

JOURNEY

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SUMMER 2017 | NO. 64

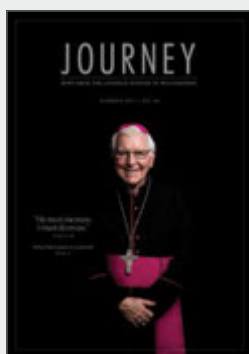
“He must increase,
I must decrease.”

JOHN 3:30

Bishop Peter prepares to say farewell

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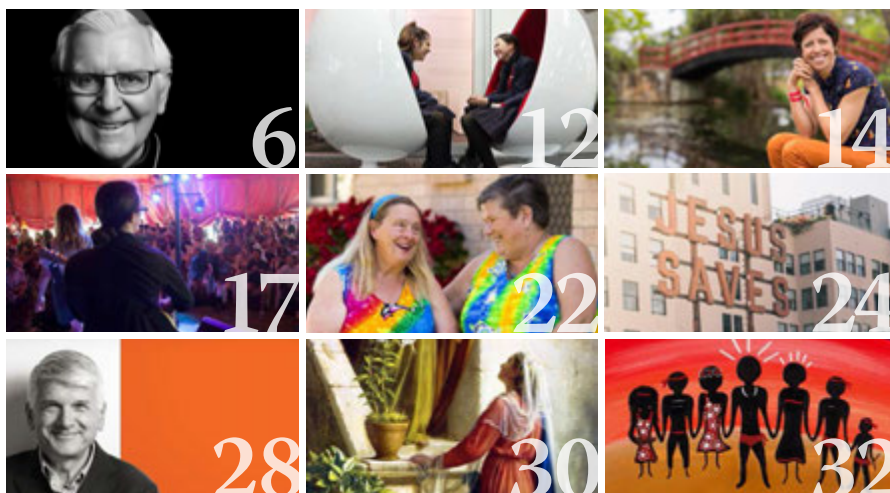
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Practising what we preach

The Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey

BY BISHOP PETER INGHAM

The result of the *Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey* was released on 15 November 2017 with 61.6% of Australians who took part voting yes, and 38.4% voting no. The result was not unexpected, especially when considering the debate was largely argued on the basis of *equality* with little heard on the nature of *marriage* outside of “love is love”.

In saying this, I do not deny the goodwill of the vast majority of those who voted yes and I accept the result of the survey and respect the democratic process undertaken by the people of Australia. Although it was heartening to see both sides of the debate conduct themselves in a relatively civil manner, it cannot be denied that there has been much hurt felt on both sides, and we now must work towards healing and reconciliation in our families, communities and Church.

I believe one of the causes of hurt has been a confusion between the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage and its teaching on the dignity of people with same-sex attraction. For me and all those people of goodwill in the Church, the postal survey was never a vote on the worth or dignity of people with same-sex attraction, which is beyond question, but on the meaning of marriage and the unique roles of a husband and wife in a family.

... as Catholics, we are called to love our same-sex attracted brothers and sisters, for they are loved completely and unconditionally by God, they share the same human dignity as all other human beings ...

The Catholic Church will continue to promote and practise the tenet of our Faith received from the Lord himself (Matthew 19:3–6) that marriage is a lifelong union of a man and a woman, open to the possibility of children.

However, we must also continue to promote and practise the tenet of our Faith that recognises the dignity and worth of every person, including those with same-sex attraction.

It should go without saying that, as Catholics, we are called to love our same-sex attracted brothers and sisters, for they are loved completely and unconditionally by God, they share the same human dignity as all other human beings, they are bestowed with gifts from God and should never be categorised simply according to their sexual orientation. As the Catechism of

the Catholic Church states, “They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (CCC, 2358).

As we move into the next phase of legislating the changes required to enact the will of the people, it is important that our parliament also ensures that the proper freedoms are legislated to guarantee that the many people who hold to the traditional definition of marriage are free to speak, teach and act on this belief. As Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP of Sydney said, “As we create a legal ‘right’ to marry a person of the same sex, we must not trade off existing rights to religious belief and expression, and other freedoms. There is room in the Australian public square for both.”

I invite you to join me in prayer for unity, healing and reconciliation for our nation and a generosity of spirit and respect for all who have different beliefs. ■

Yours in Christ



Most Rev Peter W Ingham DD
Bishop of Wollongong

REASONS FOR HOPE



BY JUDE HENNESSY

“Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:15).

I have been asked on a couple of occasions this year to speak at church events about the good news of the Gospel and the good things that are going on in our Church around the Diocese. Recently, I received a rather blunt request—“We need some good news because so many of my people are feeling downcast and downtrodden.” I was more than happy to oblige and had no shortage of good news stories that I was eager to share. But, I certainly understood why the request was being made and why many people in our Church need some encouragement and to be given “fresh heart” (Acts 14:22).

The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse have brought about a deep sense of shame in our humbled Church. Many of us are reeling because of the nature and tone of the debate surrounding the recent marriage survey and the proposed changes to the definition of marriage and the

... another reason for our hope is that what the world is offering is proving to be a counterfeit.

possibility of religious freedoms coming under threat. The difficulty in communicating the Church’s stance on important issues such as euthanasia and abortion, in an often hostile media environment, is another source of concern. Add to that the reports of the decline in church attendance and the “no religion” category claiming first spot in the recent national Census, and you get a sense of why I was asked on more than one occasion this year to remind people of the reasons for our hope as people of faith.

Has God abandoned us?

Reminding ourselves about the reasons for our hope and the source of our joy is a very timely thing to do in this Advent and Christmas season when we celebrate the historical and spiritual

reality of the coming of “Emmanuel”—God with us. Not only is God with us—he is for us, he loves us, redeems us, teaches us, corrects us, forgives us and renews us. He does this knowing all there is to know about us, our individual strengths and weaknesses, and our successes and failures. He loves us—warts and all. Jesus offers this to us as individuals and also as the body of Christ—this Church that he established, that he loves, and of which he remains the cornerstone.

Why should we be people of bottomless hope? The Gospel remains good news, full of transformative power. Repentance always leads to forgiveness and mercy every time—guaranteed. God wants us to spend eternity with him in joy and happiness and God assures us that, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). All of these things should be a cause for immense certainty, hope and joy.

A crisis of faith?

It is in the midst of these assurances that we are called: not to fear, but to bold action; not to passivity, but to faithful commitment to mission. It is important

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to note that, globally, adherence to belief is booming with 73% of the world's population identifying with one of the major religions. That figure is expected to rise to 80% by mid-2050—growing fastest in countries where faith was, until recently, banned. In the midst of the crisis of faith in Western materialistic societies, still 15% of Australians attend church once a month, with up to 25% at Christmas and Easter. If you ask non-believers if they like having a church in town, the response is an overwhelming “yes”. Hugh McKay said at the recent *2017 National Pastoral Planners Network Conference* that while “Church”—viewed as an institution—might be on the nose, when asked questions about the faithfulness and life of believers, non-believers are very positive, in many instances expressing a kind of “faith envy”.

What is the world offering us?

Because our increasingly secular society isn't fairing too well, we need to keep joyfully proposing Jesus. The materialist mantra of *more, more, more* has led to plummeting rates of happiness. Three million Aussies suffer from anxiety and depression, and loneliness is a major

social issue felt most acutely by young adults in their 20s. We have an epidemic of obesity and substance abuse—both symptomatic of dissatisfaction—and it is estimated that up to 70,000 Aussies now attempt suicide each year. Over 730,000 Aussie kids live in poverty, with UNICEF saying that 16% of Aussie kids lack secure access to decent food. We have over 100,000 people living on the streets each night in Australia with 42% of these people aged under 24 years. Violence is on the increase, with Australia recently hitting the top of the list for serious assaults amongst developed Western nations. Sweden was second. It would be quite easy to go on. Suffice to say that another reason for our hope is that what the world is offering is proving to be a counterfeit.

What does faith and the Church offer us?

When you contrast this to the overwhelming worldwide evidence showing that people of faith enjoy better health, longer life, higher quality relationships, and higher rates of happiness, fulfilment, service and belonging—even in the midst of life's inevitable hardships and difficulties—you start to get a sense that perhaps St Augustine was right when he stated that, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (*Confessions*, Bk I Par 1).

It is to this suffering and unsatisfied world that Pope Francis is urging us to introduce the person of Jesus to—through encounters with people who show love and compassion, with communities of welcome and service, with the transforming power of the simple Gospel message and ultimately an encounter with the risen Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nationally, our Church is transitioning to a listening Church. There are high hopes that renewal and reinvigoration will emerge in the lead-up to, and as a result of, the plenary council planned for the Australian Church in 2020. Amidst the bad news stories, remains the authentic vibrant witness of a Church that runs 66 hospitals nationally, operates 1,700 schools, has extensive social welfare networks such as CatholicCare, has the largest

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volunteer organisation in the country in the St Vincent de Paul Society, and has an array of charitable networks—most notably via Caritas and Catholic Mission. It is undeniable that we are a people of faith who walk-the-walk, not just talk-the-talk, and Australia would be a very different place—a harsher, darker place—without the light of witness and service that is a fruit of the body of Christ.

A Diocese of hope

In our own Diocese, the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) results present some great challenges and opportunities. But thankfully, this is bringing us to a renewed reliance on Jesus, who has already proven he is in the Resurrection business! Importantly, the NCLS shows that across the Diocese of Wollongong, we are a people who have a deep love of the Eucharist, of vibrant worship, of praying for and serving one another and have a strong desire for communities of deeper belonging. We are eager to find ways to grow in discipleship and ways to make Jesus known and loved, increasingly reaching out to the disconnected through programs like *Alpha* and *menALIVE*, vibrant youth ministry initiatives and effective parish renewal strategies.

Whilst this short editorial provides me limited capacity to overview the many wonderful things going on in our Diocese, in the pages that follow, I would urge you to allow yourself to be encouraged, to be challenged and to be prayerfully reawakened to the reasons for our hope and joy—emboldening you to serve and use your gifts in the local community. ■

Jude Hennessy is the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation and the co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.



He must increase, I must decrease.

JOHN 3:30

Bishop Peter prepares to say farewell

INTERVIEW & PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DANIEL HOPPER

For a generation of people in our Diocese, Bishop Peter Ingham is the only bishop of Wollongong that they have known. And so, it is with great sadness and a genuine sense of mourning that we will soon be saying farewell to our servant bishop who is nearing closer to retirement each day.

To say that Bishop Peter will be missed by the people of God in the Diocese of Wollongong is a massive understatement. He is universally loved by his flock as one of the kindest and most warm-hearted leaders in the Church. It is also fair to say that he is affectionately renowned in the public sphere as one of the great spiritual leaders of the Illawarra. So, his absence will be felt strongly outside the Church as well.

Personally, I—like many others—owe much of my livelihood to this man when he took a chance on my running the Diocese's involvement in World Youth Day 2008. Since then, my life has never been the same. He is like a second father to me and I will miss him more than I can describe in words. I don't think I have photographed any single person more than I have photographed Bishop Peter—including my own children! I will miss his sage spiritual and pastoral advice, the beautiful letters he pens, his wonderful sense of humour, his photogenic smile and his insanely youthful looking skin for a 77-year-old man that makes photographing him so easy.

Therefore, during the calm before the storm that will be the changing of the guard in the near future, I thought it was important to sit down with the man behind the mitre and ask him to reflect on his time as Bishop of Wollongong.



1

Doing an article looking back at your time as Bishop of Wollongong begs the obvious first question: Do you know something we don't know with regards to your retirement?

Haha! Definitely not. What I do know about my retirement is that having submitted my resignation to Pope Francis in 2016 when I turned 75—as required by Canon Law—he replied accepting my resignation, but requiring me to stay in my ministry until he appoints my successor. I turn 77 in January 2018, so I may go from rooster to feather duster by next Easter!

I am just conscious that when the new bishop is announced it will be a whirlwind time for the Diocese and I do not want to be drawing attention away from my successor. Like Jesus with John the Baptist, “He must increase, I must decrease” (John 3:30). This is why I have agreed to do this interview now.



2

You have said to me over the years that you are a reluctant bishop. What do you mean by this and how has it affected your relationship with Jesus?

I have heard my brother bishops say, “Anyone who desires to be a bishop, deserves what he gets!” That always makes me laugh because it sounds terrible, but what they mean is that all the best bishops—like the current Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis—are true servants and not motivated by power.

I was always happy being a priest and I probably did more effective pastoral work in the four parishes where I was an assistant priest and did not have all the additional administrative concerns for which parish priests are responsible. The change from priest to bishop is quite a leap and takes a big adjustment. Being an auxiliary bishop for eight years

in Sydney before being appointed the Bishop of Wollongong was an advantage, as was having been personal assistant to the Archbishop of Sydney for six years and the general secretary of the Archdiocese for 10 years. I had a bird's-eye view of what bishops have to do and be responsible for.

How has it affected my relationship with Jesus? Well, fundamental for any baptised Christian—and more so for those in ordained ministry—is one's personal relationship with Jesus, whose priesthood all the baptised share in varying degrees. Being aware of God's presence and that I can turn to Jesus at any time to praise, to seek forgiveness, to give thanks and to ask for other's needs and my own, makes me realise I am not exercising my ministry all on my own. As St Paul said, “I can do all things in the One who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).



2

What has brought you great joy as Bishop of Wollongong?

After God, the source of my greatest joy is definitely people—lay and clerical. A special part of my ministry is to be present to the Diocese by regularly attending and speaking at diocesan, parish, school, welfare, ministry and civic events—meeting others and witnessing to Jesus Christ to make the Church visible. I especially love celebrating Confirmations each year in all our parishes—speaking with the children and their families, teachers, catechists and clergy.

As priests, we accompany and minister to our people in their joys and sorrows. We are privileged to be a minister of mercy, especially when our people are up against it in times of serious illness, tragedy and death. What we learn from the faith and goodness of our people often far outweighs what we teach them.

I also love those small interactions, especially when I'm not "on the job." I remember one night I was at Collegians Club when a man asked if I was a priest because he wanted to talk "faith." We yarned for over half an hour about issues in this life. As we were walking out of the club together, he told me he once had a good yarn with Bishop Murray. He then asked, "Who's the Bishop now?" When I said, "Moi," he said, "Well, I'll be b...!"



4

Yours is a very public role—often meeting hundreds of people in a day. Yet, you somehow manage to be present to each and every person you meet. How important is this to you?

I learnt from seeing Bishop David Cremin in action how important it is to listen to people, be present to them and to put them at ease in our presence. I lived with an old Irish parish priest in my second curacy in Newtown (1966–1969). He used to say, "The glad hand, Father." It is amazing the positive response you get when you reach out and offer to shake hands with someone. You can't shake hands with a clenched fist.

While the Diocese is my primary role, one is also a bishop for the whole Church—at the level of our province (NSW/ACT), our nation (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference) and also on the international level where I have served a term as president of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (Aust/PNG,/NZ/Pacific Islands) and have been a member of three international Synods of bishops in Rome.

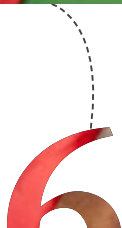


5

You have got a reputation as the joke-telling Bishop of Australia. How important is a good sense of humour when it comes to being a bishop?

A sense of humour takes a lot of the bumps out of life. When I was Cardinal Freeman's secretary, he would often say, "You never want to take yourself too seriously." My father was great at telling yarns, so I suppose I inherited a funny bone. Whenever Cardinal Freeman was preparing for a function, he would regularly ask me for an appropriate joke he could use. I follow Hal Roach's advice, "Write it down!" That's why you will often see me with a pen and paper in hand when listening to other people's presentations at functions. I wouldn't say that I recycle their jokes. I'll change a few things here and there. I "originate" their jokes.

One of my ambitions in retirement is to publish a joke book from my "original" collection. I believe humour breaks the ice and helps me draw attention to the message I try to embody. I asked a class in primary school one day, "What's a bishop?" One student said, "That's the one that moves diagonally!" I quickly "originated" that one. Remember, "joy" is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.



Being a bishop also means making hard decisions that affect a lot of people's lives. I have witnessed you privately in tears agonising over such decisions. Has it got any easier to make the tough calls over the years?

I always struggle and pray over hard decisions that I have to make, because I am sensitive to how the person affected is going to feel. I know I have alienated some clergy and lay people over decisions I have had to conscientiously make. I pray for them even though they may want nothing to do with me. I also pray that the Holy Spirit will convict me of errors in the way I may have handled situations, and I ask for the courage to seek forgiveness and restore justice. I am the first to admit that I am not always successful at this.

You ask whether it has got any easier to make the tough calls over the years? Definitely not. If anything, it has become harder, as the older you get, the more you realise your own fallibility. Yet, all this comes with the territory and I am grateful for the clergy and laity who have helped me in these difficult, but necessary, decisions.

Over the years too, I have been insulted by "experts"—like the person who dressed me down in public telling me how incompetent I was as a bishop. What can you say, but, "I am sorry you feel like that." So often you know a lot more than what you can talk about.



What has given you the greatest sorrow as Bishop of Wollongong?

Undoubtedly, the fact that some children and vulnerable adults have been abused by people in positions of trust in our Diocese over the years, and the realisation that abuse has a long tail and some people's lives have been so seriously damaged that their ability to form relationships is forever impaired. Some have even taken their own lives. This breaks my heart and is a cause of great sorrow. And the fact that this also contradicts the Gospel we preach is further cause of immense shame and scandal. Jesus warned us about scandal and the harm it does, saying, "Alas for the person who provides obstacles. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone round their neck that they should lead astray a single one of these little ones" (Luke 17:1–2).



What is one piece of advice you would give to the next bishop of Wollongong?

Love the priests, love the people.



9

How do you think you will cope leaving the public spotlight? What are your plans for retirement?

That's a great question. I've dreamt for some time now about the day I finally turn the key at my apartment in Sydney and feel the weight being lifted off my shoulders as I close the door behind me. However, as appealing as that notion is, I will be completely honest that I also have a nagging concern about the adjustment I will need to make. Naturally, I will want to have an initial break as I transition to life without the burdens of office. But, I know it is important to keep active in mind and body in this final phase of my life. I also want to give some time to my

relatives and friends because my work here has cut me off from opportunities to be with them as much as I would have liked.

Of course, as an emeritus bishop, I remain a priest and will be available to choose to do locums in parishes in need of clergy. I may also be called upon to do some Confirmations.

There is a lot of reading, reflecting and writing I want to do as well as playing some golf and enjoying some movies and shows. I will continue to nourish my prayerful relationship with the Lord as I examine my life and prepare for my finals when the Lord will require an account of my stewardship.

10

Anyone who has watched the TV show, *Inside the Actors Studio*, would be familiar with the ten questions that James Lipton asks his subject as the end of each interview (taken from French journalist, Bernard Pivot.) I will finish with his last question—If heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the pearly gates?

I forgive you for all your sins and failings that have obscured the saving work of my Son, and I thank you for what you—under the influence of my Holy Spirit—have tried to do to make my Beloved Son, Jesus, better known and loved.

Daniel Hopper is the director of media and communications and co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.

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Studio5

Smart place *Heart* space

BY ANNE SUTHERLAND

When the idea for *Studio5* was in the planning phase, Amy McDonald thought, “This is something I’d really love to be a part of.” Amy got her wish. She now works at a job she feels passionate about, getting the message out to students and families in the Macarthur region that *Studio5* is more than just an innovative learning place—it is a caring space that nurtures as it instructs.

In 2014, the director of schools for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, Mr Peter Turner, had a vision to establish a presence in the Macarthur that was more than just bricks and mortar. The new *Emmaus Catholic Education Centre* at 5 Allman Street, Campbelltown, is a living structure of people who support students, families and the community. *Studio5* is positioned right in its very “heart” and, as event coordinator, Amy’s role is to keep this space beating.

“We sometimes wrongly assume that students always have access at home to computers and the internet,” Amy said. Providing the latest technology in a safe, comfortable place to study is part of *Studio5*’s vision to enable every student—no matter their home situation—to achieve their full potential.

Currently, there is a creative writing and art program for gifted students and maths extension classes in the holidays. In the future there will be HSC revision classes and one-on-one revision for

Studio5 is more than just
an innovative learning
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instructs.

students with learning difficulties and teachers to assist with homework during out-of-hours. Also planned are workshops for skills not generally taught in schools.

Another exciting venture will be STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths—workshops that culminate with a robot building competition.

An open day in August showcased the new facilities and launched its name. A survey handed out to Years 10 and 11 students who attended turned yet more colourful ideas into the kaleidoscope of possibilities.

Former student, Eliza, from Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville, suggested that, “The centre would be really useful for students who have younger (or even older) siblings that they just need time away from during their studies to completely focus, eliminating distractions—allowing them to achieve their goals more efficiently.”

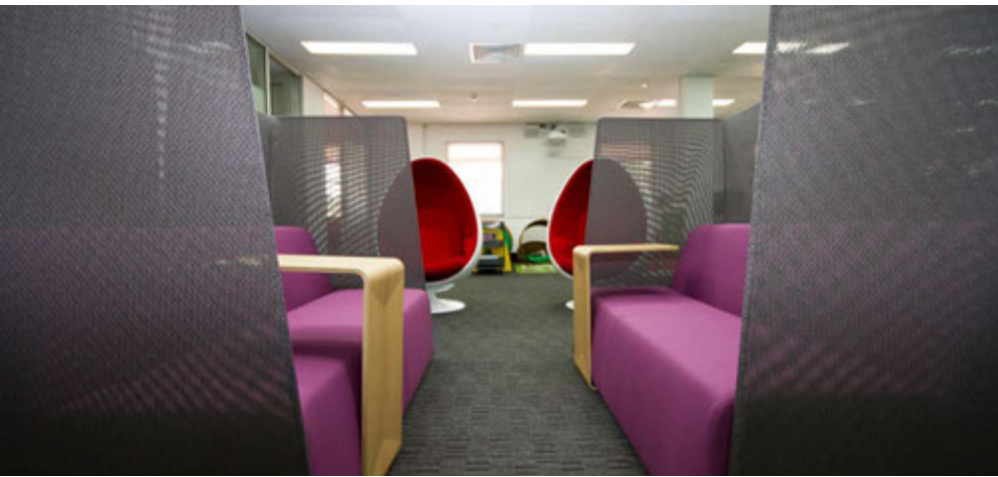
Lachlan, also from Mount Carmel, wanted tutoring with volunteer teachers, while Emily from St Patrick’s Catholic College, Campbelltown, asked for people to assist with homework.

Paris, a Year 10 student from Magdalene Catholic High School, Narellan, saw the outreach possibilities of *Studio5*, pleading for some mental support systems to be put in place to vent and talk.

Amy said, “Anxiety and depression are such big issues and we want to let students know that we are here for them, to support them.... What an important issue to engage with.”

Feedback from Year 12 students who used *Studio5* in 2016 for their final exam preparations showed how vital





PHOTOS: ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

During times of stress—such as our trial exams and HSC—Studio5 provided so much comfort to us as students.

this compassionate support is. Former Mount Carmel student, Montana, said, “During times of stress—such as our trial exams and HSC—Studio5 provided so much comfort to us as students.”

Amy will be visiting Catholic schools right across the Macarthur in Term 1

next year to continue marketing Studio5. However, the creative and caring energy pulsing through this place has already got it sold. ■

Studio5 is currently open five days a week—including during school holidays. Students are able to book via the Studio5 website at Studio5.com. Contact Amy McDonald, event coordinator at the Emmaus Centre on (02) 4253 0964 or amy.mcdonald@dow.catholic.edu.au.

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



This Christmas, please help give food and a sustainable future to the children of Ethiopia.

With her children suffering from acute malnutrition, Yennesh’s only Christmas wish was to be able to save their lives.

Today, Yennesh and her family’s story is one of life, health and hope thanks to the Bushulo Health Centre in Hawassa, Ethiopia. Sister Anna Kim and the Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary are helping to save the lives of undernourished children every day; however, there are thousands of children at risk in the Hawassa region right now who still require your help.

Please give generously today to ensure so many more children can receive the gift of food, faith and a sustainable future this Christmas and beyond. You can donate online at catholicmission.org.au/ethiopia or by calling 1800 257 296

 **catholic mission**
Reach out. Give life.



introducing Anna

An interview with
our new director of
professional standards
and safeguarding

INTERVIEW & PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DANIEL HOPPER

Over the past 15 years, you've had a distinguished legal career, most recently working for the Royal Commission. What prompted you to join the Diocese as the director of professional standards and safeguarding?

Throughout my career I have been devoted to social justice and assisting those who are disadvantaged within the community—particularly children and vulnerable adults. My work with the Royal Commission, and previously the Archdiocese of Dublin, has given me great insight into the individual and systemic aspects of abuse of children and vulnerable adults in the Catholic Church. The abusive behaviour within the Catholic Church has related to both the perpetration of abuse and the failure of those within the Church to respond to abuse in a meaningful and adequate way.

My work at the Royal Commission involved listening to survivors of abuse, and their family and friends, who live with the devastating and often lifelong impacts of abuse.

I want to utilise this knowledge to effect cultural change within the Diocese of Wollongong and more broadly. At the core of this cultural change is the understanding that abusive behaviour is an abuse of power. Over the years, the models of power have sadly often underpinned a system of complicity and concealment of abuse within the Catholic Church. To effect true cultural change, transparency and accountability must exist at every level.

Your work with the Royal Commission must have been challenging at times, both professionally and emotionally. What did your work consist of and how did you cope with the relentless nature of the issues you had to deal with on a day-to-day basis?

My work at the Royal Commission involved listening to survivors of abuse, and their family and friends, who live with the devastating and often lifelong impacts of abuse. I also listened to those who have perpetrated abuse as well as members of the Catholic Church who have failed to respond to survivors adequately or prevent further abuse. Many people I engaged with were faithful people who have been so affected and disillusioned by the abusive behaviour of members of their Church. So many people I worked with faced devastating mental health and substance abuse issues. Abusive human behaviour continues to both sadden and fascinate me. I hope that, with empathy, I can

PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

continue to respond with human kindness, whilst remaining inquisitive to better understand the motivations behind the horrible crimes that are inflicted on survivors by perpetrators—both at a systemic and an individual level. Children and vulnerable adults will be inevitably safer if more time and energy is spent understanding the individual and systemic motivations behind abusive behaviour.

I was very fortunate to experience continuing love and support from my family and close friends. I had ongoing clinical supervision whilst at the Royal Commission and have continued this support in my new role. I find great solitude and strength with keeping fit, particularly when I swim, which I think—like my late grandmother—is my tonic. I believe it is important that I engage openly about my work and my mental health to ensure that I undertake my role to the best of my ability.

You spent a number of years living in Ireland working on the legal team assisting the Archdiocese of Dublin during the State-sponsored Commission of Investigation into the Archdiocese. What lessons do you think the Australian Church, especially in Wollongong, can take on board from the Ireland experience?

The Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin—often referred to as the *Murphy Inquiry*—focused on the organisational inadequacies of the individual diocesan power structure. The *Murphy Inquiry* identified a “culture of secrecy” where the auxiliary bishops and vicar-generals either colluded or remained silent about complaints in a system that strived to protect the institution and consequently protected the perpetrators of abuse whilst neglecting the victims.

Sadly, whilst working with the Royal Commission, I investigated the same

culture of secrecy operating within Catholic Church authorities in Australia. Such secrecy has a long lasting and devastating effect on the survivors of child sexual abuse as well as the institution within which the secrecy exists. The *Murphy Inquiry* has taught us the fundamental importance

of information sharing within an organisation (eg, the Diocese of Wollongong), as well as information sharing between different Catholic and government authorities. Effective information sharing systems are essential to ensure accountability, transparency and, above all else, assess the risk of further work or ministry by people who have been subject to allegations or suspicions of abusive behaviour.

What are your impressions of Wollongong so far in terms of both the strengths of our current practices, and the challenges and areas of development that lie ahead for us to ensure children and vulnerable adults are kept safe in our Diocese?

The Diocese of Wollongong, at the direction of Bishop Ingham, is clearly committed to developing and supporting an effective child protection and safeguarding system. One of the key areas of work for the Church leadership, and more locally the Diocese of Wollongong, is to put in place an oversight mechanism that will assess how the recommendations and learnings from the Royal Commission are being implemented in the Church. This Commission needs to have long-reaching impact and there is no room for complacency after the end of the Royal Commission in December 2017.

I see education and training at the heart of the areas of development to ensure that all members of the Diocese can better protect children and vulnerable adults.

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The Diocese of Wollongong, at the direction of Bishop Ingham, is clearly committed to developing and supporting an effective child protection and safeguarding system.

I see education and training at the heart of the areas of development to ensure that all members of the Diocese can better protect children and vulnerable adults. The education and training of young people and other lay members of the Church is necessary and valuable to ensure that they, particularly women, feel empowered to effect cultural change within their own church. Kath McCormack, Margaret Chittick and Sr Moya Hanlen OLSH are inspirational examples of women within the Diocese whose work and commitment have effected—and continue to effect—this fundamental cultural change.

I am really looking forward to working with members of the Diocese, including our priests, religious and the faithful who contribute so much of their daily lives to the people of the Diocese of Wollongong.


It takes a special type of person to do the role you do. What's life look like for you outside of your job, and how do you find a healthy balance in your life?

I have two adorable boys who are busy and boisterous, as well as a loving partner. I also have wonderful parents and an older brother and sister who bring me much fun and laughter. I

am very grateful too for my vibrant group of friends who share with me so many different and wonderful personalities. Weekends and holidays are spent with our family and friends often camping, cooking

or attending to the garden and veggie patch. I love to read a good book when I can and I occasionally take out the sewing machine to experiment—which is always far from perfect, but therapeutic all the same. ■

Daniel Hopper is the director of media and communications and co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.



from discontent to *progress*

**“Restlessness is discontent
and discontent is the first
necessity of progress.”**

THOMAS EDISON

*A snapshot of diocesan youth
ministry for the Year of Youth 2018*

BY SETH HARSH

The famous American inventor, Thomas Edison, once said, “Restlessness is discontent and discontent is the first necessity of progress.” If the development of youth ministry in the Diocese of Wollongong has been marked by anything, it has been discontent—a discontentedness with the state of youth ministry and a desire to see it become everything it can be. The progress and achievements in youth ministry in 2017 prove Edison’s theory true.

However, Edison’s statement fails to address one very crucial thing, and whilst we can’t expect every pithy statement to be all-encompassing (even if it is attributed to one of the greatest minds of all time) I dare to point out that Edison makes no mention of a goal or plan. Discontent is important and it drives us (hopefully) to act, but action without a goal and a plan runs the risk of inefficiency (at best) and aimlessness (at worst). *Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong* (CYMW) most certainly has a plan, and it is being realised throughout the Diocese.

This past year—despite all the progress that has taken place—still only offers but a glimpse into a grand vision for youth ministry. The Year of Youth in 2018 will see further progression of the plan for youth ministry in the Diocese. Some of the exciting developments that lie ahead include:

LIVE Initiative

Our *LIVE* initiative with in-school twilight retreats, will grow to include more frequent occurrences (three per year in each of our systemic high schools), new and exciting games, bigger and better music, dynamic guest speakers, and even more fun, food and fellowship. *LIVE Festival* will be on again in 2018 and is already shaping up to be the biggest and most exciting diocesan youth ministry event in years.

Youth ministry leaders

Youth ministry leaders will be a new addition to the ever-expanding phenomenon of youth ministry in this Diocese in 2018. Members of these teams will work with the youth ministry coordinators in schools to grow youth ministry initiatives as well as support CYMW in running *LIVE*. These teams will begin their new roles with a retreat in early Term 1 which is set to be a powerful experience of faith as well as an opportunity to build leadership and ministry skills.

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival

In the wake of the *Australian Catholic Youth Festival* (ACYF) in December this year—which will no doubt powerfully stir-up the faith of all those who attend—there will be a day for all participants from the Diocese to reconnect early in 2018.

iSTAND and regional youth groups in the Macarthur and Shoalhaven

In addition to the existing Illawarra regional youth group, *iSTAND*, currently run by the *Youth Mission Team*, Macarthur and Shoalhaven regional youth groups will be established shortly after the ACYF reconnect day. This is the next crucial step in the plan for youth ministry in the Diocese as it provides another opportunity for young people to more deeply explore their faith in a contemporary and relevant way surrounded by their peers.

Primary school youth ministry

Next year will also see the delivery of youth ministry initiatives to young people of primary school age in collaboration with our parishes. Details for these events are still being finalised, but we are very excited to announce this development. Kids—get excited, and stay tuned!

Discontent is not enough—we need a goal, a plan and a willingness to act. The small snapshot above of youth ministry initiatives in this Diocese shows not only a dynamic combination of these factors, but true progress that will extend well into the future, if only we can stay the course. ■

*Seth Harsh is the diocesan youth
ministry coordinator for the Diocese of
Wollongong.*

Youth alive

BY JOEL DUVAL

The second annual Wollongong *LIVE Festival* was held on Friday 15 September 2017 at the Cathedral precinct in the heart of the Diocese. Hundreds of young people from Catholic secondary schools around the Diocese arrived at the festival around 9:30am ready for a day of fun, faith and worship.

As the day began, there was already high energy and spirit among the young people. The incredible house band opened the festival with a mixture of pop and worship music, followed by the morning keynote speakers, Mr Pete Gilmore and Miss Trish McCarthy—both from the Diocese's *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation*. They spoke on the importance of opening our heart to Jesus and the value of filling our lives with meaning and purpose.

Festival participants had opportunities to attend workshops and talks on a variety of topics including creative liturgy, how to make a difference in your local community, international mission, and what it means to be a young person of faith in the world today.

Many of the young people expressed that their highlight of the day was the midday Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Ingham. One Year 10 student commented, "The level of energy at the Mass—even though it was very reverent—was just amazing! It gave me an opportunity for a dialogue with God that I haven't experienced for a really long time."

In the afternoon, there was a talk-show-style session on vocations where guests were introduced and interviewed about their chosen vocation—including a married couple, a priest, a seminarian and two young people devoted to single life.



"The LIVE Festival was an engaging experience that helped me to explore a my faith.... Listening to talks about music ministry, being a man in the modern world, and being prayed for by strangers, made it an extremely powerful day."

YEAR 12 STUDENT



"I really enjoyed the opportunity to go to Reconciliation. After not confessing my sins for so long, it was really refreshing to walk away from the Festival feeling clean and free from sin. Fr Stephen was very helpful with advice on how to grow closer to God."

YEAR 9 STUDENT



During dinner, there was a great sense of community as young people from all parts of the Diocese sat and shared a meal together. As the sun set, the band started-up again to lead the young people into the evening session which included with the final keynote speaker, Mr Steve Toohey, director of Youth Mission Team Australia, and Miss Meg Harrison who gave a personal testimony.

The young people then had the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It was

overwhelming to see the number of young people who took up this opportunity. There was a great sense of peace and contemplation in the long line.

The evening concluded with an energetic and uplifting concert performed by the house band led by Seth Harsh. The festival was an inspirational success and we look forward to an even bigger one in 2018. ■

Joel Duval is the education officer—youth ministry for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

INTERVIEW BY
DEBBIE GATES

We continue our series of profiling the many volunteers in our Diocese who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Patricia Reynolds resides in the Southern Ilawarra region of the Diocese and is a member of St Paul's Catholic Parish, Albion Park.

It would be easier to list what Patricia doesn't do! But, that wouldn't give you an insight into this amazing woman and her contribution to the Church—a contribution that was recognised this year when she received an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for service to the Catholic Church in Australia. The OAM nomination listed her prominent roles in the Church over the years, including member on the parish liturgy committee, reader at Mass, minister of Holy Communion, altar server, church cleaner and housekeeper, secular member of the Discalced Carmelites and a catechist since 1974 (and now life member of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.) In presenting the OAM awards, Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove offered his congratulations and admiration, "Your qualities—compassion, dedication, generosity, selflessness, tolerance and energetic ambition inspire and motivate us.... We are a stronger, safer and more caring nation because of you."

Recently, I was privileged to share a delicious morning tea with Patricia.

How did a nice girl from Ireland end up living in Australia?

Firstly, I need to state that my native land, Ireland, will always have a special place in my heart. My [now deceased] husband, Bob, was born in India. He loved me and I loved him. When we were married, we lived in London and decided to immigrate to Australia when our children, Lorraine and David, were



aged seven and four years. We arrived here as "Ten Pound Poms" in 1966—staying in a hostel at Fairy Meadow for the first four months. Later that year, we bought our home in Oak Flats which was then part of St Paul's Parish, Albion Park.

St Paul's Parish means a great deal to me because its parishioners made us feel very welcome when we arrived. We loved our parish community so much that when the decision was made to locate Oak Flats in the Shellharbour parish, we decided to move from Oak Flats to Albion Park.

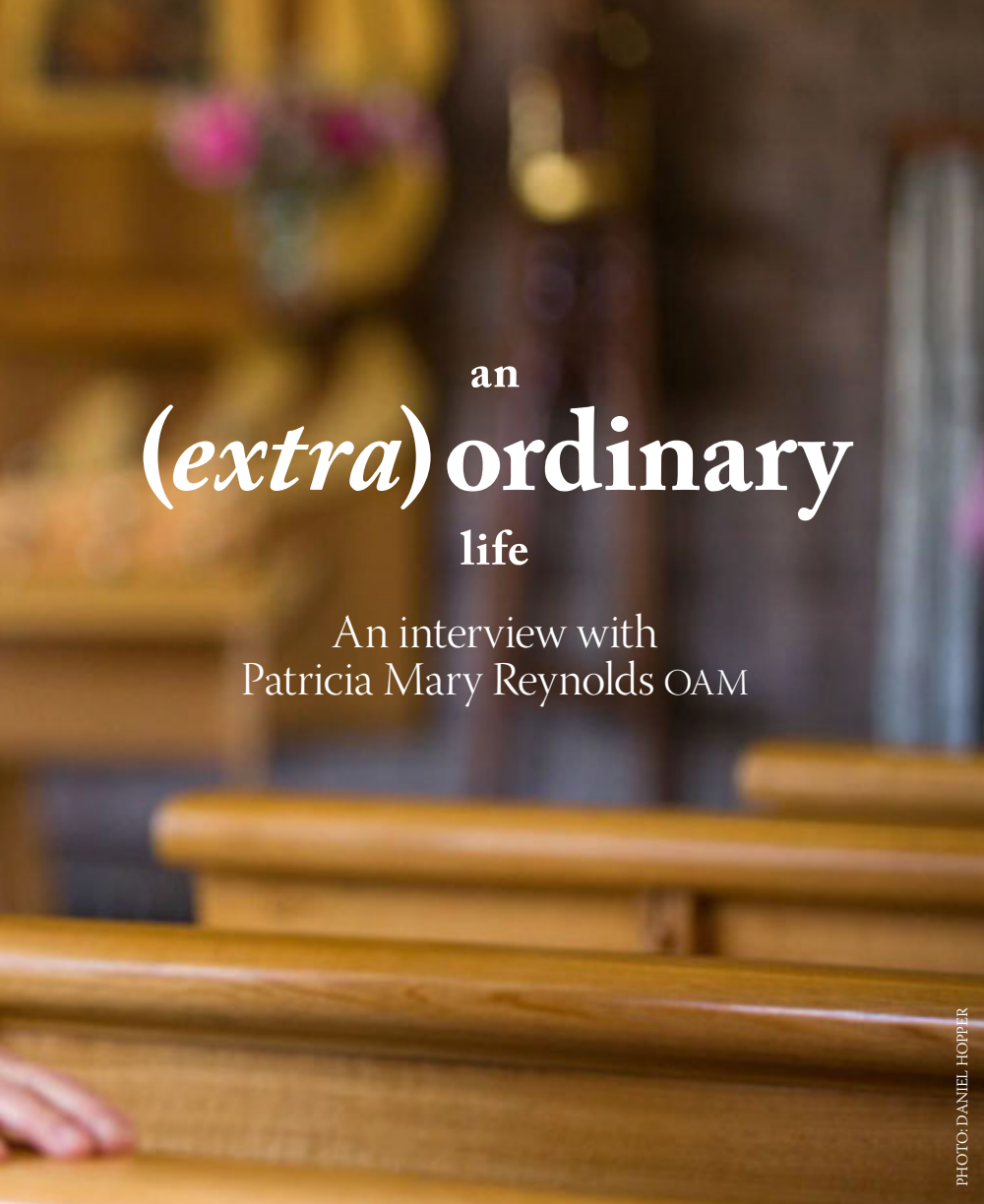
What are you passionate about?

The Mass, prayer and spreading the good news. I believe that the Mass is the greatest gift we have in the Catholic Church. That is why I am a senior altar server and minister of Holy Communion. I believe every Catholic should have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist at least once a week

I believe that the Mass is the greatest gift we have in the Catholic Church.

and that is why I visit the Ridgeview Nursing Home as a minister.

Prayer is also at the centre of my life. As St Teresa of Avila said, "There is always time for quiet prayer." Every morning I wake up and put my dressing gown on and go to my little room to sit, meditate and be alone with the Lord. The Carmelites have taught me how to "sit and be". Then, I say the Divine Office. There has never been a busier time in history than the 21st Century, so I find that prayer focuses me when my mind wanders.



an (*extra*) ordinary life

An interview with
Patricia Mary Reynolds OAM

I believe I have a responsibility to spread the good news. I was a leader of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for many years in my parish and I am still a catechist. I love teaching Scripture to the children and telling them about a man called Jesus—how much he loves all of us and how he never stops loving us, even when we do the wrong thing. I tell them that his love is like the sun—always in the sky even if we can't see it. I am now teaching Scripture to Year 3 students at Tullimbar Public School, Albion Park. I love teaching and hope to do it for a few more years.

What is your vision for the parish?

My vision for the parish is that *Alpha*—our new outreach and renewal program—is a great success and that it will enable parishioners (old and new) to form a bond of love, joy and peace.

There has never been a busier time in history than the 21st Century, so I find that prayer focuses me when my mind wanders.

A “God” moment?

I don't have a specific God moment. I try to see God in all the little things each day. For example, I love walking. I look at the escarpment at Albion Park and it is so beautiful. No human could create that.

I look on Jesus as my friend and I talk to him every day. I also say this prayer of St Paul, “Fill my mind with everything that is true, everything pure, everything noble and everything that is holy” (Philippians 4:8).

I love teaching Scripture to the children and telling them about a man called Jesus—how much he loves all of us and how he never stops loving us, even when we do the wrong thing.

“Bucket list” items?

- I hope my granddaughter, Ellie, will have a safe delivery when her baby girl is born shortly—a beautiful cousin for Macie.
- I pray that my great grandchildren will be baptised in our parish in Albion Park.
- To visit Lisieux in France, the birth place of St Therese.
- To visit Avila in Spain, the birth place of St Teresa.
- To walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

Your “claim to fame” moment?

I was a catechist at Oak Flats Public School and a young boy named David was a student in my class. David went on to become a Catholic priest and eventually the parish priest at Albion Park—my own parish! Today, Fr David Catterall is the parish priest at St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park.

And finally, let's talk about ...

... that recent award! I asked if I could see it. Eventually, Patricia's genuine modesty could not suppress her huge smile when she showed it to me. She eagerly accepted my offer to ask Bishop Peter Ingham to bless it. While transporting the precious cargo back to the Bishop's office, I kept replaying her parting words to me, “Receiving the OAM was overwhelming. I am just an ordinary person who happens to love my Faith and this country of Australia.” ■

Debbie Gates is the director of development and community engagement for the Diocese of Wollongong.

LOVE HAS NO ALIBI

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY OF THE POOR



BY JUDE HENNESSY

“Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). It was with this Scripture reference that Pope Francis commenced his message marking the first *World Day of the Poor* on 19 November 2017. In doing so, Pope Francis implored us to be people of action and eager for justice, people who see not only the suffering of others, but who look to challenge the root causes of the plight of the poor.

It is possible to become blind to the poverty we see around us and to weave around and away from the expectation that Jesus has of his true disciples—to engage with the poverty that surrounds us in our own locale, our own nation and even the extreme poverty facing so many in other parts of the world. Pope Francis assures us that, “Love has no alibi. Whenever we set out to love as Jesus loved, we have to take the Lord as our example; especially when it comes to loving the poor.”

The message of Pope Francis should cause us all to pause. He reminds us that there have been times when Christians have not fully heeded Jesus’ expectation that we embrace the poor and tend to their needs. In doing so, we have assumed a worldly way of

“Love has no alibi.
Whenever we set out to
love as Jesus loved, we have
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POPE FRANCIS

thinking. Yet, the Holy Spirit has not failed to call us to keep our gaze fixed on what is essential.

It is easy to get side-tracked—to be distracted by good things to the detriment of essential things. Thus, in reminding us of the essential nature of responding to the poor, Pope Francis is inviting us to see poverty in the “face of women, men and children exploited by base interests, crushed by the machinations of power and money.”

To mark the first *World Day of the Poor*, Pope Francis calls on us to truly “encounter” the poor and to see how poverty challenges us in so many ways—“In faces marked by suffering, marginalisation, oppression, violence, torture and imprisonment, war, deprivation of freedom and dignity,

ignorance and illiteracy, medical emergencies and shortage of work, trafficking and slavery, exile, extreme poverty and forced migration.”

As always, the Pope calls us to prayerfulness, knowing it will fuel and give power to our actions. He says, “The Our Father is a prayer said in the plural: the bread for which we ask is ‘ours’, and that entails sharing, participation and joint responsibility. In this prayer, all of us recognise our need to overcome every form of selfishness, in order to enter into the joy of mutual acceptance.”

I encourage people to read this beautiful document from Pope Francis who challenges Christians to recognise, “The contrast between the empty words so frequently on our lips and the concrete deeds against which we are called to measure ourselves.” He holds up the example of St Francis of Assisi as a model of active service to, and identification with, the poor. ■

You can read the Pope’s message marking the first *World Day of the Poor* at dow.sh/wdp2017.

Jude Hennessy is the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation and the co-editor of *Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong*.

AFRICA

immersion

BY SARAH SELWOOD &
JOANNE KENNY

Last school holidays, teachers and staff from the Diocese of Wollongong took their gifts to Zambia and came home with so much more than what they gave.

Three years ago, Sarah Selwood—a teacher at St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish Primary School, Campbelltown—travelled to Zambia on an immersion experience organised by Catholic Mission Australia. Feeling a call to return, she organised 10 colleagues from St John's, St Francis Catholic College, Edmundson Park, and Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, to travel to the province of Chipata, Zambia, to immerse themselves in culture and education.

During their stay in Zambia, their host, Fr Jacob Zulo, would drive them to one school in the morning and a second school in the afternoon. Resources are so limited that schools rotate through several shifts a day—primary school children in the morning and high school students in the afternoon. There were up to 55 children per class sitting on old wooden benches, one lead pencil apiece, on cement floors under tin roofs in 36 degree heat—yet, they were so grateful for the privilege.

Our Australian teachers dived into this energetic and joy-filled foray; laughing, playing, learning, sharing, swapping knowledge and classroom “tricks”. Their hearts bonded in their mutual passion for teaching and their love for children.

There is no greater gift in life than knowing that you are living the ministry of Christ. To know that through this experience, others have been called to do the same is special and sacred.

Sarah said, “There is no greater gift in life than knowing that you are living the ministry of Christ. To know that through this experience others have been called to do the same, is special and sacred.”

As well as the gift of themselves, \$7,000 of generous donations collected from parishioners back home along with more than 800 pencils, rulers, sharpeners and 150 beautiful dresses (handmade by Mrs Kathryn Hampton), were all given to the Diocese of Chipata. \$5,000 bought a new bus for all the schools to use and the remaining money went to various schools and the *Cheshire Home for Children with Disabilities*.

Every afternoon, time was spent playing with these children, whose disabilities, including clubfoot and hip displacement, are both easily treated at birth in Australia. The nuns drive around the local villages and collect the children who can then access healthcare and education.



Another inspirational place visited was a training centre for catechists. Complete with an on-site primary school and housing, whole families undergo a two-year training program before being relocated to outlying villages where access to a priest and pastoral support is limited. These “missionary families” then live in the local communities, acting as spiritual and pastoral supports for the community they adopt.

For the communities that do have a priest, like Fr Jacob, Sunday Mass can last for up to four and a half hours because it is filled with so much singing and dancing. “We are a dancing church,” laughed Fr Jacob.

If wealth was measured by faith, then Zambia would be rich indeed—a culture whose currency of love finds satisfaction in people rather than material possessions. Living in the moment and experiencing this life of faith were huge aspects of the immersion experience. Sarah said, “The kindness, compassion and generosity demonstrated by those we met in Chipata was simply touching and no words can describe how grateful we are. We have brought home with us not only friendships and memories, but also an open-mindedness to the needs of individuals all around the world.” ■

Sarah Selwood is a teacher at St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish Primary School, Campbelltown.

Joanne Kenny is the education officer—primary religious education for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

I get by with a little help from my *friend*

A story of friendship that transcends time and the challenges of an intellectual disability

BY JACQUELINE MCCORMACK

It is rare to come across friendships that span more than six decades, let alone a friendship that has overcome the challenges of an intellectual disability. It is also rare to come across individuals who voluntarily devote the later years of their life to care for a friend. Carers of people with disabilities often find themselves adopting the caring role without hesitation as the person may be a family member or it is a part of their profession. Lorraine and Rose's story of friendship is exceptional.

Their story begins at 20 and 22 Dalcassia Street Hurstville. Lorraine was born in 1952, and has a mild intellectual disability which impedes her ability to complete everyday tasks and to competently care for herself. Rose was born five years later and shared a side fence with Lorraine for close to 10 years before "Rainey", as Rose would fondly call her, moved out of Dalcassia Street.

"We would do silly things. We would have fun and get up to mischief, but most importantly, we would make each other laugh," said Rose. Both Rose and Lorraine can recall countless childhood memories—from swinging on the Hills Hoists in their backyards, much to their parents' dismay, to frequently visiting the pools at Roselands. However, there were also challenging times.

**As time went by,
especially after Lorraine's
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in 2003, I saw Lorraine
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nobody coming to see her.**

"When we would go swimming at the pools, I would often notice other children staring at Lorraine, so I would just say to them ... what was it Lorraine?" "Sticky stare like a bear, like a sausage in the air," said Lorraine. "See she still remembers it!" laughs Rose. "It is good to have all these memories and to constantly reflect on them because it is good for the memory to survive. For Lorraine, she will forget what she was trying to get out of the cupboard last night, but she can remember things that happened decades ago."

Rose would often hear her mother express her concerns and worry for what was going to happen to Lorraine in the future, but from an early age, Rose would always say, "Don't worry I will look after her." Reflecting on her promise, Rose said, "Lorraine is not that different to us, you just can't jump to conclusions, you just have to know how she thinks."

Lorraine's father died when she was in primary school, so Lorraine had a very special and close relationship with her mother. In 1980, Lorraine's mother had a fall and was experiencing the first signs of dementia and this saw her placed in a nursing home to ensure that she received the right level of care that she needed. Rose had just returned from travelling around Australia and began to observe that Lorraine was starting to get left behind by the system.

"As time went by, especially after Lorraine's mother passed away in 2003, I saw Lorraine start to slip through the cracks. I would go up to Hurstville on a Tuesday and ask when was the last time she went shopping or when did she last see somebody—but Lorraine could never remember. Turns out weeks had been going by with nobody coming to see her. So that's when I spoke to her social worker and started to get involved. That was in 2004."

Rose began to think about the possibility of moving Lorraine from Hurstville to the South Coast, but was unsure about how to go about it. "I liked everything about the South Coast—it is so open, and in Hurstville I was feeling out of place," said Lorraine. Rose liaised with Lorraine's social worker who was very welcoming of the change of scenery for Lorraine and expressed that they were going to oversee the transition and network with relevant organisations to ensure that the moving



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

process was as painless as possible. But, once Rose managed to move Lorraine to Wollongong, nothing had been done.

“When we moved Lorraine to Wollongong nearly three and a half years ago now, I was swimming. Nothing that was promised had been put in place,” said Rose. Rose took it upon herself to seek out appropriate assistance for Lorraine and was directed towards CatholicCare Wollongong. Initially, Lorraine was receiving domestic assistance and other social support services. However, now with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)—which Lorraine qualified for recently—there is much more funding available that enables her to do more of the things that she loves to do.

“When we got down here, I wanted to start to better connect Lorraine to the wider community and CatholicCare has helped us do this through taking her bowling, swimming and to the gym,” said Rose. “It is the little things that are of great help to Lorraine, like

However, now with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) ... there is much more funding available that enables her to do more of the things that she loves to do.

having a person come in on a daily basis and check on Lorraine’s tablets or to help Lorraine stay independent by assisting her with her everyday tasks.

“Our community support worker, Sarah, is a motivator—and to motivate someone like Lorraine, who needs motivating, is the best thing you can do for that person,” said Rose. “I really value the friendship I have with Lorraine, and, as I said to my mother all that time ago, I have to follow through with my promises. Even though CatholicCare helps us on a day-to-day basis, I always worry about what would happen to Lorraine if something was to happen to me.”

When asked about her friendship with Rose, Lorraine said, “It’s more like a sister thing—and she’s a good sister. I wouldn’t get rid of her for the world ... she means everything to me.”

“We both love each other dearly and I don’t like to say no to Lorraine ... so it’s good that CatholicCare are the providers—there is a lot available to Lorraine, so I don’t often have to say no.” ■

CatholicCare is a registered NDIS service provider and offers a variety of supports to enhance participants’ independence and community connections. For more information please call (02) 4254 9342 or visit catholiccare.dow.org.au.

Jacqueline McCormack is the community relations assistant for CatholicCare Wollongong.



CatholicCARE

DIocese OF
WOLLONGONG

hope begins with us

Worth SHARING?

“Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.”

G.K. Chesterton

BY PETER GILMORE

K*nock, knock.* Who on earth could that be? It's early Saturday morning, it's been a long week and I am way too tired for this. Slightly louder now—one could almost read impatience—*Knock, knock.* I gingerly roll out of bed, put on a t-shirt from what I hope is the freshly washed pile and stumble to the front door. Opening the door, the sunlight beams in and I see the silhouette of a man and a woman standing a few feet away. The Akubra-donned man—small book and mini iPad in hand—smiles, “Good morning Peter!” he proclaims. “Morning,” I reply, forcibly smiling like someone getting their orthodontics examined. “What have you got for me today?” I ask. “A new video, but before that, how are you going? It's been about a year since your dad passed away. How's the family?”

For about two years now, this delightful couple from the Jehovah's Witnesses has come past my little apartment—presumably I am on their designated flight path. They always remember who I am, where I work, previous conversations and even little details about me and my family. We never

descend into fights, but it is very clear we believe different things about God and the nature of life, salvation and the role of Jesus. And yet, they keep coming. I feel like I've changed from being a number into a person in their eyes.

Now imagine they were Catholic.

It's almost unfathomable. A Catholic going door-to-door? On a good day, they'd be seen by fellow Catholics as one of those extreme Christians—an evangelical, a Bible-basher and a person you wouldn't want mixing with your non-Catholic friends. On a bad day, we'd probably just think they were crazy.

For many Catholics, our faith is a private matter. It's a moral prescription that shows *me* how to best live—and when pressed, from my discussions with people, many will describe the community aspects of being a Catholic, how they come from a Catholic family and then perhaps insert a few practices (eg, “I go to Mass on Sunday”). But in

A Catholic going door-to-door? On a good day, they'd be seen by fellow Catholics as one of those extreme Christians—an evangelical, a Bible-basher and a person you wouldn't want mixing with your non-Catholic friends.

a post-modern world where truth is entirely relative, moral prescriptions, ancient practices and faith itself seem like a waste of time. You “centre yourself” with prayer? That's great for you but I do yoga. You have a faith community? Okay, but I have my mates that I hang out with. When described as a series of practices to achieve some moral good, one could see how the world would find





We were never called to share *some thing*—a practice, a belief system, a calendar agenda—but our relationship with the *some One*.

with the *some One*. At the centre of human history stands the Cross on which Jesus Christ died because of the Father's great love for us, because he would not wait another day to be in relationship with us and because he has a plan to prosper us and not to hurt us. In Jesus, we can come to know the Father and discover the truth that we are loved and there is nothing we can do that will make him love us more or make him love us less. We are loved, called, saved, forgiven and sent forth to bring God's Kingdom to Earth—here and now.

That's a story worth telling.

In fact, it's *the* story worth telling. It's a personal story of how God has interacted in our lives and how—in his strength—we are becoming the people we are meant to be, our best selves. It's an adventure story, a love story, and a story of pain, sorrow, redemption and joy. It's your story. It's my story. It's our story as a Church.

When someone says they don't like talking about their faith, the question that comes to mind is, "What is the story they are telling?" Is it a redemption story? An adventure? A love affair? Or is it a summary of beliefs and a moral prescription? The story we tell shows us the story we believe and live.

What story are we telling? ■

Over the last year I've had the pleasure of getting involved in the Alpha program that has been adopted around the Diocese. Alpha captures the heart of the Christian story and helps people to make it real and tangible in their own lives. If you haven't had a chance to get involved yet, look for an Alpha program near you or contact Darren McDowell on (02) 4222 2463.

Peter Gilmore is a CCD and evangelisation coordinator for the Diocese of Wollongong.

this unappealing. I must do this, this, this and this, and then one day I *might* be happy? Well, I'm happy right now, at least in my understanding—so, thanks, but no thanks.

A Christian satirist, Adrian Plass, wrote a comedy sketch in which he describes a believer awkwardly sharing the Gospel with a non-believer. The non-believer accepts the Gospel to the delight of the believer who proceeds to then describe the countless services, meetings, outreaches and community potluck dinners the new believer will need to attend. The fresh convert exclaims unconvincingly, "Free at last!"

Catholicism is not enslavement to ritual. It's not first and foremost a series of to-do's and a way to fill your calendar. As the Catholic author, G.K. Chesterton, wrote, "Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair."

When we think of love affairs—imagining the stories of the "silver

screen" of Hollywood—the best ones are never clean cut. A couple meets, they fall in love, they go through trials, they often take turns rescuing each other, perhaps they even break up for a time, and then ultimately, they come together in the end. The stories with the greatest intrigue involve peril, cost, loss and the fight to keep the relationship going. Love affairs are never entirely private or secret—that usually indicates some sort of perceived wrongdoing. But they are never entirely public either—intimacy, true romance and the deep discussions are kept sacred between the lovers. Why are such stories so interesting? Because, they tap into the reality of what it is to be human. Our hearts were made to be in deep union with God and they will always be restless until they find rest in him (St Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk I Par 1).

We were never called to share *some thing*—a practice, a belief system, a calendar agenda—but our relationship



THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A

YOUNG CARER

BY JOSIE COOKS

I've often heard people say, "It's not what happens in life that matters, but how we deal with it *and* the people in our lives who help get us back on track."

Late one Sunday night a few months ago, I fell and fractured my left wrist. While my injury could have been a lot worse, it happened at the worst time possible. You see, at 6:30am the next morning, my youngest son's college basketball team were arriving from the USA. In one split second, I went from being in a state of excitement about their arrival, to a state of panic and severe pain.

The first few weeks were a nightmare. Between the pain and the loss of independence, it wasn't long before the situation started to get the better of all of us. While our lives had hit a slight

**1.7% of children under
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have the responsibility
of being a carer**

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU
OF STATISTICS

bump, our situation was temporary and, with time, routines would return to normal. But, for many young people, the responsibility of caring for a parent or sibling is their ongoing reality.

In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that 1.7% of children under the age of 15 years and 7.4% of 15–24-year-olds have the responsibility of being a carer. Acting

executive manager of family services for CatholicCare Wollongong, Mrs Roseanne Plunkett, believes these statistics are less than the real figures, as many children do not identify themselves as carers and often see their responsibilities as being a normal part of their role within the family unit. For families who don't have the support structures of bygone generations, more often than not, the responsibility of care falls on young people.

Some young people flourish in a carer's role. The responsibility of caring for a loved one teaches resilience and other important life-skills that many of their peers do not experience. Unfortunately, the opposite is often the case. According to CatholicCare, a number of young students in our diocesan school system have been "parentified" and carry the burden of not only caring for a parent, but also younger siblings.



“I’ve found the Catholic community to be very kind and compassionate towards people like me who are in difficult situations.”

CONNOR

Some young people flourish in a carer’s role. The responsibility of caring for a loved one teaches resilience and other important life-skills that many of their peers do not experience.

There are various reasons why children inherit the role of carer—a parent suffering from a disability, long-term health issues, or drug and alcohol abuse, to name a few. But, one of the most difficult challenges facing young carers is the responsibility of caring for a parent suffering with a long-term mental illness.

Roseanne says physical disabilities are more obvious and support can be more easily put in place. The fluctuation and inconsistency of a mentally ill person is difficult for a child to understand and manage—with the uncertainty of each day causing great disruption to their life.

Usually, young carers are not able to be as carefree as their peers and are more at risk of social isolation which can be a cause of depression. They

can become anxious about spending time with their friends instead of being home supporting their parent.

Connor*, a senior student within the diocesan Catholic school system, shares the responsibility with his mother of caring for his aunt and younger brother who both have a disability. For Connor, days can vary so much. He admits that the daily uncertainty makes life difficult as it is unpredictable and sporadic and there is no way to prepare for it. Connor says that his friends are very understanding of his situation and are a great source of support, but not being able to invite them into his home is difficult to accept.

According to Dianne Warren and Ben Edwards in the 2016 *Australian Institute of Family Studies LSAC Annual Statistical Report*, young carers have significantly lower educational outcomes which impacts greatly on their education, long-term wellbeing and future life chances. Roseanne says, “When a parent doesn’t have the capacity to get out of bed each morning to get their child ready and off to school, or a child has interrupted sleep after being up during the night, late arrivals and school absence becomes an issue.” Connor admits that being a young carer has had a significant impact on his school life and that, at times, it has become all too much, making him feel depressed. He said, “I often lose a lot of sleep at night and come to school tired after a tough night looking after others.” Connor continued, “It’s quite difficult to concentrate in class and keep on top of school work after a night of broken sleep.”

Roseanne says the reality of life is that children don’t get to choose their destiny and there is no one-size-fits-all method of support. For many young carers, school can be a safe haven and provide a “sense of normality in their lives”. The impact of caring responsibilities can be substantially reduced by services like CatholicCare who can provide tailored support to students to help them on this journey. Roseanne believes that while CatholicCare works closely with the Catholic education system to support young carers, there are many who don’t access the service.

Sadly, sometimes support comes too late when a family is already in crisis. CatholicCare is able to provide wrap-around support involving school counselling, carers support services and in-home support—alleviating pressures on both the family and school community.

Connor is a kind, smart, articulate and driven young man with hopes of studying aerospace engineering at university and embarking on a career in aerospace transportation, exploration and manufacturing. His school is extremely supportive and makes academic adjustments to accommodate his situation where possible. He feels well supported by his friends and doesn’t feel he needs to access the CatholicCare school counselling service. When asked about his greatest sense of support, he replied, “I’ve found the Catholic community to be very kind and compassionate towards people like me who are in difficult situations.”

Upon reflection, Connor said that sometimes he feels like he has missed out on some of his childhood, but very rarely. “I’ve grown up with this, so being a carer feels normal to me.... Anyway, being part of a family is dealing with the problems that come along.” ■

More information about CatholicCare’s wrap-around support services can be found at catholiccare.dow.org.au

** Name has been changed to protect the student’s identity.*

Josie Cooks is the community development officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.



5 minutes with Robert Falzon

an interview with the
co-founder of menALIVE



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

INTERVIEW BY
JUDE HENNESSY

Robert Falzon is a husband, father, businessman and co-founder of *menALIVE*.

He has been married to Alicia for 34 years and has four adult children. He has been awarded many business accolades including *Australian Marketer of the Year*, *Telstra QLD Small Business of the Year* and *Australian Owner Manager of the Year*.

In 2007, Robert shocked the business world when he sold his primary manufacturing company to focus—full-time in a volunteer capacity—on ministry to men through *menALIVE*. Since then, this national Catholic ministry has delivered over 350 events in 26 dioceses in Australia and New Zealand for more than 20,000 men.

Robert is also the author of two books: *How to Grow a Men's Ministry* (2011)

**If we can enhance the
quality of fathering, we
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an indelible impression on
the lives of children.**

and *The Father Factor* (2014)—co-authored with Dr Peter O'Shea. He is a dynamic speaker, passionate about drawing men of all ages into vibrant living, nurtured by a relationship with God and the Church.

In 2018, Robert will be working in partnership with the Diocese's *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation* to deliver both the *menALIVE* and the *Father Factor* seminars. In this interview, Robert gives some insights into what he hopes to bring to our region in 2018.

Why did you start *menALIVE*?

Put simply, one day at Church I was looking around and it struck me—"Where are all the men?" Even in your Diocese of Wollongong, only 40% of Mass attendees are men. We started *menALIVE* in response to this issue—to reach out to the men, find relevant ways to connect with them and renew their relationship with God. The *menALIVE* weekends are fairly "blokey" in style—they deal with the hard questions most men face at different points in their journey and it hopefully gives clarity to help them live more meaningful and purposeful lives.

What are the *Father Factor* seminars?

One of the things we learned from doing *menALIVE* over the past decade is that there is a universal desire amongst fathers to be good dads. However, they are not given a handbook, training or support to do so.



This led to me writing the *Father Factor* with Dr Peter O'Shea. Among other things, the book outlines research results that clearly show that children perform better in every social indicator if they have an involved, nurturing and loving father. It's undeniable that kids with dads—who can deliver on these things—will experience greater happiness, health and success. The book contrasts this with the impact of fatherlessness or disengaged dads—resulting in kids experiencing higher rates of poverty, lower educational performance, increased criminality, drug abuse, mental health problems and heightened physical health issues.

The compelling evidence we present to the dads and grandfathers who come to the *Father Factor* seminars confirms the importance of their role as dads and the powerful impact their style of fathering has on their kids.

Next year, I am really looking forward to running these nights in partnership with the Diocese of Wollongong for hundreds of men around the Diocese. Most men I speak to want to be awesome dads. It is pretty rare, though, to meet a dad who thinks he is on top of being a good father. The *Father Factor* seminars provide men with great tips on doing simple things well and I have seen how these can transform relationships between dads, kids, husbands and wives.

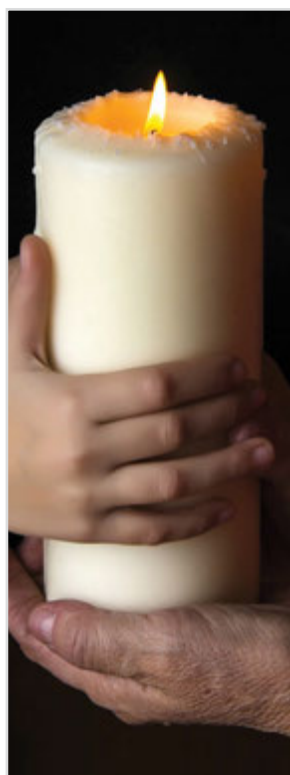
What is *Growing Good Men* all about?

Again, the catalyst for the *Growing Good Men* weekends was the experiences and feedback we received during the *menALIVE* program and *Father Factor* seminars. It was obvious that we needed to find a way to bring fathers and sons together to share an experience, be affirmed by each other, reset the clock if mistakes have been made in the past, and commit to strengthen their relationship as they journey through manhood together.

The *Growing Good Men* weekends provide these life-changing experiences for fathers and sons who invest this time in each other. We are really looking forward to having fathers and their 12–16-year-old sons be part of this amazing experience at the Cataract Scout Camp in 2018 (run in partnership with the Diocese's *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation*.) If they come, I guarantee it will change their relationship forever.

Why are you so passionate about fatherhood and men being fully alive?

If we can enhance the quality of fathering, we can change the world. It is undeniable that the influence of fathers forms an indelible impression on the lives of children. Good fathering grows healthy children, it fosters stable marriages and it forms the scaffold of a robust and strong society. The poor state of many father/child relationships constitutes a social crisis which began decades ago, and we are now suffering the deepening consequences. We've got to turn this around!



What are your top three tips for men being all they can be?

1. Love God with all your being.
2. Intentionally reject passivity and accept responsibility.
3. Live courageously.

If they can do this, they are well on the way to being men who are fully alive. ■

menALIVE will be run in a number of parishes and regionally in 2018 in the Diocese of Wollongong. Father Factor seminar evenings will be run in four regional locations and promoted widely in schools and parishes. The Growing Good Men weekend for fathers and sons will be held at Cataract Scout Camp in October 2018. To register your interest for any, or all, of these events, please contact Mr Jude Hennessy on (02) 4222 2407 or jude.hennessy@dow.org.au

Jude Hennessy is the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation and co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Think about it...



The Catholic Church has been present at many 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. By leaving a gift to your church in your Will, you will leave a legacy of faith—a legacy to help ensure the mission and pastoral outreach that has been important to you will continue both for today's needs, and for those of our children, our grandchildren and beyond.

For information about leaving a gift in your Will to your local parish or a ministry of the Church, please visit **www.bequests.dow.org.au** or call **4222 2446** to receive a copy of our brochure "Leaving a Legacy of Faith".

ART *inspiration*



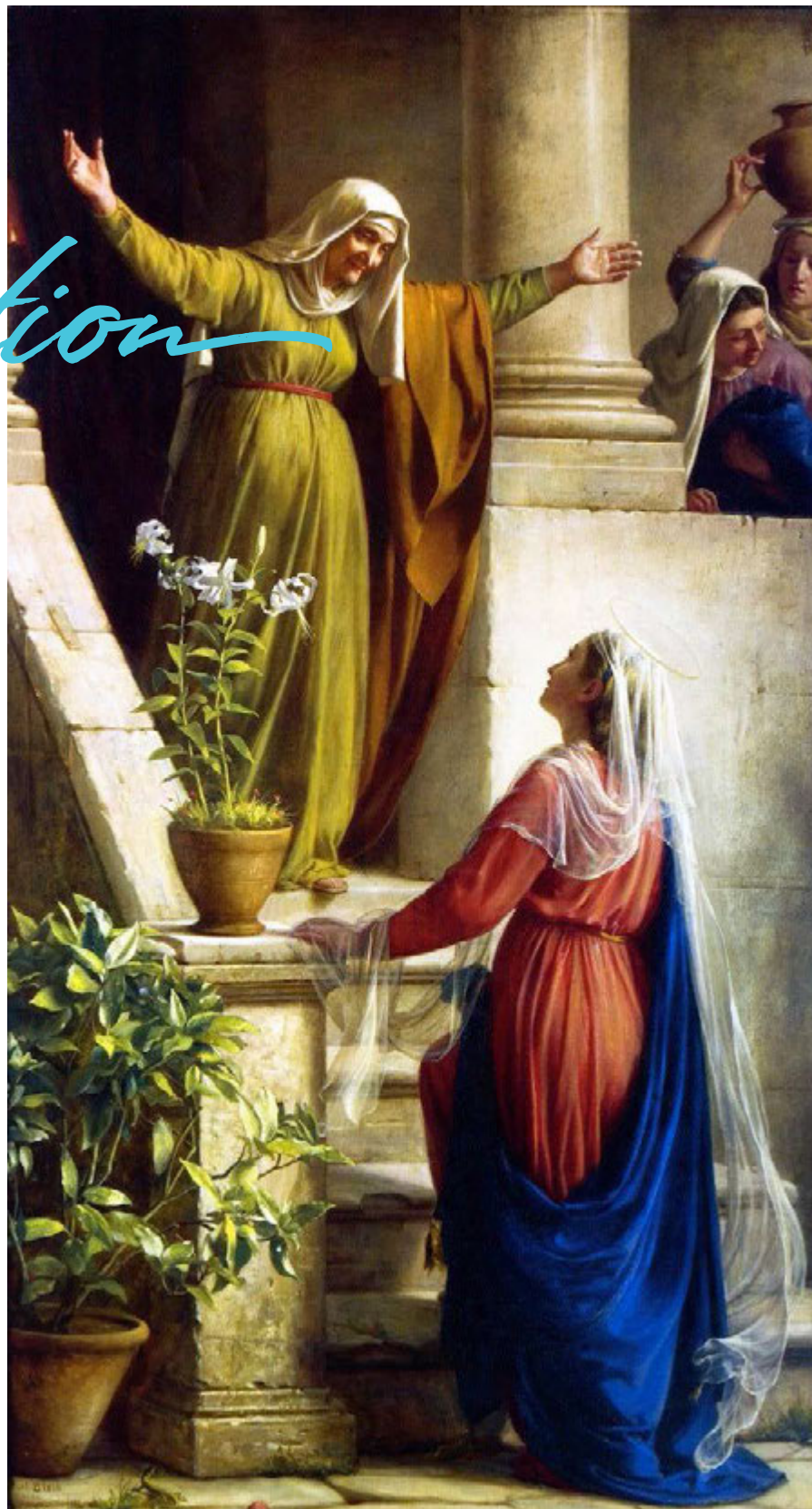
Advent art and reflections inspire thousands

BY DANIEL HOPPER

The Diocese's pocket-sized daily reflection book for the Advent and Christmas season has now become a staple for thousands of people around the world including inmates and guards in prisons all around Australia. What started as a small diocesan project six years ago, now sells close to 30,000 copies each year with the numbers growing annually.

Advent is such a busy time of year and we so easily forget that—at its heart—it is meant to be a time of preparation, waiting and hope for the coming of Jesus into our world and lives. This year's reflection book, *Chosen*, provides an opportunity for us to be still each day, listen to God and hear him declare to us, as he declared to his Son—you are my beloved; my favour rests on you (Mark 1:11).

One of the most popular features of the book is the artwork and accompanying artwork spotlight reflections by Fr Graham Schmitzer, parish priest at Immaculate Conception Catholic



Parish, Unanderra. We've included the artwork and Fr Graham's reflection from Week 3 of Advent as published in *Chosen*.

If you like Fr Graham's reflections as much as we do, he is one of the major authors—along with Sr Hilda Scott OSB—for our 2018 Lenten Program,

Surrender. We will be taking orders in December 2017 at dowshop.org.au. It's also not too late to grab your copies of *Chosen* from our website. ■

Daniel Hopper is the director of media and communications and co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.

The Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth

Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834–1890)

"The Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth" c. 1866

Oil on copper. Frederiksborg Slot (Denmark-Hillerod). Public Domain.

Many will be familiar with the art of Carl Heinrich Bloch. His many scenes from the life of Christ illustrate bibles and devotional manuals. Bloch was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1834. While his parents wished him to enter the Navy, Bloch's only interest was painting. On his way to study art in Italy, he passed through the Netherlands and became acquainted with the work of Rembrandt. For seven years he lived in Italy, soaking up the Italian masters. Returning to Denmark, he was commissioned to produce 23 paintings for the chapel of Frederiksborg Palace. He died in 1890, "An abrupt blow for Nordic art," as an article by Sophus Michaelis stated.

Bloch's works are popular because they are full of realism, and *The Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth* is no exception. It is not hard to imagine you're actually watching the original scene. You can almost see the movement in Elizabeth's arms, ready to embrace her younger cousin. It is a meeting of two mothers, but there is a profound difference. Elizabeth has conceived in the natural order, even though aged. A greater work of grace is present in Mary. Her Perpetual Virginity is symbolised by the lily against whose container Mary rests her hand.

The first miracle recorded in the New Testament comes about at the sound of Mary's voice—the sanctification of John the Baptist in his mother's womb, "For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy" (Luke 1:44). St Luke pictures Mary as the new Ark of the Covenant, carrying not the tablets of the Law, but the Lawmaker himself. Not just a bowl of manna, but the True Bread from Heaven (John 6:32). Not just the priestly staff of Aaron, but Christ the High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). Just as David had danced before the Ark which housed God's Presence (2 Samuel 6:14), so John dances before his Maker. It is an unborn child who first recognises the incarnate God. The New Testament's second miracle will also occur at the sound

of Mary's voice—the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana, hinted at by the serving girl in the upper right hand corner carrying a water jar. The real effect of this miracle will be the stirrings of faith in the hearts of the apostles. Mary is always striving to evoke our faith in her Son. "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5).

But there was a price to pay. Christ knew his miracles would enrage the Pharisees and lead ultimately to his

death. So he warns his mother. Most bibles will give us the translation, "Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet" (John 2:4). However, the Greek literally says, "Woman, what to me, to thee," meaning, she will have to share in his destiny. Without hesitation, she says to the wine servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Perhaps Bloch is hinting at this, as Elizabeth's outstretched arms seem to form a cross.

One cannot help but notice the differences between Elizabeth's garments and Mary's. Elizabeth wears a heavy veil, and you would expect Mary to be in a travelling veil, having just completed a very taxing journey. But no, Mary's veil is almost bride-like. She is the spouse of the Holy Spirit whose action is so prominent in this encounter.

Visitation is a great ministry, one rooted in the Gospel, "[I was] sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me" (Matthew 25:36). Sadly, it is a ministry in danger of dying out in modern times; the phone and text-messaging has taken over. But they are not the same. Visitation is not always an easy ministry, but a very fruitful one, not just for the one visited, but also for the visitor. We are also enriched—one is blessed by receiving; the other by giving. Christmas is a great time for visiting people we may have neglected all year long. But it is also a time to open ourselves to the God who wishes to visit us.

Fr Graham Schmitzer

Christmas is a great time for visiting people we may have neglected all year long. But it is also a time to open ourselves to the God who wishes to visit us.



POPE JOHN PAUL II
*in his address to the Aboriginal and
 Torres Strait Islander people at Alice Springs in 1986*

Celebrating success in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

BY KARAN TAYLOR

Let me tell you of 2017—a year of journey and success! John Therry Catholic High School, Rosemeadow, has elected its first Aboriginal school captain for the year ahead, and as a new generation of young people steps up to fill the places of influence and leadership in our nation, they follow the wisdom of their Elders and forge new paths of justice for themselves.

In this progress, we celebrate the whispers of fulfilment in the prophetic words of Pope John Paul II in his address to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at Alice Springs in 1986, “You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

In telling our story, we acknowledge Aboriginal colleagues from our own Diocese for the gift of their cultures to our schools today. They include our many Elders and Aboriginal community members from the traditional lands of the Dharawal, Tharawal, Gundungurra



Slowly but surely, the gap is closing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people—literacy and numeracy rates are improving and retention rates are rising for Aboriginal students.

and Yuin peoples and those from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations who live here and support students and educational initiatives.

Since the 1990s, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) has walked the journey with us towards greater recognition for the culture and needs of our people—developing policies and implementing strategies to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Through significant



professional and cultural awareness initiatives, we are slowly developing resilience, authenticity, capacity and sustainability.

Change for the better began in earnest when Aboriginal education assistants were employed in schools and especially when the first Aboriginal person was appointed in a full-time role as an Aboriginal education officer to work at the system level. As the number of Aboriginal staff increased, so did the number of Aboriginal student enrolments.



In terms of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is making a contribution to the life of the Church, a local Aboriginal artist has recently been commissioned to paint an Aboriginal art resource called the *Sacraments Series*—highlighting through art some of the connections with Aboriginal spirituality, celebration and ritual with those used in the sacramental life and religious rituals of the Church (see artwork in this article.)

We have also been proactive in creating a welcome brochure to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families understand Catholic education—how they go about enrolling their child in a Catholic school and what will be provided for them through that education.

In July 2017, a group of 17 people from CEDoW attended the *World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education* (WIPCE) in Toronto, Canada—on the land of the Haudenosaunee. The group consisted of Aboriginal education assistants and community engagement officers, principals, education officers and support staff from the *Office of the Director*. The conference provided an opportunity to present a workshop on the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the Diocese, titled, *Building Cultural Competency, Commitment and Resilience across the System of Schools*.

There is much to celebrate! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have been in place for over 65,000 years in Australia and are the oldest surviving cultures in the world. We are a people who are aware of the spiritual reality of the land and of our own lives, and we celebrate that there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministries where the traditional owners are striving to incorporate the gifts of their culture, rituals and symbols into the life of the Church.

Just as the Magi followed the star of Bethlehem towards the Christ child, we—the people of Australia—look up at the Southern Cross and, in its light, journey together towards a future full of hope. There is much to celebrate! ■

Karan Taylor is the aboriginal education officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

Karan presented at WIPCE with colleagues Beth Riolo and Anne-Maree Creenaune.

Slowly but surely, the gap is closing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people—literacy and numeracy rates are improving and retention rates are rising for Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent about 3% of the 22 million Australians. In the 1990s, Aboriginal students comprised only 1% of the student cohort—80 students. In 2017, the numbers have positively increased to 3.4% of students—650 students. In two of our secondary schools, the Aboriginal student population is now 10%.

There are also now nine times the number of staff members to support them. No longer does the Aboriginal staff member work alone. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has strong leadership from the Director of Schools down, and it is led through a team approach of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff walking together to achieve the improvements needed.

When students receive the support they need, it gives them the confidence to aspire to dream and achieve brighter outcomes. This year, 29 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will complete their HSC as retention to Year 12 improves—and the election of the first Aboriginal school captain at John Therry Catholic High School is a sign of great hope that change is being embraced, not just by policy makers and teachers, but by students themselves.

Teachers are instrumental in this process of change as they work hard to implement cultural competency, personalised planning and quality intervention practices, and appropriate protocols for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

One key initiative in the CEDoW vision and strategic direction document,



... the election of the first Aboriginal school captain at John Therry Catholic High School is a sign of great hope that change is being embraced, not just by policy makers and teachers, but by students themselves.

Lighting the Way, is the conducting of local cultural immersion experiences for teachers in country areas to highlight the diversity of respective Aboriginal communities and their sacred sites. Teachers then carry the torch of cultural connection back to their classrooms.

CEDoW's logo also symbolises this connection of cultures with its golden star of Bethlehem being surrounded by a ring of dots to represent, "The meeting place where people gather to grow in faith and learning, as they share wisdom with Elders" (*Lighting the Way*, p 2).



For the good of our common humanity

Euthanasia bill defeated in NSW Parliament

BY BISHOP
PETER A COMENSOLI

On 16 November 2017, the Legislative Council of the NSW Parliament defeated the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill* by a vote of 20–19.

This is a decision for the good of our common humanity.

In a matter of conscience, all sides of the political divide considered the questions that legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide poses and decided that this is not a path that the State of NSW should venture down.

While all of us are rightfully moved by personal stories of pain and suffering too often experienced by our beloved at the end of their lives, none of us should think that a deliberate act of killing them is a genuinely human thing to do. The trauma of pain and suffering that might emerge in people as they are dying, cannot be overcome by eliminating them. May our better impulse always be towards compassionate care and sacrificial accompaniment of those who are dying.

I am extremely grateful for all the effort given to defeat this Bill. Our medical

and nursing fraternity has been a particularly important voice in these efforts, by properly informing our parliamentarians of the inherent risks that legalising assisted suicide poses. I am also grateful to the many thousands of people who spoke up for human dignity by signing petitions, contacting their parliamentarians and spreading the word to our communities. The Bill has been defeated in NSW but the

The trauma of pain and suffering that might emerge in people as they are dying cannot be overcome by eliminating them.

issue has not gone away. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are national issues being played out state-by-state.

I also hope that those who sponsored the Bill in NSW will acknowledge that legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide is not the path desired by their fellow parliamentarians. Now is the time for our legislators to concentrate their efforts on the real agendas leading to suffering in our society in a more appropriate and compassionate way.

There is a deep awareness within the Christian tradition—out of which came hospitals, hospices and palliative facilities—of the need to accompany with professional and pastoral care those who are suffering. Might we all do what we can to recover this precious gift of accompaniment, which we can each give to those who are dying—to sit beside them, to hold their hands, to sooth their minds and bodies, to pray for them and to offer them the assurance of our abiding and healing love. ■

Bishop Peter A Comensoli is the Bishop of Broken Bay and the bishops' delegate for matters of life for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

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How a partnership to build teacher capacity in Kiribati led to even greater outcomes for diocesan teachers.

BY NEIL MCCANN

In July this year, I led a group of seven high school teachers from the Diocese of Wollongong to work in three schools over three weeks in the small pacific island nation of Kiribati. It is one of only two countries in the world that actually invited Catholic missionaries in to minister to the local people. The “mission” was to build teacher capacity as most secondary teachers in Kiribati Catholic schools have little, if any, teacher training or qualifications.

The project was undertaken in partnership with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) who sent eight undergraduate students to work alongside our teachers in a two week community engagement practicum. It provided the undergraduate students with valuable experience in and out of the classroom. ACU also sent four experienced academics to supervise their students and to deliver an intensive teacher training course to the local teachers of the three schools in Kiribati.

The Kiribati experience had a profound effect on the teachers from our Diocese. The fact that they were fully immersed in one school for the full three weeks—including living on site—allowed them to form relationships with teachers and students very quickly.

We were invited to Kiribati to help build teacher capacity in much the same way as the first missionaries were invited into their country. However, in our case, we were the ones who clearly gained the greatest benefit.

They became learning partners in the teacher training course offered by ACU—observing each other’s lessons and working cooperatively in extra-curriculum activities like sport, cultural activities and liturgies.

Kiribati is one of the poorest nations in the world. Yet, the people joyfully shared their food, homes, incredible culture and their lives. Despite having so little, they willingly shared everything with us. Their generosity was overwhelming, as was their appreciation of our presence. Meaning for them is found not in material possessions, but within their family, community and faith.

One particular story illustrates the centrality of Christianity in their lives and the beautiful ease with which they integrate community life and faith. The athletics team slept at the school so they could get up early before lessons

to train. Each night before dinner, they would pray the Rosary and include us in this process. After a few nights of saying the Rosary in their own language, they wrote out the Hail Mary in English for each of the local students to use so that we would feel included. While we were delayed that night at a seminar, one of our teachers said, “Quick, we have to rush home, we don’t want to miss the Rosary,” explaining what the students had planned. In over 35 years working in Catholic education, I have never heard a teacher say this. I then realised that this was a reverse mission!

We were invited to Kiribati to help build teacher capacity in much the same way as the first missionaries were invited into their country. However, in our case, we were the ones who clearly gained the greatest benefit.

This project will continue next year under our agreement with ACU and the Catholic Education Office in Kiribati. It is envisaged that the Diocese of Wollongong will continue to support capacity-building for teachers in Kiribati for many years to come. If other dioceses are interested in tapping into this project for their teachers in future years, please contact me on 0409 379 955. ■

Neil McCann is a senior professional officer for Human Resource Services Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

At their best, parishes continue to be the vibrant and central hub supporting our lives of missionary discipleship. Pope Francis describes a parish as, “A community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 28). The recent results of the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) attest to our desire for this dream to become a reality. The diocesan-wide results indicate that we focus attention upon a strong sense of belonging, spiritual growth, liturgies that are uplifting and nurturing, a clear vision and the ability to draw more people into the life of our communities.

Such a vision requires, at times, a renewal of our parish life and culture. Enthusiasm in our parishes for such renewal draws strength from individual parish NCLS results and the realisation of the truth of Pope Francis’ dream of, “A missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (*EG*, 27).

Over the past 12 months, renewal has been occurring across many parishes. This renewal—closely supported by the Diocese’s *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation*—utilises *Alpha* and *Divine Renovation* to begin bringing about a cultural and mission-focused renewal of parish life. These parishes include Oran Park, Varroville, Macquarie Fields and Campbelltown—with Eagle Vale soon to follow.

The renewal process at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville, began with the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) gaining a deeper understanding of the fundamental mission and purpose of parish life, the call to missionary discipleship, the role and place of *Alpha*, and the core qualities of a renewed parish. Foundational to this formation was viewing



As the pastoral council focussed on the need for renewal ... it became a wonderful journey together of faith and friendship, listening and learning, and sharing our plans with our community.

GEOFF ASHTON

the videos of a workshop given in Brisbane by Fr James Mallon on *Divine Renovation*. Other parishes began this renewal process by running full parish gatherings to watch these videos.

Having gained inspiration and enthusiasm for renewal, the PPC concentrated on understanding the five key systems of a vibrant parish—worship, ministry, community, discipleship and evangelisation—plus the addition of leadership for good measure. They wrote a description of what missionary disciples look like and then articulated a vision statement for each parish system. This gave a strategic focus for the path ahead. PPC chairperson, Geoff Ashton, reflects that, “As the pastoral council focused on the need for renewal and discerned the message of creating missionary disciples, it became a wonderful journey together of faith and friendship,

listening and learning, and sharing our plans with our community.”

Whilst developing vision statements for each key system, time was devoted to understanding the results of the NCLS. These results gave a detailed picture of what parishioners thought about the parish and their hopes and concerns for the future. It was amazing to see how the desires of parishioners linked with the renewal work being undertaken by the PPC. Parishioners loved the Eucharist and praying for one another (worship) and desired attention be given to building a stronger sense of community (community), a deeper growth in spiritual life and faith (discipleship), improved discovery and use of gifts (ministry/service) and starting new programs of outreach (evangelisation).

Nearly 100 parishioners gave an overwhelmingly positive response to the renewal process and vision created by the PPC at a parish gathering on 15 October 2017 titled, *Celebrating our Past, Creating our Future*. The PPC presented and invited consultative feedback on the NCLS results, elements of the *Divine Renovation* videos, the list of qualities for missionary disciples and the system vision statements. Parishioners strongly endorsed both the vision and the continuation of the process of renewal within the parish. As one parishioner said, “Having been a parishioner from the earliest days, I know we are building on strong foundations



Having been a parishioner from the earliest days, I know we are building on strong foundations here and I am confident our renewal process will lead to an even more vibrant, faith-filled community.

VARROVILLE PARISHIONER

here and I am confident our renewal process will lead to an even more vibrant, faith-filled community at Our Lady of Mount Carmel." A similar gathering with positive response was undertaken at the Macquarie Fields and Campbelltown parishes.

To assist in implementing this renewal process, parishes are developing a new leadership structure in line with the *Divine Renovation* model. In this model, the PPC narrows its focus to responsibility for creating, communicating and overseeing the renewed culture and strategies that will achieve the desired vision. They are the energisers and big-picture strategic thinkers who ensure that the parish, in all its activities, remains true to its core mission, purpose, culture and vision.

The PPC is freed from operational matters through the creation of a

new Parish Leadership Team (PLT). Currently operational and working effectively at the Varroville, Oran Park and Campbelltown parishes, these PLTs meet fortnightly and comprise around four to six members along with the parish priest. They form a trusted leadership group who take on responsibility for managing the week-to-week life of the parish and the implementation of the culture and strategic directions set by the PPC. Each person on the team takes on some responsibility for communicating and working with a set of ministries aligning with worship, community, evangelisation, discipleship and ministry/service.

The aim of this structure is to spread the load of responsibility for parish life and mission. Having two groups—one operationally focused and one big-picture focused—ensures that the strategy developed by the PPC and operationalised by the PLT will be understood and carried out by the ministry teams. In this way, a positive renewal outcome is achieved where everyone feels part of the process, understands what is being done and knows what is expected of them and their teams in fostering a culture of forming missionary disciples.

Membership of both the PPC and PLT is intentionally and prayerfully discerned. Essential elements to their effectiveness includes a solid and shared understanding of the vision, a balance of strengths, the ability to have healthy conflict about strategy and capacity for openness and vulnerability.

The PPC and PLT at Mount Carmel continues to make solid progress on developing renewal within the parish. Along with Oran Park, Macquarie Fields, Campbelltown and Eagle Vale, these parishes are looking forward to a 2018 full of hope, energy, enthusiasm and ongoing vibrancy and renewal. ■

Darren McDowell is the coordinator of evangelisation and discipleship for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Geoff Ashton is the parish pastoral council chairperson at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville.



Winner, winner, chicken dinner

On 24 August 2017, the prestigious Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA) Awards were held in Auckland, NZ, where our very own *Journey* magazine took out one of the major awards, *Most Improved Publication*.

It was the first time the Diocese had entered the competition, so it is quite an achievement to take home one of the major awards and it validates the intentional changes we have made to the magazine over the past year. Our diocesan graphic designer (who is responsible for the layout of *Journey*) Jeremy Yuen, was there to receive the award presented by Cardinal John Dew, archbishop of Wellington, NZ (pictured above with Jeremy.)

ACPA made the following citation in relation to our magazine, "This magazine has transformed itself into a quality publication. The use of better printing stock, vastly improved design and an expanded focus on content that reaches out to non-Mass going Catholics makes *Journey* a clear winner."

Congratulations and thank you to the *Journey* organising committee and administration team for contributing to this success. ■



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Good practice is universal

CatholicCare shares insights with the USA

BY TRISH COONEY

During a recent holiday to the USA, I was privileged to represent CatholicCare Wollongong at the *Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) Annual Gathering* in Houston, Texas, from 28–30 September 2017. CCUSA is the national office for Catholic charities agencies across North America. Our equivalent here is Catholic Social Services Australia, currently led by Fr Frank Brennan SJ.

My presentation titled, *A Framework for Practice grounded in Mission: An Australian Story*, focussed on the process we went through to develop our *Framework for Practice* document. CatholicCare was established in this Diocese in 1980. Since then, the environment in which we work has been ever-changing. Developing a *Framework for Practice* was our proactive response to the signs of the times, consolidating and articulating common practice approaches across our agency.

CatholicCare's work is inspired by the Gospel and our framework refers to the parable of the good Samaritan as reflecting our core ministry. By highlighting the ethic of giving and enablement, the parable articulates the

CatholicCare's work is inspired by the Gospel and our framework refers to the parable of the good Samaritan as reflecting our core ministry.

important role organisations like ours play in reaching out to people on the margins. The presentation gave insights into how we utilise our framework to ensure that our services are high quality, effective and aligned with our mission.

The participants in the session asked many questions, particularly about the obstacles we faced in developing the framework and our governance structures. The executive director of Catholic Charities in Portland Oregon, Rev Richard Birkel, commented that we were "ambitious". I took this as a compliment and an example of Aussie ingenuity.

Other than presenting and sharing our experience and knowledge, conference highlights included keynote speaker, Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP, consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Fr Timothy warned of our work being

strictly measured by outputs and outcomes because we are "creating acts of love with consequences we can't always imagine." He also spoke about Catholicism as being "spacious and diverse" in nature—"The Church loves difference with even the four Gospels all disagreeing with each other." Reflecting on his words, and relating them to life, I couldn't help but contemplate the importance of acknowledging unique personal experiences and perspectives when encountering humanity.

Archbishop Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston celebrated the conference Mass at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in downtown Houston. After Mass, we showed our support to the *Caritas Internationalis Share the Journey* campaign aiming to promote the strengthening of relationships between migrants, refugees and communities.

I attended this conference proudly on the shoulders of my compassionate, committed and wise colleagues who live out the Gospel every day in their work with people who are struggling with life. We belong to a truly universal Church. Although we are on opposite sides of the world, our social service agencies have similar opportunities and challenges, which both affirms our experience and reminds us there is much work to be done. ■

CatholicCare's Framework for Practice is located online in the About Us section at catholiccare.dow.org.au.

Trish Cooney is the manager for mission and community relations for CatholicCare Wollongong.

here to STAY

BY PETER GILMORE

Seemingly an eternity later, and after much scurrying on the Department of Education's side, we finally have received the results of the review into Special Religious Education (SRE)—the work of our volunteer catechists in government schools. Suffice to say, the news is not better than we expected, it is exactly what we expected. The review found that SRE—particularly delivered in the Catholic context—is of a very high standard, it bolsters the sense of community in a school, and best of all, it's here to stay.

According to a report commissioned from *McCrindle Research*, SRE is hitting home runs in nearly every category. The only statistic that leaves us disheartened is that we can't see more children and young people each week!

A clear majority of providers are ensuring kids are being kept safe and well taught by providing child protection and classroom management courses (90% and 80% respectively). This fact, coupled with 99% of SRE teachers completing the mandatory *Working with Children Checks*, shows us that SRE providers have responded well to the growing need for professionalism and safety when working with young people. This is certainly true of the Diocese of Wollongong. Catechists have risen to the challenge of making time for ongoing training and ensuring all credentials are in order and up-to-date. In fact, the commitment of catechists in our Diocese to maintain high-levels of professionalism and investing in personal growth through in-services, courses and retreats, is nothing short of astounding. We have yet to encounter a single catechist who resents the additional training we have on offer. Because of this enthusiasm, we have been driven to create new programs and in-services so that there are always new avenues for growth.



The media operates under the assumption that if they repeat the same lies often enough, we'll eventually believe them. Unfortunately for them, as people of faith, we already have someone we believe in.

Don't believe the lies

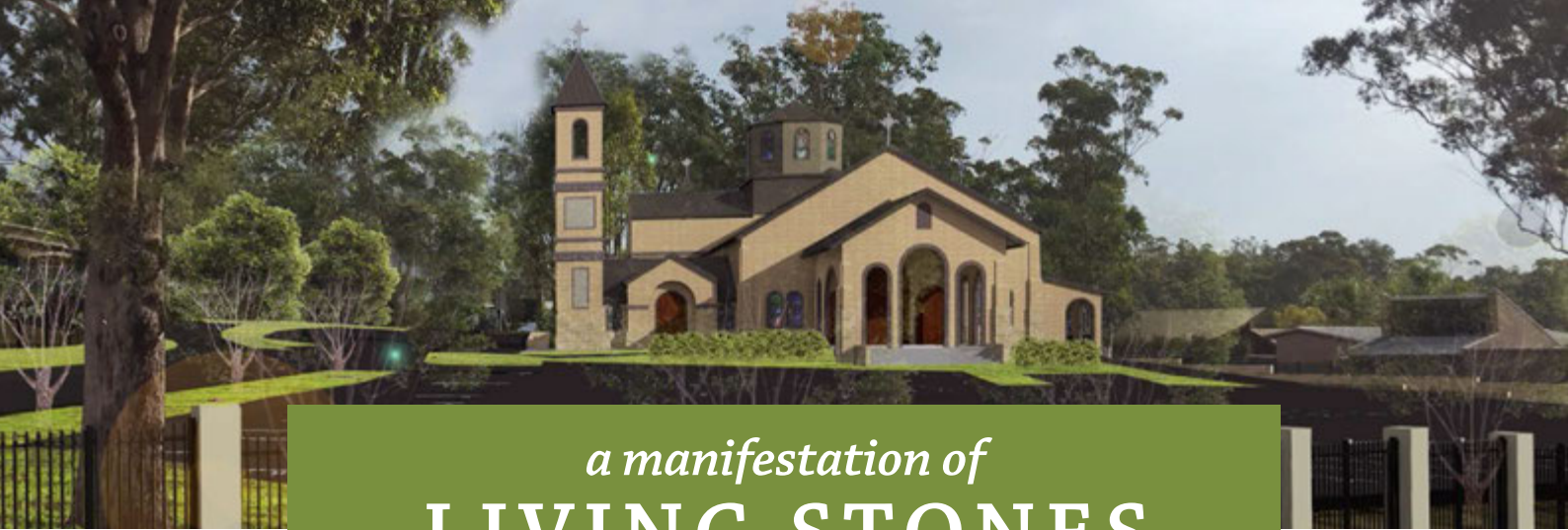
It is often discouraging—considering the clearly positive empirical evidence—to wade through article after article of negative news stories surrounding SRE. Quite often the facts are cherry-picked from tiny providers or they'll cite apparent spokespeople for Christianity—usually a former minister of some stripe or the leader of a small congregation that has no interest in SRE. One such group (whom I will not dignify by naming) declares that, in a secular society, we must have freedom from religion. It sounds reasonable! The government should not impose a religion on people, but, is anyone forcing a religious view on people, or are families making a choice for themselves? Don't we have freedom of, not, from religion? Government schools position themselves as being in, and of, their local communities. People of faith are just as much part

of the local community as any other person or group. The review itself found that "SRE is community building and helps connect schools with the local community". The media operates under the assumption that if they repeat the same lies often enough, we'll eventually believe them. Unfortunately for them, as people of faith, we already have someone we believe in. We mustn't believe the lies. Catechesis and the gift of relationship with Christ has shown time-and-time again to assist in a well-balanced, stable upbringing in a world that is seemingly anything but stable.

What now?

We need to keep up the good work while humbly striving to do better. Whether that is going out of our way to show kindness to teachers in schools, to take those few extra moments to refresh ourselves in classroom management, or even be a networker in our parishes—we can always use more catechists in the ministry. If this ministry truly is at the coalface of the Church ministering to and teaching the next generation, then we share this great privilege and responsibility with our Lord Jesus. He is our strength, he is our song and he will always be Lord of all of creation, forever and ever. Amen! ■

Peter Gilmore is a CCD and evangelisation coordinator for the Diocese of Wollongong.



a manifestation of **LIVING STONES**

Work commences on a new church for Rosemeadow

BY DANIEL HOPPER

After more than 20 years of planning and preparation, work has begun on the final and most important part of the parish precinct at Our Lady Help of Christians (OLHC) Parish, Rosemeadow—the building of their first purpose-built parish church. On Sunday 3 September, Bishop Peter Ingham visited OLHC and celebrated the 10am Mass with the parish community including parish priest, Fr Chris Sarkis, and [then] Deacon Victor Vincent. After Mass, everyone processed to the land for the official blessing and dedication of the site for the new church which promises to be a beautiful building in the Romanesque style.

When asked about the new church that will seat 523 worshippers—up from 300 in the existing building which will be converted into a parish hall—Fr Chris said, “The parish church represents far more than the mere building of bricks and mortar. It is, as it were, the manifestation of the ‘living stones’, the people of the parish. It is also God’s dwelling place on earth. In the Tabernacle is the Incarnate Word, the sacramental Real Presence of Jesus Christ himself. The parish church is also the place where the people of God offer worship and adoration through the Sacrifice of the Mass—strengthened in hope to go forth and proclaim the good news of salvation to the world.

“Finally, it is the place where we Catholics celebrate the most important sacramental

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moments of our earthly lives on our pilgrimage to eternity—Baptism into the body of Christ on earth, the Church, nourished through the Eucharist, forgiven and reconciled in Confession, filled with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, united in Marriage, sanctified through the ministry of priests in Holy Orders, strengthened through the Anointing of the Sick, and finally commended to God in death. It is the place where we come home to God and simply sit prayerfully in his Presence, silently uniting our human heart to his Divine Heart.”

With regards to the aesthetics of the new church, there will be 48 stained glass windows, designed and manufactured in Italy using traditional craftsmanship and imagery. There will also be two bell towers containing nine bells—all cast in England. Famous Australian iconographer, Michael Galovic, has been commissioned to produce four icons, and renowned local sculptor, Engelbert Piccolruaz, will carve the Cross and Corpus as well as the gilded timber angels of adoration for the Tabernacle.

The building of the parish precinct has been funded through the sale of land the parish owned nearby. “We are now benefiting from the wise decisions made

by past parish priests of Campbelltown from which this parish of Rosemeadow was separated, and we are indeed grateful for their vision and foresight,” Fr Chris said.

Current members of the parish and the wider community also have the opportunity to share in this vision too. Fr Chris said, “Everyone is invited to add their special touch by gifting items to help us complete this historic project. To date, funds for 27 of the 48 stained glass windows have already been gifted, as well as other items such as sanctuary furnishings, statues, candelabra, brassware, sacred vessels and vestments.” All donations and gifts will be acknowledged in the *Perpetual Benefactors Book of Remembrance* that will be placed in the church foyer and will be viewed by generations to come.

Fr Chris says the positive support that he has received for the new church has left him feeling overwhelmed and humbled. “I feel privileged to be the parish priest at a time when we are embracing this noble and worthy undertaking for the honour and glory of God.”

If you would like to consider making a gift and being a part of the history of the parish, you can find out how by calling the Rosemeadow parish office on (02) 4628 1385 or visiting the parish website olhcrosemeadow.org.au.

In addition to the building of the new church, work is also being undertaken in the surrounding parish primary school and the regional John Therry Catholic High School. Work began in May 2017 and will hopefully be completed in time for Christmas 2018. ■

Daniel Hopper is director of media and communications and co-editor of Journey for the Diocese of Wollongong.



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Cassandra strikes the *right chord*

BY PAUL MASON

On 5–7 October 2017, around 350 musicians from Catholic parishes and schools all around Australia gathered for a national conference in Perth highlighting the role of music and song in bringing people together. The *Sing With Joy! United in Diversity* conference—organised by the *Australian Pastoral Musicians Network* (APMN)—was headlined by American composer, Mr David Haas, and the director of the Australian Catholic University Centre for Liturgy, Professor Clare Johnson.

David is one of the pre-eminent composers of the last 30 years, best known for such songs as *You Are Mine*, *Blest Are They* and *We Are Called*. In his opening keynote address to the conference, David stressed that the essential aspect of the ministry of pastoral musicians is to “point to Jesus”.

“As a Church, this is our ultimate call—not just to be good musicians, not just to become skilled liturgists, not to be skilled in music notation software. Although all these things are important, our ultimate call is to show and reveal Jesus Christ to the world through our music and our sung prayer,” David said.

In her keynote address, Clare spoke of music as the “glue” that binds members of the faithful together in joyful celebration. She said, “Recent scientific studies have posited that singing is a universal human behaviour, suggesting that all humans have the capacity to engage in singing and it may have arisen as an evolutionary adaptation to promote group bonding among early humans.

“Beginning our liturgies with song is the smartest thing we could have done—psychologically and socially—in order to kick-start our corporate ritual action in a way that bonds us faster than any other activity.”

The conference chair, Mr Michael Mangan, presented this year’s APMN scholarships—a hallmark feature of the work of the APMN. It was a delight to see one of the \$500 scholarship awards going to Wollongong organist, Cassandra Cordero.

Cassandra featured at the first APMN national conference held in Wollongong as part of the *Lift Up Your Hearts*

“... our ultimate call is to show and reveal Jesus Christ to the world through our music and our sung prayer ...”

DAVID HAAS

conference in January 2014. She used her skills in notation software to prepare the typesetting for the various liturgy booklets as well as her skills as an accompanist for many of the liturgies and workshops during the 2014 conference.

Cassandra recently hosted a recital on an Allen organ at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong. In her address to the assembly, she spoke passionately about the role of music in the Sunday Mass (Cassandra has played a major role at St Francis Xavier Cathedral for the past nine years.) She commented on her journey thus far, thankful for her Catholic education at Wollongong Primary School—provided by catechist, Patricia Calabro, and her music education at Smiths Hill High School.

Congratulations Cassandra! We wish you well in your future pastoral music endeavours. ■

Paul Mason is the coordinator of liturgy and ministry for the Diocese of Wollongong.



Catholic Women's League

BY ANNE KELLY

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) triennial conference was held at the Xavier Centre in July and had more than 120 members participating in the successful launch of the *CWL History Book*. We were also delighted that 18 diocesan members could attend the CWLA national conference in Adelaide in September.

Our chaplain, Fr Patrick Vaughan, facilitated the CWL diocesan retreat day held at St Mary Star of the Sea Church in Gerringong on 25 May. The retreat provided a peaceful day of inspirational reflection and silent contemplation. Members are most grateful to Fr Patrick for his spiritual nurturing and his friendship. Five diocesan Masses were recently celebrated, including a Mass for St Mary of the Cross MacKillop on 8 August 2017.

The first meeting of all CWL branches in the Diocese will take place on Tuesday 27 February 2018 at the Xavier Centre, Wollongong, at 10am. Non-members in the Diocese would be made most welcome!

For more information on CWL in the Diocese, contact Anne Kelly on 0411 260 040 or gerry@1earth.net

Anne Kelly is the president of the Catholic Women's League, Diocese of Wollongong cwlwollongong.org.au.



Twins celebrate 90th birthday at Lumen Christi

Well-known parishioners, Shirley Sparks and Sr Joan Miles SGS, from Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong recently celebrated their 90th birthday with Bishop Peter, family, friends and parishioners. Those gathered to mark this milestone celebrated the faith-filled lives of these two wonderful and committed women who have shown generosity of spirit and a great love for the life of the Church.

Peter's Pence

Dear Bishop Ingham,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 12 July 2017 with which you sent a cheque for the sum of AUD 30,000 thus distributed: Peter's Pence Collection for the Year 2017 (AUD 10,000), and the contribution of the Diocese according to Canon 1271 for the same period (AUD 20,000).

I wish to assure you that the amount will be forwarded to the Holy See.

Grateful for this generous gesture of solidarity with the Successor of St Peter in his ministry of unity, charity and service to the Universal Church, with kind regards, I remain

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

✠ Adolfo Tito Yllana

Tit. Archbishop of Montecorvino
Apostolic Nuncio

Macquarie Fields Parish celebrates 40 years

BY FR LINH NGUYEN

On 11 September 2017, Bishop Peter Ingham presided at the 40th Anniversary Mass for Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Macquarie Fields. During his homily, Bishop Peter said, "Since 1962, when a Mass Centre was opened in Macquarie Fields, and since 1977, when the parish was established, Macquarie Fields has been nurturing and forming a community of believers in the Catholic tradition.

"The unique history and character of the parish has created a wonderful legacy of faith, hard work and service to the local community—a history that can be traced to *Macquarie Fields House*, built by James Meehan (1774–1826). In 1810, he received a grant of 1,400 acres at Ingleburn. Macquarie Fields House was named in honour of his benefactor, Governor Macquarie. Meehan—an emancipated Irish Catholic convict—was the deputy surveyor of lands and later superintendent of roads and bridges."



The well-attended celebration reflected the Bishop's comments that, "Mary Mother of the Church Parish is an oasis of mercy. The building is made holy by those formed in faith, hope and love in our Catholic schools, those instructed by our catechists, as well by those who undertake works of charity for people in need.

"Mary Mother of the Church Parish is a sacred site and we treasure the memory of its beginning and of its continuing ongoing influence for good. May this continue into the next 40 years with the people of God in this area, led by the clergy and helped by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Happy anniversary!"

Fr Linh Nguyen is the parish priest at Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Macquarie Fields.



Oran Park Parish turns two!

BY SR KERRY GARDINER RSJ

On 8 August 2017, St Mary MacKillop Parish, Oran Park, hosted the diocesan Catholic Women's League (CWL) annual Mass celebrating the feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

The parish also recently celebrated its second birthday. Many features in the church provide tangible reminders of the way of love and sacrifice of its patron—

St Mary MacKillop. The processional cross—crafted by a parishioner—contains a small cross made from floorboards of the original school house used by Mary MacKillop in Penola, SA. The cross

was presented to parish priest, Fr David Caterall, by parishioners from Penola during the 2015 National Mary MacKillop pilgrimage.

The altar—made by the students of St Benedict's Catholic College, Oran Park—contains a relic of wood from the coffin of St Mary MacKillop. The relic was given to Fr David Catterall when he was first being treated for cancer.

The restored tabernacle—originally from the Josephites Sisters at Croydon—bears the handprint of a small child that reminds parishioners of our own hands stretching out to Jesus.

As part of the Mass, Bishop Peter blessed the painting of *The Vision*, commissioned for the sesquicentenary of the Sisters of St Joseph. The painting was a gift from Catholic Education, Diocese of Wollongong.

These objects are external signs of the vibrant spirit of the St Mary MacKillop Parish community—a spirit that continues to strive to live the vision of embracing everyone with radical hospitality, that nourishes the faith of all, that serves with humility and responds to the needs of our neighbours.

Sr Kerry Gardiner RSJ is a pastoral associate and member of the parish leadership team at St Mary MacKillop Catholic Parish, Oran Park.

Entrusted to the care of the Franciscans

BY JUDY BULL

In 2009, two remarkable Franciscan Friars arrived at the parish of St Michael's, Thirroul—the new parish priest, Fr Ken Cafe OFM, and his colleague, Fr Andrew Granc OFM.

On 20 February 1967, these two comrades were first professed as Franciscan Friars Minor. This year, the Thirroul Parish was honoured and delighted to help them celebrate their 50th anniversary and later to commemorate Fr Andrew's 40th anniversary for the priesthood.

The close association of these two friars began more than 50 years ago before they were professed. Fr Ken explains, "Andrew and I met on the Southern Aurora train which left Platform 1 at Central Station in Sydney on 6 February 1966."

Highlights of the 50 years of the Franciscan way of life for Fr Ken included his formation pathway. He explains, "I did not take to the study too well and so I became a teacher.



How contradictory is that!" Fr Ken continues as an active surf lifesaver and an AFL umpire.

When asked about his most treasured moments, Fr Andrew said, "I would have to say my first visit to Poland in 1979 and my personal encounter with the newly elected Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla) at the shrine of the Black Madonna, Czestochowa."

Fr Andrew reveals that, "An openness to God's Spirit—operating in and through my Franciscan brothers—has taken me to places I could never have imagined and given me opportunities for personal growth as well as a strong sense of personal fulfilment. Yes, there have been tough, lonely and disheartening times, but somehow the grace of the Lord has brought me through these valleys, stronger and more purified motivationally."



Fr Andrew has also completed a master's degree in theology in Chicago, USA, in 1984, and marked 12 years as a formation director in 1985. He was elected as vicar provincial of the Friars in 2013.

On their lifelong friendship, Fr Ken reflects, "Andrew and I are the only two left from a novitiate of 21 people. Our common outlook on life, our common Franciscan approach and common friends have all helped bind us together. My parents befriended Andrew's mother and her sister, and my family has befriended and adopted Andrew. We truly are brothers."

Judy Bull is a member of the parish pastoral council at St Michael's Catholic Parish, Thirroul.



MASS & RECONCILIATION TIMES 2017

CHURCH / COMMUNITY	CHRISTMAS EVE 24 December (Sun)	CHRISTMAS DAY 25 December (Mon)	RECONCILIATION
ILLAWARRA			
WOLLONGONG CATHEDRAL: 36 Harbour St	7pm	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm), 7am, 9am & 10:30am	15 Dec 11am-12noon (2 nd Rite) & Saturdays 12noon-1pm (1 st Rite)
ALBION PARK: Tongarra Rd	6pm	Midnight & 10am	21 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite)
BALGOWNIE: 47 Balmoral St	11:30pm <i>Syro-Malabar</i>	10am	
BERKELEY: Northcliffe Dr	6pm	8:45am	
BULLI: 48 Park Rd	6:30pm & 8:30pm	8:30am	
CROATIAN: Bellevue Rd, Figtree	8pm	Midnight & 10am	
CORRIMAL: 99 Princes Hwy	6:30pm	Midnight, 9:30am & 11am <i>Italian</i>	
DAPTO: 24 Jerematta St	6pm & 9pm	7:30am & 9:30am	20 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite) & Saturdays 4pm (1 st Rite)
FAIRY MEADOW: Princes Hwy	6pm & 8pm <i>Vietnamese</i>	8:30am, 10am <i>Italian</i> & 7pm <i>Vietnamese</i>	13 Dec 7pm-8pm (2 nd Rite) & Saturdays 5pm-6pm (1 st Rite)
GERRINGONG: 166 Fern St		8:30am	
GWYNNEVILLE: 115 Gipps Rd	5pm	9am	Saturdays 5pm-5:30pm (1 st Rite)
HELENSBURGH: 4 McMillan St	6pm	8:30am	15 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite)
ITALIAN: Stewart St, Wollongong		Midnight & 8:30am (See also Fairy Meadow & Corrimal)	
JAMBEROO: 22 Chapel Lane		9:30am	
KIAMA: Manning St	6pm & 9pm	9am	15 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite)
PORT KEMBLA: O'Donnell St	7pm	Midnight & 9:30am	22 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite)
SHELLHARBOUR CITY: College Ave	6pm & 8pm	9am	
SLOVENIAN: 136 Princes Hwy, Figtree	8pm		24 Dec 7pm (1 st Rite)
THIRROUL: 325 Lawrence Hargrave Dr	6:30pm	9am	19 Dec 7:30pm (2 nd Rite)
UNANDERRA: Princes Hwy	6pm	7am, 9am & 10:45am <i>Polish</i>	18-23 Dec 4:30pm-5:30pm (1 st Rite)
WARRAWONG: Cnr Flagstaff & Bruce Rd	6pm	Midnight, 7:30am & 10am	
WEST WOLLONGONG: Princes Hwy	6pm (TIGS) & 9pm	9am	19 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite) & 23 Dec 9:30am (1 st Rite)
WINDANG: Windang Rd	5pm	7:30am & 10am <i>Spanish</i>	
WOMBARRA: Cnr Lawrence Hargrave Dr & Morrison Ave	9:30pm		
MACARTHUR			
CAMDEN: Cnr John & Mitchell Sts	5pm (Children's Mass), 7pm & 9pm	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	
CAMPBELLTOWN: Cordeaux St	6pm, 9pm & 11pm	8:30am & 10:30am	18-21 Dec after 9:30am Mass (1 st Rite), 21 Dec 7:30pm (2 nd Rite), 22 Dec after 8:20am Mass (1 st Rite), 23 Dec 11:30am-12:30pm & 5pm-5:30pm (1 st Rite)

DOUGLAS PARK: 415 Douglas Park Dr	7:30pm (Carols 7pm)	9am	
EAGLE VALE: 2 Aquamarine Dr	5:30pm (Children's Mass), 7:30pm (Family Mass) & 9:15pm <i>Spanish</i>	Midnight & 9am	23 Dec 10am (1 st Rite)
INGLEBURN: Oxford Rd	6pm & 9pm	Midnight, 9am & 11am	16 Dec 11am-12noon & 5pm-5:45pm (1 st Rite) & 23 Dec 11am-1pm & 4:30pm- 5:30pm (1 st Rite)
LEPPINGTON: Cnr Ingleburn & Dickson Rds		9am	1 Dec 6pm (1 st Rite)
MACQUARIE FIELDS: 58 Edgar St	7pm (Family Mass)	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	19 Dec 7:30pm (2 nd Rite)
MENANGLE: 119 Menangle Rd	6pm		
MINTO: Moss Glen St & Guernsey Ave	7:30pm (Outdoors)	9am	
OAKDALE: Blattman Ave	6pm		
ORAN PARK: 94 Oran Park Dr	5pm (Family Mass outdoors at St Justin's Primary School) & 8pm	9am	2, 9, 16 & 23 Dec 3:30pm (1 st Rite)
ROSEMEADOW: 80 Demetrius Rd	6pm	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	19 Dec 7pm-8pm (1 st Rite), 20 & 21 Dec 9:30am-10am (1 st Rite), 22 Dec 8:50am- 9:30am (1 st Rite) & 23 Dec 5:15pm-5:45pm
RUSE: 43 Acacia Ave	6pm (Pageant 5:30pm) & 9pm <i>Syro-Malabar</i>	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am (Carols 8:30am)	19-22 Dec 9:30am-10:30am (1 st Rite) & 23 Dec 11am-12noon (1 st Rite)
TAHMOOR: Stratford Rd	7pm	Midnight & 9am	
THE OAKS: Merlin St		Midnight & 9am	Saturdays 11am (1 st Rite)
VARROVILLE: 193 St Andrews Rd	7pm	9am	15 Dec 7:30pm (2 nd Rite)

SHOALHAVEN

NOWRA: 20 North St	11:30am <i>Syro-Malabar</i> , 7pm & 10pm	8am & 9:30am	20 Dec 7pm (2 nd Rite)
BERRY: Albert St	9pm	8am	
BOMADERRY: Bunberra St		9:30am	
CULBURRA BEACH: Silvermere St	6pm	8am	
KANGAROO VALLEY: Moss Vale Rd	9pm		
SHOALHAVEN HEADS: Shoalhaven Heads Rd	6pm		
ULLADULLA: Green St	6pm (Outdoors, BYO chairs) & 9pm	8am & 10am	
SUSSEX INLET: Banksia St	6pm	8am	20 Dec after 8am Mass (1 st Rite)
VINCENIA: St George Ave	6pm & 8pm	8am & 9:30am	

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

BOWRAL: 2 Bendooley St	6pm & 11pm	9am	16 & 23 Dec 9:30am (1 st Rite) & 18 Dec 6pm (2 nd Rite)
BUNDANOON: Hill St		8am	
BURRAWANG: Church St	5pm		
MITTAGONG: Alfred St	8pm	7:30am	
MOSS VALE: 24 Garrett St	7pm	10am	
PENROSE PARK: 120 Hanging Rock Rd		English: Midnight (Carols 11:30pm), 9am & 11am <i>Polish: Midnight & 10am</i>	

"Priests, like parents, never retire from their calling."

BY DEBBIE GATES

Many of our readers would know Fr Doug Rheinberger from the time he spent as a parish priest at Dapto, Moruya, Picton and Thirroul, and as an assistant priest at the Wollongong, Nowra and Corrimall parishes.

Fr Doug recently appeared in a new video called *Caring for those who have cared for us*—which tells his story as a retired priest. The video was produced to support the recent *Bishop's Annual Appeal for Sick and Retired Clergy*.

Whilst Fr Doug retired in 2011, he still concelebrates the Saturday Vigil Mass at St John's Dapto, hears Confessions



when needed and enjoys visiting and looking after the spiritual needs of his neighbours. As Fr Doug says, "Priests, like parents, never retire from their calling."

Fr Doug is one of nine priests who are now retired and who are cared for by our Diocese through the provision of suitable accommodation, transport assistance and holistic health care.

Bishop Peter wishes to thank everyone who supported his recent Appeal. "Please be assured that your generous response helps me to ensure that clergy, like Fr Doug, will continue to have a dignified retirement. As the number of clergy nearing retirement age in our Diocese will double in the next five years, your practical support is very much appreciated and something for which I am very grateful."

This year \$65,300 has been raised. The video can be viewed and donations can still be made online at dow.org.au

Debbie Gates is the director of development and community engagement for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Getting Involved

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

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



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