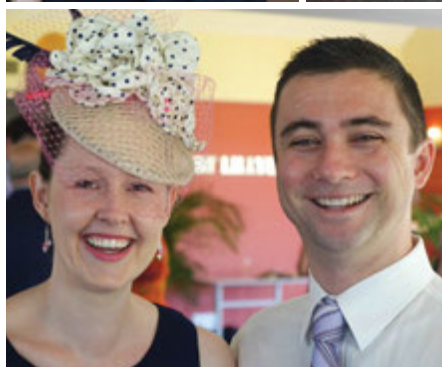
Fillies and Fashion at the Races

CatholicCare's 28th annual St Patrick's Race Day was held at Kembla Grange on 19 March 2016, raising \$22,000 which will directly benefit CatholicCare's Family & Sibling Support (SIBS) Program, subsidising social outings and the Annual Camp for brothers and sisters of kids with a disability.

Bishop Peter Ingham, along with Director Michael Austin, welcomed 250 guests on the day who gathered in support of this worthy cause.

Local businesses who showed their generosity through sponsoring the day included: Collegians Rugby League Football Club, Illawarra Toyota, Wollongong Mini Storage, Catholic Development Fund, Catholic Education Office, KPMG and Dapto Centretown Pharmacy. Thanks also to auxiliary sponsors, Gai Waterhouse, Solar Springs, Outback Steakhouse, Ultimate Paintball, Harvey Norman, Assett Communications, Avene, Tynan Motors, Kids Car Showroom, Catholic Church Insurances and Proust Optical Figtree. ■

Be kept up-to-date with CatholicCare events and workshops. Contact Chiara on chiaram@catholiccare.dow.org.au



Golf Day

MONDAY 11 JULY 2016
PORT KEMBLA GOLF CLUB

Special guest speaker
Brendon Santalab
Striker – Western Sydney Wanderers

All funds raised will go towards SIBS (siblings in families of kids with a disability)

TO REGISTER CALL CHIARA ON 4254 9308

CatholicCare Celebrates Volunteers



Helping Parents Prepare for Work

CatholicCare services are growing with the recent introduction of a new ParentsNext Project. Through this project, eligible parents living in the Shellharbour Local Government Area can access assistance to plan and prepare for employment by the time their children are at school.

ParentsNext is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Employment and is designed to provide non-vocational support to parents who are looking to return to the workforce after having children.

CatholicCare Staff work with parents to help them to identify their education and employment goals, develop a pathway to achieve their goals and link them to activities and services in the local community.

Parents may be eligible for ParentsNext if their youngest child is aged five years or under and they have not had paid employment in the last six months.

If required, ParentsNext Projects also assist parents to increase their educational qualifications, identify and address barriers to employment, develop the practical skills needed to get a job and find out about childcare fee assistance.

The ParentsNext Project is located at 7/5 Burra Place, Shellharbour City. For more information call 0417 410 127

Over 60 CatholicCare volunteers, including Molly the volunteer visitor dog, were recognised at a special luncheon on 20 May 2016 at the Xavier Centre.

Bishop Peter presented the volunteers with a special Year of Mercy bookmark and paid tribute to their compassion and generosity of spirit.

CatholicCare Director, Michael Austin, says CatholicCare relies on the voluntary service of more than 170 passionate people who donate their time and energy to support people in need in our Diocese, every day of the year.

"We owe an incredible debt to our volunteers. They make our communities better places to live," Mr Austin said.

"Volunteers are invaluable in the lives of so many people, especially in older people who may be less mobile and depend on them for social contact," he continued.

Volunteering is an opportunity to get involved with your local community, make new friendships and connect with people. Throughout the Diocese, volunteers are involved in a wide range of CatholicCare programs and initiatives including Community Visitors Scheme, Pastoral Care, Activity Buddies in the SIBS program, transport and fundraising. ■

To find out more about volunteering with CatholicCare call 02 4227 1122 or visit catholiccare.dow.org.au

PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

Ruse Parish Farewells their “Good and Faithful Servant”

BY DANIEL HOPPER

Monday 29 February 2016 was indeed a sad day for the Diocese when Bishop Peter Ingham announced the death of Fr Anthony “Tony” Daly, beloved Parish Priest of St Thomas More Catholic Parish Ruse, following a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

A Pontifical Funeral Mass for Fr Tony was held on Thursday 3 March 2016 at Ruse. On a hot summer’s day, the church was overflowing with hundreds of mourners sitting under any shade they could find. Inside, Bishop Ingham joined clergy, religious, family, friends and parishioners from St Thomas More as they celebrated the life of this true servant of God.

The following are excerpts from Bishop Ingham’s homily that he gave during the funeral Mass:

Whenever someone we love and appreciate dies, I think we too die a little bit ourselves. I mean, we know that we can never be exactly the same again. An area of our life – a familiar voice, a footstep, a shared memory – has now disappeared and cannot ever be re-created. It is a heart-rending experience because Fr Tony, the one we loved and appreciated, and still do, has a place in our heart and we can no longer find a place in his. A violence has been done to us because we have lost a place where we were happy to rest.

So, mixed with our sadness and grief, there may well be even some anger, that the balance of our lives has been roughly upset. There’s nothing wrong if your prayer is telling God you feel angry – God’s big enough to take that!

Yet, woven into all this mixed emotion, there is also a deep gratitude to God for all that Fr Tony has been to us. Deep down we can now conclude Fr Tony’s life was complete – into God’s hands he commended his spirit. Fr Tony has given us so much despite his failing health and now we’ve had to let him go ...



By our presence here today, by our prayers, and by our expressions of sympathy, we comfort Fr Tony’s family and all who were close to him. We demonstrate to them the widespread honour, affection and respect with which he was held in the communities where he was known – here in the Diocese, in Tahmoor, in Shellharbour, in Rosemeadow and in Ruse, among the Aboriginal people through the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and in St Vincent de Paul circles where he was a life member among the Chaplains of diverse cultures and languages. We also note the enormous (though often unseen) contribution to goodness Fr Tony has made to these communities and to wherever he served ...

In our long and rich Catholic Tradition, one of its most consoling

Tony had a secret that made him like he was. Would you agree, there was an interior joy that radiated to all with whom he came into contact – a secret, I believe, supported by his faith, hope and love.

BISHOP PETER INGHAM

teachings is that those who have gone before us in death can be helped by our prayers for them; and most especially, by our offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the eternal repose of their souls ...



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

Elsewhere, our liturgy says, “We believe that all the ties of friendship and affection which knit us as one throughout our lives, do not unravel when somebody dies.” Furthermore, our Church’s beautiful teaching about the Communion of Saints, is about the union that continues to exist between us here on earth, with those who have shared our life and now have gone before us.

So, death doesn’t end our relationship with Fr Tony. When you and I were born, the cord was cut that bound us to our mothers. But the relationship with our mothers did not end. It simply moved into a newer, fuller phase during our lives outside the womb ...

When I think of Fr Tony, I remember a man who was very genuine. Tony

was so obviously dinkum, wasn’t he? I mean what you saw was what you got! He was unassuming. There was a humble goodness. He didn’t have himself on, nor take himself too seriously. He could see the funny side of things; he had a sense of fair-play. He was sincere; he was gentle, approachable and hospitable. Above all, he was thoughtful, he cared.

There is a mountain of Christian virtue in all those colloquial expressions. I am not saying that Fr Tony had no faults. He was human like the rest of us, but the goodness of Tony’s character and the integrity of his living explain the universal high regard in which he is held.

I believe Tony had a secret that made him like he was. Would you agree,

there was an interior joy that radiated to all with whom he came into contact – a secret, I believe, supported by his faith, hope and love ...

What more can I say? Be sad that Fr Tony’s gone but be glad that Fr Tony is now home with God whom he served with such dedication.

May Fr Tony rest in peace in one of the many rooms in the Father’s house and enjoy the reward of his goodness.

Amen. ■

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

‘Home Sweet Home’ for Diocese’s Newest Parish in Oran Park



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

BY DANIEL HOPPER

When most people think of a church building they think of steeples, pews and stained glass windows. But for the past twelve months, parishioners and visitors at St Mary MacKillop Catholic Parish Oran Park have celebrated their weekend Masses among bookshelves, children’s artwork and computer terminals. That’s because the Parish (founded in June 2015) has been calling the library at St Justin’s Catholic Primary School Oran Park their home on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings.

But that all changed on the weekend of 7 May 2016 when the Parish gathered for the first time in their brand new purpose-built church and parish centre in Oran Park. A few weeks later, on Saturday 28 May, hundreds of parishioners and dignitaries joined Bishop Peter Ingham, founding parish priest Fr David Catterall, and St Paul’s Camden Pastor Emeritus Fr John Whitty, as they celebrated the official opening and blessing of the new church.

Fr David said, “For me it’s significant and providential that we celebrate the official opening and blessing of our purpose-built southern Mass centre just a few weeks short of our first birthday as a parish. As any parent and grandparent (and uncle for that matter!) knows firsthand, the first birthday of a child is a cause for great celebration, but at the same time it is an opportunity to look back with thanks and to look forward to the future in hope. The same is true for a parish as young as ours.

“It’s also significant and providential that we celebrate the building of this ‘domus ecclesiae’ (the house for us ‘the Church’) in the year that the Sisters of St Joseph (founded by our patron St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods) celebrate their sesquicentenary.

“Again, as I have often reminded us, the story of our new parish has mirrored in many ways the story of the founding of the Josephites: celebrating

the Masses in the southern part of our parish, not in a church building but in the facilities of a school; opening our first parish office (aka “The Hub”) in a site shed probably not much smaller than Mary MacKillop’s Penola barn school house; the priest not living in a purpose-built presbytery but in rented accommodation and travelling between Mass centres (yes, I acknowledge not on horseback like Fr Julian) to administer the sacraments; the opening of a convent in Leppington and the presence of the Sisters in the two Catholic schools within our parish boundary; and the generous contributions of fellow parishioners, friends and supporters.

“These similarities and many others lead us to be able to say like Mary MacKillop that “Little did [we] dream what was to spring from so small a beginning”. ■

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

St Mary MacKillop's Sisters of St Joseph Celebrate 150 years

BY SR JULIE SIMPSON RSJ

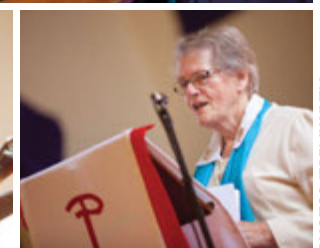
March 19 2016 marked the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St Joseph in Penola, South Australia. On this day in 1866, Mary MacKillop, with the direction and encouragement of Fr Julian Tenison Woods, began to live as a religious sister under the Patronage of St Joseph. Mary donned a simple black dress and bonnet, attended Mass, taught the children in a stable in Penola and waited for God to show her what was the next step.

The Diocese of Wollongong has been blessed with many foundations of the Sisters of St Joseph including: Albion Park, Bellambi, Berkeley Motor Mission, Berry, Bulli, Camden, Claymore, Corrimall, Dapto, Helensburgh, Jamberoo, Kiama, Koonawarra, Luddenham, Menangle, Milton, Mittagong, Moss Vale, Picton, Port Kembla, The Oaks, Thirroul and Unanderra. There are still a number of Sisters living in the Diocese today.

United with the people in other cathedrals and churches throughout Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Scotland, Peru and Timor Leste, the Diocese celebrated the Anniversary with a Mass organised by the Sisters and celebrated by Bishop Peter Ingham at St Francis Xavier Cathedral Wollongong on Saturday 19 March 2016.

The theme chosen for the Sesquicentenary year is *Listening to the Heartbeat of the World*, and the prayers and readings reminded us of the fidelity and graciousness of God. A letter from Sr Monica Cavanagh RSJ, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, was read out where her greetings were sent to all those gathered at Wollongong and other places.

Sr Monica challenged everyone to continue to respond to the needs of our time – the families in detention centres and refugee camps, rural communities where people struggle with drought, flood, fire and uncertain markets, those without educational opportunities in Timor Leste and Peru, and those dealing with the grief, loss and heartaches of everyday life.



PHOTOS: JEREMY YUEN

Little did either of us then dream of what was to spring from so small a beginning.

ST MARY OF THE
CROSS MACKILLOP

Bishop Peter Ingham's homily looked at three aspects of St Joseph and applied these to Mary MacKillop's life. Bishop Ingham said that St Joseph was perplexed, marginal and was a person who knew loss. St Joseph didn't understand but he did his duty simply and faithfully. Mary MacKillop also did these things in her life. She wrote, "We must hold ourselves in readiness for God's will, whichever way things go." St Joseph was marginal and thus speaks to the marginalised in today's world. In Mary MacKillop, the unloved and those alienated from society found comfort and strength. Finally, St Joseph was a person who knew loss. Similarly, Mary MacKillop knew loss

on many levels – excommunication, loss of Sisters to diocesan rule, loss of Fr Julian and many more losses in her life from family and Congregation.

The Mass was one of joy and hope for the future. At the conclusion of the Mass, the Sisters processed out to the applause of the Congregation. Through the smiles and the tears, the love of God, St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, was shining through. We are assured it will continue into the future. This was followed by lunch, beautifully set up by Jane Hollier, her little helpers and the Catholic Women's League who donated the sweets. This was a time where all could catch up, share laughter and stories. ■

Sr Julie Simpson RSJ is from Picton and is one of the Coordinators of the Sisters of St Joseph's Sesquicentenary Year celebrations

Ignorance is *Not* Bliss

BY JUDE HENNESSY

There are numerous words in common use in our language that have seemingly been hijacked. For example, our Catechists are part of what is known as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), an organisation that grew with the desire to promote learning of the truths of our faith. The word *doctrine* was thus associated with a body of truth. Unfortunately these days, the word doctrine is linked negatively to the word *indoctrination*, which suggests a process of convincing people to think and act a certain way, through processes that trick them and lead them away from reality.

A similar instance of words being hijacked could be noted when referring to the Spiritual Works of Mercy. For example, one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy most relevant to Catechists is “instructing the ignorant”. I must admit, that when you hear or read that word “ignorant” you can’t help but regard it as a harsh term. No one would like to be referred to as ignorant these days. When considered in its true meaning, the word ignorant best refers to someone who is unaware, or who still has some things to learn. Thus, we are all in some respects ignorant.

There is one thing, however, that no one should be ignorant of; namely the love of God, his mercy and the Gospel message of salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. That is not my opinion. That is the opinion and instruction of Jesus when he tells us to, “Go therefore and teach all of the nations.” (Matthew 28:19) It is for this reason that the Church identified “instructing the ignorant” as a Spiritual Work of Mercy. The Catechists of our Diocese, in teaching about Jesus and bringing young people to an encounter with God’s love, mercy and forgiveness, are revealing truth (doctrine) by teaching about the one who said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

*go therefore
and teach all*

ALL of the NATIONS

MATTHEW 28:19

Each time our Catechists go into a class to teach and the next time they answer questions from students about the deeper questions of the human heart, they are participating in the mission of the Church through the Spiritual Works of Mercy. We should all be grateful to our Catechists for doing so. Most of us know who our Catechists are in our parishes. Don’t forget to affirm them and encourage them in their work.

If you feel called to be part of this incredible ministry, the CCD Team would love to speak to you on 02 4640 8550. ■

Jude Hennessy is the Director of CCD & Evangelisation and Director of Parish Services, Diocese of Wollongong

Think about it...

It has been present at most of the important milestones in your life; your baptism, your first communion, at times of great celebration and at times of great sadness.

The work of the many ministries of the Catholic Church are far-reaching, life-giving and life-saving. You can play a part in helping to ensure that this important work will be there for future generations by leaving your local parish or the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong a gift in your will. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

For further information, please contact the diocesan representative on **4222 2446** or visit **www.bequests.dow.org.au**



 **Catholic Diocese of
Wollongong**
Bearers of Christ's Love

The Bad, the Good, and the Future

BY FRANCIS SULLIVAN

It is clear that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has shifted its attention to the second phase of its brief: *Identifying the best practice in prevention and management of child sex abuse.*

So far the Commission's public hearings have highlighted the failures of institutions and there has been little concentration on what institutions have put in place over the years as they came to terms with the horror of this scandal. Without wanting to minimise the past failures of the Church I do think it is now an appropriate time to draw attention to the significant work that has gone into prevention, education and victim focused pastoral care within the Catholic Church.

As I have previously stated, the Towards Healing and Melbourne Response programs have worked well for some people and not for others. They have always been "works in progress". At least they have been in place now for well over twenty years and have offered victims a pathway designed to help achieve a level of restorative justice.

So many other institutions simply didn't have any redress or reparation programs in place, and still don't.

The Church leadership has given every indication that it will continue to pursue best practice in this area and we are engaged with the Commission wherever possible to explore such avenues.

It is interesting to step back and ask why it is that the Catholic Church actively put in place reparation schemes when so many other institutions didn't. I expect that for most institutions their legal advice was to let the courts deal with the issue.

Of course that was a fairly "safe" course to adopt as most cases of child sexual abuse had very little chance of success in the courts. Either the perpetrators were



dead, the limitation period had been exceeded or there were no witnesses to corroborate the victim's story. If the victim was lucky maybe an out of court settlement would occur. However, the legal might of the institution could easily prevail. Hardly a sympathetic, let alone compassionate response.

For many years Church leaders and officials panicked and sought to safeguard the reputation of the Church and adopt legalistic approaches to child abuse cases. By the late 1980s the true ethos of the Church finally began to emerge and we began to see more of a pastoral response to victims.

In other words, the essence of the Church came to the fore and began to shape a response very different from the knee jerk legalistic approach that was previously in place. This meant that resources, both financial and human, had to be deployed to make a redress and reparation complaints handling system a reality. It meant that institutional apologies, counselling and material support needed to be available. It meant the Church had to humbly accept its history and its failures.

Facing the shame of the hypocrisy and the humiliation that the scandal has caused were also important public testaments that Church leaders have made. At that time, unlike other

institutions, at least the Catholic Church showed that it was and has been prepared to shift its approach, learn from grave mistakes and face up to its failures.

I think this more than anything has been the difference in the history of the Church's approach to child sex abuse compared to other institutions. As the saying goes, "we are not there yet" but the embrace of best practice over these last twenty years and the willingness to innovate and improve can only make things better. ■

Francis Sullivan is the Chief Executive Officer of the Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

The Catholic Diocese of Wollongong is cooperating fully with the Royal Commission and seeks to be truly open to the wisdom that it will offer to ensure greater protection for children, now and into the future.

If someone has been sexually abused as a child by a priest, religious or employee of the Catholic Church, it is important that they are given an opportunity for their experience to be heard.

**The Royal Commission into
Institutional Responses to
Child Sexual Abuse:**

1800 099 340

childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au
GPO Box 5283, Sydney NSW 2001

Police Assistance Line: 131 444

Wollongong to Los Angeles - 40,000 Experience God's 'Boundless Mercy'



Bottom, left: Participants met in Anaheim at Downtown Disney.

(L - R) Maria Ioannou, Kerrie Piatek, Steve and Jo Kenny, Jill and Ken Bryant, Philip Moore, Catherine Hailstone.

BY CATHERINE
HAILSTONE

“Would you like to come to America for a conference?” This is the last thing I ever expected my Principal to ask me, but this is how it all began. I was fortunate to be invited to attend the 2016 Religious Education Congress in Anaheim, California – a four day conference that is known as the largest annual Catholic gathering in the USA, attracting nearly 40,000 people in 2016.

The Wollongong cohort included Philip Moore and myself from St Pius X Catholic Parish Primary School Unanderra, Kerrie Piatek and Maria Ioannou from Corpus Christi Catholic High School Oak Flats and Ken Bryant and Joanne Kenny from Catholic Education Dicoese of Wollongong.

The Theme for the 2016 Congress, “Boundless Mercy”, was inspired by

St John’s Gospel where Jesus meets the woman at the well and from the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis. Pope Francis writes, “Mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive.”

The Congress was a wonderful experience for everyone involved. There were over 300 workshops to choose from, an impressive range of keynote speakers, liturgical celebrations, entertainment and an exhibition hall showcasing art, music, books and other religious resources.

The Congress highlight was the closing liturgy held in the main arena. Although it was on such a large scale, it was still so personal and meaningful. The celebration was presented through music, readings and dance in three different languages, highlighting the message of inclusiveness.

Mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive.

We have all since reconnected together with Director of Schools, Peter Turner, to share and discuss the Congress experience and to offer reflections on our learnings and insights. An Action Plan has been developed to implement some of the valuable ideas and resources collected throughout the Congress into our Religious Education classrooms in the Diocese of Wollongong. This will strengthen and enhance our school communities as we celebrate the Year of Mercy. ■

Catherine Hailstone is the Religious Education Co-ordinator, St Pius X Catholic Parish Primary School, Unanderra

Guest Speakers Visit Wollongong for Catholic Mission Church Appeal

BY DAVID HARRISON

Catholic Mission's 2016 Church Appeal has wrapped up in Wollongong with some special guests stopping by from Cambodia, where this year's campaign is focused.

Hang Sreyputh and Tom Chheat, two education and training professionals from Battambang in central Cambodia, visited Catholic schools in Wollongong as part of their visit to Australia, coinciding with the appeal and an education conference in Perth.

Catholic Mission's Church Appeal ran through May and June in the Diocese of Wollongong and carried the theme, *Just as you did it to one of the least of these ... you did it to me.* (Matthew 25:40)

The campaign reveals the efforts of Sr Eulie Desacula and the Daughters of Charity to reach disadvantaged children in Phnom Penh with their innovative Mobile Tuk-Tuk Education Centre.

The Centre allows children in disadvantaged and remote communities to access education, and ultimately to avoid the possibility of falling victim to a merciless reality of prostitution, child trafficking and drugs.

Sreyputh and Chheat were visiting Australia following the appeal as delegates to the National Catholic Education Commission Conference in Perth from 19-22 June. The Conference, supported by Catholic Mission, drew Catholic education leaders from Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, and across Australia.

David Harrison, Diocesan Director for Catholic Mission in Wollongong, said the visitors provided young people with a different view of education. "It was a great privilege to have Sreyputh and Chheat with us in Wollongong," he said. "Their experience of education is very different to the one we know in Australia and we are grateful to have the opportunity to share with them."



Hang Sreyputh



Tom Chheat

It is not too late to support Catholic Mission's 2016 Church Appeal. Sr Eulie now urgently wants to expand the Mobile Tuk-Tuk Education Centre's reach into other communities. "If these children receive a good education, they can become freer to decide for their own lives," she said. "These children will be freed from the poverty which their parents are experiencing now."

You can learn more by viewing the inspirational DVD, *Just as you did it to one of the least of these ... you did it to me*, which can be found online along with other interactive materials for anyone who wishes to engage further with the work of Catholic Mission around the world, including through prayerful or financial support. ■

David Harrison is the Director of Catholic Mission, Diocese of Wollongong.

For further information about the appeal, please visit catholicmission.org.au/cambodia. Alternatively, you can support Catholic Mission today by calling 02 4222 2482 or 0449 716 363.

To find out more about the NCEC Conference, please visit ncec2016.com

Amazing Response to Diocese's Weekly Small Group Resource

BY DANIEL HOPPER

The idea of Faith Circles had been growing for some time, largely due to the positive feedback we receive for our Lenten and Advent programs. Many people desire to keep their group going throughout the year, noting the benefits of journeying in faith with people they have come to know, love and trust.

All the evidence shows that living and growing in our faith is best done as part of a small group. So, we decided to pilot Faith Circles – a *free* weekly small group resource based on Pope Francis' Weekly Catechesis for the Year of Mercy.

We did a "soft" launch via our eNewsletter email list giving the first four weeks and then inviting people to sign up and start their own group. What we didn't expect was that one month later we would have over 400 groups Australia-wide using our weekly resource!

What is Faith Circles all about?

We usually attend Church in rows, often with limited interaction with our sisters and brothers in Christ. As the name suggests, Faith Circles aims to turn these rows into circles, bringing about a sense of belonging, a growing knowledge of faith, group and personal prayer, growing confidence to share faith with others, and a place to invite people who are not attending church.

Faith Circles are easy to start. Just get two or more people keen to share faith and life and pick a time and a place to regularly meet. Sign up for our emails



and we will send it to you, for free! You can then print the handout or maybe just read it straight off a smart-phone or tablet!

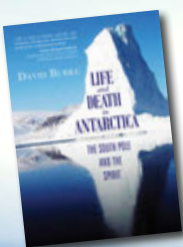
Faith Circles aren't meant to be a closed club! Yes, it is a great resource to nurture those who come to Mass, but more importantly, Faith Circles provides a forum to draw back people disconnected from Church because of the welcome and care of a small group and an encounter with Jesus through prayer.

It doesn't matter if you go for five minutes or an hour: the Holy Spirit turns up when we come together!

What is the Faith Circles Resource?

Faith Circles is a double-sided A4 sheet, based on Pope Francis' Weekly Catechesis, with reflection questions and prayer points. It is available to download for free via email subscription or on our website at faithcircles.dow.org.au. Go to the website link to subscribe to the Faith Circles email list. It takes less than 30 seconds! ■

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



LIFE and DEATH in ANTARCTICA THE SOUTH POLE AND THE SPIRIT

We congratulate Ss Peter & Paul Kiama parishioner and former journalist, David Burke OAM, on the release of his 26th book, *Life and Death in Antarctica: The South Pole and the Spirit*, which chronicles the gripping account of those who since the days of the earliest Antarctic explorers have had to summon their Faith when survival hung in the balance, including famous Jesuit seismologist, Fr Daniel Linehan SJ. David's new book can be purchased for \$29.95 online at: dow.sh/burkeantarctica

Diocese Helping the Vulnerable Through Project Compassion

BY TOM VAN KINTS

Caritas Australia's Project Compassion Appeal is an extraordinary, ongoing demonstration of the faith, love and generosity of caring supporters, all in the name of justice and peace. In this, its 50th year, Project Compassion 2016 was launched in the Diocese of Wollongong on Tuesday 9 February at Holy Spirit College Bellambi. Over 200 students from 30 diocesan schools came together to show their solidarity and hope for a more just world. Since the launch, the Wollongong Catholic community has showed its commitment to the world's most vulnerable people by raising funds, making donations and taking part in awareness raising activities.

Caritas would like to give special thanks to our Wollongong supporters, especially the wonderful Church leadership, Catholic Education, teachers and parish communities who so wholeheartedly embrace Caritas Australia's annual Lenten appeal.

About Project Compassion 2016

The theme for this year is *Learning more, creating change*. As Pope Francis says, "Education is an act of hope," so this year Project Compassion celebrated the power of learning and the many ways in which Caritas Australia is working with local partners around the world to provide vital learning and renewed hope to those children, women and men who are most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.



With your support and compassion, our agency has been able to reach 2.47 million people directly in the last financial year.

Project Compassion demonstrated how education and training can empower members of vulnerable communities to share their skills and create positive changes for all.

Our stories of hope, shared during Lent, were stories of change assisted through our long-term development programs that focus on agricultural training, access to education for intellectually disabled children, skills development to reduce gender inequality and violence and medical and advocacy skills training. All of these inspiring stories showed how education, training and sharing knowledge can empower individual

communities across the globe to transform their futures and create lasting change.

With your support and compassion, Caritas Australia has been able to reach 2.47 million people directly in the last financial year and accompany them on their path to a brighter future.

Want to be involved in our work?

Are you interested in international development and social justice? We are running a Global Justice Workshop for Young Adults. Find out more at www.caritas.org.au/act/events or youth@caritas.org.au ■

Tom van Kints is the Diocesan Director of Caritas, Diocese of Wollongong.

Donations for Project Compassion 2016 will be accepted until 30 June 2016. Call 1800 024 413 or donate at caritas.org.au/donate

Divine Mercy DEVOTION

You are invited to come and pray with us the Divine Mercy Devotion with veneration of St Faustina's Relic, **every Wednesday at 5pm**. All welcome.

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Growth and Strength

BY ANNE KELLY

This year the Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Women's League welcomed the Shellharbour City and Berkeley/Warrawong Branches. Both Branches are enthusiastic and provide growth and strength to our Diocesan Catholic Women's League.

The elected Executive, who will hold office for the next three years are: President – Anne Kelly (Dapto Branch); Secretary – Mary Smith (Wollongong Branch); Treasurer – Isabel Fitzgerald (Dapto Branch); Assistant Treasurer – Helen Waterworth (Kiama Branch); Senior Vice President – Jo Clarke (Milton/Ulladulla Branch); Vice President North – Sue Meehan (Wollongong Branch); Vice President South – Ann Dawes (Kiama Branch); and Vice President Southern Highlands – Lynne Harrison (Moss Vale Branch). Fr Patrick Vaughan continues as Chaplain.

Upon accepting the President Badge of Office, newly-elected President, Anne Kelly, said, "I hope and pray I can walk in the footsteps of previous Diocesan Presidents and do them proud."

A very successful Social Day was held on St Patrick's Day (17 March 2016) with the Catholic Women's League



Top: CWL Members enjoying the Cruise. Bottom: New Executive elected at the AGM

cruising on the Port Hacking River. A number of Branches were represented and new friendships were formed and old ones renewed.

Upcoming activities include the Annual St Maria Goretti Mass to be celebrated at 11am on Friday 1 July 2016 hosted by the Shellharbour City Branch at All Saints Catholic Church Shellharbour. This will be a great opportunity for the members of this new branch to meet and get to know the members of the Branches of CWL in the Diocese.

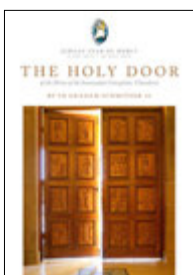
The Annual Diocesan Mass of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop will be celebrated at 11am on Tuesday

9 August 2016 at St John's Catholic Church Dapto. As the Sisters of St Joseph are celebrating their 150th Anniversary this year, we are hoping to have a large number in attendance.

In this year of Mercy may we remind ourselves of Jesus' words, "Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) ■

Anne Kelly is the President of the Catholic Women's League, Diocese of Wollongong.

Readers wishing to know more about the work of CWL are invited to contact Diana Lyon on 0417 421 916

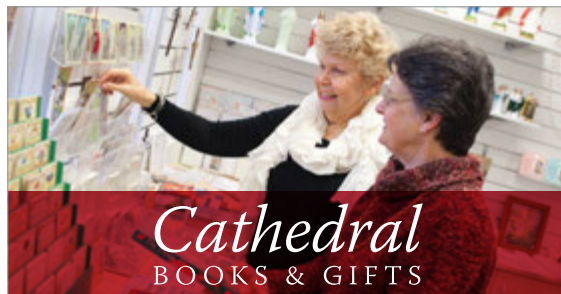


THE
HOLY
DOOR
REFLECTIONS BY
FR GRAHAM SCHMITZER

As part of the Year of Mercy, Immaculate Conception Parish Unanderra commissioned acclaimed Wood Sculptor, Engelbert Piccolruaz, to carve twelve themes of mercy from the Scriptures into the church doors to serve as a meditation on God's message of mercy for the world.

Parish priest, Fr Graham Schmitzer, has written twelve beautiful short reflections to accompany the carvings which have been compiled along with photographs of the carvings in the new Holy Door book.

Prices for the book start at \$3.00 (+ shipping). Download a sample and order today at www.holydoor.dow.org.au



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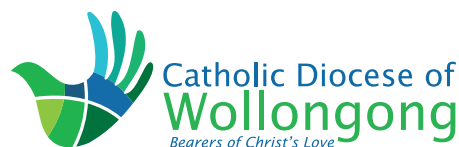


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CCD Resource Centre

02 4640 8550

Micah House

35a Cordeaux Street, Campbelltown

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General Information can be found at:
catholicozvocations.org.au

For enquiries contact: 02 4222 2400

Marriage Tribunal

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

Needing Help?

CatholicCare provides a range of services: 02 4227 1122

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Offering support to parishes
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Mass Times, Churches and Upcoming Events

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