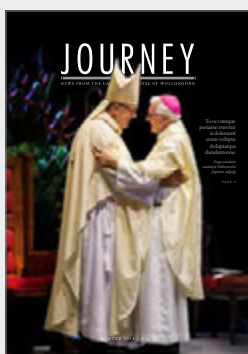


JOURNEY

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

An emotional
changing of
the guard as
Diocese enters
the “new”
life of Brian.

PAGE 6



COVER PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

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Editors

Daniel Hopper
Jude Hennessy

Graphic Design

Jeremy Yuen

Administration

Helen Bennett

Proofing

Daniel Hopper
Lorraine Tobin

SUBMISSIONS & ADVERTISING

Phone: (02) 4222 2400
Email: journey@dow.org.au

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CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
WOLLONGONG

PO Box 1239
Wollongong NSW 2500

Phone: (02) 4222 2400
Email: journey@dow.org.au



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FIRST impressions



So much has happened since the events depicted on the front cover of this magazine. I love this image of the unforgettable personal moment

when I was embraced and encouraged by Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham during my ordination. While these wonderful events are indelibly imprinted in my mind and heart, it has, in many ways, been a whirlwind four-month journey since becoming the bishop of Wollongong. As such, I thought it was important to share with you some of my first impressions and a little of what I have experienced so far in the Diocese.

In saying “yes” to becoming bishop, I have continued to trust in God’s plan for my life and vocation. But, there is always an element of loss at important points of transition in our lives. Certainly, I have experienced a type of loss in the move away from family and trusted friends. At the same time, my experiences and encounters since having come to this Diocese have been a source of great hope and excitement.

I have already met so many people as I travel new roads (for me) and visit parishes for the first time, meet parish and ministry leaders, attend dinners, meet key religious and political leaders, and attend openings, Masses and important events. While at times it is a bit of a blur, it has been quite wonderful.

I note the wonderful dialogue I have had with so many of our clergy—good men, committed to God, the Church and the people they pastor. For many of them, it is a different Church and society than when they first entered ministry. Yet, they continue to give so much, and their steadfastness in a time of turmoil—a time when it is tough to be a priest—is often inspiring.

I have been to a number of wonderful schools and cannot wait to visit more in coming weeks and months. It has been so heartening to meet quality, committed teachers, eager to nurture their own faith and that of the young people they teach and mentor. Speaking to them at their wonderful Education Mass (see Page 46) just one week after I was ordained bishop, I was buoyed by their energy and commitment. The same can be said of our hundreds of catechists who draw young people into the reality of God’s love and mercy in over 140 government schools.

I have been to four vibrant gatherings with almost all of our Catholic school Year 12 students, encouraging them to consider God’s purpose for their lives and to trust that God wants to journey with them. This, and the revolutionary *encounter* style of youth ministry happening in the Diocese, is seeing students being presented with the Gospel and invited to respond to God’s invitation in attractive and relevant ways. That has been exciting to witness up-close.

I have also been to number of parishes for Confirmation and have seen first-hand what can happen when schools and parishes combine to prepare students and their families to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I’ve seen and felt the hospitality of these places—eager to welcome and engage with all who come. I’ve seen growing attempts at outreach through initiatives such as *Alpha* and small *Connect* groups in parishes.

I have already had the opportunity to witness the wonderful work done by our social services agency, CatholicCare, at a recent function honouring their many volunteers. I have attended numerous meetings with people of passion and expertise, and have read planning documents from all of our major agencies with priority given to outreach, justice, service, renewal and evangelisation.

My experiences and encounters since having come to this Diocese have been a source of great hope and excitement.

Additionally, I have been graciously welcomed by Catholics and non-Catholics alike at community functions such as *The Illawarra Connection*, the *Wollongong Catholic Dinner Club* (see Page 53) and a thank you luncheon for supporters who helped stage my ordination and Bishop Peter’s farewell. Recently, I was also privileged to pray with 250 people from over 30 churches at the *Illawarra Prayer Breakfast* (see Page 48). I came away affirmed by the stories of how God and Christianity—in all of its works—makes our lives better and gives us purpose and direction.

I have seen the great commitment to quality training processes and the evolution of new standards and expectations for accountability that in turn points to a Church eager to come out of itself, to try new things, create a fresh culture, so that each member of the Church is able to contribute to the mission of making Jesus known and loved. Make no mistake, it is a deep relationship of love that Jesus is calling us into, as members of the Church. It is this encounter of the heart that has the potential to change everything and move us to embrace the sharing of our faith with others as a joy that brings life, rather than a duty.

In coming months, I will come to meet more of you as I move around the Diocese. As we journey to *Plenary 2020* (see Page 10), I trust that the pathways for dialogue will be graced and fruitful. Please pray for me as I promise to do the same for you. ■

Yours in Christ

+Brian Mascord

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
Bishop of Wollongong



REMEMBER WHO(SE) WE ARE

BY JUDE HENNESSY

I thought it was appropriate to begin this edition of *Journey* by affirming the incredible work done by the countless paid employees, volunteers and religious women and men in the Church, all seeking to serve broad sections of the Australian population. As you move through the pages of this magazine, you will see the dedication and service to the community demonstrated by so many in the Church. It is something that we need to always prayerfully reflect upon as we encounter the personal love and mercy of God, and, in turn, we love those who God brings into our lives.

In Australia, the Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health, community and aged care services, education and welfare.

Day in and day out, these people serve the faithful, the sick, the elderly, the young and the disadvantaged. Our churches, hospitals, schools and various social welfare organisations—acquired largely through the generosity of people like you and me over the past 200 years—allow so many people within our community to be cared for and nurtured. All of these dedicated people authentically live the Gospel and continue to support and nurture all-comers, utilising resources built-up and provided for by generations of people who have called themselves “the Church”.

As disciples of Jesus, we need to continue to discern what the Spirit is saying to us and embrace what it means to be authentic followers of Jesus, especially in the midst of the Royal Commission’s findings of tragedy and immense harm. We are called to be now—as much as ever before—salt and light, bearers of love, hope and justice.



Getting our hands dirty

Each day, the Catholic Church feeds, houses and clothes more people, cares for more sick and vulnerable people, visits more prisoners, and educates more people than any other institution on the face of the earth. The very essence of health care and caring for the sick emerged through the Church because of the value our faith places on the dignity of every human life. The contribution of the Church by authentic believers on a local, national and global scale remains phenomenal, in spite of our faults, inefficiencies and the tragedy caused by child sexual abuse.

In Australia, the Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health, community and aged care services, education and welfare.

It is one of Australia's largest non-government employers—running 68 hospitals, 414 nursing homes and 217 facilities dedicated to children's welfare. These facilities are for all-comers, with a special focus on the vulnerable. (The Archdiocese of Sydney recently released a great *YouTube* video on this which can be viewed at dow.sh/churchassets.)

As the largest non-capital city diocese in Australia, our own Diocese of Wollongong comprises 32 parishes across nine local government areas (including some of the fastest growing regions in Australia) and offers ministry to almost 200,000 Catholics, especially at the most important moments in their lives—at times of great sadness and times of great celebration.

In our Diocese, there are 46 Catholic schools educating over 25,000 students every year, and the demand is growing. There are six CatholicCare sites throughout the Diocese offering social services to nearly 10,000 people every year. We have 650 volunteer catechists teaching Catholic Special Religious Education to around 9,000 students in 140 government schools each week. Mass is celebrated in over 55 churches, in 20 languages for close to 20,000 people every weekend. There are over 20 chaplains working alongside our

“As disciples of Jesus
... we are called to
be now—as much as
ever before—salt and
light, bearers of love,
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youth, aged, disabled, prison, hospital, university and non-English speaking communities. Our Church boasts one of the largest and most extensive volunteer networks and is one of the region's biggest employers, with a staff of nearly 2,500 people.

A tough time to be Catholic

Matthew Kelly, in his New York Times bestselling book, *Rediscover Catholicism*, notes that, “The past few years have been a tough time to be Catholic.... we have forgotten our story, and in doing so, we have allowed the world to forget it as well.... Our history is not without blemish; our future will not be without blemish. But our contribution is unmatched, and it's needed today more than ever before.”

I agree. Within Catholic communities around the world you find people driven by a love of life, of family, of humanity, and you find these people making enormous contributions to their communities.

Rebuilding the trust within the community in the wake of the Royal Commission requires love and patience. Being advocates of the fullness of truth, justice and healing is paramount and will need to be prayerfully considered and authentically navigated. The *Plenary Council 2020* will certainly provide the opportunity for the honest conversations required to enable this to unfold with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Throughout that process, it is important we do not forget the fullness of our story and speak about the bad and the good, the human and divine.

Who we are in the Diocese

- 32 parishes across nine local government areas including some of the fastest growing regions in Australia.
- Almost 200,000 Catholics.
- 46 Catholic schools educating over 25,000 students every year (and growing).
- 6 CatholicCare sites offering social services to nearly 10,000 people every year
- 650 volunteer catechists teaching Catholic Special Religious Education to 9,000 students in 140 government schools each week.
- Masses celebrated in over 55 churches in 20 languages for close to 20,000 parishioners each weekend.
- Over 20 chaplains working alongside our youth, aged, disabled, prison, hospital, university and non-English speaking communities.
- One of the largest and most extensive volunteer networks and one of the region's biggest employers, with a staff of nearly 2,500 people.

Be encouraged

It is my hope that as you read through this edition of *Journey*, you will be heartened by the many wonderful things that are being done throughout our Diocese. I hope you are encouraged by the obvious ways so many members of your Church are embracing love of God and love of neighbour, and that it helps you to remember who you are called to be as a disciple, and who we are called to be as the Church. ■

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



new The life of Brian

**Diocese celebrates the ordination
of the fifth bishop of Wollongong**

BY DANIEL HOPPER

On Thursday 22 February 2018—the Feast of the Chair of St Peter the Apostle—the WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong was transformed into a cathedral as a congregation of 4,500 people witnessed one of the largest episcopal ordinations in Australian history—the ordination of Most Rev Brian Gregory Mascord as the fifth bishop of Wollongong.

Livestreamed to a global audience, the principal consecrator, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP of Sydney and co-consecrators, Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham of Wollongong and Bishop William Wright of Maitland-Newcastle, presided over the Mass of Ordination. They were joined by the apostolic nuncio in Australia, His Excellency Most Reverend Adolfo Tito Yllana, 34 Australian bishops

We look to our Bishop-elect to be a good man and a good Christian before all else, to model for us faith, hope, charity and the other virtues.

and 113 priests concelebrating the Mass; parishioners and families from all the diocesan parishes; principals, staff and students from more than 40 diocesan Catholic schools; staff and families from diocesan agencies and affiliated organisations; leaders of other churches and faiths; civic leaders in government and business, along with over 700 of Bishop Brian's wide circle of family, friends, parishioners and community members from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle where he had ministered since being ordained to the priesthood in 1992.

In his homily for the ordination, Archbishop Anthony, quoting St Augustine, said, “If as a bishop I feel tossed about in the open sea, as a Christian I find myself in safe harbour. Now Bishop Brian will have the benefit of many safe harbours of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven!

“We look to our Bishop-elect to be a good man and a good Christian before all else, to model for us faith, hope, charity and the other virtues. Happily, on his own account, Brian has been surrounded from childhood by ‘tremendous’ people such as his grandmother and beloved parents who’ve shown him how to recognise and respond to God in everyday life, expressing faith practically in service.”

Archbishop Anthony later said, “Like Francis of Assisi, we are called to rebuild the Church. That will require a teacher’s head, a spouse’s heart, and a shepherd’s soul, as your new vestments tell. But the



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER, ALPHONSUS FOK AND JEREMY YUEN

most important thing you will wear from tonight is the cross of Jesus Christ upon your heart.”

The new bishop has taken as his motto the words of St Paul to the Church in Thessalonica, “For all things give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). During his address to the congregation, Bishop Brian said, “These words are among the first existing words that were written after the death and resurrection of Jesus. They’re the words that I’ve chosen for my motto. I chose them 25 years ago when I was ordained a priest, and I choose them now because I believe in them. For every situation and every opportunity, we give thanks. Just as they were a challenge to the infant Church, learning to walk and navigate its way in a hostile world, so they remain a challenge for us today as we try and bring life to our world—life through the promise of the Gospel, a

Life can throw up many challenges—ones that can, at times, seem almost insurmountable.... But, here I am—overwhelmed, nervous, yet open to what the Lord has in store for me and for all of us. I am very conscious of the incredible trust that Pope Francis now places in me.

mission that we all share through our mutual Baptism.”

Directing his attention to his beloved and very proud parents, Ron and Margaret, who were present to share in this experience with him, Bishop Brian said, “I give thanks for the gift and

the presence of Mum and Dad, who brought me for Baptism and have been my first and my best teachers in the ways of faith.” One intensely, emotional moment during the ordination that brought many to tears was when Bishop Brian commenced his lap of the venue to bless the congregation.

Before he began blessing others, he first removed his mitre and knelt at the feet of his parents to receive their blessing. Reflecting on it all, Margaret Mascord said, “After the ceremony last night, we feel relieved and also overwhelmed at how beautiful it all was. It amazed me because you can’t believe it’s happening to you. This is Brian—that was very humbling.” Ron Mascord described the event as, “Something I never expected but we’ll all learn to cope with it ... I’m sure Brian will too.”

continued next page ►



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In preparing for the ordination, Bishop Brian said, “Life can throw up many challenges—ones that can, at times, seem almost insurmountable. When the apostolic nuncio rang me at the end of November with the invitation from the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to be the bishop of Wollongong, it all seemed totally insurmountable. But, here I am—overwhelmed, nervous, yet open to what the Lord has in store for me and for all of us. I am very conscious of the incredible trust that Pope Francis now places in me.”

The joyful singing and instrumental pieces—directed by Angela Quinn and Annette Griffin and performed by a 50-piece orchestra and 100-strong choir—were a standout feature of the

This was no triumphant Church on display. On the contrary, bishops, priests, religious and all the faithful gave witness to our belief that it is God’s Church into which we are called ...

liturgy, and this was not lost on Bishop Brian, who said during his address, “As a musician, I love you guys!” In addition to contributing to the music, students from diocesan Catholic schools also participated in the sprinkling rite and assisting the priests taking Communion to the congregation.

Due to the huge number of people in attendance, St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Wollongong was not large enough to cater for the ordination. Therefore—as was the case with Bishop Peter’s installation—a decision was made by the organising committee to hold the ordination in the WIN Entertainment Centre.

Event director and former general manager of the WIN Sports and Entertainment Centres, Mr Stuart Barnes, said, “The thinking was—if we couldn’t take the people to the Cathedral, then we would take the Cathedral to the people! So, the ‘Foley’ stained glass window and the two large ‘Michael Galovic’ icons that form the backdrop of the Cathedral were recreated as giant



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER, ALPHONSUS FOK AND JEREMY YUEN

banners at the WIN Entertainment Centre. It was a spectacular sight, helping to create a beautiful, sacred environment for such a holy occasion. We were also very grateful for the support of St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong, for their orchestra and providing us with their large altar, ambo and water bowl!"

Praise for the preparation and execution of the ordination was universal. One attendee, Fr Kevin Bates SM, parish priest at Holy Name of Mary Catholic Parish, Hunters Hill, wrote to his congregation, "This love for the Church was ever so gently and humbly evident in Wollongong where 4,500 people participated in the ordination of the new bishop of

Wollongong, Brian Mascord. The long, formal ceremony was woven through with a certain warmth and the belief that, in the good news of Jesus, we share the possibility for the healing of all our wounds.

"This was no triumphant Church on display. On the contrary, bishops, priests, religious and all the faithful gave witness to our belief that it is God's Church into which we are called, and it is only in God's own presence among us that trust and love can be restored.

"This was a most gentle celebration of a humble Church in need of healing and hope. The music, the prayers, the instructions given to the new bishop,

the homily, the civic welcome from Wollongong's Lord Mayor [Gordon Bradbery AM], and Bishop Brian's closing remarks, all spoke of a faith in a mystery ever so much deeper and broader than the narrow bounds of our frail human condition.

"One could almost imagine that we were sitting with the first disciples as they waited for the coming of the Spirit who alone could call them beyond their feelings of isolation and fear." ■

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



LISTEN TO WHAT THE *spirit* IS SAYING.

REVELATIONS 2:7

GETTING READY FOR PLENARY 2020

BY JUDE HENNESSY

At Masses on Pentecost Sunday 2018, parishes right around Australia—including in our own Diocese of Wollongong—prayerfully marked the official launch of *Plenary 2020* with a great deal of expectation and hope, including an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis.

Some parishioners were taken by surprise—knowing little or perhaps nothing at all about the fact that in 2017 the bishops of Australia sought permission to conduct a plenary council and that Pope Francis had approved the council in March of this year. Perhaps you are reading this article and thinking to yourself, huh? What plenary council? What's all that about? Well, read on, because the Australian Catholic Church is in official “plenary” mode and all of us are invited to reflect on the question: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?*

What is a plenary council and why have one?

Plenary 2020 will be the fifth plenary council in Australian history—the first since 1937 and the first to feature

I encourage all Catholics, whether devout or disillusioned, fervent or frustrated, to seize this opportunity to speak what is on their minds and in their hearts.

ARCHBISHOP
TIMOTHY COSTELLOE
Plenary Council 2020 President

women and lay people. Chair of the plenary council, Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, believes, “The council will be a unique opportunity for people to come together and listen to God in all the ways God speaks to us, and in particular by listening to one another as together we discern what God is asking of us at this time—a time when the Church in Australia is facing significant challenges.”

Described as a three-year journey of listening to God by listening to one another, the plenary council will be the highest possible formal gathering of the Church in Australia, and unlike a synod,

it has the power to make changes to its legislation and governance. Cultural reform of the Church is likely to feature prominently.

Pope Francis has endorsed the nomination of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe of Perth as the president of the plenary council. Archbishop Timothy hopes that the council will bring about a period of authentic renewal. “I encourage all Catholics, whether devout or disillusioned, fervent or frustrated, to seize this opportunity to speak what is on their minds and in their hearts,” he said.

Similarly, in various addresses to Church leaders, Archbishop Mark has urged that the Australian Church be conscious of the longer-term significance of the plenary council. “The world is watching this process and we can’t therefore afford to see the plenary council as merely significant for the Australian Church,” he said. “This will indeed help shape the direction of the universal Church as well.”

Who attends a plenary council and what will happen there?

Plenary 2020 will be held in two sessions to enable deep discernment, dialogue and

It is my hope that through patient dialogue and faith-filled discernment, the conciliar journey will confirm Catholics in Australia in a spirit of fraternal unity and missionary discipleship, thus enabling them to be a leaven of holiness, justice and reconciliation in today's rapidly changing society.

POPE FRANCIS
Apostolic Blessing (18 May 2018)

listening. The first session will be held in October 2020 in Adelaide and the second session will be held in mid-2021, likely on the East Coast.

"Plenary" refers to the council being attended by all "local [Catholic] churches" in Australia, that is, the geographical dioceses as well as other dioceses (eg, Military Diocese), Eastern Church eparchies and others of this nature. Altogether, Australia has 34 "local churches".

The delegates of the council sessions are leaders with particular roles in our local churches, falling into two categories—those who *must* be called, and those who *can* be called.

Those who *must* be called include bishops (diocesan, auxiliary and other bishops who have been given special functions in Australia), vicars general, episcopal vicars, some superiors and congregational leaders of religious orders, and some rectors of seminaries. Those who *can* be called to the council include lay people, clergy and retired bishops living in Australia at the time of the council.

All council delegates have a vote. Some have a deliberative vote, while others have a consultative vote. The deliberative voting is how the final decisions are made at the council. These deliberative decisions are forwarded to Rome to ensure they are consistent with the universal teachings of the Catholic Church and then the legislation becomes binding for the Catholic Church in Australia.

Others such as advisors and consultors can also be invited to the council as guests. Observers may also be invited. Anyone invited as a guest or observer does not have voting rights at the council.

How can we get ready for Plenary 2020?

Plenary 2020 facilitator, Lana Turvey-Collins, has been briefing gatherings of Church leaders about how all people—particularly those marginalised, vulnerable or distant from the Church—can be part of preparing for the plenary council. "The process of listening and dialogue will help form the agenda for the plenary council. All people are invited to share their story of faith, of life and of their experience of the Church," Lana said.

As individual parishes and communities in the Diocese, there are some simple but important things you can do in this initial phase of preparation for *Plenary 2020*. The best place to start is the plenary council website



plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au which provides great resources that will enable individuals and groups to:

- **Pray** for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we prepare for *Plenary 2020*.
- **Watch** the videos available to learn more about why we are having a plenary council and what we are doing to prepare.
- **Read** the articles available on the website to understand more about the significance of councils in the life of the Church.
- **Talk** about the future of the Church with your friends, colleagues and family. Ask questions about what matters to you and what you hope for the Church.
- **Subscribe** to the *Plenary 2020* e-newsletter (on the website) and stay up-to-date with the preparations and first steps as we all continue on the journey toward *Plenary 2020*.

In this present time—a time that many would describe as one of great turmoil and uncertainty—the Holy Spirit is moving and doing new things in the hearts and minds of the faithful. Be assured that the Diocese of Wollongong will embrace the strategies that are currently being developed by the *Plenary 2020* organisers and then establish opportunities for dialogue and listening. ■

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

BISHOP EMERITUS

Peter Ingham

*farewelled
in style*

BY DANIEL HOPPER

It has been a year of mixed emotions so far in 2018 as the Diocese has welcomed Bishop Brian Mascord to the fold whilst simultaneously enduring the sadness of farewelling our beloved Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham. In saying this, the multiple events around the Diocese over the past months honouring Bishop Peter have been anything but sad—more a celebration and thanksgiving for the wonderful man of God that he is.

Farewell Masses

There were four regional farewell Masses for Bishop Peter held around the Diocese in January and February 2018 as well as a diocesan schools farewell liturgy held on 9 February at Dapto (see Page 36). Bishop Peter presided and preached at each of the Masses and it provided a beautiful occasion for him to thank his flock for a final time. It was also a wonderful way for thousands of parishioners around the Diocese to say farewell to their beloved bishop.

Thank you to all the parishes in each of the regions for working so closely together to organise the liturgies and provide wonderful hospitality at each of the churches: St John Vianney, Fairy Meadow; All Saints, Shellharbour City; St Paul's, Camden; and Holy Family, Ingleburn. Bishop Peter was overwhelmed with emotion by all the love shown to him, especially the beautiful words of thanks that members of the laity and clergy spoke at each of the Masses and the spontaneous standing ovation that he received—and which lasted for over a minute—at Fairy Meadow.

Farewell dinner

On Monday 19 March 2018, Bishop Peter was honoured in style at *The Cube* (located at the Campbelltown Catholic Club) with over 500 guests in attendance from around the Diocese as well as



Bishop Peter's family and friends from throughout Australia. One of the guests present, Sr Maria Casey RSJ (president of the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand), said of the evening, "There was an atmosphere of joy and celebration despite it being a farewell. What happened there at *The Cube* was a wonderful example of what it is to be Church—a community, faith-filled, joyous, supportive, able to work and celebrate together."

Member for Camden Mr Chris Patterson MP, expressed similar sentiments in a recent *Private Members Statement* given to the NSW Parliament: "I am sure Bishop Peter will agree he has made lifetime friends and companionship. I was very well informed that Bishop Peter has an amazing sense of humour and is very well known for his joke-telling—unfortunately, many of them 'dad jokes.' That side of Bishop Peter showed he was a man of the people who was well loved and respected. His caring attitude and sincerity held him in good standing in the difficult situations he encountered over the years. The farewell dinner held to celebrate his retirement was supported by so many local businesses. It was wonderful. It was a privilege and an honour to be there to say farewell to the bishop."



As guests entered *The Cube*—walking a red carpet flanked by large images from Bishop Peter's life—Bishop Peter made sure he was there to shake the hand of, and welcome, every single guest.

Dean of St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, Fr Ron Peters, said grace and guests were then treated to a beautiful three course meal prepared by celebrated Australian chef, Mr Peter Sheppard—director of culinary development at the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

Several amazingly talented students from Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville, provided the pre-dinner and dinner music on the night, with acclaimed former Varroville student, Miss Chantelle Santos, performing a special solo rendition of *Ave Maria*.

Former diocesan chancellor, Sr Moya Hanlen FDNSC, and current chair of the Diocesan Finance Council, Mr Kieran Biddle, delivered touching tribute speeches. Dame Kathleen McCormack AM presented Bishop Peter with a gift and farewell cake.

Bishop Peter then responded with a warm and humorous address of his own. During the address, Bishop Peter said, "Tonight, I am here to thank you all for the terrific support and affirmation of my style of



PHOTOS: ALPHONSUS FOK, VIENNA MARIE AND DANIEL HOPPER

I have been absolutely blown away at the various farewells around the Diocese ... you have all given me a preview of what people might say at my funeral!

ministry. I have been absolutely blown away at the various farewells around the Diocese. I still have a lot of very touching letters to answer amid packing up and preparing to move.... I tend to only look at my mistakes, at what I have done badly, and what I have failed to do. But, you have all given me a preview of what people might say at my funeral! I think I have done nothing extraordinary except to keep being there....

"My motivation [as a bishop] came from a phrase in the Acts of the Apostles: 'They [Paul and Barnabas] put fresh heart into the disciples encouraging them to persevere in the faith' (Acts 14:22). It is my fervent prayer that despite my own

shortcomings, I have, by God's grace, put some fresh heart into people and encouraged them to hang in there as Catholic Christians."

In true Bishop Peter style, he finished off his speech by focusing on his successor, saying, "Let your new bishop be himself. Each of us is different and we see much further into the future when we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us."

One of Australia's most loved comedians, Mr Vince Sorrenti, was a brilliant master of ceremonies for the evening. The night was topped off by a wonderful musical set performed by renowned Australian opera singer and Sydney parishioner, Mr Mark Vincent, and his band. Mark received a standing ovation for his encore performance of *Nessun Dorma*.

One of the highlights of the evening was a surprise slideshow presentation of over 100 photos from Bishop Peter's life. You can watch the slideshow at dow.sh/slideshow. ■

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

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A person in a dark jacket and pants is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that winds through a hazy, mountainous landscape. The path is made of light-colored soil and small stones, contrasting with the darker, rocky ground on either side. The mountains in the background are shrouded in a thick, white mist or fog, creating a sense of depth and isolation. The overall tone is contemplative and solitary.

AN unlikely MESSAGE

Virtue and the Jordan Peterson phenomenon

BY PETER GILMORE

The lights dim on a sold-out auditorium packed with eager fans. When the tickets went on sale for the Australian tour, all the venues were sold out in an astonishing five minutes. And these are not bargain-basement prices—the premium seats will set you back \$150. So, who is this rockstar? What pop sensation is causing all this fuss? As he takes the stage, there's no fanfare or flashing lights. There's no band. He's going to speak and answer impromptu questions for three hours. That's it. That's the “show”, and people can't seem to get enough of it.

Dr Jordan B Peterson is an enigma in the modern age of short-lived attention spans and passing fads. For a solid four months, his book, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*, has been on most best-seller lists. Over the last few years, his university psychology lectures on *YouTube* have been getting millions of views and they're not introductory courses—they're dense, complex and, shockingly, life-altering. Perhaps, most surprising of all, is his 15-part biblical lecture series on the book of Genesis. Each lecture, which discusses the deep human significance of the stories contained within, clocks in at over two and a half hours, and despite not even identifying as a Christian, the average viewership is in the hundreds of thousands.



Why does any of this matter?

It matters because his central message is reverberating across the world like an ancient discarded drum rediscovered whilst scouring the junk heap of history—the junk heap that has swallowed up such crucial ideas as the power of forgiveness, the centrality of the family in society, and even the awful truth that we are all capable of doing terrible things given the right circumstances, the right environment and the right motivation.

What's the message? What is the drum beat that is calling the young and old, the educated and non-educated, the affluent and those who are struggling? It's simple. Clean up your room. Tell the truth, or at least, don't lie. Treat yourself like someone you are responsible for helping. Be precise in your speech. And, possibly most confronting of all, life is hard. Life is very hard, but we need to, in his words, "Pick up your damn cross and walk up the hill." Shoulder whatever burden you can and carry it. That, Peterson says, is "truly heroic". That is what gives life meaning.

An unpopular message to give. A hard message to receive. An even harder message to live.

Shoulder whatever burden you can and carry it. That, Peterson says, is "truly heroic". That is what gives life meaning.

The pursuit of virtue

But, this message isn't unique. For two millennia, these messages have been the song sung by the Church over the Catholic faithful and the world at large: "Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). And not just think about them like a car with its engine in neutral—all noise but no motion. We need to do something. Become the people God

created us to be. Our Church tells us, "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 1803).

Ultimately, "The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God" (St Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus*, 1: PG 44, 1200D). This sense of purpose is an echo of ancient Greek philosophy. Aristotle said that our purpose as human beings is happiness or fulfilment, and that is found in virtue.

To Aristotle, virtue was realising our potential. How can we know our potential if we aim only at where we are in our journey rather than where we could be?

continued on next page ►



◀ continued from previous page

The two great lies

We, with all our modern trappings and sophistications, suffer from the results of two insidious lies.

The *first* is that the unconditional love of God and being made in his image are incompatible with the need to pursue our best selves, or, as the Church would call it, “sainthood”. We give out participation awards, we remove the possibility of last place by declaring everyone a winner, and we refuse to say the hard things for fear of hurt egos and wounded pride. What is there left to do when you are already made perfect? It would seem nothing. I *just* have a bad temper. I *just* can’t help this vice or that. I *just* am who I am, which sounds eerily like God’s proclamation to Moses—I am who I am. Except, we aren’t God.

The *second* lie is that we have allowed ourselves to become infected with the moral relativism of post-modernist theory—“I have *my* truth, you have *your* truth, there is no *the* truth.” And under this motto, we have all sorts of justifications why some law, rule or teaching doesn’t apply to us—*my* truth obviously trumps *the* truth. We stay silent and we rationalise ourselves out of sharing our faith because, “This is good for me and what they believe is good for them.” But, didn’t Christ declare himself to be “*the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life”? (John 14:6) This doesn’t mean an arrogant, forceful and unloving evangelism. Quite the contrary. The truth that we are loved, called, saved and given the grace to pursue our purpose, should lead us to singing and dancing in the streets. As

To Aristotle, virtue was realising our potential. How can we know our potential if we aim only at where we are in our journey rather than where we could be?

C.S. Lewis said, “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*).

An unlikely audience

Many would think that 56-year-old Peterson’s rise to fame would be fuelled by an older generation, perhaps stuck in old ways of thinking, not adapted to the modern-day world. On the contrary, his largest audience is by far the typical university age person—young, not quite stepping into the responsibility of adulthood and finally discovering for themselves what living in the world looks like. This goes against every negative stereotype of the modern young person—lazy, not willing to shoulder personal responsibility, absorbed in self, and constantly bathed in the glow of some device or another. Archbishop Charles Chaput OFM of Philadelphia, recently wrote an article where he highlighted a letter he received from a parishioner in his diocese. This young parent wrote to the bishop, “We young people crave the truth and clarity of good teaching. On a secular level, this is evidenced by the meteoric rise

in popularity of Jordan Peterson. We crave the truth, no matter how blunt or difficult it is for us to swallow or for the shepherds of our flock to teach.” He concludes his letter by saying, “Many of us feel that we’re the rightful heirs of thousands of years of rich teaching, tradition, art, architecture and music. We young Catholics increasingly recognise that these riches will be crucial for evangelising our peers and passing on a thriving Church to our children. If the Church abandons her traditions of beauty and truth, she abandons us.”

The pursuit of perfect

As Catholics, we have so much to offer the world. The best of which is not the idea of being perfect, but rather, the pursuit of perfect—God. It’s the pursuit of the good, the true and the beautiful which the world is thirsting for. And, our beliefs as Catholics—hard as they are to live—are the living core of this. In the romantic comedy, *Keeping the Faith* (2000), Edward Norton’s character, Fr Brian, has this conversation with his friend, Rabbi Jake:

Rabbi Jake: Jews want their rabbis to be the kind of Jews they don’t have the time to be.

Fr Brian: Yeah, and Catholics want their priests to be the kind of Catholics they don’t have the discipline to be.

None of us are perfect. We all fall short. We all get it wrong. As St Teresa of Kolkata said, “God doesn’t ask that we succeed in everything, but that we are faithful.” As our mother, the Church sets a high bar for us in her teaching, as she should. Not to punish us, but, with God’s grace, to draw out the best in us and to bring the kingdom of God to Earth.

David and Goliath

Is Jordan Peterson right about everything? No, he’s human just like the rest of us. So, what can we learn from this phenomenon? Let us face down the giant, the Goliath, and like David, with God’s strength, be victorious! However, perhaps the discovery will be, the giant is me and the victor in this story is the person who God created me to be. ■

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

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Year of Youth in full swing in the Diocese

BY JESSICA SPARKS

The Australian bishops have put a call out to young Catholics to engage with the Church, celebrate and be celebrated in a declared *Year of Youth* from the beginning of Advent 2017 (Sunday 3 December 2017) to the end of Ordinary Time in 2018 (Sunday 25 November 2018).

Australian Catholic Youth Festival

Ten years on from hosting World Youth Day 2008, Sydney again played host to a national gathering of young Catholics, this time to launch the *Year of Youth* at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF).

From 7–9 December 2017, 351 students and 46 staff from Catholic secondary schools in the Diocese gathered at Sydney Olympic Park to experience large-scale concerts and liturgies, keynote speakers, and the incomparable “Hangin’ with Hilda” sessions.

The formative three-day program was full of smaller workshops, group sessions and Q&A discussions tackling a variety of issues and challenges in the lives of young Catholics in Australia—from indigenous spirituality to dating, from leadership in the digital world to being Catholic in a secular society. There was outdoor music and activities on offer, as well as a global village, virtual reality games, and a social justice centre with hundreds of Catholic agencies offering information, workshops and ways to help those in need.

Our Diocese led the charge with creative elements for the Festival, with Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) Education Officer Tim Hart winning the competition for official ACYF theme song, *Joyful Generation*, and then CEDoW students performing and teaching the rest of the nation’s

It was simply incredible to see the young pilgrims from the Diocese engage in their faith in such a charismatic, reverent and joy-filled way ...

thousands of pilgrims their actions to the song—a dance which quickly spread across the whole festival.

The event culminated in a pilgrimage from Milson’s Point, over the Sydney Harbour Bridge and to the Domain, where over 20,000 people gathered to take part in the festival’s final outdoor Mass.

CEDoW Youth Ministry Education Officer Joel Duval said the great sense of community and excitement at the event was palpable. “It was simply incredible to see the young pilgrims from the Diocese engage in their faith in such a charismatic, reverent and joy-filled way,” he said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ACBC: CYRON SOBREVINAS, GIOVANNI PORTELLI, ALPHONSUS FOK & DANIEL HOPPER

Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator Seth Harsh agreed, “ACYF was an amazing opportunity for young people all over Australia to be reminded that they are not alone in their faith, and that with their contribution, the Catholic Church can be an exciting, fulfilling, empowering and life-changing thing to be a part of.”

Youth ministry leadership retreats

ACYF set the tone for the *Year of Youth* which has continued here in the Diocese. Retreats for our schools’ youth ministry co-ordinators and youth ministry leaders (see Page 20) have already taken place in Term 1, as has a reconstructor event in February that saw all our ACYF pilgrims gather again, this time at Mount Carmel Catholic College in Varroville. Students relived their festival experience, shared memories, heard from our Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham and joined in a fantastic “Hangin’ with Hilda” session run by Sr Hilda Scott OSB herself.

Year of Youth—looking ahead

Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong has a fantastic rest of 2018 planned, including:

- Three *LIVE* events (lunchtime concert and in-school retreat) at every systemic Catholic secondary school in the Diocese (see Page 21);
- A day-long *LIVE Festival* in August featuring live music, workshops and activities, great food, inspirational speakers and special guests (see Page 17);
- Feast day celebrations at each systemic Catholic secondary school in the Diocese;
- A number of Year 6 Masses and Year 12 gatherings with Bishop Brian Mascord;
- World Youth Day 2019 formation days across the Diocese; and
- Winter sleepouts and spirituality days across the Diocese.

Joel and Seth said their hope for the *Year of Youth* is that young people “take up the challenge to enter into a relationship with God” and grow “through the practice of their faith in the everyday and through participating in the many initiatives run throughout the Diocese of Wollongong”.

“I wish for our young people—especially those who feel they don’t have a place in the Catholic Church or that the Catholic faith has nothing to offer them—that they will come to discover the transformative and life-giving power that can only come from a relationship with God,” Seth said.

“I also hope we see a continued growth and excitement about youth ministry in our Diocese and that all youth feel supported to journey deeper into their faith,” Joel added. ■

Jessica Sparks is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

Youth ministry leaders

EMPOWERED

by formation retreat

BY JESSICA SPARKS

In March 2018, over 70 students involved in youth ministry at each of our Catholic systemic high schools gathered at Stanwell Tops to participate in the Youth Ministry Leaders (YMLs) Formation Retreat.

The overnight retreat, run by the Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong team, was a unique opportunity for the students to step away from daily life and immerse themselves in understanding and engaging with the principles of youth ministry. The retreat has greatly assisted with the formation of this year's YMLs, furthering their spiritual development, enhancing their capacity as leaders, and strengthening their relationships with God and each other.

The two days provided quality time for students to hear from key leaders in the space and engage in youth ministry experiences that they can then recreate and share with others at their school. They were able to absorb the kind of knowledge, skills and practices they need to offer the leadership that will help other students connect to their faith too.

"Being a YML is a lot more than just presenting yourself as a faithful person to your community. It's leading by example," Jordan from Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville, said. Aidan, also from Mount Carmel, added, "It's taking the love that God has for us and trying to spread it around to the people we know—to make a difference in the world."

The event has also linked YMLs across our schools and allowed them to get to know and open up to each other—the beginning of solid foundations for a



PHOTOS: BETHANY PARRISH

It's taking the love that God has for us and trying to spread it around to the people we know, and try to make a difference in the world ...

diocesan youth ministry network, where these students feel supported in their work, both within their school and the Diocese.

A special highlight was the moving evening worship session which included singing, music, prayer teams and Reconciliation on offer. Students overwhelmingly enjoyed the night, describing it as "emotional, intense and powerful" with "such a good atmosphere" that was "really enlightening and opened our eyes and hearts".

Many students expressed gratitude for the affirming and empowering occasion of coming together, openly sharing their faith with others, and talking about their

relationship with God in a supportive environment. They took away a renewed pride and confidence in being Catholic and what that means to them, as well as a wealth of ideas on how to better express what they believe in within their communities and schools.

"The retreat was amazing!" Claudia from Holy Spirit College, Bellambi, affirmed. "It did much more than teach us to be YMLs. It taught us to not be afraid. It let some of us experience what it feels like to be touched by the Holy Spirit and it enabled us to feel more connected to God. The atmosphere was constantly filled with happiness and joy."

The YMLs have now taken everything they've learned at the formation retreat back to their schools to share with other students, so they may keep the enthusiasm for youth ministry alive and growing in our Catholic communities. ■

Jessica Sparks is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

the evolution of LIVE

BY SETH HARSH &
JOEL DUVAL

No, it's not pronounced "Liv" as in Liv Tyler—it's *LIVE* as in "lie", but with a "v". Now that we've got the pronunciation sorted, let's answer the second most popular question regarding this cutting-edge youth ministry initiative in the Diocese—Why call it *LIVE*?

What's in a name?

When deciding on a name for your baby, it's often the names you associate with naughty kids that you avoid, right? Why is this? Is it perhaps that we believe a name is more than merely a label? That maybe it speaks of something deeper—of character, of destiny, of potential or of substance. It was not without much careful consideration that the name *LIVE* was chosen for what is possibly the most exciting thing that has happened in youth ministry in this Diocese ... ever.

When we say that something is live, it can mean that it is full of life (a live human being), that it was not recorded digitally or otherwise (a live music performance), that it contains latent power (live wire, live match or live ammunition), or that a computer system has become operational. *LIVE* is all of these things and more. Ultimately, it refers to the life that Jesus Christ offers each person when he says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). This is what it means to be truly full of life—or *LIVE*.

What happens at *LIVE*?

LIVE has been running in our Catholic systemic high schools for about three

years now. In the past, secondary schools have had one to two *LIVE* events per year, but in 2018, each school will have three *LIVE* events each year.

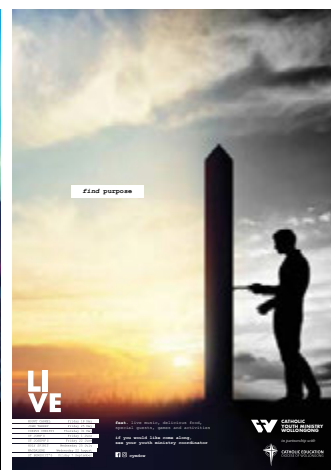
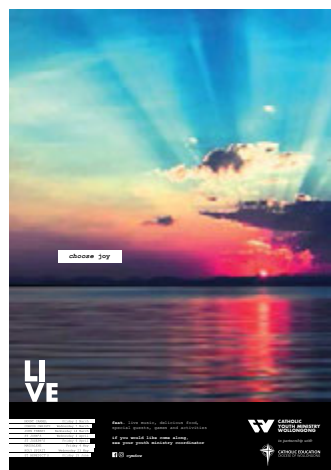
The aim of *LIVE* is to draw young people into responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic Church and to forge a strong sense of community and spirituality amongst them. One of the goals for *LIVE* is to create an environment for young people in our schools to encounter the person of Jesus Christ and take up his invitation to live their lives to the full in communion with him.

LIVE is run by Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong (CYMW) which is co-led by Seth Harsh and Joel Duval and also consists of Dom Cabrera, Bethany Parrish, Chantel Santos and Michaela Swadling.

On the day of *LIVE*, the school has a lunchtime concert where live music is performed by the CYMW team. The concert usually takes place on the CYMW mobile stage that is driven into the school playground or it is held in the school hall.

That same afternoon, there is a *LIVE* retreat which runs for three hours and is open to students in Years 7–12. Students gather together after school for afternoon tea (it's pretty epic) which is provided by CYMW and is served by the school's youth ministry leaders (YMLs). This is also a time for the young people to have a bite to eat, listen to some music and get to know one another.

Students then play a couple of competitive "Jimmy Fallon" style games where they can win a variety of prizes. We then move into the theme song for that night which is based on the theme of that particular *LIVE*.



One of the goals for *LIVE* is to create an environment for young people in our schools to encounter the person of Jesus Christ and take up his invitation to live their lives to the full in communion with him.

A guest speaker is then invited to break open the theme and how it relates to God and the lives of the young people gathered.

Students then separate into small groups led by their YMLs to discuss what they heard and what it means for them in the context of their lives.

Following small groups, everyone enters into a time of worship where CYMW lead the group in prayer and a number of powerful, modern worship songs.

LIVE finishes with dinner which is provided by the school youth ministry coordinator (usually pizza, woohoo!) At the end of each *LIVE*, students are informed of upcoming youth ministry events that they can get involved in and how to stay connected. The best way to stay connected and updated on what is happening in youth ministry in the Diocese is to follow us on Instagram: [@cymdow](#) ■

Seth Harsh is the youth ministry coordinator for the Diocese of Wollongong

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

A young boy with dark curly hair is swimming underwater in a pool. He is wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. He is giving a thumbs up with his right hand. Bubbles are visible around him. A blue and white lane line is visible in the background.

Launching into the

DEEP

**The inspirational story
of diocesan school staff
teaching refugees to swim**

BY JOSIE COOKS

Without a doubt, the Illawarra landscape is breathtaking. With its picturesque coastline and array of stunning beaches to choose from, residents in the area are indeed blessed. As an outsider who relocated here, I couldn't believe that locals not only had access to some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, but they also had an instant form of social inclusion by going to the beach. On any given day over summer, if you head to the beach you'll find people—old, young, families and couples—swimming and enjoying themselves.

Growing up in country Victoria, I spent my youth swimming in either dams or lakes. However, before moving to the Illawarra with my husband and young family, I could count on one hand the number of times I had been to the beach. I considered myself a relatively good swimmer, I spoke English and was fortunate enough to have my children in private swimming lessons. But, in those early years after we relocated, every time my children asked me to take them to the beach so they could be with their friends, I dreaded it. I was unfamiliar with beach culture, I had little understanding of rips, and I initially found the whole experience overwhelming. But, I knew I had to

take them or they faced the possibility of being socially isolated from their peers over summer.

According to the recent *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report*, 291 people drowned in Australia during 2017. Nearly 70% of those drownings took place in coastal locations, with people born overseas making up 40% of that statistic. For people new to the area, particularly those of non-English speaking backgrounds who haven't grown up around water or have never had the opportunity to learn how to swim, living in a coastal area with a young family would be challenging. In recent years, the Illawarra has experienced an influx of refugees relocating to the area, many of whom have come from refugee camps with little access to water, let alone an ocean to swim in.

After striking up a friendship with a newly arrived refugee family who had enrolled their children at Good

**291 people drowned in
Australia during 2017.
Nearly 70% of those
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up 40% of that statistic.**

Samaritan Catholic Primary School in Fairy Meadow, Rebecca Coll, a young staff member at the school, learned the family had never been to the beach. When questioned why, they admitted they were too afraid to go because they couldn't swim. Persuading the family to come to the beach with her, Rebecca quickly discovered they had very little idea of what to do at the beach, let alone any water safety awareness.

Knowing refugee families would find it difficult to afford private swimming lessons, along with the fact there were no specific programs aimed at teaching

adult migrants and refugees about water safety awareness, Rebecca decided to take matters into her own hands and help make the transition for refugees into our coastal community a little easier. With the help of colleagues, Rebecca started a refugee swimming program which has run over the past two summers at the Wollongong Continental Pool.

Although Wollongong Council were supportive of the initiative and gave approval for the program, there was a stipulation that everyone who participated had to wear swimwear to access the pool. This stipulation created a number of problems due to the fact that nobody participating in the lessons owned swimwear. Overcoming that issue, the program then faced another. Rebecca said, “The mothers were not used to wearing swimmers in public. It took six weeks for the mothers to overcome their fears and fully participate in the program. It was a huge achievement when they could finally stand up in waist-deep water. Their fear highlighted that if something happened to one of their children at the beach, they wouldn’t be of any help to anyone who needed rescuing because they were so frantic themselves.”

While the mothers slowly adapted to the idea of learning to swim, the children took to the water straight away and loved it. “The children became so enthusiastic about learning and so confident in their swimming ability, that by the end of summer, every time they came to the pool they arrived with extra swimming apparatus, whether it be snorkels, flippers or goggles,” said Rebecca.

The swimming program has had great success—five children in the older group can now swim a full lap of the continental pool, the pre-schoolers are able to jump in the water and make their way back to the edge of the pool, and five out of the six mums can now float and stay buoyant in the water.

The program began with three swimming teachers and three volunteers from Good Samaritan, Nazareth Catholic Primary School, Shellharbour City, and Holy Spirit Catholic College, Bellambi, who supported five mums and 10 children.



PHOTOS (ABOVE): REBECCA COLL

What started as a water awareness and swimming program, developed into one of self-confidence and social inclusion for families unable to access out-of-school activities for their children.

Through word of mouth, the good news spread quickly and it wasn’t long before the numbers grew, with 40 people participating in the last swimming lesson. The program is not just being accessed by refugee families with children enrolled in diocesan Catholic schools—it has also been accessed by families in the wider community.

What started as a water awareness and swimming program, developed into one of self-confidence and social inclusion for families unable to access out-of-school activities for their children. The program also encourages families to use community facilities, with a number of families now accessing the pool by themselves. Rebecca said, “I’ve had the privilege of witnessing the effect the swimming program has on the lives of these displaced people. As I watched the women floundering around in the

cold water, I couldn’t help but admire their courage. This group of mothers understood the importance of learning this new skill and the difference it would make in their children’s lives. They were able to put their fears aside and accept the challenge to travel the paths of their lives with courage and strength.”

When asked, Rebecca was quick to say that all the hard work has been worth it: “The older children are now on boogie boards in the ocean, and while the mums are still plodding along, I am now confident that if anything happened to one of their children, they would now have the ability to act, whereas before, if they tried to help or step foot in the water, there would have been a second person drowning.”

For the program to continue and be sustainable, Rebecca needs to engage the services of more volunteers. “When the numbers grew to 40, along with the range of ages, we could only do supervision, rather than teach people how to swim.” If anyone is interested in assisting with this program to ensure its ongoing success, please contact Josie Cooks on (02) 4253 0836 ■

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

We continue our series of profiling the many volunteers in our Diocese who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Dame Margaret McEntee OAM (known to all as “Peg”) resides in the Illawarra region of the Diocese and is a member of St Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish (part of the Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong pastoral region.)

BY DEBBIE GATES

Peg was a dance and physical culture teacher and a catechist in Warrawong when she met her husband, Ron. With their young family, they moved to The Oaks in 1966 and became involved in parish and community life. Now in retirement, Peg and Ron live in Wollongong.

While in The Oaks all those years back, Peg joined the parish branch of the *Catholic Women's League Australia* (CWLA) (cwlawollongong.org.au), the *St Vincent de Paul Society* (SVdP) and the parish liturgy and social committees. Peg has also served on the *Diocesan Committee for the Aged*, *Diocesan Council for Catholic Women*, SVdP's *Compeer Program* and the Australian Catholic Bishops *Commission for Priestly Life and Ministry*. Peg was also on the organising committee for the *Beatification of Mary MacKillop*.

When not busy with Church matters, Peg involved herself in various school, sporting and community organisations. She co-founded *Meals on Wheels* in The Oaks region and—drawing on her passion for dancing—trained debutantes and their partners for the local community ball for 40 years. Peg was the first woman to serve on the boards of *Carrington Aged Care* and *Southern Cross Care*.

On the international stage, Peg has done an amazing amount of work advocating for women's issues. She has represented CWLA at two *Pontifical Council of the Laity* conferences in Rome. She was also a delegate at the now historic *Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace* convened by the United Nations in 1995 in Beijing, China. Following this, Peg represented CWLA on six occasions at the *United Nations Commission for the Status of Women* (UNCSW).



It was there that my eyes were opened to what we could do as an organisation to advocate for children, women and families, and how I could make a meaningful contribution to this.

Very recently, Peg was awarded a papal honour—*Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great*—by Bishop Brian Mascord at St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Wollongong in recognition of her personal service to Church and her excellent example to the community. On the same day, she was also installed as the president of *Australian Church Women NSW Unit*—an organisation that seeks to unite Christian women across denominational boundaries to promote peace, understanding and unity through faith and love in God.

When I met Peg, I commented on her impressive CV and asked her what she is most passionate about now? Peg singles out the Catholic Women's League, where she is currently the international secretary for CWLA—NSW.

Peg, how and why did you become involved with CWLA?

I became involved with CWLA when we moved to The Oaks parish. Being very new to the district and parish, and with small children, I was missing my family, feeling lonely and seeking some company connected to my faith life.

And it appears you have never looked back!

So many opportunities have come about because of my membership of CWLA.

I was asked to be the parish representative at the diocesan level for CWLA. It was there that my eyes



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

were opened to what we could do as an organisation to advocate for children, women and families, and how I could make a meaningful contribution to this.

When I mentioned to my husband, Ron, that I wanted to become more involved with CWLA at a policy and representative level—something that would require me to do some travel—he simply encouraged me, reassuring me that he and the family would manage when I was away.

“Some travel” seems like an understatement! What was your key “takeout” from your international experiences?

At the UNCSW meetings, of the 12 critical areas of concern identified at the Beijing conference, there were two areas I couldn’t address because of who I am and what I represented. My mantra became, “Let’s focus on the many things we can agree and work on, rather than the few we can’t.”

Who inspires you?

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop has been, and continues to be, my strength.

What is on your wish list?

I will limit this to three wishes!

- I want to see young families in our churches again. As a mother, grandmother and great grandmother, I have so many concerns about how we, as a Church, are not meeting their faith needs now. I want to see our Church come alive for them. We are living in a changing society and dare I say I think we need to look at changing the model of “Church”. I pray that the *Plenary Council* to be held in Australia in 2020 will go a long way to addressing this.
- Like most community organisations, CWLA membership is in decline and plans are underway to manage its inevitable cessation. Joining the Catholic Women’s

League gave me the wonderful opportunity to witness the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Gospel of Jesus in a practical and exciting way. I hope that in the future there will be a version of the CWLA for women like you Debbie!

- To “let go and let God”—something a person like me needs to be reminded of every day.

Do you have a “God” moment you would like to share?

The first day of building the *Mary MacKillop Aged Care* facility at Carrington Care in Camden. When my mother died, I initiated the formation of a community committee which joined Carrington Aged Care to establish an aged care facility in the Camden area. This came about because my mother needed 24-hour nursing care and it was extremely hard to find accommodation for her anywhere at that time. I had no idea of the obstacles we would face. Eventually, with funding from the Australian Government, other fundraising and local belief in the project, it finally happened.

From the beginning, I had decided that such a facility would be named in honour of Mary MacKillop. This decision certainly raised Mary’s profile in the local area, and through constant petitions to Mary, hard work, sweat and many tears, we eventually found ourselves watching the first machines begin to level the ground to build the facility. That first day was a very emotional day for me.

How does it feel to become a Dame?

I was shocked when I was advised! Can I be humble and proud at the same time? The journey I am on would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of Ron and my family.

The interview comes to an end. But, as we say our farewells, I have thought of one more question. So I ask:

Peg, how would you describe faith?

After some silence, Peg says, “Faith is a gift.” Emotion then fills Peg’s eyes. Mine too. ■

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

MILTON COUNTRYSIDE

SETS THE SCENE
FOR HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS



BY JESSICA SPARKS

On Good Friday, the entire Church fixes her gaze on the cross at Calvary. For the St Mary Star of the Sea Parish in Milton, their view of the cross is complemented by rolling, green farmland surrounds, the sun shining down on a white church standing strong atop a hill; behind it, a backdrop of blue sky and beautiful southern NSW escarpment.

This stunning outdoor setting was the scene for the most beautiful of Holy Week celebrations, attracting not only the communities of St Mary Star of the Sea, Milton, Holy Family, Ulladulla and St Patrick's, Sussex Inlet, but an abundance of visitors from out-of-town and as far as Sydney too, who travel especially to Milton to join together in this particularly memorable commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion.

"It's become one of the most anticipated ceremonies of the Easter calendar, our Stations of the Cross led by the students of St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Parish Primary School in Milton," the school's religious education coordinator, Simon Kinch, said.

"Each year, it is a very powerful experience to see the young people of the parish take on such an important role and to help lead the adults towards a deeper engagement with their own faith."

Over a third of the school's students participated in the re-enactment, all dressing up as people of Jesus' time and involving themselves in the 14 stations. The younger children enjoyed being members of the crowd in each scene, while Years 5 and 6 students took on larger roles. Those playing key characters prepared for weeks in advance to ensure a seamless performance for their school, parish and wider community.

Boy School Captain Jack Richards said he was honoured to have played Jesus: "It was a great experience. It was really special for my Mum to see me take on that role for the school community. It was hot and hard work, but it was definitely worth it."

Girl School Captain Ellie Fitzpatrick was one of the women greeted by Jesus: "It felt like I was part of something important because Good Friday is such a significant part of the Church year. Lots of people come to Milton because they like watching our Stations of the Cross."

The moving outdoor re-enactment allowed the faithful gathered to make a spiritual pilgrimage to the pivotal scenes of Christ's suffering and death. Children, parents, teachers and parishioners alike walked together with deep devotion and reverence.



PHOTOS: DEAN DAMPNEY—CLOUDFACE PHOTOGRAPHY

Parish priest, Fr Michael Dyer, enhanced the congregation's reflections by making meaningful connections between each station and the challenges we face in modern society. In acknowledging the Church's *Year of Youth* in 2018, Fr Michael made specific mention of the struggles faced by our young people in Australia.

The annual tradition is a wonderful demonstration of the close relationship between the parish and school and further highlights the power of Holy Week ceremonies to remind us how blessed we are and the gratitude we owe Jesus Christ for giving his life on Good Friday so that we may receive the greatest gift of all—salvation. ■

Jessica Sparks is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.



Heightened potential at the peripheries

BY FR MICHAEL DYER

"There is a tension between the centre and the periphery.... We must get out of ourselves and go toward the periphery" (Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio to the pre-conclave *General Congregation of the Cardinals*, March 2013).

I muse often day and night (*cf* Psalm 63:6) about how, as a missionary Church, we might reach out in contemporary ways to people who no longer participate regularly at Mass and/or in other parish/diocesan initiatives. How do we creatively embrace *peripheral* Catholics who are receptive to this embrace? How do we re-engage with people on, or beyond, the margins, especially at a time when our Church is in a deep crisis. Rather than simply viewing this crisis as a dangerous time—which in fact, it is—how might we envisage it as a time of heightened potential? How do we empower our *peripheral* sisters and brothers in Christ to reclaim passionately their Catholicity—and the *One* who is Catholicism's Sacred Heart? In recent times, I have witnessed heightened potential surrounding *peripherals* including: 200 people who gathered in Milton on Good Friday to celebrate an outdoor Stations of the Cross ritual. Another 200 people participated in a Easter *Son-rise* Mass at Mollymook Beach. Later that same day (*cf* Luke 24:13), several hundred well-wishers waved enthusiastically at their Catholic priest during the *Blessing of the Fleet* parade in Ulladulla. Eight days later (*cf* John 20:26), 28 of the faithful—including some *peripherals*—gathered for a home Eucharist at Bawley Point.

Other graced encounters and conversations have taken place with *peripheral* Catholics and others at local cafés and shopping centres, a two-day conference for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school support personnel, a spirituality day for high school staff, ANZAC Day ceremonies, a local restaurant and soup kitchen which provide meals for the vulnerable, plus hospitals, nursing homes, children's Masses, sacramental preparation programs, baptisms, weddings and funerals.

All of these across-the-board encounters were sacred moments between this priest and his regular and *peripheral* parishioners. Let us pray for the grace to remember that we are all called in distinctive ways to respond to the Great Commission of Jesus to "go forth [especially to our *peripheral* Catholics] and make disciples" (*cf* Matthew 28:19). To do so we must courageously and creatively "put out into the deep" (Luke 5:4). We must be willing to leave behind our comfort zones in order to reach those who, like us, need the good news of Jesus to illuminate our respective lives. As we strive to respond to the universal call to holiness proclaimed by *Vatican II*, let us, "See the entirety of our life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognising the signs that God gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received" (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, § 23; *cf* *Evangelii Gaudium*, § 20, March 2018). ■

Fr Michael Dyer is the resident priest of the South Coast parish of Milton incorporating St Mary Star of the Sea, Milton, St Patrick's, Sussex Inlet, and Holy Family, Ulladulla.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

BY ANNA TYDD

PSCPT membership

The diocesan PSCPT meets to discuss individual cases in the Diocese as well as overall strategy and policy development. The team consists of Bishop Brian Mascord, the directors of CatholicCare and Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, and subject experts, including Dame Kath McCormack AM—former member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and current member of the national Catholic Implementation Advisory Group.

Training and Education Program

A key focus of the Royal Commission's final report and recommendations was on the importance of ongoing and regular training and education for members of organisations who work with children (see also Professional and Clinical Supervision Program). Endorsing our commitment to the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 1—child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture*, the PSCPT has designed and implemented a Training and Education Program that requires each person in positions of leadership within the Diocese to undertake a minimum of 10 units of training per year. We have also extended the training program by invitation to all congregational schools and other congregational entities that operate within the Diocese.

Diocesan Child Protection and Safeguarding Manual

The PSCPT is developing a diocesan Child Protection and Safeguarding Manual. It will be an interactive online educational tool not just limited to compliance, but also designed to assist in the continuing development of cultural change within the Diocese to ensure best practice. The manual will underscore the Diocese's commitment to the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 10—Policies and procedures to document how the institution is child safe*.

Parish Safeguarding Program

The Diocese is developing a parish Safeguarding Program which will include the appointment of two safeguarding officers in each parish cluster. The program will be piloted in several parishes in the Diocese in late 2018. Safeguarding officers will be trained to be the contact persons within the parish for complaints/concerns, and co-ordinating education and training for parishes. This program is aligned with the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 3* (see above at the Annual Report) and *Child Safe Standard 1—Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture*.



The diocesan Professional Standards and Child Protection Team (PSCPT) is driving a safe institutional culture across all diocesan entities.

The PSCPT's key function is to improve individual and organisational capacity to understand risk, recognise harm and take action for effective prevention, reporting, response, support for victims and survivors, acknowledgment and just redress. Embedded in its commitment is the Royal Commission's recommended *10 Child Safe Standards* (Download at: dow.sh/RCChildSafe).

Anna Tydd is the director of professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Professional and Clinical Supervision Program for clergy

The PSCPT has designed a Professional and Clinical Supervision Program for clergy (and eventually other relevant Church personnel). The Royal Commission focused on the importance of confidential and focused professional supervision for those in religious ministry to ensure they are provided regular support and can engage in reflective practice. This is in accordance with the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 7—staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual training and education*. The program will provide for both group and individual professional and clinical supervision sessions.

Annual Report 2018

The Royal Commission's Child Safe Standard 3 requires that children and communities are informed and involved. Our 2018 Professional Standards and Safeguarding Annual Report will form part of our commitment to this standard. The annual report will report on data with respect to reportable conduct matters relating to children as well as profiling children displaying sexually harmful behaviour and professional misconduct or unlawful behaviour against adults. It will also report on diocesan professional standards and child protection initiatives and programs.

Professional Standards and Safeguarding website

The Diocese is developing a new website which will be instrumental to the work of the PSCPT. It will ensure that both children and adults have access to professional standards and child protection online tools to ensure transparent diocesan practice. The webpage for children will be piloted with them in order to obtain relevant and honest feedback in accordance with the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 2—children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously*. A key focus of the webpage will be educational tools to support and educate children as to how they will engage safely online, specifically responding to the Royal Commission's *Child Safe Standard 8—physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur*.

Clergy care and support

Robert Fitzgerald AM—a commissioner on the Royal Commission for five years—will be presenting at an upcoming *clergy in-service* in July 2018. He will explore the current climate with respect to clergy and religious in relation to their living and ministering. Robert will talk on ways in which clergy and religious can be supported, both personally and professionally, within the current climate. Robert will also navigate the issue of structure and governance from a clergy or religious perspective.



CREATING A *safe* CHURCH FROM WITHIN

**DIOCESE TO HOST TWO
DAYS WITH THE VATICAN'S
FR HANS ZOLLNER SJ**



BY ANNA TYDD

On Friday 31 August and Saturday 1 September 2018, the Diocese of Wollongong—along with various other Catholic Church authorities—is hosting a two-day conference of presentations by Fr Hans Zollner SJ at *The Cube*, Campbelltown Catholic Club.

Fr Hans is regarded as one of the leading church experts in the field of safeguarding of minors and on areas concerning sexual abuse. Over the two days, he will address the most significant issues facing the Catholic Church today with respect to harmful behaviour, including the theological and spiritual implications arising from the abuse crisis and its impact on members of the Church, and how the Church needs to change to survive, flourish and ensure the safest place for the most vulnerable.

Fr Hans has been a member of the pope's *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* since 2014 and head of the *Centre for Child Protection* at the Gregorian University in Rome. He is a German theologian and psychologist. Since 2003, he has taught at the *Institute of Psychology* at the Gregorian and has been the academic vice rector of the Gregorian since 2010. He has been a member of the Jesuit Order since 1990.

The conference will be structured on both days with a focus on interactive workshops and participant engagement on the various topics which will be introduced by Fr Hans.

FRIDAY 31 AUGUST 2018 (10am–5pm)

The Friday presentation is primarily for Church personnel including child protection and safeguarding professionals, principals, teachers, social welfare leaders, clergy, religious, and other employees and volunteers.

It is hoped participants will gain:

- An understanding of the current workings and view of child protection internationally with specific reference to the Holy See and the relative position of the Australian Catholic Church;
- Insight into the spiritual and theological impact of the child sexual abuse crisis;
- An ability to identify the key theoretical and practical changes to make a child safe organisation; and
- The ability to equip Catholic Church leadership with the necessary tools to create and maintain a safe institutional culture both at an individual and collective level.

SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2018 (10am–3pm)

The Saturday presentation is primarily for victims and survivors of abuse and their family and friends, together with their advocacy and support groups. The presentation will also focus on issues that continue to face lay members of the Church in light of the child sexual abuse crisis, particularly parishioners.

It is hoped participants will gain:

- An ability to identify and understand how the history of child sexual abuse and other harmful behaviour has impacted, and continues to impact on faithful communities worldwide;
- An understanding on how victims and survivors of harmful behaviour can be best supported with specific reference to work being undertaken internationally;
- An understanding of the role of the faithful in the creation and continuation of clericalism; and
- An understanding of the ways that faithful members of the community can assist the transformation of religious communities to ensure they are child-safe.

Cost

The cost for the Friday presentation is \$100 per person and free for the Saturday presentation (includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.)

For more information

To book online and get more information on the event (including transport and accommodation options), visit hanszollner.dow.org.au or contact Anna Tydd on rsvp@dow.org.au or (02) 4222 2405. ■

Anna Tydd is the director of professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong.

ROYAL COMMISSION RELEASES FINAL REPORT

BY ANNA TYDD

In December 2017, the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* published its final report, following separate reports on *Working with Children Checks* (August 2015), *Redress and Civil Litigation* (September 2015), and *Criminal Justice* (August 2017), as well as numerous case study reports.

Two case study reports—Case Study 43 (Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle) and Case Study 44 (Dioceses of Armidale and Parramatta/Fr Farrell)—are yet to be published because of ongoing criminal proceedings. In addition, some material throughout the reports of Case Study 28 (Ballarat), Case Study 35 (Archdiocese of Melbourne) and the final report, has been redacted for the same reason. It will be up to the government to publish unredacted versions of these reports after relevant criminal proceedings are concluded.

The final report contains a preface and executive summary plus 17 other volumes—each devoted to a particular topic. Volume 16 is specifically devoted to religious institutions, including the Catholic Church, and is 2,524 pages long.

The final report contains 189 recommendations, of which 21 recommendations are directed specifically at the Catholic Church, nine are directed to other specific religious organisations, and 27 are directed to all religious institutions in Australia. The *Working with Children Checks* report contains 36 recommendations, the *Criminal Justice* report contains 85 recommendations and the *Redress and Civil Litigation* report a further 99 recommendations. There are numerous recommendations covering various issues that are directed at the Catholic Church, religious organisations and religious institutions in Australia.



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Their work is necessary to meet the expectations of the wider Australian community as well as ensuring that Catholic institutions and communities are a place of transparency and safety for all individuals.

The Royal Commission conducted 8,000 private sessions with survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and, with the consent of the survivors concerned, has published summaries of approximately 4,000 survivor narratives on its website, of which 1,316 reference the Catholic Church.

Implementation Advisory Group

An *Implementation Advisory Group* (IAG) has been established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia in response to the Commission's final report. Their role is to play a critical part in monitoring and implementing both the Commission's and the Truth, Justice and Healing Council's recommendations. Their intention is to advise on the

developments within the Church regarding leadership and culture.

Their work is necessary to meet the expectations of the wider Australian community as well as ensuring that Catholic institutions and communities are a place of transparency and safety for all individuals. The IAG will work together with *Catholic Professional Standards Ltd* and the *National Redress Reference Group* to monitor the progress of all reforms in the Church. They will focus on the recommendations mentioned above, in addition to the following areas: relationship with and spiritual support of survivors, governance and church culture, child-focused standards, the national redress scheme and handling of abuse complaints. Dame Kathleen McCormack AM—who is also on our diocesan Professional Standards and Child Protection Team—is a member of the IAG. Kath was the founding director of CatholicCare in the Diocese and a former member of the *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* set up by Pope Francis. We take this opportunity to congratulate Kath on her appointment—the IAG and the Diocese is very fortunate to have her! ■

Anna Tydd is the director of professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong.

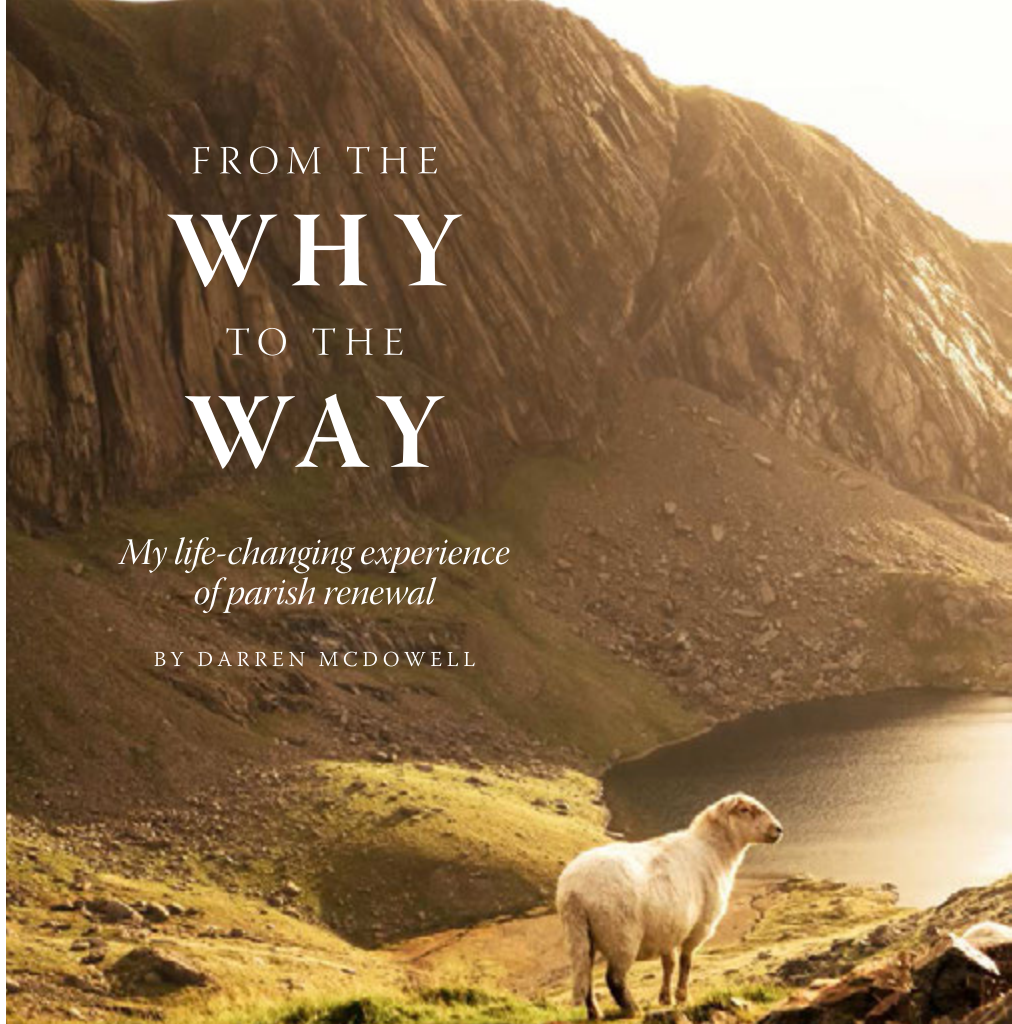
Over the past couple of months, the Diocese's coordinator of evangelisation and discipleship, Darren McDowell, has been travelling North America on a sabbatical prior to joining three diocesan clergy at the *Divine Renovation Conference 2018* in Nova Scotia, Canada, on 11–12 June 2018. The conference brings together leaders from around the world to explore principles and tactics of parish renewal.

During his sabbatical, Darren has been visiting a number of parishes that are successfully embracing the principles of parish renewal to see how they do it—writing a blog along the way. As you will see from his entry relating to his visit to the *Prince of Peace Catholic Church*, the experience has been life-changing.

FROM THE WHY TO THE WAY

*My life-changing experience
of parish renewal*

BY DARREN MCDOWELL



15–22 MAY 2018

Prince of Peace Church, Flowery Branch (Atlanta), Georgia

This past week has been another engaging and thought-provoking opportunity with a large and vibrant parish. This parish is a little smaller than St Ann's that I visited last week, yet, still very large by our standards, with some 70 ministries and a large Hispanic community. The week was full of gatherings and meetings. Rather than go through each of these gatherings in turn, for this post I'd like to focus on some of the key themes that occurred across all these gatherings.

Firstly, developing a clear vision and “game plan” for forming missionary disciples followed by a complete and holistic commitment to its fulfilment. The parish priest, Fr Eric Hill, and his leadership team, in implementing *The Way*—their name for the game plan as outlined in *Divine Renovation*—have made a concerted effort to ensure that all processes and activities in the parish support people moving along this pathway and fit within the framework of the game plan and parish vision.

Their parish vision is (capitals theirs):


“We invite all people to encounter Christ and live as disciples, in an intentional way. *The Way* is a journey that begins with *Alpha*, where we encounter Christ, *Connect* with him in community, are *Equipped* by Scripture and Catholic Tradition, *Serve* him in others, and *go* make disciples of Jesus.”

The effect of this “all-in” attitude is creating energy, enthusiasm and a rallying point for all parishioners. It was enjoyable meeting Michelle, their onboarding and engagement coordinator. Working with the reception volunteers and others, she personally and joyfully assists new and regular parishioners enter into *The Way* and begin walking the journey. The first step is being part of *Alpha*, followed by ongoing participation in all the other elements of their *Way* of forming

missionary disciples. Check out their website (popfb.org) which gives a flavour of their spirit and energy.

Such commitment to vision and mission enables them to be intentional about leadership, and leadership discernment, because they are committed to a course of action which will bring the vision and mission to fulfilment. All their leaders are required to have been through *Alpha*, be participating in a *Connect* group, and have done at least one or two *Equip* (adult faith formation) programs. Of course, they also require leaders to do the relevant child protection and safeguarding training—akin to what the Diocese is implementing in relation to accreditation and safeguarding.

Lest we think this is too “business like”, let us consider Jesus, as that is what they are doing through their “lead like Jesus” process. Luke's Gospel, you'll remember, tells how Jesus “resolutely took the road for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). Jesus was committed in an “all-in” manner in vision and mission, he was intentional about the formation of his leadership group, he coached and enabled them to serve in mission whilst he was still with



Imagine if, rather
than “counting sheep”,
we focused all our
attention on
“feeding sheep”.

**Jesus was committed in an
“all-in” manner in vision and
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about the formation of his
leadership group ...**

them, and he enabled them through the Holy Spirit to go out and transform the world.

Thus, I arrive at perhaps the most crucial element of all that I’ve seen and experienced at both St Ann’s Parish and at Prince of Peace Parish—a wholehearted commitment to prayer and surrender to God’s will, in and through, the Holy Spirit. What I’m experiencing is a basic, often quiet and deep (but nonetheless clear), visible and expressed relationship with Jesus and a desire to follow him.

What could this talk of “relationship with Jesus” look like and mean? At one level, it’s always different, like any relationship. However, as I’ve been moving around and talking with various people, I think it can be characterised by asking a number of

questions—the same ones that could be asked of any relationship with a friend, spouse or child:

When did I last laugh / cry
with (Jesus / ...)?

When did I last spend quality
time with (Jesus / ...)?

When was (Jesus / ...) “just too
cheeky for words” in that cute
enjoyable sense?

When did I last experience
(Jesus / ...) doing something
practical and tangible for me,
and me for (Jesus / ...)?

When, and how, did I fall
in love with (Jesus / ...)?

When did (Jesus / ...) last
challenge me / disturb
my comfort and when did I
challenge (Jesus / ...)?

Certainly, whilst I’ve been away, I’ve really resonated with all of them. Jesus has certainly been with me through the people, the “coincidences”—seeing the fruit of what’s been happening. I say this simply to spark the question—how do you experience your relationship with Jesus?

Born out of their experience of *Alpha*, such a culture of prayer is clearly seen where, for example, staff come together to share prayer intentions that are on their hearts and minds, they spend time as a staff in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, they have a perpetual adoration chapel open at all times and attended by parishioners. People pray for and with one another easily and simply, and people experience the transforming love and healing of Jesus in their life.

I will share one story. One of their *Connect* groups was meeting at a local coffee shop. They made the sign of the cross and prayed for one another. Towards the end of their gathering, a man who had been sitting nearby came up and asked them what they were doing. The leader of the group—rather than brushing him off—explained that they were members of the local Catholic parish who came together regularly to

share life and faith. He invited the man to have coffee with him later, which he did, and then invited the man to *Alpha*. Michael, the man in question, came along to *Alpha*, encountered Jesus and is now living this new relationship in the life of the parish.

I was keenly interested in another expression of this culture of prayer and relationship with Jesus—monthly *Encounter* evenings. These evenings—comprising praise and worship, sharing of stories, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and sharing prayer—are graced experiences for all concerned and a source of growth and encounter with Jesus.

Of importance here is the *why* of all that they are doing—and this can be a vital question for ourselves. Sometimes I feel that we, in Australia, are trying to “save our Church” and spend much of our time “counting sheep”, as it were. We ask, “How can we get people back to Mass?” or “How can we halt the decline in numbers?” or “How can we be financially viable?”

Imagine if, rather than “counting sheep”, we focused all our attention on “feeding sheep”. Rather than “saving the Church from decline”, we developed a greater heart for “enabling all people to experience fullness of life and healing” (saving sheep). I believe we are well on the way to doing this in our own Diocese, so please don’t get me wrong—we’re doing great work. Yet, my point here is simply that they are fully focused on the *person* as a *person*. Or as one author has put it, “Don’t use people to build up the Church, rather, use the Church to build up people!” I’m simply making a point of reflection—how can we have this focus even more fully and wholeheartedly? I know that I don’t do this well, but I am now resolved to improve!

The impact that this way of thinking has had on the parish is quite impressive. They are seeing a ten-fold increase in participation across all areas of parish life—faith formation, ministry involvement, sacramental life etc. They are also seeing lives being transformed through bringing people to encounter the love and presence of Jesus. Basically, yes, they are seeing highly fruitful results. ■

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



AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR

for humble Dapto priest

BY DANIEL HOPPER

On Australia Day this year, Fr Francis Tran OAM, parish priest at St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Dapto, was awarded a *Medal of the Order of Australia* (OAM) for “service to the Catholic Church in Australia and the community”. On 1 May 2018, Fr Francis received his medal at an investiture ceremony in Sydney accompanied by Dapto parish secretary, Mrs Jenny Gibson, and friend, Fr Peter Tien, administrator of St Anthony’s Parish, Picton.

Fr Francis said his receipt of the Australia Day honour is something that took him “completely by surprise”, but for the various communities he has served, this award is a just recognition for an amazing life of humble service dedicated to the formation of nurturing communities. Fr Francis has had a

I am, as a priest, a representative of Jesus in the community, and I am called to do exactly what he did—to be his hands and feet. I am not a perfect person, but I try the best I can.

tremendous impact on numerous parishes and communities in the Diocese—having spent time in Nowra, Fairy Meadow, Wollongong, Mittagong, Moss Vale, Vincentia, Milton-Ulladulla, Helensburgh and Dapto throughout his 22 years as a priest.

Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham said, “The Office of the Bishop received an unprecedented number of letters of

commendation from members of the parish and school communities where Fr Francis has ministered over the years, and I have seen first-hand the way Fr Francis builds up and truly loves the people he serves.”

When asked why he was so surprised by his receipt of the Australia Day honour, Fr Francis said,

“Because I live a very simple life. I am a normal human being. I never do big things. I just live a normal life amongst the community as a working man.”

Fleeing Communist Vietnam at a time of serious persecution for members of the Church, he came by boat to Australia in 1987 and was welcomed to the hostel in Villawood for refugees (now *Villawood Immigration Detention Centre*.) Fr Francis said, “I worked in factories and farms for nearly three years doing manual labour—two jobs a day, working and working. I felt



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

called to be a priest, but I had no English, so I stopped working and studied English for six months at Liverpool TAFE. It was hard. It had been many years since I had been to school. But I learnt it, entered the seminary, and was ordained in 1995 at Fairy Meadow.”

Even before joining the seminary, Fr Francis had a strong desire to learn and adapt as he tried to embrace his new home. “I read a lot about Australian history. If you don’t know the history, you don’t know the people. I always heard Australians say, ‘You can take the boy out of the village, but you can’t take the village out of the boy.’ That’s true in many ways, but it was important to me to become very involved with the Australian Community—learning and growing—so I could serve people and build-up communities where people feel like they belong.”



It’s not about how I preach, but how I live and act. It’s about giving your all for others like Jesus did. That’s how life becomes meaningful.”

Parishioners attest to Fr Francis as being a man who rolls-up his sleeves and gets his hands dirty, especially on projects that bring people together. Fr Francis is dedicated to building facilities that allow people to come together. Working alongside parishioners, he has become quite a “handyman”, building pergolas, gardens, fish ponds, barbeque areas and spaces for hospitality and welcome. “I want the parish and my house to be a place where people of all ages can come together, and they do in big numbers,” Fr Francis said.

It is this desire to bring people together in genuine friendship that was central to his OAM recognition. Fr Francis describes himself as “humbled by the award” but he accepted it as something that recognises the way he lives his life. Fr Francis said, “I love the community. In whatever I do, I think of the community. Even if I’m mentally and physically tired, I keep on working as I want to offer the community something and make people feel they belong and that they have a brighter tomorrow.

“In Australian culture today, it is very easy for people to become isolated and disconnected. In my role here, I’m trying to get it back to the old way of life—a community life. I want people to know each other, to be friendly with each other, to see the value of family, and so I try to create spaces and opportunities to bring people together—a cup of coffee after Mass, dinners here, sports nights, gathering for celebrations, watching footy together. I want people to know and love each other. Worshipping God in the Church will not make sense if we don’t have a true sense of community and of belonging.”

Fr Francis said, “My priority for the community is to create a good, healthy, happy community that people will bring God into their presence. I try to share my faith in Jesus by being like Jesus. He loves everybody and he sees the value of every single person—good or bad alike. I am, as a priest, a representative of Jesus in the community, and I am called to do exactly what he did—to be his hands and feet. I am not a perfect person, but I try the best I can. I see myself as just one member of the community. I am there to talk to people as a friend and bring them into the community and to help that community be a family who know God’s love.”

In receiving the award, Fr Francis reflected that while his life had not always been easy, he was full of gratitude for so many things. “God has given me time, talent and opportunity to make my life useful for people. I’m grateful to the Church for my faith and the opportunity to serve others. I feel so grateful to be accepted by this country which has adopted me. I know the life of the Gospel is what I have to live. It’s not about how I preach, but how I live and act. It’s about giving your all for others like Jesus did. That’s how life becomes meaningful.” ■

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

WHO IS MY neighbour?



Pope Francis inspires an ongoing mission to support the most disadvantaged community in our Diocese.

When we think about serious social disadvantage and poverty, we don't always think of Australia. We regard ourselves as the “lucky country”—a nation of plenty, living in a safe and peaceful environment with a comprehensive education and welfare system; far removed from the developing countries of the world.

And yet, three million people in Australia currently live below the poverty line. Unbeknown to many of us, members of our own Diocese are living in circumstances of entrenched disadvantage, just 10 minutes drive from Campbelltown's city centre.

With a population of just 3,000, the suburb of Claymore is troubled with high levels of criminal convictions and juvenile offending, along with deficient education, drastically low family income, and an overall lack of infrastructure, access to internet and public transport.

Dropping Off the Edge—a report published in 2015 by Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia—demonstrates that social circumstances in Australia varies dramatically by postcode, with a number of locations experiencing ongoing and entrenched social disadvantage and poverty. The report mapped all postcodes across Australia based on 22 social indicators, with the suburb of Claymore being among those ranked as “Band 1”. The band ranking system categorises postcodes based on the level of severity of disadvantage experiences within a location with Band 1 being the most severe.

In light of these findings, CatholicCare Wollongong undertook a special place-based project in Claymore, funded by Catholic Social Services NSW/ACT, entitled *Project Francis*. The name of the project was inspired by Pope Francis' call for a *Year of Mercy* in 2015 and Jesus' command in Luke's Gospel to “be merciful just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). The project involved a number of practical initiatives endeavouring to make a difference in the wellbeing of residents in Claymore.

We do know that having strong family and community connections is key to wellbeing, so we started there.”

The acting executive manager of family services at CatholicCare Wollongong, Roseanne Plunkett, expressed that *Project Francis* gave the community a voice, and through community consultation and by simply asking residents what they needed, *Project Francis* uncovered that residents weren't being confronted with just one form of disadvantage, but many complex barriers hindering their wellbeing and community participation.

“There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach in highly disadvantaged areas like Claymore. With such high levels of unemployment and overall lack of safe and affordable housing, the challenge is immense. But we do know that having strong family and community connections is key to wellbeing, so we started there,” she said.



PHOTO: DEE KRAMER PHOTOGRAPHY



Bringing up Great Kids (promoting positive and respectful parent-child relationships) and *Seeing Red* (which looks at controlling feelings of anger.)

During *Project Francis*, CatholicCare provided 27 group work sessions in Claymore with participants reporting an overall satisfaction rating of 100%. Participants—who asked to remain anonymous—stated that they benefitted most from learning new parenting strategies and building on their understanding of children and their emotions. Being able to learn basic parenting skills not only allowed them to feel more in-tune with their children's feelings, it enabled them to feel better about themselves as parents and it instilled in them a sense of personal validation.

CatholicCare Director Michael Austin expressed that by virtue of its mission, CatholicCare will champion the primacy of human dignity and be drawn towards assisting those who are marginalised and experiencing disadvantage.

"We draw upon the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching, and in particular the practice of accompaniment, which means to 'journey beside,' or to accompany," Michael said.

"Accompaniment is both a philosophy and a practice where we meet people in the very circumstances in which they are living, and through walking together in respect and trust, we have an encounter that contains the seeds of possibility and of change and mutual learning. This is in contrast to an approach of 'doing to,' where an attempt is being made to impose something upon a community, however well-intentioned this may be," Michael continued.

The issues facing our neighbours in Claymore may be stark and confronting, but practical interventions such as *Project Francis* have opened up possibilities and long-term solutions to achieve positive change within the wider community. CatholicCare is committed to continuing to work within the Claymore community alongside its residents to find new and innovative ways to break down intergenerational barriers and improve their awareness of the importance of individual and community wellbeing. ■



"From our conversations with the Claymore residents and the services already working in the community, we felt we could make a difference by supporting people to make their own strong connections, whether this be with their children, neighbours, families or services.

"*Project Francis* was about enabling the client to equip them with the knowledge and skills, to not only improve their own individual situations, but to make a contribution to their wider community. We also knew that a 'helicopter-approach' of flying in and out with a preconceived solution was not going to work," she said.

Project Francis featured a participatory (or co-design) process, actively involving the residents in planning to help ensure what CatholicCare offered met their needs. Claymore is familiar with being offered community assistance from government and social service organisations, yet residents weren't taking the opportunities on offer to them. Through community consultation, CatholicCare generated some insight into what was inhibiting the residents from accessing support.

Through walking together in respect and trust, we have an encounter that contains the seeds of possibility and of change and mutual learning.

For example, some residents felt ashamed about accessing support and being perceived as an "incapable parent" in a tight-knit community.

"It became clear that we needed a different approach, so we provided some practical support, including building trust and rapport with residents to engage them. We became a reliable presence in the area—immersing ourselves in community events and providing not only workshops, but food, vouchers and a listening ear," Roseanne said.

CatholicCare group workers then offered courses including *123 Magic and Emotion Coaching* (which assists with children's challenging behaviours),

Thanks!

For all that has been ...

BY ELIZABETH HOLDER-KEEPING
& LEAH MIREYLEES

Over the past 16 years, Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham has been a sincere and graced presence during his ministry as the bishop of Wollongong—continuously expressing an authentic care of and commitment to students and their families as well as having a deep gratitude for the work of Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) staff.

On Friday 9 February 2018, Bishop Peter was honoured through a student Liturgy of Appreciation and Farewell held at St John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Dapto. Over 500 representatives from every Catholic school in the Diocese gathered to formally thank Bishop Peter for his wise and authentic leadership.

Student leaders commenced the liturgy with a procession of light, reminding the community of how God's light has shone in the person of Bishop Peter. Students led in all elements of the liturgy, resulting in a joyous celebration of the bishop. At the conclusion, Director of Schools Peter Turner gave an inspiring address presenting Bishop Peter with a unique lamp from the Holy Land, together with cards of gratefulness from each school in acknowledgement of how brightly Bishop Peter has lit the way for all to follow. In response, Bishop Peter said, "I am quite overcome to see you all here and thank you very much for this tribute. The schools have been a large part of my ministry and to have you all here—I'm very touched by that."

One of many highlights within the liturgy was the response to the word and prayer of the faithful that recognised, in a personal and humorous way, the distinctive qualities Bishop Peter has shown through his ministry. These qualities—presented to Bishop Peter as decorated gift boxes in appreciation of his leadership—included the gifts of presence, hope, witness, joy, faithfulness, integrity, courage and humour.



PHOTOS: ELIZABETH HOLDER-KEEPING

JOY

One of the strongest memories we will have of you is your smile. A smile that is authentic and engaging. It comes from a joyous and grateful soul who delights in the company of others. Your joy is infectious!

Year 1 student, Katrina Gallagher, presented the gift of humour and did this with an engaging "knock-knock" joke. Wearing a clown costume, Katrina jumped from a gift box and asked Bishop Peter, "Will you remember me?" Bishop Peter nodded and replied, "Yes I will remember you." Katrina then delivered her disarming punch line, "Knock-knock." Bishop Peter, "Who's there?" Katrina smiled: "You said you would remember me!" Undoubtedly, he will!

As with all special celebrations, there was cake, repeating the collective messages of appreciation:

*Every blessing for the future
For all that has been,
Grateful thanks.
For all that will be, yes!*

CEDoW wishes to acknowledge the many people involved, with particular thanks to the parish priest, Fr Francis Tran OAM, and Principal Andrew Heffernan at St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Dapto, for hosting the event. Sincere appreciation is also extended to Suz Marden, CEDoW's team leader of staff spiritual formation, who coordinated the moving liturgy.

Bishop Peter, we thank our God whenever we think of you; and every time we pray for you, we pray with joy (cf Philippians 1:3–4), remembering how you have shone a light on our path and blessed us by your presence. ■

Elizabeth Holder-Keeping is the graphic design and publications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

Leah Mireylees is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.



OPENING hearts AND homes

How three siblings found their forever home

BY TONI LEA-HOWIE

It's not every day that a couple adopts a child, let alone three brothers simultaneously! For Illawarra carers, Daniel and Jenny Norris, this was a commitment they were prepared to make so the boys would have a sense of belonging permanently in their family.

The couple first became carers with CatholicCare Wollongong seven years ago when their son, Darcy, was aged four. They had long considered fostering or adopting after being made aware that they would be unable to have any more children naturally.

Lachlan was first placed with them in 2011 when he was just two months old. Several months later, it became known to Daniel and Jenny that Lachlan's two older brothers were also in the system and in need of permanent carers. They didn't hesitate to put their hands up. "We had the space and the opportunity to give them a stable life," Daniel said.

Whilst having four children under the age of five can be challenging at times, Jenny said, "We got on with it and did it. I wouldn't change a thing. It's so rewarding. We knew it was the right thing to do; we've been able to keep three little ones together." So, when the opportunity to adopt the boys arose two years ago, Jenny and Daniel jumped at the chance. They knew by then that the brothers strongly identified with their family.

However, both understand the importance of open adoption where connections with a child's birth family



PHOTO: LOUISE HAMPSON

You don't have to save the world; you can just change one person's life ...

are supported. "We tell the boys, 'It's your history and it's your story,' and we support their connection with their family," Jenny said.

Both are passionate about fostering and adoption and urge others to consider becoming carers. "You don't have to save the world; you can just change one person's life," Daniel said.

Jenny and Daniel are proud to have been carers with CatholicCare and say they have been well-supported in their fostering to adoption journey. "We sat down with a heap of literature and went through all the different agencies and we chose very well," Jenny said.

CatholicCare Wollongong's executive manager of children and youth services, Michelle Ferrara, said, "As well as open adoption from care, there is an urgent need for more families to help vulnerable children by becoming emergency, respite or restoration carers.

"While every child deserves to have the protection, warmth and stability of family, unfortunately not all parents are able to fulfil this most fundamental of human needs.

"We are always looking for a strong pool of carers who are able to step in and fill the void by either providing a place of healing and hope until the child—and sometimes their siblings—can be reunited safely with their own family, or

by creating for them a permanent family through adoption or guardianship," she said.

According to the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, more than 60 children enter out-of-home care across NSW every week because they cannot live safely at home. Many are suffering neglect or abuse due to the incapacity of their parents to properly care for them because of mental ill-health, substance abuse, poverty, domestic abuse or the effects of intergenerational trauma. Open adoptions have increased by more than 60% in NSW with 129 adoptions granted in 2016–17. ■

Toni Lea-Howie is the carer recruitment and support coordinator for CatholicCare Wollongong.



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HUMANAE VITAE

A FEMINIST MANIFESTO?

BY MONICA DOUMIT

In the first five years of his papacy, Blessed Paul VI wrote seven encyclicals. In the final 10 years, he wrote none. I'm not sure of the reason why, but I can only imagine that it had something to do with the reaction to the final encyclical he did write, *Humanae Vitae*, which spoke about the dignity of the human person as well as reaffirming the Church's prohibition against the use of artificial contraception. It is said that this was the first encyclical ever that was met with open dissent from within the Church—including from laity, clergy, bishops and even cardinals.

For those unaware of the background to the writing of the encyclical, a committee was established to study the question of birth control in light of the invention of the contraceptive pill. The majority recommended to the pope that some use of artificial contraception be approved for married couples and their recommendations were strategically leaked to the media in order to build an expectation that the teaching would change.

Pope Paul VI sought to protect the faithful and the world against what he foresaw as the consequences of a contraceptive culture ...

After studying the matter himself and praying “constantly” about it, Pope Paul VI decided that it was his duty to reaffirm the Church's teaching, and once again, state that there was no place in marriage for the use of artificial contraception.

Imagine just for a moment how much courage it took to do what he believed to be right, even in the face of opposition from both inside and outside the Church. Pope Paul VI sought to protect the faithful and the world against what he foresaw as the consequences of a contraceptive culture, namely, that it would:

- Provide a wide opening for marital infidelity;
- Result in a general lowering of moral standards;
- See women reduced to mere instruments for the satisfaction of men's own desires; and
- Enable public authorities to impose the use of contraception on its citizens.

Today, many believe that the pope's prophecies have been borne out over the last 50 years, and a brief look at our culture suggests that these predictions have been visited upon us in ways even Pope Paul VI could not have imagined. I can't imagine that in his wildest dreams (or nightmares) Paul VI could have conceived that *Tinder* would be a thing!

And if he was trying to protect our culture from such atrocities, I dare say that he was particularly trying to protect women. Indeed, one of the great ironies of *Humanae Vitae* is that it has been decried as being anti-woman when, in reality, I believe it is incredibly pro-woman. I would go as far as to say that it is the most pro-woman document in recent history. If the world had listened to Paul VI instead of ridiculing him, I believe life today would be much better for women.

Choosing between work and motherhood

Firstly, women wouldn't have to choose between work and motherhood. The widespread availability of artificial contraception has brought with it an expectation that women would (and perhaps should) use contraception and delay motherhood for the purposes of study and career. A couple of years ago, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology sought to host a debate titled: *Membership before Maternity Leave—Should Every Registrar Have a Mirena?* (A Mirena is a contraceptive device that lasts for five years.) I know women who have lost jobs after falling pregnant with their third child because there was an unwritten rule amongst female corporate lawyers that, just like on Noah's Ark, there was a limit of two. And in line with Pope Paul VI's prediction that governments could impose the use of contraception on its citizens, former MPs have lobbied for requiring a woman to prove that she was using medium-term contraception before applying for the dole.

The effect on marriage

Secondly, I believe more people would get—and stay—married. If sexual activity still had with it the potential that a child would be conceived, it would not be treated so casually. By separating sex and babies, we have removed any need for commitment. Since 1968, marriage rates have dropped, and divorce and infidelity rates have increased. At its height, AshleyMadison.com, a “dating” website specifically for married people, boasted one million Australian members, or one in eight of Australia's married population. Breakdowns in marriage can have a disproportionate effect on women, who often bear the greater financial hardship when a marriage ends.

The cycle of hormone therapy

Our contraceptive culture means women are encouraged to use hormonal contraception during their most fertile years, and then, when their fertility has decreased, to use a different set of hormones in order to conceive



a child. Contraception has enabled a vicious cycle of hormonal treatments for women that can last half their lives and can have devastating effects on their health.

Health risks

Fourthly, there would be fewer health risks to women. The oral contraceptive pill brings with it health risks as mild as headaches, but as extreme as depression, blood clots and strokes. Women are meant to—literally—internalise the entire responsibility for avoiding pregnancy, even to the detriment of their short-term and long-term health. Men are let entirely off the hook when it comes to responsibility for their health.

Male irresponsibility

Which leads us to my final point. Separating sex from babies has led to an expectation that women can, and should, be available for sex at any time. It has, as Archbishop Charles Chaput OFM of Philadelphia wrote, “Released males—to a historically unprecedented degree—from responsibility” for their sexual activity. Rather than freeing women, contraception has introduced a new issue—a generation of sexually entitled men, many of whom have never had to control and restrain their passions within a committed loving

Indeed, one of the great ironies of *Humanae Vitae* is that it has been decried as being anti-woman when, in reality, I believe it is incredibly pro-woman. I would go as far as to say that it is the most pro-woman document in recent history.

relationship. Pope Paul VI was right when he foresaw that contraception would lead to a reduction of women to mere instruments for the satisfaction of male desire.

Over the years, much ink has been spilled over *Humanae Vitae*, and more will be this year as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of its publication and the canonisation of Pope Paul VI. I hope that people will be encouraged to read and study the document for the themselves and be open to the possibility of engaging with new, and yet, old, ideas. ■

You can read *Humanae Vitae* at dow.sh/hv

Monica Doumit is a columnist for *The Catholic Weekly* catholicweekly.com.au

It's time to WAKE UP!

Men's ministry in the Diocese

BY JUDE HENNESSY

One of the goals of the work of the Diocese's *Office of Renewal and Evangelisation* is to address the growing disconnect between men of all ages and faith. Attendance figures from the *National Church Life Survey* for our Diocese clearly show that the attendance of males has dropped below 40%, and if children are taken out of the data, the figures are even worse.

This evidence is supported by numerous studies and an array of anecdotal evidence showing that many men often do not feel comfortable in church. If and when they do open themselves up to faith, they want practical, relevant teaching and trusting connections with other men who are willing to both support and challenge them in their faith journey.

It is for this reason that the Diocese is forming an ever-closer bond with the *menALIVE* movement which will run at least two weekends a year in various regions with different parishes hosting the events.

The first of these weekends was run in the Illawarra on 5–6 May 2018 and was a great success with 56 men of all ages attending. Some were regular members of their parish communities but there



PHOTOS: JUDE HENNESSY

I really sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. I am keen to become involved in a small group. I need this.

was also a good proportion of men who had little or no connection to Church and a faith that they self-described as “lukewarm” or “dwindling”. The impact on so many men was profound.

The weekend received very positive feedback, including:

- “It was great to hear real stories from real men. Loved the format and it taught me ideas how to communicate with my wife and children.”
- “I really sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. I am keen to become involved in a small group. I need this. Please reach out!”
- “Great weekend. Much greater insight into who I am and who I want to be.”

Four weeks later, a reconnector breakfast was also held in Wollongong where Bishop Brian Mascord encouraged the men in their faith to journey together—especially in staying connected with ongoing *menALIVE* small groups so as to keep the flame of faith burning strong in each other.

What's next?

The next diocesan weekend for men will be held in the Macarthur region and hosted by the Campbelltown parish on 4–5 August 2018. If the impact of the Illawarra weekend is anything to go by, men should do all they can to attend. *menALIVE* founder, Rob Falzon, will also be attending. For more information, visit menalive.dow.org.au or contact helen.bennett@dow.org.au ■

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



GROWING GOOD MEN

men ALIVE

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A son's relationship with his father (or father figure) can be a powerful guiding force as he wrestles with the questions of what kind of man he is becoming. The most important ingredient in this relationship is time. Take time out together to get reconnected in an environment which fosters honesty, mutual respect and a hunger for more out of life.

CONTACT Jude Hennessy on (02) 4222 2407 or jude.hennessy@dow.org.au

**a camping
weekend for
fathers and
their teenage
sons (12–15 years)**

“It is a strange, and perhaps inexplicable, paradox—to enjoy and adore one’s living children, while in the same moment longing to hold my absent child in my arms.”

It is a strange, and perhaps inexplicable, paradox—to enjoy and adore one’s living children, while in the same moment longing to hold my absent child in my arms.

The mother of Jesus, when she presented her son to the Temple in Jerusalem, was told by Simeon that a sword would pierce her heart (Luke 2:35). While I do not think I can compare my suffering to hers, I feel like that sword has also carved out part of my heart, because my heart does indeed feel broken.

How can we mend a broken heart? Only with the healer of all wounds—Jesus.

Any mother knows that her heart is always wherever her children are, and part of mine is no longer living day-to-day with me.

Instead, part of my heart resides with my son in the place that is my rightful home—heaven. So, instead of my broken heart being a fatal wound for me, it is actually my reminder of who I am. It is the most constant method I have of recalling Jesus to mind and asking him to bring me home to him and to my son, in his perfect time.

This has been no fatal wound, but a strangely healing one, because it leads me to Jesus. This healing has also helped me to experience the joy that is watching my little girl grow and flourish. How can we mend a broken heart? Only with the Healer of all wounds—Jesus. God is good. Life is good. ■

Jovina James has three children including Teddy, who passed away. She works part-time as a GP on the Gold Coast, and was a regular guest speaker in the Diocese of Wollongong in the lead-up to World Youth Day 2008.

This article first appeared as an opinion piece in “Eternity News” in May 2018
eternitynews.com.au



Mother's Day

WHEN SOMEONE IS MISSING

A mother of three shares why each Mother's Day “pierces her heart like a sword.”

BY JOVINA JAMES

There is a heart condition called *Takatsubo's Syndrome*, which is also known as the “Broken Heart Syndrome”. Resembling the presentation of a severe heart attack, the main causative event for the cardiac damage is usually a supremely stressful event in one's life. Often, a sudden death of a family member will precipitate the symptoms of chest pain, breathlessness and collapse. Although the Broken Heart Syndrome usually improves with time, there is no known medical therapy to help the recovery, which makes me wonder—how does one mend a broken heart?

My heart is a broken one. Milestones are difficult for me. I had never really understood people who say they find Christmas difficult, until my first Christmas after my eight-month-old son, Theodore, died. It was a very difficult day for me—something I never thought I would say about Christmas Day. I remember constantly wishing he were there—laughing, enjoying the madness and busyness of the day.

Milestones creep up on me and linger like a cold fog.

I recall being unable to engage in conversation, feeling like I could barely taste the food on my plate. That Christmas Day was a very difficult day.

Since then, I have learnt that other milestones also creep up on me and linger like a cold fog blurring the joy of the sunniest days. There is Christmas, and then there are birthdays, and even the day my baby daughter became forever older than my Theodore.

These are the days when I wonder what he would be like—how he would experience this day? To wonder what would make him laugh and what would make him throw an irrational tantrum?

Mother's Day is another one of those milestones. It is a beautiful day to celebrate the gift of motherhood. Yet, how can I properly celebrate when one of the fruits of my labour is starkly absent? My first Mother's Day after Theodore died was the first one where I received a handmade gift from my older son, and yet, looking at it, all I could think was, “I will never have anything like this from my beautiful Theodore.”

Helping our young people to Shine

KYLIE JEYMOUR

DIOCESAN TEACHER
& CAMPBELLTOWN WOMAN OF THE YEAR



Kylie Jeymour lives for helping our young people to shine—whether it be in the classroom as a primary school teacher and leader of learning at the new St Francis Catholic College, Edmondson Park, or guiding athletes on local, national and international hockey fields as a world-class hockey umpire. Although she likes the attention on the kids, not her, being awarded *Campbelltown Woman of the Year 2018* has put Kylie—a parishioner from St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Campbelltown—firmly in her own spotlight.

BY JESSICA SPARKS

Kylie was presented the award for her leadership and exceptional achievement and dedication to teaching and hockey by the NSW Member for Campbelltown, Mr Greg Warren MP, at a recent St Francis school assembly.

Greg praised her generous contribution to the region's sporting and education sectors: "Kylie is an outstanding example of all of the many amazing women in our region who work every day to make Campbelltown a better place.

"There are not many more important things we must do than recognise the

vital contributions women make in so many different capacities in our community, and it's great to be able to do just that by surprising Kylie with this award."

Kylie said she loves making a difference and felt "very honoured" to receive the award: "Working to serve others is what I get the most out of in life. I have always loved working with children. From playing with my cousins to coaching young hockey teams, I knew I wanted to be a teacher from a very young age.

"The teaching and umpiring worlds are so different, yet so similar. When you strip the two back, they are both about the service of people. They are worlds that are defined by relationships where, if you work hard to establish respect and rapport, you gain the trust and credibility to enter people's lives and make a difference.

"The set of skills I develop in one area continually assists me to be a better practitioner in the other area, and vice versa. Through various experiences in both, my confidence levels and self-belief have developed over the years."

Faith

Through all her dealings with others personally, professionally and in sport, Kylie says faith has always played an important guiding role in her life: "I come from a family with strong Gospel values and I have been influenced by many amazing, religious role models throughout my Catholic schooling, my teaching career and beyond.

"One of the main reasons I chose to teach in a Catholic school was to be able to pass my faith onto the children and families I come into contact with and try to play my part in building the kingdom of God."

The teaching world

As the junior school leader of learning at St Francis Catholic College, Kylie is responsible for leading the teaching and learning in Kindergarten to Year 4 at the school. Her focus is on "putting in place the best structures and creating the best learning experiences for the children in our care."



PHOTOS: ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

"I love going to work and breaking new ground as we develop into the Diocese's first K–12 school. Every day is a new experience. I have learnt so much from the talented and committed teachers that I work with, as we try to cater for the learning and development of all our students through the full continuum of their schooling."

True to her humility, it is not awards or recognition that give Kylie the greatest sense of validation in her work: "One of the most rewarding things about teaching is seeing how well students are doing years after you have taught them. It is spine-tingling to hear from students out of the blue when they reach out to tell you they miss you or what they've achieved since. The fact they think of you so many years on is such a beautiful feeling."

"I recently heard from a past student who I taught in my first year of teaching. She had been cleaning out her room and found a note I'd written her all those years ago. She wrote to me thanking me for always believing in her and to let me know the impact I'd had on her as a person. Just gorgeous!"

The sporting world

As a young girl, Kylie grew up around the local hockey fields—first watching her father play, then picking up a stick

and playing herself from the age of nine for Raby Hockey Club. She took up umpiring as a teenager.

"When I was about 14, I was invited to an umpiring clinic to get to know the rules. It was attractive at the time because I knew getting to know the rules would make me a better player and I would earn five dollars a game!" she said. "It ended up being something I was quite good at and I haven't really looked back since."

Hard work and talent with the whistle saw Kylie rise through the hockey ranks to umpire at a national level, and from 2010 as an international hockey umpire at events including the *Hockey Champions Trophy* in London and Argentina, the *2014 Commonwealth Games* in Glasgow, and the *2016 Olympic Games* in Rio de Janeiro.

Highly-respected in her field, Kylie last year also received the prestigious award of *Official of the Year* at the NSW Sports Awards.

Where to from here?

She might have now retired from international umpiring, but Kylie can't part with the game completely. She still plays and umpires locally. Nonetheless, her focus has shifted to the growing demands of her K–4 leadership role at St Francis. So what's next for the woman who loves working with children so much? "I just got married [in April] so that's very exciting. My next goal is to begin my own family!" ■

Jessica Sparks is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

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Do not be afraid for I am with you

ISAIAH 41:10

2018 Diocesan Education Mass

BY JESSICA SPARKS

Catholic Education Director of Schools Peter Turner has called on teachers and staff across the Diocese to “be not afraid” at the 2018 Diocesan Education Mass. The Mass saw dozens of dignitaries and over 800 educators from all corners of the Diocese fill St John Vianney Co-Cathedral in Fairy Meadow for an evening of uplifting celebration during *Catholic Schools Week*.

“We come together to celebrate unity of purpose, oneness, mission, commitment and energy for the faith, wellbeing, and growth of our young people,” Peter told the congregation. “Catholic schools do great things, but perhaps like never before, Catholic educators need to be known for not being afraid.”

“The complex world of 2018 can leave many of us with reasons to be clouded with uncertainty and even fear. [But] the 26,000 children and young people we care for are more important than our fears. I too, like you, will seek in all things that matter most to be not afraid.”

Peter warmly welcomed a new school year and the next chapter for the Diocese under the leadership and guidance of newly-ordained Bishop Brian Mascord. “The education community stands ready to support you, to encourage you and to help bring to life your hopes and dreams for the people of our wonderful Diocese,” he told the bishop.

The large turnout was a strong show of support for our Catholic education



PHOTOS: ELLE HOLDER-KEEPING

The complex world of 2018 can leave many of us with reasons to be clouded with uncertainty and even fear. [But] the 26,000 children and young people we care for are more important than our fears.

community and for the new bishop, who spoke of bringing light and peace to others.

“As teachers, each of us has been chosen, and you have consciously chosen to teach in the name of me, the bishop of this place—to represent me as the chief teacher of the Diocese, who in turn, is a representative of the Great Teacher, the Great Rabbi, Jesus,” Bishop Brian, a former primary teacher himself, said. “We are working together to bring the mandate of Christ to life, in this place, our Diocese, and at this time.”

“To you, our teachers, our support staff—can I just say thank you for offering the gift of faith. Thank you for trying to live that gift of faith and witnessing to it. As we pray tonight, we pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be upon us so that we can continue to give life, hope, light and love to those we encounter.”

To mark the beginning of his ministry with Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong, Bishop Brian was presented with a gift on behalf of all the schools and staff: *From the Mountains to the Sea*, a striking painting by well-known local Aboriginal artist and Elder, Uncle Kevin Butler.

The vibrant artwork recognises the richness of our local Aboriginal storytelling, culture and connection, depicting a colourful array of Aboriginal Dreaming stories, images and landmarks relating to the four regions and four nations of the Diocese (Dharawal, Tharawal, Yuin and Gundungurra).

The wonderful, positive spirit of the Mass and the gathering in the school hall afterwards were both characterised by a strong sense of community and joy. It was a beautiful experience of song, prayer and celebration for all present—particularly for new principals commissioned and new teachers and staff who were specially welcomed and blessed.



The event set the tone for the year of learning ahead, inspiring our Diocese’s educators to go forward faithfully lighting the way for all students within their Catholic school communities. ■

Jessica Sparks is a communications officer for Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

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in my name.
MATT 18:20

Bishop Brian joins 250 Christians in bringing unity and love.

BY JUDE HENNESSY

On Friday 25 May 2018, more than 250 people from the Wollongong and Shellharbour Council regions came together for a morning of fellowship and unity at the annual *Illawarra Prayer Breakfast*. Members and leaders from over 30 different churches were in attendance in a vibrant morning of prayer, worship and sharing stories of faith.

While around 40 Christian leaders from various denominations attended Bishop Brian Mascord's ordination in February, this occasion provided further opportunity for the bishop to get to know many of the Christian leaders and pastors from a variety of denominations—enjoying breakfast together and considering the wonderful things that Christian people and churches do in the Illawarra.

Special guests included Lord Mayor Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM of Wollongong, Mayor Councillor Marianne Saliba of Shellharbour, the Hon Paul

Prayer is a wonderful act of acknowledging our vulnerability, our weakness; of acknowledging that God is ultimately in control.

THE HON ERIC ABETZ

Green MLC of the Christian Democratic Party, Bishop Peter Hayward of the Anglican Wollongong region, and many pastors, church leaders and Christian people from across the region.

The guest of honour and keynote speaker, Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, spoke of his own faith and the influential nature of faith in our society, noting that in Australia “more people still go to church than to the football of a weekend”.

“Prayer is a wonderful act of acknowledging our vulnerability, our weakness; of acknowledging that God is ultimately in control,” Senator Eric said. He concluded his talk with words of

encouragement, “Maintain your faithfulness in prayer and take your concern for the welfare of your community, state, nation, and indeed the world, to the next level by putting your knees to the ground whilst also putting your shoulder to the wheel.”

A number of awards were presented in thanksgiving to individuals from the region who are unsung heroes in their quiet witness of faith and service. Following the awards, the gathering was led in prayer by key Church leaders including Bishop Brian who led prayers of thanks and petition for the people of the region of the Illawarra.

In closing, those gathered were reminded that opportunities for all denominations to come together in prayer and fellowship are a work of the Holy Spirit—the bringer of unity and love—which is a powerful and perhaps the most convincing witness Christians can offer those who do not believe. ■

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



PHOTOS: JEREMY YUEN

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The work of catechists supported by new report



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84%

believe that Christian heritage has been influential in shaping the values that we teach children, with almost **60%** believing this was "very" or "somewhat" influential



16%

of those surveyed are opposed to parents having the choice of faith-based values education in schools



71%

of parents in NSW primary schools opted in to SRE for their children and it enjoys the overwhelming support of parents, principals and school communities

A national survey of Australians conducted by *McCrindle* in April 2018 has validated the wonderful work done by almost 5,000 Catholic catechists in public schools throughout NSW and the ACT.

Members of all major faiths and Christian denominations are now, more than ever before, united in their efforts to support each other in providing best practice Special Religious Education (SRE) curriculums, training and resources, so that parents can confidently choose formation in faith and values for their children.

Spokesperson for Christian SRE in NSW, Murray Norman, says the survey figures "represent what a majority of Australians are thinking" and they "endorse the importance of spirituality and programs like SRE within education". The NSW Department of Education framework says, "Spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose."

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The most vital delivery yet for Ugandan maternity hospital

BY DAVID HARRISON

It wasn't quite the delivery they are used to, but for Sr Mary Goretti and her small staff at St Luke's Health Centre in Bujuni, Uganda, it is one that will save hundreds of lives. The maternal health centre—located three hours from Kampala—can finally celebrate the arrival of its long-awaited ambulance which supporters in the Diocese of Wollongong helped to fund during last year's Catholic Mission Church Appeal.

Locals may recall meeting Sr Mary Goretti—who runs the centre—last

June when she visited the Diocese to speak with schools, parishes and supporters about the state of maternal health in her home in rural Uganda. She told the story of a local woman, Evas, who lost her baby after riding for hours on the back of a motorbike while in labour. "I think if we get a vehicle it will really help us to save the life of the mother and the baby," Sr Mary said at the time. After a short customs delay, that vehicle has now arrived, much to the relief of Sr Mary and her staff. Along with the ambulance, St Luke's received an ultrasound machine and a humidicrib, in addition to key

structural improvements that are ongoing—including the expansion of the maternity ward.

All of this was possible due to Catholic Mission supporters raising nearly \$2 million for the appeal, and the arrival of the ambulance is welcome news. After Sr Mary shared her story with the Diocese, everyone wanted to lend their support—either through donation or prayer. I am proud that we could offer the support we did, which has helped ensure the safety of mothers and babies in the community.

In 2018, the Catholic Mission Church Appeal focuses on Myanmar, and carries the theme: *Healing a nation through education*. It tells the story of an "education revolution" in the country—part of the Myanmar Catholic Church's push for peace in a land which has been gripped by internal conflict and political struggles for decades.

For more on that appeal and for updates on Catholic Mission's work with communities around the world, visit catholicmission.org.au or contact me on (02) 4222 2482. ■

David Harrison is Catholic Mission's diocesan director for Wollongong.



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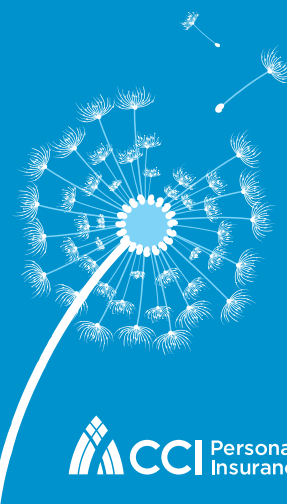
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Clergy news

We take this time to thank our clergy for the gift that they are to our Church and lives, and we invite you to continue to pray for the clergy in our Diocese:

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our clergy. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments.

Help our clergy to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people.

Grant them the wisdom, understanding and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your kingdom.

Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry.

Help them to become instruments of your divine grace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest.

Amen.

There have been a number of clergy appointments, anniversaries, retirements and bereavements:

Appointments

Bishop Brian Mascord (Nov 2017)—Fifth bishop of Wollongong.

Fr George Condookala (Feb 2018)—Chaplain at Wollongong Hospital and Wollongong Private Hospital.

Fr Mark De Battista (Mar 2018)—Priest to the chaplaincy team at the University of Wollongong.

Fr Peter Tien (May 2018)—Administrator of St Anthony's Parish, Picton.

Fr Patrick Vaughan PP (May 2018)—Administrator *pro tem* of Holy Cross Parish, Helensburgh.

Fr Andrew Granc OFM (May 2018)—Assisting Holy Cross Parish, Helensburgh, with sacramental ministry in the parish.

Fr Bryan Jones PP VG (May 2018)—Vicar General for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Fr Ken Cafe OFM (May 2018)—Episcopal Vicar for Canonical Services for the Diocese of Wollongong.

Anniversaries

Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham (12 July 2018)—Silver Jubilee (25th Anniversary) of ordination to the episcopate (bishop).

Fr Michael Healy (16 June 2018)—50 years ordination to the priesthood.

Fr Antony Brennan (3 June 2018)—40 years ordination to the priesthood.

Fr Peter Tien (17 April 2018)—25 years ordination to the priesthood.

Retirements

Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham (Nov 2017)—Fourth bishop of Wollongong.

Fr David O'Brien PP (March 2018)—Parish priest of St Therese Parish, West Wollongong.

Fr Bernard Dowdell (June 2018)—Assistant priest at Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes Wollongong and chaplain at Wollongong Hospital.

In memoriam

Fr Hugh Dowdell (19 Feb 2018)—Ordained a priest in the Diocese of Wollongong in 1992 and served in the parishes of Campbelltown, Thirroul, Port Kembla, Rosemeadow, Bulli, Shellharbour City and Port Kembla.

Br (Cyril) Victor Bell CFC (22 April 2018)—aged 100 years. Respected colleague and identity at Edmund Rice College, West Wollongong, for 44 years and an esteemed member of the Christian Brothers for 88 years.

Fr Dan Neylon OFM (11 May 2018)—Respected member of the Franciscan Friars Community and warmly remembered by the community at Minto and in Campbelltown.

May they rest in the Lord's peace.



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Thank you and farewell William Walker

BY DANIEL HOPPER

On 29 June 2018, Mr William Walker will officially retire as chancellor and executive officer of the Diocese of Wollongong. William joined the Diocese in February 2014 as co-chancellor and diocesan executive officer—a new position created to assist the bishop with his administrative and pastoral responsibilities.

Prior to his appointment in the Diocese, William was the director of financial services for Sydney Catholic Schools where he played a major role in strategic planning in response to the need for additional schools and resources.

I join with Bishop Brian Mascord, Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham and many others in the Diocese in gratefully acknowledging William's hard work and commitment. He is a man of faith—attending daily Mass at the Cathedral before starting work each day—and has provided wonderful leadership over the past four years, being integral in so many areas of the life of the Church, including:

- Navigating the Diocese through the difficult waters of the Royal Commission;
- Grappling with future planning and improving the governance and accountability structures of the Diocese;
- Overseeing key restructure and employment appointments such as the director of development and community engagement and the director of child protection and safeguarding;
- Overseeing the review process of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation coming off the back of the diocesan pastoral plan at a time of great urgency in the Church;
- Clearing the path to allow the Diocese to try new and innovative initiatives in areas such as youth ministry;
- Implementing a movement towards professional staff appraisals and continuous improvement in the Office of the Bishop; and
- Chairing countless committees and meetings with a “legendary” commitment to staying on time.

We wish William every blessing as he undertakes his new role as full-time grandfather to his eight beautiful grandchildren—including the newest addition, Ella, who arrived in February 2018. Thank you and farewell William!

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

Good Friday Collection

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

The Diocese of Wollongong is a strong supporter of the Good Friday Collection with \$48,000 donated last year.

In a letter to the Diocese, Fr Carl Schafer OFM, Commissary of the Holy Land, Australia, writes, “I am particularly grateful to the Catholic people of Australia who give so generously each year to support the mission work of the Church in the Holy Land.... your support is a meaningful sign of the spiritual link which unites all Christians to Jerusalem and to the land of Jesus.”

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Catholic Women's League

BY ANNE KELLY

We congratulate member, Margaret (Peg) McEntee OAM, who was installed president of *Australian Church Women (NSW Unit Inc)* at an ecumenical service led by Bishop Brian Mascord at St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Wollongong on 31 May 2018.

On the same day, Peg also received a papal award—*Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great* (see Page 40). Peg is a member of The Oaks branch of Catholic Women's League (CWL) and a former national president of the League. Our members are most proud of her!



We are also delighted to announce that our NSW State Executive has chosen to hold its state conference at the Novotel Hotel (North Beach, Wollongong) in September 2018. The theme of the conference is: *Do not be afraid I will help you*, from Isaiah 41:10. The opening Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, will be celebrated at 6:00pm on Tuesday 4 September.

For more information on the NSW State Conference or 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

Wollongong Franciscans invite newcomers

On 3 June 2018, the Warrawong Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) hosted a *Come and See* event for Catholics interested in learning more about the life of St Francis of Assisi. Warrawong Fraternity leader, Mr Paul Portelli, hosted the gathering which included a talk on Franciscan spirituality by local friar, Fr Leonard Testa OFM Conv.

Hoping to attract more vocations to the Order, the Fraternity invited the NSW/ACT promotions officer, Leellen Lewis, to speak with parishioners.

"I spoke with members of the parish community about what it means to be a secular member of the Franciscan family.

"I think it is important for people to understand that joining the Order is a response to a call from God—it is a vocation.

"The OFS is not a prayer group. We wanted to let local Catholics know that the OFS are present in their



Diocese. We also wanted to inspire them to think about the possibility that maybe one of them has a vocation.

"It's important to let Catholics know that we Secular Franciscans exist and have done so for more than 800 years and we would like to see the OFS exist for another 800 years with the Diocese remaining an active part of our story," Leellen said.

"The Franciscan perspective to living the Gospels is not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The specific way that Franciscan spirituality is lived depends on the situation of each individual," Leellen said.

If you would like to know more about the Secular Franciscan Order, please contact Leellen at leellen.lewis@gmail.com or on 0411 800 526.

Hon Tim Fischer AC: From the Riverina to Rome to Wollongong

It was a full house on 13 April 2018, as Bishop Brian Mascord attended the annual *Wollongong Catholic Dinner Club* dinner at Centro CBD in Wollongong, organised by the Knights of the Southern Cross.

The guest speaker for this year's event was the Hon Timothy Fischer AC, who spoke on his time in Rome as Australia's first residential ambassador to the Holy See. The title of his talk was: *From the Riverina to the Hub of Rome*.

Tim's speech was fantastic and a great night was had by all 120 guests. The annual event—held after Easter—is a great occasion for members of the Diocese to come together, enjoy



Michael Campbell, Hon Timothy Fischer AC, Jim Lyon and Bishop Brian Mascord.

a wonderful meal in fellowship, and listen to a top-shelf guest speaker. Previous speakers include Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv DD of Parramatta in 2017 and Ron Delessio (father of Sophie) in 2016.

If you would like to learn more about the *Wollongong Catholic Dinner Club*, please contact Michael Campbell on 0490 022 313 or Jim Lyon on (02) 4228 6791.



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