

# JOURNEY

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

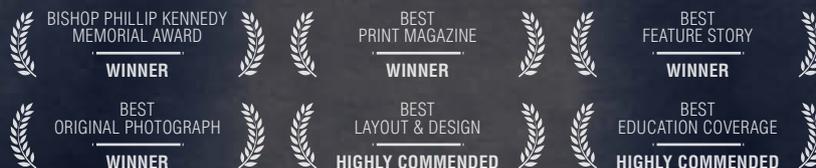
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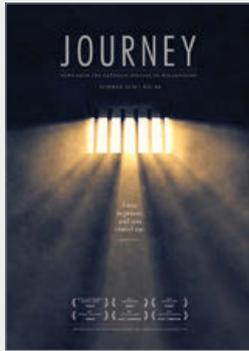
I was  
in prison,  
and you  
visited me.

MATT 25:36

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# Called to *be*.

PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER



I recently visited the official Plenary Council 2020 website and was met with the following statement: “We are blessed with great diversity

in our Catholic Church in Australia—many perspectives, experiences and encounters of faith, walks of life and vision for Church. We are called to explore what it is that we are called to, how we are called to be the presence of Jesus in Australia for today and for generations to come. United by faith, we shall: **“Listen to what the Spirit is saying” (Revelation 2:7).**

This really struck me. We are indeed an incredibly diverse people with great talents and gifts, and we certainly have a diverse vision for Church. However, it was the second part of the statement that really challenged me: “We are called to explore what it is that we are called to, how we are called to be the presence of Jesus in Australia today and for generations to come.” This really began to change my thinking about what the Plenary Council was considering us to think about.

We can become very functional and say that we need to have this, and we need to do that, but are we prepared to answer the question of who we are called to be? I believe that we are

being called to consider not the *doing*, but rather, the who we are called to *be*—in the light of Pope Francis’ call for us to be missionary disciples of Jesus and, primarily, people who will live missionary discipleship in our particular communities.

**I believe that we are being called to consider not the *doing*, but rather, the who we are called to *be*.**

This challenge really does call us out of the comfort zone of pushing our own particular agendas, and lifts us into the realms of the deeper questions of what it means to be Church into the future, or even as simple as asking ourselves are we a healthy community of faith? What are the signs of a healthy community of faith?

There are many who hope that Plenary Council will bring about structural changes, but will it bring about a cultural change in our thinking of who we are? I honestly believe that before we can look at the things we do, we have to know who we are in Jesus, and this is what I believe is the gift of the Plenary Council—to know ourselves at our very core, “Warts and all.” Then, we can consider how we can be the presence of Jesus in Australia today and for generations to come.



Plenary Council 2020  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

In asking and answering the question: “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?” we are putting ourselves in the place of an almost “pre-evangelisation” position where we will encounter the person of Jesus through whom we then encounter the Body of Christ—the Church. From here, we come to understand why we do the things we do.

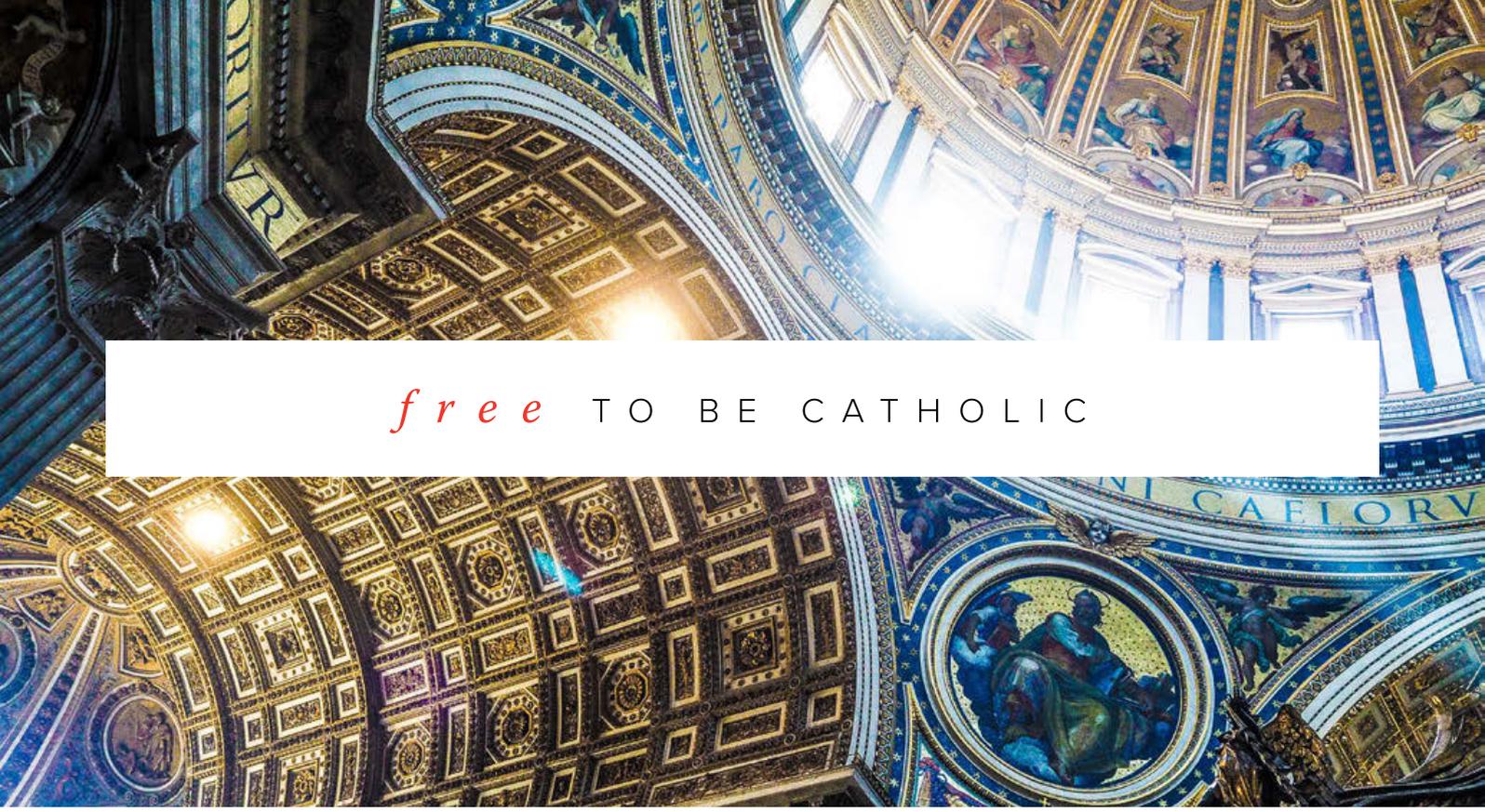
There will be many things discussed in the lead up to, and during, Plenary Council 2020, but at the essence of it all is the simple statement: “Who are we as people of faith, and how are we missionary disciples making the reign of God real in our world?” It’s much more than the *doing*, it really is a call to *be*. ■

Yours in Christ

*Brian Mascord*

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD  
Bishop of Wollongong





# free TO BE CATHOLIC

BY JUDE HENNESSY

***In recent months, there has been much reported on the issue of religious freedom. This national conversation grew out of campaigning for the plebiscite to redefine marriage, with the Turnbull Government in November 2017 assigning the former attorney-general, Phillip Ruddock, the task of conducting a review of existing laws and safeguards on the issue of religious freedom.***

The panel received more than 15,500 submissions, including a submission by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC).

Same-sex marriage advocates and unions have called for an end to exemptions in discrimination law that allow religious organisations to make employment decisions based on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. Religious organisations across all major faiths, including the Catholic Church and the Freedom for Faith group, have called for a *Religious Freedom Act* to give religious institutions a positive right to uphold their values in employment practices.

The full report has not yet been released, with the Federal Government promising to do so by the end of the year. However, some sections have been “leaked” and have fuelled a fire that has seen religious institutions in the cross hairs of many—accused of bigotry and discrimination. The boiling point of these leaks unfortunately coincided with the *National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse*—an historic day where the prime minister powerfully apologised, underlined the horrors of abuse, the culture that allowed it to occur, and set a path forward for justice and healing.

Truly and rightfully, many institutions have been humbled and are currently seeking to repair the horrors of the abuse perpetrated on the most vulnerable in their care. Advocating for the importance and necessity of religious freedom in this milieu is difficult. Some individuals and organisations feel they now have the impetus to demand the curtailing, even removal, of religious freedoms all together. While others are advocating for stronger, clearer legislation protecting religious institutions and people of faith.

**Some individuals and organisations feel they now have the impetus to demand the curtailing, even removal, of religious freedoms all together. While others are advocating for stronger, clearer legislation protecting religious institutions and people of faith.**

## **A critical issue**

While we need to always be sensitive to those that disagree with us, I believe religious freedom is a critical issue facing our society at this point in our nation's history, and thus we should not shy away from advocating firmly for solidifying these freedoms.

Religious freedom can be defined as the freedom we have as people of faith to participate in the community of believers and live our faith. Obviously, at the heart of this is the freedom to worship, but it is so much more than this.

Claims have been made by many in the media, and numerous politicians, that religious schools would use anti-

discrimination legislation to dismiss same-sex attracted students and teachers. The Australian Catholic bishops responded calmly by saying that *all* who seek employment or enrolment in a Catholic school are assessed on the same basis, that is, do they understand and accept the values of that school and do they agree to uphold those values? In doing so, they highlighted that Catholic schools are concerned about behaviour, not identity.

### **What did the Australian bishops say to the *Religious Freedom Review*?**

The ACBC's submission to the *Religious Freedom Review* highlighted three key opportunities for reform to Australian law to better support freedom of religion and belief:

1. The desire for religious freedom to be expressed as a right, as per Article 18(1) of the United Nation's *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, not defined as an exemption or exception, such as is the case with current laws.
2. To ensure that religious bodies are not compelled by the State to use their property or human resources for purposes that go against their beliefs (e.g. abortion or euthanasia).
3. Amend existing legislation that restricts freedom of conscience, especially for those engaged in medical practice.

### **Why is religious freedom important to Catholics?**

Religious Groups, especially the Catholic Church, do so much to benefit our society through extensive education, healthcare, social welfare works, and through the lives of individual believers—all intent on authentically bringing the Gospel to life.

The Church desires to continue to employ people who wish to join us in these worthy goals according to our beliefs and values. At the same time, we want to be able to do so without any threat that funding will be denied because of our beliefs, or subject to conditions that contravene those beliefs. In this sense, the Church is holding fast to the understanding that the “good” done by it is an extension of its Gospel beliefs—not merely as an NGO or

charity organisation. Pope Francis has repeatedly warned against this train of thought: “The Church is like Mary. The Church is not a shop, she is not a humanitarian agency. The Church is not an NGO. The Church is sent to bring Christ and his Gospel to all ... the Church carries Jesus and should be like Mary when she went to visit Elizabeth. What did Mary take to her? Jesus” (*General Audience*, 23 October 2013).

In Australia, one of the key ways the Church brings “Christ and his Gospel to all” is through its Catholic schools network. Potentially, and without adequate protections, Catholic schools could be denied the opportunity to do so, especially if that authentic witness is hamstrung by their being forced to employ individuals who openly reject basic Church teachings.

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#### **POPE FRANCIS**

In a recent article, Monica Doumit powerfully stated: “Catholic and other religious schools are not looking to arbitrarily or unfairly discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or other status. In practice, these exemptions operate to allow schools to give preference to those candidates who demonstrate a commitment to the mission and ethos of the school, and to decline applicants who openly oppose or reject the same.

“The Church is not alone in exercising a right like this. Political parties enjoy similar exemptions to anti-discrimination law. While an employer is generally not permitted to discriminate on the basis of political opinion or activity, exemptions exist to allow politicians and political parties to reject those existing or potential employees who do not share their

**Political parties enjoy similar exemptions to anti-discrimination law.... to allow politicians and political parties to reject those existing or potential employees who do not share their political beliefs. And it makes sense. The country could not run if the mission and values of an organisation could not, by law, be reflected in its staff.**

#### **MONICA DOUMIT**

political beliefs. And it makes sense. The country could not run if the mission and values of an organisation could not, by law, be reflected in its staff.”

Some politicians argue that this can be solved by using an “inherent requirement” test for employment, or as succinctly put during a recent episode of Q&A: “A gay teacher doesn't teach gay maths. They just teach maths.” However, this short-changes the role and impact that teachers have in our schools. As Monica states, “An ‘inherent requirement’ test misunderstands the nature and purpose of faith-based schooling. In the same way that a person of faith is called to let it infuse every aspect of their lives and not restrict it to Sunday Mass and private prayer, Catholic education is not supposed to be restricted to religion classes and the occasional school Mass. Catholicism should permeate the entire school culture, and the State should not try to make it otherwise.”

In this Advent season, we are called to ponder the immensity of God becoming one with us in our humanity. The Incarnation leads us to consider how reliant we are on God and how we must continuously surrender to the Holy Spirit in order to be authentic witnesses of God in the world. Let us prayerfully give thanks for God's guidance in the messiness of our circumstances and consider how we can draw others into the true freedom, joy and hope that a life lived in relationship with Jesus brings. ■

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

I WAS IN  
PRISON  
AND YOU

# WISL



# TEED

ME.

STORY  
BY ANNE SUTHERLAND

INTERVIEWS  
BY DANIEL HOPPER

## SETTING YOUNG CAPTIVES FREE

*Sr Frances Flemming RSJ and  
Lee Bromley*

***On 11 November this year, the Catholic Church observed Prison Sunday—an initiative by Pope Francis that began in 2016 during the Year of Mercy to raise awareness about prisoners and their families.***

***We recently sat down with three chaplains working in a prison and juvenile justice centre in the Diocese of Wollongong to learn how their radical ministry contributes to the life-giving freedom of Jesus Christ that can be found in every prison cell.***

Sr Frances Flemming RSJ is a Josephite nun of 53 years and Lee Bromley is a mum and pastor at Eternity Christian Church. Funded by the Department of Juvenile Justice, CatholicCare Wollongong is the auspicing agency for chaplaincy services run by Sr Fran and Lee at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre in the Macarthur region of the diocese, where traumatised lives—boys and girls as young as 10–15 years—are detained. Lee and Sr Fran both know *there is a darkness deeper where only love can go*. So, carrying God's torch and his big set of keys, they go down to these hidden places of the heart and unlock doors that set the young captives free.

Lee says she was intimidated when she first started working here. "All the boys are quite scary, but it's a facade. They suffer a lot of fear and anxiety themselves," she says.

Family breakdown, family violence, witnessing horrible things, maybe being sexually abused. Mental health issues like ADHD, fathers in prison, and mothers on drugs. Some have even had the intergenerational pain of parents who were in Reiby.

Sadly, Indigenous youth—boys and girls—make up the majority of detainees.

Into this chaos, Reiby brings security and structure. It is a place of rehabilitation, not incarceration. The staff work hard to make it feel like family. "I'm the mum and Sr Fran is the grandma," says Lee.

The chapel area, hard fought for, is now a hub of peace and healing. It overlooks a pond with fish and turtles. The kids look forward to their art and craft sessions, bible studies, relaxation and meditation programs. Trish Quig from CatholicCare also runs a program called *Seasons for Growth* to help with the healing of grief—particularly pertinent as 63% of the kids inside Reiby committed their offences after a significant person in their life had died.

"When young people are in here [the chapel], problems come up and get solved," says Sr Fran. "It's around the table that they're really coming to terms with where they need to be moving. There's always food and drink—it's very Eucharistic. They might say something that alerts you to the fact that they've got it; that they've come to some understanding of what they might need to do. Change is possible for these kids ... yeah, change is possible," says Sr Fran, her voice warm and passionate as she talks.

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Lee Bromley and Sr Frances Flemming RSJ

PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

She continues, “It’s about loving them back to life. It’s about loving them into life. It’s somewhere in the middle. One of my favourite things is to remind them that God is faithful and he will never, ever give up on them. He says, ‘Just let me love you.’ My favourite psalm is: ‘I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all I ever knew of you. On the day I called, you answered me, you increased the strength of my soul’” (Psalm 138:1–3).

Sr Fran gets her greatest joy from being that living psalm for others. “I always make sure if I see someone, I stop and have a yarn—staff as well. It’s not so much about setting up a meeting, it’s just free.” She loves the one-on-one when the kids want to come down and talk with her. “I’m not interested in what they’ve done. I’m interested in them. I tell them that God wants to hang out with us, warts and all.” And, so does Sr Fran.

Lee says it is vital for these young people to have a concrete experience of this love. She says, “To give them a sense of hope for the future, they need to see that there are good people out there in the world so they can seek it out for themselves in the future.” That’s why, with the help of Br Paul Hough, they enlisted the help of senior boys from St Gregory’s College in

**One of my favourite things is to remind them that God is faithful and he will never, ever give up on them. He says, ‘Just let me love you.’**

Campbelltown to be role models—big brothers—who visit on Wednesday’s during the school term to play football and volleyball with the young people in Reiby. When it was first mentioned to the Year 11 boys, the whole grade put their hands up. On one of the afternoons, the Reiby crew hosted a high tea that they had cooked for the St Greg’s boys. That was a high point for both sides.

Sr Fran and Lee both agree it gives these disadvantaged kids a snapshot of what normal life can be like, and says to them, “Look, you might be in here, but you can do this.” Conversely, the boys from St Greg’s see what a privileged background they come from, and it helps them to relate to others who are different.

Towards the end of their sentence, the young people in Reiby undertake a program to assist them in determining what they’re going to do when they get out. In earlier years, when their day of release arrived, all their possessions were

just thrown in a black garbage bag as if to say their life was garbage. “Now,” says Lee, “we send them off with a beautiful tote bag—in it is a card, and some toiletries and phone numbers. It helps them to know they don’t go out alone—someone’s still interested in them.” Lee and Sr Fran continue the care for months, often years, with visits, phone calls and advocacy. This may be the young person’s only life-line.

Because of this chronic lack of support services, up to 68% re-offend. “They often come back in here for Christmas because they have no Christmas at home. Why wouldn’t you reoffend to get back in here? It’s safer,” sighs Sr Fran.

Lee puts a lot of focus on helping these youth get practical skills to cope on the outside. Most of the 15-year-olds who come in have a reading age of five. So, with a mum’s heart, she started a homework centre 15 years ago so they would at least have basic life skills like reading a newspaper, browsing the internet or looking up a bus timetable. It runs once a fortnight on Monday nights and is staffed by over 30 volunteers who want to make a difference. Again, it’s the role model of good people showing these “modern orphans” that hope and love really do exist in the world—that things can be different for them in the future.

## LOITERING WITH INTENT

Deacon Peter Presdee

**I**t's the distinctive Australian—rough on the edges—accent that catches your attention. Some would think that an ordained deacon may speak in a more cultured tone, but Dn Peter Presdee sits comfortably with who he is—his faults, his faith and the frailties of the criminals he visits with, as a prison chaplain at South Coast Correctional Centre in Nowra—a maximum security prison housing 500 men from “anywhere and everywhere within the state of New South Wales”. As you listen, you see a man bending down and drawing in the dirt; challenging, but not forcing, a message he lives by. “The best way to accept God’s love is to accept that *I’m* not perfect,” he says.

Dn Peter freely admits to having thrown a lot of stones in his life: “I know the language of the street,” he says with raw honesty, speaking of his background in trade unionism, street ministry in Campbelltown and running a St Vincent de Paul Society refuge before becoming a deacon. “So, if someone’s way of talking is ‘strine like’ and they apologise,

I say, ‘Don’t apologise. Just talk the way you need to talk. I’m not here to be here on a pedestal for you.’ They get a surprise to know a cleric is human, but it’s in our humanity that Jesus works, not in our position.”

The *who I am* of Dn Peter took many years to arrive at. In his youth, he felt called to be a priest, but after four years in the seminary, he left and led a “wholly secular life”, dabbling in other churches until he returned to the Catholic faith by way of a coincidental miracle. After his conversion, he studied and prayed, prayed and studied, for 10 years—feeling called to serve the Church as a deacon with “no clear plan”. What he was being asked to do wasn’t easy, and eventually, this long faith journey led him to move his family to Nowra to work as a prison chaplain.

A typical day always starts with prayer. “I say my Office. I’m very, very strong on that and I always say the minor prayers during the day, coz without prayer, I can do nothing. I am an instrument in there, the same as anyone else is. We’re all part of God’s voice there,” says Dn Peter. He uses the plural to encompass his colleagues of other faiths who work with him on a pastoral team.

**... without prayer, I can do nothing. I am an instrument in there, the same as anyone else is. We’re all part of God’s voice there.**

“After that, I make myself available for any prisoner who has specifically requested to see a chaplain. We run chapel services—either a communion service, or a bible study, or prayer and singing. If I run a communion service, it’s Catholic. A strong view I have is to introduce the inmates to Jesus and his family. I talk about the saints and often Mary. They gotta know their mother.

“We don’t ask anyone who they are. We just give them the fruits of our faith,” he says.

Dn Peter continues, “The main body of my day is ‘loitering with intent’. I might go down to an exercise yard or a pod and see how they’re flying there. You gotta be available. Some respect you, some don’t. But, if you look at the Gospels, Jesus always gave people space.

*continued next page ▶*





“People are angry at God, angry at themselves, angry at everyone. I always tell people, ‘If you’re angry with God, tell God you’re angry with him. God’s big enough to listen to your anger.’ But I also tell them that God’s prepared to walk with them.”

And what does Dn Peter do when they’re angry with him? “I listen to them,” he replies calmly. It’s that understated passion in his voice that lets you know that there is nothing he wouldn’t do to get through the message of spreading God’s unconditional love to the very edges of humanity.

“Jesus has a special heart for the poor, and we are to be Christ to them. We need to start becoming identified more and more with the poor. That’s where the Church’s mission is.

“Through my Baptism, I’ve been told to take Jesus to the people,” he says.

One of the biggest problems that Dn Peter identifies in the mission field is that it is so understaffed when it comes to supporting prisoners on the outside. “So many of them come back in. They walk out of a place where they’ve got some sort of protection, and back into violence—families where domestic violence is rife, crystal meth and alcohol abuse. All that stuff is just a process of hiding from your own self.

**So many of them come back in. They walk out of a place where they’ve got some sort of protection, and back into violence—families where domestic violence is rife, crystal meth and alcohol abuse. All that stuff is just a process of hiding from your own self. That’s its own prison.**

That’s its own prison. Of course they’re gonna want to do something wrong to come back in. It’s safer in here.

“Kairos and St Vincent de Paul do a phenomenal job, but maybe it’s time to look into community chaplaincy—where we go into areas that we wouldn’t have gone into in times past,” he says.

Dn Peter believes the model of *restorative justice* holds the template of long-term healing for both victim and offender. He tells the story of St Maria Goretti as an example. Born in Corinaldo, Italy in 1890, St Maria Goretti was the eldest of six children. Coming from a poor family, Maria assisted her mother in housework and in caring for her five younger siblings

following her father’s death. In 1902, a neighboring farmhand, Alessandro Serenelli, who had made previous inappropriate comments and sexual advances toward her, attempted to rape Maria in her house. When she resisted, Alessandro stabbed her 14 times. After being found bleeding to death, she was rushed to hospital where she forgave Alessandro, saying: “Yes, for the love of Jesus, I forgive him ... and I want him to be with me in paradise.”

Of this example, Dn Peter says: “The young man that murdered Maria was incarcerated for 30 years. Maria’s dying wish to her mother was forgive him. Think about that one for a minute. I’ve gotta forgive the murderer of my daughter? She *struggled and struggled* to come to that forgiveness. Our dear friend who did the murder became so angry with himself that he became an incorrigible prisoner. More brawls than not. Chaplains trying to get through to him, all to no avail. One night he has a dream, and in that dream, he sees Maria giving him 14 daffodils representing forgiveness for the 14 stab wounds. At the same time, the confessor of Maria’s mother walks with her and assists her in finally asking to visit this man. These two people come together. It took time, but eventually trust builds and turns to love. When he gets out of jail, who sponsors him? Maria’s mother. The last 10 years of that guy’s life are spent as a Franciscan lay brother in Rome helping the poor.

“It’s not about being a perfect Church, but a *struggling welcoming struggling* Church.

“What can I as an average Catholic in the pews be doing?” Dn Peter asks self reflectively from the heart. “Two things—study and pray, pray and study. The very first thing is to pray. Look at your gifts and identify where they can be used and seek advice. Not everybody is equipped to go out there [in prison chaplaincy] and do that, but some of us are. Some of us have got those gifts to answer the cry of Jesus: ‘I was in prison and you visited me.... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brothers, you did it to me’” (Matthew 25:36–40). ■

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

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



PHOTO: DARREN MCDOWELL

# GETTING OVER OURSELVES

## ... the only way to prepare for the Plenary Council

BY SHANE DWYER

*If by now you haven't heard that the Church in this country is preparing for its first plenary council since the 1930's, you may not have been paying attention.*

It has been on the radar for some years now, even prior to the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* that many mistakenly believe has prompted the call for the Council. You might recall the *Year of Grace* in 2012–13 which was held as a way for us to begin to prepare for this event. So, we have been on the road for at least five years now. In the last year, it has gone up a notch with the formal launch of the preparation and dialogue phase occurring at Pentecost this year.

### In theory

Since the formation of the *Plenary Council Planning Committee*, I have acted as a consultant, in theory, providing assistance on any theological matters that arise. I say “in theory” because I’ve seen that the committee members themselves have this area pretty well covered. I continue to attend the meetings, not so much because I believe I am needed, but because I find myself inspired as I listen to the way those attending to this important work talk about their hopes and desires for the Church in this country. A guiding conviction that has emerged from this

committee is that all people, no matter their degree of affiliation with the Church, be welcomed to the discussion and have a voice on who we are as Church into the future.

### Grounded in prayer

This is not an easy road to take. Having sat with a number of groups throughout Australia as they seek to prepare their submission to the Plenary Council, I have come across a recurrent snag. It relates to how groups instinctively go about the listening and dialogue process. From what I have seen, it comes down to the basic predisposition of the more forthright members of the group. For those where the dominant figures are comfortable with prayer and open dialogue, the group functions more or less as the planning committee has intended. The discussion begins with prayer and silence, where each person present attempts to get in touch with what they believe God is asking of us today. Because the discussion is grounded in prayer, people then more easily share their stories and insights, knowing that while not everyone might connect with what they are saying, they will be heard and respected. This allows them to be non-defensive and, therefore, open to modifying their views when they listen to what others have to say.

It becomes another matter altogether if the dominant figures either foreshorten the prayer and silence, or dispense with it altogether. In those circumstances I notice a more adversarial approach. Instead of focusing on what each of us believes God is asking of us, the question much more quickly becomes, “What do I think is wrong with the Church?” or “What are my personal



opinions about what ‘the Church’ should be doing?” In these circumstances, I notice two inevitable outcomes: The dialogue either curtails very quickly, or it becomes argumentative. Instead of the inspirational sort of encounter that I referenced above, people feel shut down and confirmed in their view that the Church is not a place where their experiences and insights are welcomed. Hope begins to fade, and those who are already disillusioned with the Church, remain so.

### Eyes on Jesus

So, I end with a plea. The journey to the Plenary Council began in 2012 with the *Year of Grace: A year in which we were invited to “contemplate the face of Christ.”* We were invited to do this, not as a “one-off”, but as the beginning of a deep conversion process. We are being invited to reflect again on what it truly means to be the disciples of Jesus Christ. When we take our eyes off him, we experience the very thing that happened to St Peter when he got out of the boat and began to walk towards Jesus (Matthew 14:22). Peter was fine as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. The moment he ceased to contemplate the face of Christ, he began to drown. Which will we be: the Church of Jesus Christ with our eyes on him, or a self-focused group of people in danger of going under? ■

Shane Dwyer is director of the National Centre for Evangelisation.



Plenary Council 2020  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

# No longer business as usual

## John Tubridy, reflects on Plenary Council 2020

INTERVIEW BY  
DANIEL HOPPER

### How did you get involved in helping to coordinate the diocese's participation in Plenary Council 2020?

I was away on holiday when I got a call from the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Jude Hennessy, on behalf of Bishop Brian. He gave me a rundown on Plenary Council 2020 and pitched me the role. I have been fortunate to have worked for three agencies in the Church during my career—Catholic Education, CatholicCare and the Office of the Bishop—so I have an appreciation for the work of the Church and all involved.

I told Jude that I needed some time to pray about it and do some more research on what the Plenary Council was all about. The diocese had already produced some quality resources which proved invaluable in my discerning process. It became apparent to me that this is an historic moment in the life of the Church in Australia and a chance of a lifetime for me—and all Catholics—to reflect honestly on our past and listen to the Spirit about future directions of the Church in Australia. So, I decided to listen to the Spirit asking me to get involved!

### The idea of a plenary council in Australia has been discussed for over a decade. Why do you think now?

That's a good question, especially considering the last time we had one



was 1937! I think there are a number of reasons why this decade-long discussion of a plenary council in Australia has now come to fruition—apart from the obvious reason that the decision is a work of the Holy Spirit in and of itself.

Professor Richard Gaillardetz from Boston College in the USA recently said of the Australian Plenary Council: "I think this is one of the most important things that is going to happen in the Church—universal—in the next four or five years.... If done well, it could have a marvellous revitalising effect, both in the Church in Australia and give some hope to other churches in other parts of the world."

I believe Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane hit the nail on the head when he said that the decision to hold a plenary council was a "recognition that we can no longer put up a sign saying *business as usual*". Pope Francis has frequently referred to the importance of us being a synodal church. Archbishop Mark reiterated this when he said that if bishops are to "listen to all the voices

### If done well, it could have a marvellous revitalising effect, both in the Church in Australia and give some hope to other churches in other parts of the world.

and try to bring them into harmony", dialogue is necessary, even if it might reveal differences and unresolved issues, because, for all its messiness, dialogue is a serious process of discernment, and can be exhilarating and refreshing in deeper ways—producing real fruit.

Archbishop Mark also acknowledged that the Royal Commission made it abundantly clear that the culture in the Church has to change. Then, there's the reality of the ongoing decline in regular Mass attendance across Australia and the continuing downturn in use of the sacraments—particularly Reconciliation and Marriage—plus the waning of local vocations to the priesthood and religious life.



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

Therefore, I believe the decision to hold Plenary Council 2020 is a courageous and timely opportunity for the Catholic Church in Australia to be open to listening to what the Spirit is saying to us at this time. And, for the first time in our history, the laity have been asked to



PHOTOS (ABOVE): DARREN MCDOWELL

share stories of their faith experiences and submit questions about the future of the Church.

**What phase of the plenary council journey are we in now?**

We are currently in the listening phase. My involvement has been to assist in training over 120 local animators in every parish, school, agency and community in the diocese. They are the foot soldiers on the ground holding listening and dialogue sessions in their local communities and then reporting the results back to Bishop Brian—in person—at regional gatherings. The regional gatherings with the bishop are not there for resolving issues. They are there to allow Bishop Brian to listen

and understand the main issues that have been raised in the various faith communities.

The response so far has been overwhelming, and the support of our parish priests, parish councils, principals and community leaders has been appreciated. The courage and generosity of our local animators has been outstanding. We are so fortunate to have attracted local animators who are committed Catholics and who are able to hold listening and dialogue sessions where people can listen humbly and speak boldly without being judged (meet some of our local animators on pp. 14–15).

**Is it too late to contribute?**

We have until Ash Wednesday (6 March 2019) to contribute during this year of listening. Submissions can be made by either completing a local feedback form, or by making an online submission at **plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au**, or by joining a local listening and dialogue session.

Next year, there will be feedback about the major themes identified Australia wide. There's still time and I urge you to contribute if you have not already done so. ■

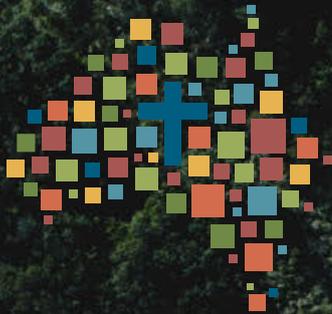
*Your voice is important.  
Your faith story is important.  
The Church is listening.*

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



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# YOUR LOCAL animators

INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY DANIEL HOPPER

There are over 120 trained animators in the diocese volunteering their time to coordinate the local parish, school and agency response to *Plenary Council 2020*. We recently sat down with eight animators to ask about their involvement and how the listening process is progressing.

## Frances Fairs

*St Michael's Parish, Nowra*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

At first, I didn't think it was optional! When I realised that it was, I remained willing to help as I want to do all I can to bring people into genuine relationship with Jesus through the Church. I'm hopeful of a better future for our Church in Australia and I agree wholeheartedly that we need to listen to the Spirit through each other and allow the Spirit to guide us into the future.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

I've found listening to people and their desire for positive change in our Church encouraging. The hope that I've encountered is encouraging.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

Currently, it is time—my time (or lack of it!)

## Jacqueline Gorey

*Mater Dei School, Camden*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

As the leader of mission and vision at Mater Dei, I wanted to lead our school to, and through, this open dialogue process. It's an historic time for the Catholic Church in Australia and I wished to be a small part of it.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

I have been encouraged by the discussions the bishops have been having, e.g. the issue around whether the Catholic Church may allow married men to become priests. It's exciting that ground level changes are being examined and explored.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

Some people may not have any interest in the future directions of the Catholic Church and therefore may try and influence others. This is not specific to my setting, just a general observation.

## Jacqueline McCormack

*CatholicCare, Wollongong*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

I was encouraged to hear that the Church was actively asking for insights from all people—no matter what their relationship with the Church. It reflects an institution that is willing to learn, change and grow. I also thought, as a female in my early 20s, I would be able to bring a certain perspective to the process.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

People seem to be heartened that their voices are valued. They are also pleased to learn that no topic is off the table.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

I am finding people to be quite time poor to attend sessions, so it is helpful to be able to inform them of the variety of ways that they can participate, especially online. There also seems to be a level of doubt that significant change is truly going to happen and it's difficult to counter this.

## Simon Kinch

*St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Parish Primary School, Milton*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

As a Catholic with a young family who also works with young people, I am particularly interested in what the future holds for the Catholic Church in Australia. When I look at my four young children, I wonder what place the Church might have in their lives and how ready the Church is to meet the young people of the future where they are.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

During the sessions that I have facilitated so far, people have been extremely willing to share their viewpoints openly and sincerely. Having an animator in a school means that we are able to hear not just from practising Catholics, but also from those who have found themselves distanced from the Church, while also hearing the important voices of non-Catholic spouses and parents who choose Catholic education.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

Finding a time to meet that suits busy parents. I am offering a range of meeting times before, during and after school hours, on the school grounds and offsite.

## Dr Jodi Steel

*St Michael's Parish, Thirroul*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

In my professional life, I have a reputation for integrity, openness, courage and collaboration, and I'm good at asking questions. I see the Plenary Council as an opportunity for renewal in the Church: we need to understand what we're doing well—and may want to do more of—and identify what needs to change.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

I've been encouraged by the passion and hope people have to see our Church be all it can be, even those who have been disillusioned by many false starts on Vatican II renewal. It's been humbling to hear people's faith experiences and ideas, and experience how they engage with each other with openness and creativity to propose important questions for the Plenary.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

Changing our culture and practice will require a lot of effort and time, which can seem daunting at times. I think the Church needs to renew its focus so that purpose and mission lead our institution, practices and behaviours.

## Timothy Hart

*Catholic Education  
Diocese of Wollongong*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

In his video address, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe talks about the plenary process as being a "call to action". So, for me, accepting this role is part of this call. In my workplace, I collaborate with a team of animators, each doing their part.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

There is great hope out there among the laity. Amongst the challenges, concerns and saddening stories, participants have also expressed their dreams for the Church. For me, this has provided an uplifting hope-filled vision of our Church's future.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

For our animators, some would say that listening and guiding discussion without also giving our own input has been a challenge. Others might say that the process is quite confronting and some of the personal stories shared have tapped into feelings of hurt and sorrow. For me, as we prepare to meet with Bishop Brian, summing-up everything we have listened to into a few concise points is quite a challenge as we want to honour everyone's stories.

## Don Turvey

*St Anthony's Parish, Picton*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

The question, "What is God asking of us" got me in. As one who grew up and served in the Presbyterian tradition and then in the Catholic tradition, church has always been a congregation of the faithful, "us", on a shared journey of faith. This role gives me an opportunity to encourage my fellow travellers to look back at where we have come from and suggest new pathways for our journey into the future.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

The fact that it is actually happening is encouragement in itself. The genuine stories, listening and discernment exchanged in dialogue sessions, convey a sincere hope for change in the future and provide encouragement to continue dialogue and extend it to all aspects of Church life and faith.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

Confronting and dealing with a feeling of scepticism—held among many—that change will happen. Reaching out to other believers outside our local church to encourage their response remains an ongoing challenge.

## Dr Jason Young

*St Thomas Aquinas Catholic  
Parish, Bowral, and St Michael's  
Catholic Parish, Mittagong*

### Why did you accept the role as local animator?

My story is not dissimilar to others—there was always a flavour of optimism at the heart of my childhood. Many a time my parents would reference the words of Pope John XXIII in "throwing open the windows to let the fresh air of the Spirit blow through." It is within those words of John Paul XXIII that there appears an awakening as to what sits at the heart the Council—the need to let the Spirit be intertwined in all that we do.



### What have you found encouraging in the role so far?

The deep interest and willingness of our parishes to be involved. Being stopped in the main street of Bowral and asked, "What time is the parish assembly?" may appear an innocent enquiry, but they have been frequent, and with a determined interest to be involved.

### What has been the greatest challenge?

We have been keen to ensure that all in the parish understand that now is the time for Bishop Brian to have an opportunity to hear the voice of the people of the diocese. Time is always a challenge, but the people of Mittagong and Bowral are very keen to listen and enter into dialogue.

*A new dawn has been ushered in at the University of Wollongong with Fr Mark De Battista commencing his role as the Catholic chaplain to the university in 2018. In this interview, Fr Mark reflects on some of his past experiences that have led to his new role in teaching our young people how to hope.*

INTERVIEW BY  
JUDE HENNESSY

**You've just finished your first year as Catholic chaplain to the University of Wollongong. What's it been like?**

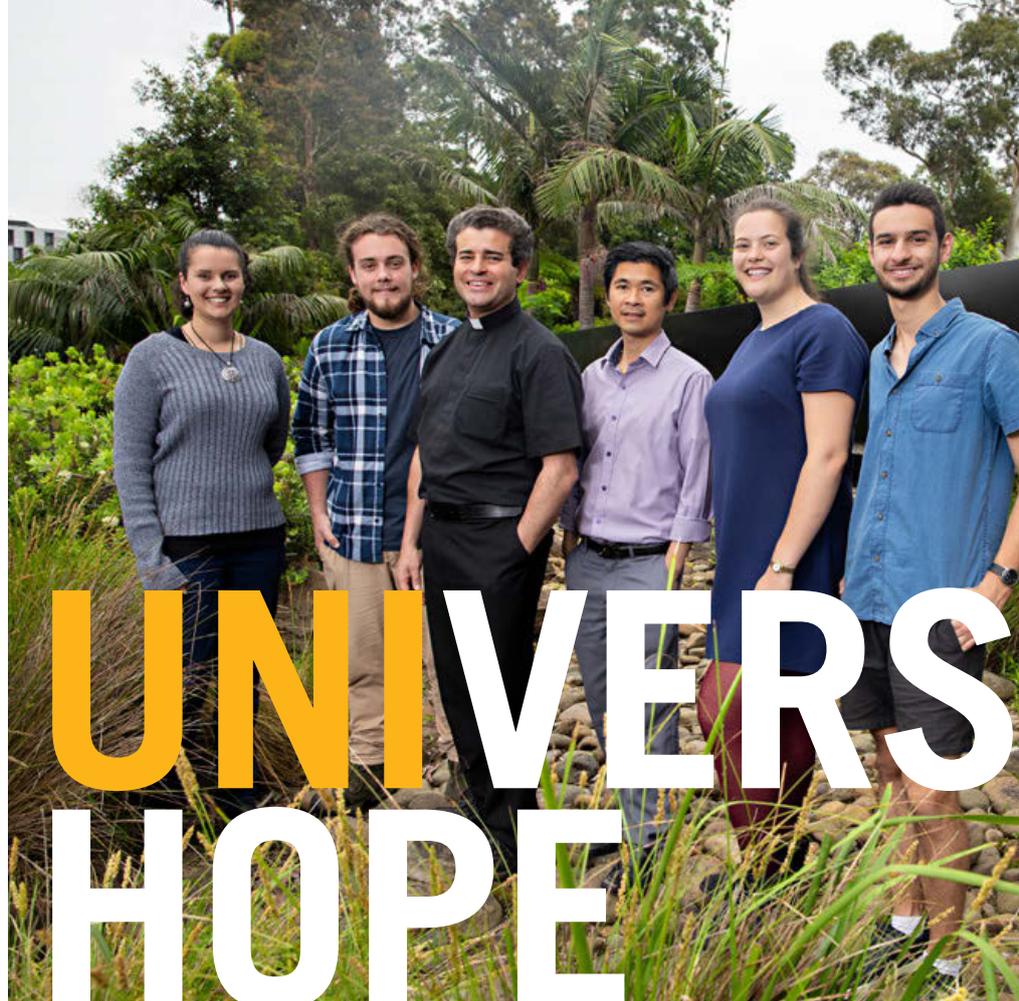
It's been a wonderful opportunity and I have been touched by the openness of the students, their sincerity, and their hunger to know about Christ. Working at the university is, in some sense, an open marketplace of ideas, where everybody is welcome to contribute to the life of the campus. However, it is very competitive and requires strategy to make the most of the opportunities and resources available.

**Did you come into this role with any experience of university work?**

As a matter of fact, I've had quite a bit of experience in two assignments in the USA. One was 18 months in the University of Illinois, in Champaign-Urbana, and the other was a national chaplaincy with *Fellowship of Catholic University Students* (FOCUS) based in Greeley, Colorado. Both were extremely providential experiences for me where I learnt a great deal about life on the campus and the hunger that students demonstrate for Christ and the Church.

The site of 2,000 young students at all of our Masses over a weekend, where the average age was 24 years old, was an amazing site to behold—an inspiration to my own life and priestly vocation. One Ash Wednesday, some 6,000 students passed through our chapel. Thank God we had seven priests and six nuns on staff!

With FOCUS, I had the opportunity of working in their headquarters and was constantly involved in visiting FOCUS Catholic campus staff across the USA and assisting in their formation



for their ongoing work. In my time with FOCUS, I learned how crucially important it is that we strive to raise up well formed leaders from the heart of the Church.

**What excites you about the role?**

That so many students are hungry to know more about Jesus Christ, despite the many demands made on their time, with many of them having to find part-time work to support their journey through university. The students are so good-hearted and open to learning.

I see a great opportunity for me as chaplain to have a fatherly and brotherly role, working closely with the students. For some, it will be a closer working relationship involving spiritual direction and access to the sacraments on a regular basis. For others, it will mean opportunities to come to weekly faith and outreach talks, appealing to the curiosity of students and inviting them to an intellectual faith formation.

This is appealing to believers and questioners alike. For example, at one of the last Masses of the semester this year, we had two Mormon missionaries, a Pentecostal (formerly

Catholic) and an Anglican student, in addition to the Catholic students, coming along, eager to witness a Mass and listen to the homily message about the Scriptures. Their reaction to the Mass was incredible.

I am excited that many more students in coming years will come to the Catholic chaplaincy and join the Catholic Society in order to be strengthened in their faith, to experience encouragement, and to be deepened in their commitment to life with Christ. This necessarily requires challenging their thinking and preconceptions, but also experiencing the joy of growth in faith.

**What is the toughest thing for you in the role?**

That there are around 8,000 Catholics on the campus—most of whom are disconnected from the Church—yet, who have a deep need for meaning in their lives and for the hope and a sense of purpose that goes so far beyond merely working towards a career or accumulating wealth. The spiritual hunger of every student, and the large staff on campus is something that, in a university setting, has largely



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

not in a Christian milieu. For some, knowing what I, and representatives of the Catholic Society, stand for as members of the Church sees us met with levels of curiosity and perhaps shock. I know that doing simple things such as wearing clerical attire is both a sign of contradiction and affirmation. I simply look, smile and say hello to everyone, regardless of how I am perceived. While some ignore this, many others—both students and staff—respond well and in kind.

**What has surprised you in this your first year?**

The university has been most welcoming and encouraging of me and the purpose of the role of chaplain. I didn't expect this degree of cooperation and support from a secular institution. There are also plans afoot by the university for the development of a multi-faith centre and worship space, which is most encouraging.

**What do you hope evolves in this ministry in the next few years?**

I hope to evangelise with different opportunities and offerings to engage with students and staff. The university is a great ground for vocational recruitment and good conversations about the choices God offers us. I hope our Bible study and faith sharing groups grow, with weekly scholarly teachings of the Church, answering life's big questions and teaching young people how to hope. I desire to offer

the sacraments, and the regularity of these will, in time, I trust, lead to more frequent reception by students and staff alike. There is already interest from students leading Bible studies and small groups. We are trying really hard in our plans for the next two years to dramatically increase our profile in the university, both as a chaplaincy and Catholic Society presence. The NET Ministries Team—who will commence in the diocese next year—will be a welcome presence on campus too. I hope we can think big in the next few years, maybe even considering development of a site for a Catholic college residence for university students. ■



*To find out more about the University of Wollongong Catholic Society, visit [catholicsociety.org.au](http://catholicsociety.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.

been eclipsed by our secular age. This requires a consistent and constant effort from the followers of Christ to make disciples of all the nations by unabashedly proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel.

One of the reoccurring experiences for me on the campus is akin to what I imagine it must have been like for St Paul in Corinth, namely, that we are

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# THE POWER OF

# Love



BY JACQUELINE MCCORMACK

*For many people, home isn't just a place—it's a feeling. It is laughter, a warm hug, a lingering smile or a home cooked meal. Most importantly, home is where you feel loved. It can be a place—your favourite coffee shop, your spot in the park or the place where you grew up. It can also be a person. For George and Suzi, home was their love for one another—a force stronger than illness and disease.*

Very little is known about George and Suzi's life story. Born in Serbia in 1926, George lost his parents at a young age, and after the sudden death of his sister, George lived and worked with his uncle. He later immigrated to Australia.

## Operation Fortress

George and Suzi first started receiving services from CatholicCare in 2014—George nearing 90 years of age and Suzi in her 80s. Staff recalled the day they received notification of the aged care

assessment and went out for their initial visit with George and Suzi.

"When we went out for the first visit, we found ourselves approaching a very unusual place," said their CatholicCare aged care case manager, Deb.

"It resembled a fortress, with barbed wire all around it, and so many keys—keys for almost everything. They were obsessed with locking things away. Removing the padlock from the front door and bringing in a vital call [medical alert system] was our first objective to enable access for ambulance workers. This took six months," Deb continued.

It was obvious that George and Suzi both had immense trust issues and grave suspicion of anyone and anything. "When we commenced services, George didn't trust anyone, but for some reason he was never suspicious of us—he was always very generous," said Deb.

## Unspoken loss

CatholicCare community support worker, Sylvia, was one of George and

**For George and Suzi, home was their love for one another—a force stronger than illness and disease.**

Suzi's primary workers. Sylvia, fluent in Serbian, was their communication channel as English wasn't their first language. "When I would walk into their house, George would be happily chatting away, but only about what was happening now. He would never talk about the past much, as if he was trying to block it out," Sylvia said.

Their withdrawal from the world stemmed from the tragic death of their only child, John, who was killed in a car accident in 1977 at just 30 years of age. He was a talented engineer who built their family home alongside George. "George would never speak of the incident, but if ever his name was mentioned, there would always be tears," said Deb. After their son's death, George and Suzi had no other family or friends, they only had each other.

## Family meals

George's initial aged care assessment stated that he was suffering from malnutrition and fatigue. Staff immediately noticed they were living off very basic food with nothing substantial such as meat or vegetables. Suzi was experiencing the early signs of dementia and community support workers would find food—such as yoghurt—being stored strangely in the cupboard.

"We started cooking with them and introducing them back to meat and green vegetables—they didn't eat 'green stuff', as George would call it," said Sylvia.

"Eventually, they would eat anything, and all the workers would make a point of sitting down and having lunch with them, like a family. That's what they wanted. They wanted you to eat, to have a coffee, to feel like you were at home," she continued.

## The darkness of dementia

During late 2017, Suzi's dementia was becoming progressively worse. Community support workers would arrive to commence their service, but Suzi would not know who they were or why they were there.

"I would go through the cupboards as I was tidying up to see what they needed, and then I'd go do the shopping. I would start packing it away and sometimes Suzi would help me. When it was all put away, Suzi would come back and open the fridge and grab my hand and say, 'Look at all these things. We have everything now!'" said Sylvia.

Suzi couldn't remember that it was Sylvia who had just bought and packed away all the shopping. "George would say, 'I know Suzi, I know. It was Sylvia who brought it all,' but Suzi just couldn't understand. I remember George just thought she wasn't listening, but eventually our workers helped him to understand that it wasn't that Suzi was not listening, she just didn't have the capacity anymore to understand what she was being asked," Sylvia said.

George would never sleep until Suzi was in bed—safe and asleep. She



**Their withdrawal from the world stemmed from the tragic death of their only child, John, who was killed in a car accident in 1977 at just 30 years of age.**



would be up all day and night pacing and walking around the house, sometimes from 8 a.m. until 4 a.m. the next day, and George, at 91 years of age, would be up with her until he was finally able to get her into bed, and he would then just collapse with exhaustion.

One day, a community support worker arrived to find George on the floor unconscious, with Suzi just stepping over him to continue pacing around the house, unable to comprehend the situation. George received medical attention, but it was after this that he finally acknowledged he needed help and he couldn't continue to care for Suzi.

## Separation is no respite

Suzi was placed in respite care at a dementia care facility in March 2018. What was initially supposed to be a short respite placement, kept getting extended as George was suffering from myelodysplasia—a disease which affects the production of normal blood cells in the bone marrow—and he just wasn't getting better. Without Suzi, George was not himself, constantly overwhelmed with tears and loneliness from being separated from her.

*continued next page* ▶





*George and Suzi sharing one final kiss*

**It was as if he was drinking her in—inhaling her. Especially their last kiss—he was just totally inhaling her feel, and everything about her. He was home.**

“They were just staring at each other and Suzi was picking some fluff off his top. It was as if he was drinking her in—inhaling her. Especially their last kiss—he was just totally inhaling her feel, and everything about her. He was home,” said Deb.

“Charmaine noticed that after the kiss, his breathing was very shallow and his pulse was really slow. We thought we had lost him.

“But when we took him back to the hospital, he started laughing and talking in his room. He couldn’t stop talking about love, about Suzi, and how much love he had for our staff members,” said Sylvia.

Even in his own final days of need, George couldn’t help but think of Suzi. “He made me promise that I would look after her. He wanted to make sure that she had everything she needed,” said Deb. George died peacefully on 26 September 2018.

Deb was at the forefront of ensuring George could be reunited with Suzi for the last time. When asked about what made her want to go above and beyond, Deb said, “It’s what humanity is all about, and it was the right thing to do. It’s the values of CatholicCare and it’s the way the world should be—you should look after one another, especially when someone is unable to look after themselves.”

CatholicCare would like to thank their aged care team for their unwavering determination to reunite George with Suzi for their final goodbye—a stark reminder of the fragility of life and the power of love. ■

*If you or your loved one needs assistance, please call CatholicCare on (02) 4227 1122.*

Jacqueline McCormack is the community relations assistant for CatholicCare. Wollongong.

◀ *continued from previous page*

“When they were in the house, they would kiss each other goodnight, every night. They had this beautiful loving relationship—they were inseparable,” said Deb.

“I can recall one occasion when George had to be hospitalised because his blood transfusions had stopped working. The separation caused such heartache and stress, so hospital staff brought another bed into his room so Suzi could be by his side.”

After 70 years of marriage and losing their child, the one thing that remained and never wavered was their love for one another. Home was no longer a place for George and Suzi, home was a feeling, and that feeling was strongest when they were together.

Against the advice of the CatholicCare aged care team, George decided he wanted Suzi to return home at the end of her respite placement. Suzi was returned home, but within 24 hours, George called Deb in tears asking if they could please take her away.

“George knew he had exhausted all avenues. He tried to get her home, but he was too sick and unable to cope with her not knowing who he was.

“Suzi’s dementia had forced her back into the mindset of a 10-year-old girl—constantly carrying around baby dolls as she waited for her grandmother to come and pick her up,” Deb said.

### **Love’s final light**

Suzi was placed in a permanent dementia facility, with George visiting once or twice a week. George’s health

began to severely deteriorate, and he was no longer well enough to see Suzi after being placed in palliative care. Since both George and Suzi had been placed in alternative permanent caring arrangements, they no longer required in-home assistance from CatholicCare. But, George had a final wish: He wanted to see Suzi one last time.

CatholicCare’s aged care team sprang into action to fulfil George’s dying wish. “Their last meeting was so emotional, but even more so because we all thought it wasn’t going to happen,” said Deb.

**It’s what humanity is all about, and it was the right thing to do. It’s the values of CatholicCare and it’s the way the world should be—you should look after one another, especially when someone is unable to look after themselves.**

It was determined that George was well enough to receive a gate pass from palliative care if accompanied by a nurse. CatholicCare’s registered nurse, Charmaine, accompanied George—along with Deb and Sylvia—in a special taxi organised to accommodate George’s wheelchair on his final journey to see Suzi.

“When we arrived, we were standing there waiting for Suzi to come over, and I told her we were here to see her. She came over to George and remembered him!” exclaimed Sylvia.

# A Heart that Sees

BY JACQUELINE MCCORMACK

On Friday 9 November 2018, CatholicCare launched their new strategic plan for 2018–2021 named, *A Heart that Sees*, following their annual staff Mass at the Xavier Centre in Wollongong.

The strategic plan articulates the direction of CatholicCare’s efforts for the next three years. It features three themes: *Recognise, Respond and Transform*, ensuring continued delivery on CatholicCare’s mission of bringing joy to those they serve by enabling growth, healing and hope.

At the launch, vicar general for the diocese, Fr Bernard Gordon, spoke on behalf of Bishop Brian: “In his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI was very clear on the intrinsic nature of charity for our Church. His chosen expression: ‘A Heart Which Sees’ evokes a strong sense of what CatholicCare prioritises.”



PHOTOS: MARK NEWSHAM

“True service starts with a heart which is moved into action. Each and every day, the staff of CatholicCare live out the Gospel through their professional practice—reaching out and walking alongside our brothers and sisters on the margins.” Fr Bernard continued.

In his address, the director of CatholicCare, Michael Austin, said, “CatholicCare above all else stands for one thing; one thing that is central to who we are, and central our purpose—human dignity.

“It is the foundation in human dignity that challenges us to respond to each

person as an individual, with their unique array of talents, gifts, struggles and vulnerabilities that are part of what it means to be human; to reach out to those especially who may be marginalised and in greatest need; to relate to each person and family whom we are called to serve with respect and compassion.” ■



You can download *A Heart That Sees: Strategic Plan 2018–2021* at [dow.sh/ccsp](http://dow.sh/ccsp)

Jacqueline McCormack is the community relations assistant for CatholicCare Wollongong.



CatholicCare’s *St Patrick’s Race Day* will be held **Saturday 23 March 2019** at **Kembla Grange Racecourse**. Don’t miss out.

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  CatholicCareWollongong



*All proceeds from the day support families of children with a disability*

The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty.

POPE FRANCIS

Visit to the community of Varginha, Rio de Janeiro, 2013.

BY JOSIE COOKS

When I was young, our parish priest went to Papua New Guinea to work at a mission. On one of his return visits to Australia, he came to stay with my family and showed a slideshow of his work. As I laid on the floor looking up at the faces of the “mission children” staring back at me from our lounge-room wall, something stirred deep within. I decided there and then that when I grew up, I wanted be like Jesus and help make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than myself. Being young and naïve, I thought the only way I could ever live out this important calling was to join the convent and become a nun.

With the beginning of high school, I moved from the local Catholic primary school to the only high school in the area, which was a public school. The opportunities to be involved in social justice were non-existent, and as I became a teenager, my focus changed and I began heading down the road of self-indulgence. Quickly I realised a life in a convent was not the life for me. Over time the flame that fuelled that passion deep inside of me to serve others began to fade.

19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian minister and abolitionist, Theodore Parker once said: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” However, in order for that bending to occur, the skills of our young people need to be developed. Social justice in Catholic schools plays a pivotal role in that development and helps students



Rachel Bagot, Adrianna Zoric and Alex Honan

# BENDING

towards justice

The arc of the moral universe is long,  
but it *bends towards justice*.

THEODORE PARKER

19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian minister and abolitionist

decide on which side of history they want to be. As young people grow and find their place in society, will they be a generation of consumers in what Pope Francis calls a “throwaway society”, or will they choose to be socially responsible citizens who act with empathy and have the courage to speak-up for the voiceless?

One of greatest commands that Jesus gave us was “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). With these words, we are called to action—to take on the role of servant and care for the needs of others without expecting anything in return. Pope Francis believes that in order for young people to do so, schools need



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

One of greatest commands that Jesus gave us was “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). With these words, we are called to action.

more—whether that be by collecting football boots for Africa, supporting CatholicCare’s *Gifts of Hope Program*, or fundraising for the *Vinnies NSW Drought Appeal*.

For Year 12 Magdalene student, Adrianna Zoric, her involvement in social justice will have a lasting effect: “The values that have been established in us through supporting these initiatives help us to understand the difference we can make. Now we’ll continue to do so—even after we leave school.”

My adult daughter was recently home for a visit and asked me to help her find a local women’s refuge that she could donate some makeup and skincare products to. As every parent would, I told her I was proud of her kindness, to which she responded, “How could I not? After going to a Catholic primary and secondary school, that would be like turning my back on everything I was taught and all the values that had been instilled in me over the years. It’s only a simple thing” she said, “but I hope it makes a difference and helps at least one woman feel good about herself during such a difficult time.”

The *Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools* framing paper claims the mission of Catholic schools is to “give witness to and support students on the path towards a personal integration of faith and life”. If the involvement in social justice initiatives in Catholic school throughout the Wollongong diocese empowers just one student to be at service to others and helps them understand the importance of putting their faith into action, then the arc of the moral universe will continue to bend in the right direction. ■

*If you would like to know more about the Boots for Africa Appeal, please contact Peter Collins from Magdalene Catholic High School at [collinsp01@dow.catholic.edu.au](mailto:collinsp01@dow.catholic.edu.au).*

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

to “educate the head, the heart and the hands of students”. This, says Pope Francis, “will offer students a growth that is harmonious, not only at the personal level, but also at the level of society.”

Social justice in schools not only forms a major part of our Catholic identity, but it provides occasions for young people to take up the challenge and encounter God. Rachel Bagot, a Year 10 student at Magdalene Catholic High School in Narellan, believes her involvement in social justice has helped her connect with her faith. “It helps me develop a better understanding of my faith” said Rachel. “We’re currently studying the Corporal Acts of Mercy in class, and through my involvement in social justice, I can see how what we study ties into our Catholic faith. Rather than just thinking that I need to help others because I’m a Catholic, I now understand what our faith is based on and how it can be applied to everyday life”.

In this *Year of Youth*, Pope Francis’ message to young people is: “Never think that you have nothing to offer, or that nobody needs you. Many people

### **Lots of people help kids in Africa, but this appeal lets [our] kids help by donating something they would normally take for granted.**

need you.” Year 10 student Alex Honan used to be a bystander in the social justice arena at Magdalene, before she realised she had something to offer. “By putting in what we think is only a little bit, we can make a huge difference in other people’s lives,” said Alex who started the *Boots for Africa Appeal* at Magdalene. “Lots of people help kids in Africa, but this appeal lets [our] kids help by donating something they would normally take for granted. Kids who go to training every week have boots or shoes to pack in their sports bag. But in Africa, kids don’t have anything to play sport in, and that really stuck with me.”

The opportunity to get involved in social justice programs give students the inspiration and opportunity to think more, do more and be

*It is indeed an honour to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Campbelltown Catholic Club, the “King of Clubs”, as they mark their 50th birthday. Few could have imagined how much the Club would grow in membership, stature and impact over this time.*

The Club that exists today is a testament to the numerous men and women over the past five decades who have continually asked the searching question, “What else is possible?” It is important during milestones such as this to honour and reflect on your origins. And the origins of the Catholic Club are definitely worth reflecting upon!

As part of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Macarthur historian, Jeff McGill, has written a wonderful book, *Campbelltown Catholic Club: The First 50 Years*, which delves into the history of the iconic venue. It features hundreds of photos and stories about the club over the past five decades. As a “newbie” to the diocese, I was fascinated to read about the origins of the Club.

**... the Catholic Club has built opportunities for people to become a community. One of the key elements of the Catholic faith is the gift of “being present” with others.**

Jeff tells of how the Macarthur region had a strong Catholic vibe in the early days on the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the area—and its surrounding farmlands—were dominated by Irish ex-convicts. It was by no means a wealthy area, and so Campbelltown’s first parish priest, Fr John Therry, rarely enjoyed the spoils of a full collection plate. It took 10 years to build the original St John’s Catholic Church on the hilltop, consecrated in 1834 (located on the current St Patrick’s College site.) Over the next century, St Patrick’s School was built (1840), and a new St John’s Church, with easier walking

access, was built in Cordeaux Street in 1886, resulting in the old church being converted into St Patrick’s College secondary school for girls in 1889. In 1914, a new St John’s school was built next to the new church and the old St Patrick’s school (now the Campbelltown visitor information centre) was sold to a private family. In 1926, St Gregory’s College for boys was established at the former Badgally farm.

We now fast forward to the 1950s—after World War II. There is a population boom in the area and fibro houses begin to cover the hillsides. All these children need to be educated. And so, it was a working bee in 1964 that started it all for Campbelltown Catholic Club. As Jeff explains, “St John’s Primary School needed more classrooms, but money was scarce—so Fr Tom Grant begged

his parishioners for help after Mass. Four brick classrooms were duly erected during the Christmas holidays as an army of volunteer parent-labourers worked up a sweat, guided by a handful of skilled tradesmen. After a long and hot day’s work, some of these parents decided to grab a cold ale down the road at The Club Hotel.

“Bill Meehan was among them. He looked down at the beers they had just paid a publican for, and then he looked at the tired faces all around him, and he spoke up: ‘There’s an easier way to build schools than this!’ It wasn’t long before the idea of a licensed club for Catholics was imagined, using its profits to help fund local Catholic schools.”





a) The original clubhouse built in 1968. b) Bill Meehan in 2018 with Club President David Olsson. c) The original St John's Church on the hilltop of Broughton Street in 1834. d) The newer St John's Church, which opened in Cordeaux St in 1886. e) The fibro housing estates that doubled the size of Campbelltown in the 1950s. f) Fr Tom Grant.

Jeff goes on to explain how Fr Tom—worn out by financial worries—gave his blessing to the Catholic Club idea. But, Bishop Thomas McCabe wasn't so enamoured by the prospect, mainly due to his opposition to alcohol. However, his arm was twisted when parishioners were determined to push ahead under the name "The St John's Club". Legend has it that Bishop McCabe became a Club convert in the 1970s when it began settling thousands of dollars of growing education debts.

The Club had its first social gathering in May 1965 and its first AGM in September 1966 for its 123 members, where a net profit of \$182 was announced. That same year, they purchase 1.5 acres of land for \$1,300 on which they built their first club in 1968. As Bill Meehan says, "The original clubhouse could snugly fit into the foyer of today's Club." Fr Tom was there—beer and cigarette in hand—for the grand opening as the Club's first honorary chaplain. Jeff says in the book, "The Club could not afford to hire a doorman, so volunteering for that task

**There's an easier way to build schools than this! It wasn't long before the idea of a licensed club for Catholics was imagined, using its profits to help fund local Catholic schools.**

**BILL MEEHAN**

was Fred Eves—an old lighthorseman and a veteran of the famous 'Charge of Beersheba' in 1917."

And the rest, as they say, is history! There are so many good works that the Catholic Club has been able to support because of this vision and ongoing good management. The fruit of the success of the Catholic Club has enabled enormous support for Catholic education, social welfare services, ministries of outreach and parish renewal, personal formation and support for a myriad of other community-based organisations. The Macarthur region would be a very

different community today without the presence of the Catholic Club.

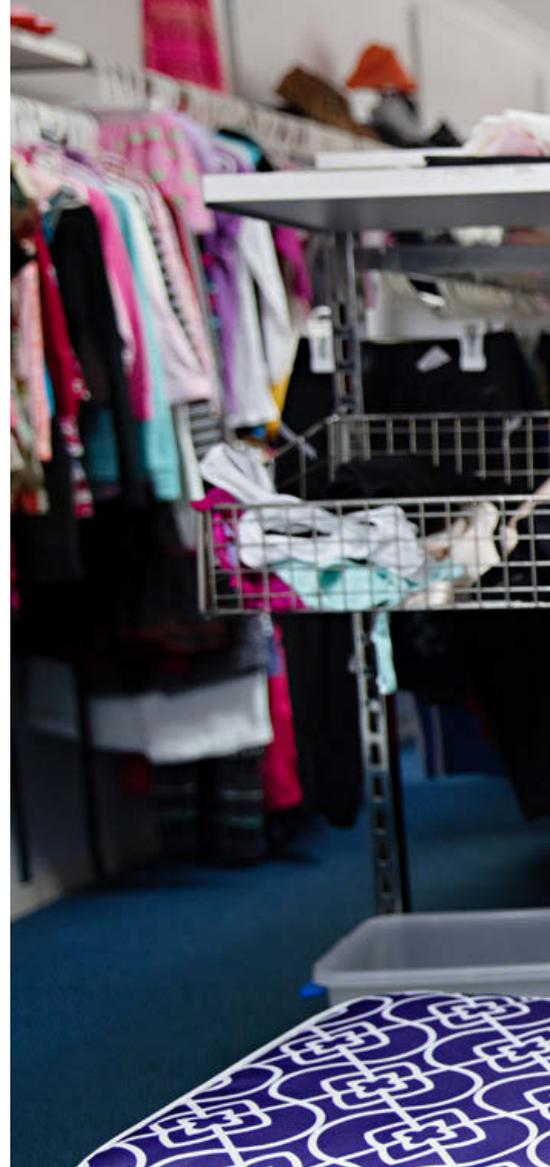
The impact that is probably the most difficult to measure is the one that I believe has had the greatest influence. Put simply, it is how the Catholic Club has built opportunities for people to become a community. One of the key elements of the Catholic faith is the gift of "being present" with others. When you break open the Gospels, you find time and again the desire of Jesus Christ to bring people together in unity and friendship. In being a place where people can come together to celebrate, to relax, to enjoy company, to mark important occasions, to party together and to mourn together, the Catholic Club has been a conduit for deep human connections.

Congratulations Campbelltown Catholic Club board, members and staff! ■

*Campbelltown Catholic Club: The First 50 Years is available for purchase at the Club.*

Bishop Brian Mascord is the bishop of Wollongong.

in giving  
we  
**receive**



## An interview with Betty Cotter

We continue our series of profiling the many volunteers in our diocese who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Betty Cotter resides in the Shoalhaven region of the Diocese and is a member of the parish community at Holy Family Catholic Church in Ulladulla.

INTERVIEW BY DEBBIE GATES

When I met Betty, we instantly bonded. As it turns out, we went to the same Catholic primary school in Bankstown, albeit a few decades apart! After comparing our home addresses and some “pioneer” families we both might have known, we settle into a very relaxed conversation over a lovely morning tea—like two friends who have known each other forever, rather than for just 30 minutes.

Born in Perth, Betty arrived in Sydney in 1946 as a 12-year-old and her family settled in Bankstown, in South Western Sydney. Betty married Bernard when she was 22. They established their family home in Padstow and in Betty’s words, “As you did in those days,” had the first three of their six children within the first two and a half years of being married.

Today, Betty is a member of the parish community at Holy Family Catholic Church in Ulladulla and has happily been the parish coordinator of its vibrant morning tea group since retiring there 21 years ago. Betty has also been an active member of the

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP) for the past 30 years and served three terms as a local conference president in Ulladulla. For the past 15 years, Betty has been the secretary of the monthly management committee meetings for Davenport Cottage Ulladulla—a facility that provides a home for five residents who have a disability.

**From your stories, you seem to be one of those people who is always in the right place at the right time!**

Hmm. Whilst studying for my school leaving certificate, I accompanied a friend to a job interview for the Commonwealth Bank, and when she was offered the job, the manager asked if I wanted one too! I worked at the bank in Martin Place, Sydney, for eight and a half years, and I absolutely loved it! Years later, I accompanied one of my friends (a different one) to an information session about the community group called, Independence Ulladulla. I left that information session as a member of the committee, and I’m still there!

**And you are also involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society?**

Yes, I am the coordinator at the “Vinnies” shop in Ulladulla every Monday and Friday morning.

**What are some changes that you are proud of that have happened under your “watch” at Vinnies?**

At our Vinnies, we offer a *No Interest Loans Scheme*. We introduced this a few years ago. It is wonderful to see people who could never imagine

having the ability to purchase something new—like whitegoods. After repaying previous loans, some of our people are now onto their third loan. The growth in their self-esteem is something to behold.

**Do you have a favourite story to tell about your time with Vinnies?**

For over five weeks in 1999, the Milton-Ulladulla SVdP Conference played holiday host to 71 Kosovar refugees who were living at the Safe Haven Camp at Singleton. Every week, family groups of Kosovars were bused down to our holiday units at Mollymook for a week’s respite. Many of them had lost their loved ones, their homes, and had been through the most horrific time. The ages ranged from a baby just born in Newcastle Hospital to a 90-year-old lady.

This opportunity gave these beautiful people a chance to live their lives as a normal family once again and to be able to cook whatever they fancied (at the Safe Haven Camp in Singleton, everyone ate together in the dining hall.)



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

These weeks are something that I will never forget. Although very tiring, it was well worth the effort and made us all very aware of how lucky we are to live in a peaceful country. Our members became very involved, and the wider community of Ulladulla also took them under their wing. There were lots of shopping trips, picnics and barbeques, and homes and local clubs were opened for visits and meals. Each week, there were tears as our new friends left to return to Singleton. One elderly lady who visited, told us that in Ulladulla, Muslims and Christians were as close as her two hands clasped tightly together.

**What are you passionate about?**

I am still involved with the Mollymook holiday units run by SVdP. We offer these units to families who would never be able to afford a holiday at the beach. It is such a joy to see children looking in wonder at the ocean for the first time. Just being involved—available

**We offer these units to families who would never be able to afford a holiday at the beach. It is such a joy to see children looking in wonder at the ocean for the first time.**

whenever and wherever there is a need—is something that brings me great joy. I pray it is something that our conference will always be able to offer.

**Your God moments?**

I am so grateful that I could nurse my husband, Bern, at our home where he went to God peacefully nine years ago. And as always, when I am with my family and friends.

**Your “claim to fame” moment?**

When I was chosen *International Woman of the Year* for the

Southern Shoalhaven District in 2012 for my volunteer work. It is something I am very proud of, but also still humbled by. I have received so much more from my volunteering than what I have given.

**“Bucket list” items?**

To travel more. I am accompanying one of my granddaughters, Kirsty (30), for a three-week holiday to Canada later this year. How lucky am I? To stay close to my family. I am a proud grandmother to 24 grandchildren and I am delighted that my grandson, Lachlan (24), has recently moved in with me. We keep each other on our toes!

**What is your secret to good health?**

I love volunteering. It keeps me young and fit! ■

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

***Three doctors told Eddie D'Souza, "In our medical experience, no one has ever come to us this early with a lump. You saved your own life." Eddie knows it wasn't him, but divine intervention.***

STORY BY  
ANNE SUTHERLAND

INTERVIEW BY  
DANIEL HOPPER

Looking back, Eddie can see God's hand in everything—especially the timing of events which coincided with life-changing *Alpha* courses he has been attending at his local church: Mary Immaculate in Eagle Vale. "Whatever the outcome, one thing for sure is that I have come close to my God and nothing is going to change that," says Eddie.

Eddie was standing in his office at the end of the day, talking on the phone to a work colleague. For some unknown reason, he stretched back his neck, and with his other hand, he reached up and felt a pea-sized lump at the base of his throat that didn't feel normal. He went straight to his GP who sent him for an ultrasound and scan. The results came back showing the original lump was benign, but they found a smaller lump (that he couldn't feel) that turned out to be thyroid cancer and later spread to his lymph nodes.

"When I was diagnosed with cancer, I broke down completely for two days. Here I am enjoying life and it couldn't be better, then in a day, everything changes. You think of your children, your future. I didn't know how to break it to my wife, my kids or my family back home," he says.

**When I was diagnosed with cancer, I broke down completely for two days. Here I am enjoying life and it couldn't be better, then in a day, everything changes. You think of your children, your future.**

Eddie is a man who thought he had it all. Born in India and brought up in the Catholic faith, he worked in Dubai for



10 years as a technology consultant. He came to Australia for a conference and could see a better future for his children, so he decided to immigrate and got the first job he saw on the internet—that was six years ago.

Even though he lived next door to the church and went every weekend, Eddie says his faith wasn't that strong. When his parish priest at Eagle Vale, Fr Slawek Plonka OMI, announced at Mass at the beginning of this year that an Alpha course was starting, Eddie's wife suggested he go. She thought he was being carried away by his job and the house, and that God was taking a back seat in his life. "But I'm not really the sort of man who goes on retreats", laughs Eddie, admitting to not signing up the first week. But, the second week, as he was walking past the Alpha sign-up sheet in the foyer, a prompting inside of him said, "What the heck, I'll do it."

During the first Alpha session, Eddie kept a fairly low profile. He enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of having a meal with other parishioners and getting to know them, but during the round-table discussions, he didn't contribute anything himself. It was only during the

video presentations that he began to realise that God was wanting to speak to him—wanting to be a part of his life.

"With each progressive session, I began to realise how blessed we are to have Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and how even more blessed we are to have the gift of the Spirit—and how important it is to build relationship with God through the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation."

When Season Two of Alpha started, Eddie was eager to sign up again—this time as a helper. Even though he saw the same videos twice, he wasn't bored—the message only got reinforced. Each week was a stepping stone to yet another level in his faith growing stronger. As he learned to believe in the will of God—and to surrender himself to this will—Eddie could see that he was beginning to live life the way God wanted him to live it.

**My wife noticed a difference—how I would react to situations. My prayer life changed.**



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER



never have done before. You need to fall down to rise up in a different way.

“The road I was heading down was putting materialistic values before God. But, the greatest treasure in this world is the purification of your own soul and not to chase this life. Alpha was a watershed moment in my life—a journey from absolute emptiness in my relationship with God, to making him the primary focus of my life,” he says.

“I am a living testament as to how Alpha has changed our parish community. In the past, I would not even talk about my faith to my wife, let alone share it with others. But, here I am now talking at five Masses about Alpha and getting people to sign up. Eddie laughs, ‘One day, I even told them at work that I had to leave early to help prepare for Alpha, and two of my colleagues said, ‘You’re doing Alpha? We’re also doing Alpha!’

“If anyone’s thinking about joining Alpha there’s a reason why you’re even thinking about it—because an inner voice is asking you to do it. It was that same inner voice that reached out to me. These 10 sessions will potentially change the rest of your life, the life of your family, and the life of the people around you—and you’re not changing your life just for this life on earth, but you’re preparing yourself for the next.” ■

*Alpha runs in several parishes across the diocese. Contact Darren McDowell on 4222 2463 for more information.*

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

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

“My wife noticed a difference—how I would react to situations. My prayer life changed. I started wanting to say the rosary with my children every day. She noticed my involvement with other charitable movements that exist in the church.”

It was the day before the last session of Alpha Two that Eddie learned he was diagnosed with cancer. “God let me go for two Alphas to strengthen me because he knew I had to carry a cross—and that cross was cancer. It was the strength I drew from Alpha that prevented me from going into depression or trauma or mental stress.”

“When I first got the news, all I could do was ask the Lord to heal me—and I could only do that because of being in Alpha. But then I realised, ‘Why do I even worry about the Lord healing me? Why don’t I just surrender myself to the Lord and let him lead the way?’ And, when I did that, I had nothing to worry about. Absolutely nothing. Because, I knew that in my faith with the Lord, he will do what is best for me whatever the outcome—whether it means radiation, another surgery. He’s gonna do what is best for me, and

that has helped me deal with this like if I had a common cold. That is how I’m dealing with this.”

### **But then I realised, ‘Why do I even worry about the Lord healing me? Why don’t I just surrender myself to the Lord and let him lead the way?’**

The most amazing part of this journey has been that despite the medical roller coaster of doctor’s appointments, scans, biopsies and surgeries, Eddie has never missed a single Alpha night. Alpha would happen on a Thursday night and Eddie would go in for major surgery on the Friday morning and be back for Alpha the next Thursday. Even the uncertainty of more bad news—that the cancer may now be in other parts of his body—has not stopped Eddie from signing up for Season Three of Alpha—this time as a leader.

“And you know what? Some part of me thanks the Lord that I got this cancer, because if I didn’t get it, I don’t think I’d be strengthened in my faith to allow the Lord to lead me in a way that I would

# MOSAIC

of  
youth  
ministry

CELEBRATING WHAT  
HAS BEEN AND  
PREPARING FOR  
WHAT COMES NEXT

BY JUDE HENNESSY

In December last year, young people from the diocese, along with staff from Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong (CYMW) and youth ministry leaders from Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW), bumped into—our soon to be new bishop—Brian Mascord, at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) in Sydney. ACYF was an amazing event that had a huge impact on the hundreds of young people who attended from our diocese along with the thousands of others from around Australia.

ACYF was, in many ways, the culmination of a great deal of youth ministry work done in the diocese—reflection days, regional *LIVE* events and youth groups—to ensure that the young people who attended were ready to receive what was on offer and encounter the risen Jesus. It has also proven to be a catalyst for ongoing vibrant youth ministry in schools throughout 2018, and increasingly at after-school and regional youth gatherings. Without a doubt, there have been some wonderful things happening in youth ministry, including:

- The formation of student leaders for youth ministry and their enthusiastic teachers—the youth ministry coordinators in schools.
- Multiple school reflection days for schools run by Youth Mission Team (YMT).
- Lunchtime evangelisation concerts in schools run by CYMW.
- After-school *LIVE* local events run by CYMW.
- Diocesan *LIVE* Festival in Wollongong run by CYMW, CEDoW and YMT.
- The commencement of the *LIVE* regional youth group in the Macarthur on Friday evenings run by CYMW.



CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY  
WOLLONGONG



- Ongoing good work of Disciples of Jesus (DoJ) youth leaders and YMT running the iStand youth group in Wollongong and YMT school holiday iStand camps.
- Commencement of a youth group in the Nowra Parish.
- New initiatives for the University of Wollongong (UoW) in our revamped chaplaincy program ran by Fr Mark De Battista and the UoW Catholic Society.
- Sunday evening Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral with young people leading the music and regular get-togethers afterwards.
- Preparations and formation for our Wollongong pilgrims to attend World Youth Day in Panama in January 2019.
- Piloting of Year 6 Confirmation reflection day with CYMW.
- The inaugural father and son camp held at Cataract Scout Camp run by menALIVE and supported by the diocesan Office of Renewal and Evangelisation (ORE).
- Diocesan young men attending the national *Be Awake* conference at Stanwell Park run by MenALIVE and Young Men of God, and supported by ORE.
- Access and training for youth ministry leaders in the use of the Life Teen resources.
- The commencement of Youth Alpha in a number of locations ran by DoJ and CYMW.

The vibrancy of youth ministry in the diocese has been developing over a number of years as partnerships have strengthened between ORE, CYMW, CEDoW, secondary schools and regional youth ministry groups. Each are endeavouring to bring young people to an encounter with Jesus and draw them into the sacramental life of parishes.

This growing partnership has allowed for a style of youth ministry that is contemporary in nature—music and worship, testimony from leaders and peers, and high quality relevant content as part of school-based and



CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG



a new partnership was regarded as the necessary next step for an expanded vision for youth ministry for the whole diocese.

YMT have made an amazing contribution to the Diocese of Wollongong, especially in the Illawarra and upper Shoalhaven region—bringing so many young people to an experience of God’s love. Thousands of young people have been impacted by the Gospel via their high school reflection days and their support of the Wollongong iStand youth group. Similarly, their end-of-term camps have drawn numerous young people to the love and mercy of God. In many ways, the efforts of YMT have brought the diocese to this point of growth and impetus, enabling consideration of broader plans for future youth ministry impact.

I wish to thank the national manager, Steve Toohey, for the efforts of YMT in partnering with the diocese over the last 11 years, the various team managers and supporters, and most especially many young people who have generously served as members of the Wollongong YMT during that time. I am sure that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless their ministry and use YMT to transform the lives of young people in other regions.

In 2019, the diocese is looking to commit more resources to youth ministry initiatives than ever before—building on the many good things that have happened in recent years and enhancing the impact in schools, regional youth groups, holiday retreats and university events.

Regular regional youth ministry nights are already planned for 2019 and booking for school visits are well underway. The new NET team will look to visit multiple parishes around the diocese as soon as they commence in 2019. Look out for the promotional material that will be distributed in early 2019 about the ministry opportunities and events that will happen in 2019, or contact Seth Harsh at [seth.harsh@dow.org.au](mailto:seth.harsh@dow.org.au) or Joel Duval at [joel.duval@dow.catholic.edu.au](mailto:joel.duval@dow.catholic.edu.au) for more information. ■

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

regional events. Large numbers of young people are coming voluntarily to the events being run in schools and there is genuine excitement and expectation about what comes next in this process of evangelisation and renewal for young people.

Recently, Bishop Brian wrote to clergy and principals to announce some important changes in youth ministry for 2019 and beyond, as the diocese looks to build on the successes of recent years.

One key change stems from the rapid growth and increasing demand for youth ministry support, which has resulted in the need to move to a full-time youth team working alongside the diocesan youth ministry coordinator, Seth Harsh. This will enable the formation of a team to contribute to our current secondary school ministry initiatives as well as upper primary student formation and the Catholic chaplaincy initiatives at UoW.

As a result, in 2019, the Office of the Bishop will welcome members of

### **In 2019, the diocese is looking to commit more resources to youth ministry initiatives than ever before.**

National Evangelisation Team (NET) Ministries—a Catholic peer-to-peer youth ministry that puts into action the Church’s mission to evangelise and disciple young people, encouraging them to encounter Jesus and embrace the Church. The NET team will be based in Wollongong and work right around the diocese, visiting both primary and secondary schools, parishes, UoW and regional youth groups.

While excited about the prospects of this new partnership for our current and future needs, this decision also unfortunately means the end of our eleven-year partnership with YMT Australia. This was a difficult decision because of the wonderful work that YMT have done in the diocese since 2007. This difficult decision to embrace

# from boys to men

men  
ALIVE

Father & teenage son weekend experience



BY JUDE HENNESSY

**One of the most important influences in a man's life is his relationship with his father, or father-figure.**

The validation, encouragement and affirmation that this relationship should provide is a key ingredient for how men view themselves and their own gifts and sense of purpose. Giving dads the tools to be able to communicate, affirm, validate and encourage their children is a huge need in our society, and in our Church, especially if our diocesan *National Church Life Survey* results are anything to go by.

It is for this reason that the Diocese of Wollongong, in partnership with Robert Falzon and his team from *menALIVE*, ran the first *Growing Good Men* (GGM) weekend in the diocese in November this year at the Cataract Scout Camp in Appin. It was an amazing opportunity for dads and their teenage sons (12–16 years) to embark on a quest of discovery.

## The glory of God is man fully alive.

ST IRENAEUS

There were 30 dads and lads in attendance journeying through a series of talks, outdoor activities and conversations that saw them grow in friendship and speak openly and honestly about their hopes and dreams. It was powerful to see them move to points of trust in each other, in the firm knowledge that they are valued and supported—no matter what comes next.

According to Christian family relationship author, Dr Gary Smalley, every young man needs to receive a

“blessing” from his father. He needs to hear with his ears, see with his eyes and believe in his heart, that he is good enough in his father’s eyes. Boys who don’t receive this from their fathers can spend decades trying to prove to themselves, and to others, that their actions, accomplishments and their character are worthy of approval.

The feedback received from the sons who attended the weekend was amazing:

- “What my Dad thinks about me matters to me a lot—and now I really know. I feel like I could tell him pretty much anything after this.”
- “The weekend was great—full of adventure and it brought my Dad and I closer together.”
- “I initially didn’t want to come, but it was so fun. My Dad and I grew closer, and it also helped me spiritually.”

The feedback received from the dads was just as heart-warming:

- “Wow, what a great weekend—thank you so much! I didn’t think I needed this. I did!”
- “It was an inspiring experience to learn ways of becoming a better man and father in the company of some other great men.”
- “My son and I are travelling along the Murray River for 10 days in January. Prior to the *Growing Good Men* weekend, I was nervous about how we would go spending 10 days ‘in each other’s pockets.’ But now, we are both looking forward to spending this time together.”

**... every young man needs to receive a “blessing” from his father. He needs to hear with his ears, see with his eyes and believe in his heart, that he is good enough in his father’s eyes.**

DR GARY SMALLEY

Our society is made up of so many diverse family units, with many mums and dads trying to navigate this transition to adulthood—often with limited support. If you are a mum looking for some good resources, formation and future opportunities to connect in faith with others, including your teenage daughter(s), checkout [sisterhood.org.au](http://sisterhood.org.au). We look forward to promoting their great work in future editions of the *Journey*.

The diocese will be holding another GGM weekend in November 2019, along with two regional *menALIVE* weekends in 2019 in the Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands regions. Thanks so much to the team from *menALIVE*, the band of volunteers from our diocese, and to the many men and their sons who were part of these experiences in 2018. It is our hope that in 2019, even more men—young and old alike—will be filled with the joy of living life to the full as better men, husbands, fathers and sons. ■

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

# WILL THE SERVANT LEADERS PLEASE STAND UP?

BY ADAM KADMON

The political turmoil was an ironic backdrop for the annual *National Student Leadership Forum on Faith and Values* that I attended in September this year. We were just outside of Parliament House in Canberra as The Hon. Scott Morrison MP became Australia's latest prime minister.

Now, there is at least one clear advantage and disadvantage to this shake-up. The negative—that the revolving door style of leadership has left many Australians disenchanted with the state of democracy. The positive—an opportunity to more frequently use the nickname “Scomo”. We may also be grateful for the funding boost he announced for Catholic schools.

The four-day forum—for student delegates aged 18–26 years from diverse backgrounds across Australia and the world—centred on how faith and values inform leadership. The forum looked at the idea of Jesus’ “servant leadership” style as the height of true leadership: “The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Matthew 23:11–12). Jesus also demonstrated this with his actions: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14).

So, following the example of Christ, we put this concept into action during the forum when we volunteered to give local residents a backyard makeover. This community service was very rewarding and a reminder to always act with the gift of humility.

Politicians from both sides of the aisle spoke to us about their faith and values. This showcased a variety of approaches to the topic. Liberal Party MP, The Hon. Stuart Robert, was very



comfortable putting his faith at the forefront, describing himself and his pal, “Scomo,” as “big Jesus guys.” Whereas, the leader of the Labor Party, The Hon. Bill Shorten MP considered his faith component a more “private matter”. He was forthcoming, nonetheless, when it came to the values he holds as sacrosanct: “Equality, respect and a fair go.”

**The prevailing societal norm seems to say that while it is fine to talk about values like human dignity, servant leadership, and merciful justice, it is a cardinal sin to mention their source—faith.**

This latter approach seems to go to a broader trend in society. Ironically, despite the forum being centred on “faith” and “values”, I felt there was a taboo among the delegates regarding the topic of faith. The prevailing societal norm seems to say that while it is fine to talk about values like human dignity, servant leadership, and merciful justice, it is a cardinal sin to mention their source—faith. This is especially relevant to the Christian faith. While a Muslim or Buddhist may be praised for their diverse cultural perspective, I feel that Christians are more routinely ostracised and humiliated.

Maybe it is because Christianity is seen as part of the status quo—in the same way I feel there has been a demonisation of the dreaded “straight, white male”. Or, maybe it is the erosive effect of the new atheist movement of those such as Richard Dawkins. Whatever it be, I feel it is having a profound impact on the faith of youth today.

And, I believe that this bias against the Christian faith is also being encouraged throughout academia. I feel that some universities and schools show an outward hostility towards Christian beliefs—routinely labelling them “bigoted” or “backwards”. It is no wonder, therefore, that I feel that young Christians are hesitant to share their thoughts, even in a setting designed to foster such discussion such as the forum I attended.

We need to pray for strong leadership during these troubled times—servant leaders who can unashamedly stand up for the faith and values that have been so instrumental in shaping our society. ■

Adam Kadmon was the 2017 school captain at Corpus Christi Catholic College in Oak Flats. He is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts/Law at the University of Sydney. He was nominated by his university and sponsored by the Diocese of Wollongong to attend the National Student Leadership Forum on Faith and Values at Parliament House, Canberra in 2018.



THE  
ART  
OF  
TELLING THE  
CHRISTMAS  
STORY

BY JESSICA SPARKS

Fifty talented Year 5 and 6 students have had their artworks selected and celebrated at Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong's (CEDoW) *Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition 2018*. The student entrants—along with very proud family members, staff and principals from our diocese's primary schools—filled the rooms of the Xavier Centre in Wollongong for the official opening of the exhibition and announcement of the finalists and award winners.

For several weeks, over 1,000 Year 5 and 6 children in classrooms across the diocese explored the layers of meaning of the Christmas story, using Scripture references from the Religious Education curriculum. They then demonstrated their own interpretation of the story through an individual art creation to enter into the Competition.

The best 170 entries from 28 schools were sent into the CEDoW office, where the judges examined their artworks and accompanying descriptions for the originality of the illustration, standard of artistic skills and techniques, consistency of style, depth of the personal reflection, and connection to the Scriptures.

The judging panel praised the students for producing art that had “moved, challenged and enlightened” them.

Chair of the judging panel and CEDoW education officer for gifted education, creativity and critical thinking,

John Charadia, commended the students for not only their talent, but their hard work, perseverance and commitment.

“We’ve seen diverse personal connections, high-order emotional intelligence, authentic imagery from the Holy Land, and many who have captured the wonderful Christmas message of joy, hope and peace in dynamic ways. It is to be celebrated,” he said.

CEDoW education officer for Catholic Life, Education and Mission Services, Cath Hailstone, told the students that not only had they each created a piece of religious art, they had also given expression to the faith and identity of our Catholic schools.

“What an enormous privilege it is viewing these beautiful interpretations of aspects of the Christmas story and reading the deep reflections on the meanings and artistic processes from our students,” she said.

## MAJOR AWARDS

A very special congratulations to the students who received the following major awards:

**Bishop’s Choice Award**  
Amali Dimond  
*Stella Maris, Shellharbour*

**Director’s Christmas Story Award**  
Nash Linsley  
*St Michael’s, Mittagong*

**CatholicCare ‘Star of Hope Award’ and ‘Students’ Choice Award’**  
Leo Wallace-Pannell  
*Ss Peter and Paul, Kiama*

## FINALISTS

The judges selected 16 of the artworks as finalists, which will go on to represent the Diocese of Wollongong in the larger *Sydney Christmas Story Art Competition and Exhibition* hosted by the Archdiocese of Sydney. This will be held at Notre Dame University this month, from the first Sunday of Advent. Congratulations to our student finalists:

## YEAR 6 FINALISTS

- A Lucas Rhodes**  
*St Thomas Aquinas, Bowral*
- B Olivia Cimino**  
*St Paul’s, Camden*
- C Ebony Payne**  
*St Paul’s, Camden*
- D Samantha Cowle**  
*St Columbkille’s, Corrimal*
- E Jessica Lo Surdo**  
*Good Samaritan, Fairy Meadow*
- F Lola Lochrin**  
*St Michael’s, Nowra*
- G Andre Sembrano**  
*St Justin’s, Oran Park*
- H Amali Dimond**  
*Stella Maris, Shellharbour*
- I Bronte Hawkesby**  
*St Therese, West Wollongong*

## YEAR 5 FINALISTS

- J Isabelle Streater**  
*St Paul’s, Camden*
- K Christian Mifsud**  
*St Paul’s, Camden*
- L Olivia Abdal**  
*St Francis, Edmondson Park*
- M Lourdes Elias**  
*St Francis, Edmondson Park*
- N Leo Wallace-Pannell**  
*Ss Peter and Paul, Kiama*
- O Nash Linsley**  
*St Michael’s, Mittagong*
- P Tessa Bōdy**  
*St Michael’s, Thirroul*

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





## CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

It's been another massive year for our 650 amazing catechist volunteers who tirelessly minister to over 9,000 young Catholic students in State schools around the diocese.

It's staggering to think just how wide an impact, and how deep an influence, each one of these servants of the mission of the Church makes on the eternal life of our precious young people. And so, as we finish up another year giving thanks to God for all things (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:18), we thought it appropriate to share two reflections that were given to our catechists during the year as part of their formation on the importance of finding rest in Jesus.

### Leaning on God

BY FR SEAN CULLEN

The overwhelming theme of the two short letters of St Peter is *encouragement*. The content of the letters were meant to both inspire and admonish the people who were trying to live as God's people, but at the same time, felt an alienation from their previous religious roots and the society around them. Peter spells out what is required of Christians to live out their calling in whatever situation they find themselves. But, over all of this, hangs the possibility of suffering as a Christian.

Encouragement to fidelity in spite of suffering is based upon the meaning of Christian existence. But, sometimes we're a bit reluctant to lean on God the way God wants us to. Why? What's stopping us? Perhaps it has something to do with the image we have of God. It might be a ferocious image of God that we learnt in childhood, or an imagined



image of God that we've formed from our own individual view of the world.

So, before we can cast all our burdens onto God, confident that he will look after us, we need a mature and appropriate idea of God in our hearts and minds.

God is *prodigal*. God is *generous* and *unlimited* in his mercy.

God is always *invitational*. "Do not be afraid." When God breaks into our lives, they are his first words. The Gospel is meant to set us free from fear. You cannot be afraid of someone you love.

God *respects* our nature. God made us as distracted beings, so God is never angry with us for immersing ourselves into life.

God doesn't demand a moral condition to be with us. When Jesus went to dine with tax collectors, prostitutes and other sinners, he didn't demand that they clean up their lives first. He dines with them, and then a lot of them *do* clean up their lives. Discipleship is a process of conversion—accepting that we are sinners and then accepting God's mercy.

We are all anxious and fearful about many things—our health, our work, our future, the people we love. What diminishes our faith isn't that we have these burdens or that we are worried

### Cast all of your burdens on him, for he cares for you .

1 PETER 5:7

about this or that, it's the overwhelming feeling that God has forgotten us or abandoned us. We worry that we are not in safe hands and that we are not being looked after.

Faith doesn't promise that we won't have burdens to carry. But, our faith does give us the assurance that God is good, that we can trust God, that God won't forget us, and that despite all the evidence to the contrary, God is still in control of the universe.

Our faith tells us that God is real, and because of this, there is, in the end, nothing to fear. God is loving and forgiving, and absolutely trustworthy.

So, our task is to surrender to that. We can "cast our cares onto him" because our faith assures us that there is really nothing to fear. And, we remember that the message littered throughout Scripture is that whenever God appears—when heaven speaks to earth—the opening words are: "Don't be afraid. I'm here. Be at peace." ■

Fr Sean Cullen is the parish priest of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish in Bowral and St Michael's Catholic Parish in Mittagong.



## Remembering rest

BY PETER GILMORE

In Psalm 23, we have some of the most profound statements of truth that our minds and hearts will ever hear: “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul” (Psalm 23:1–3).

We often stumble into the final chapter of the year and it can feel like the 13<sup>th</sup>

round in a boxing match—one more round than there should be. The kids are a little more wired than normal and our minds turn to concerts, certificates, conclusions, Christmas, and then 2019, and ... it all starts again!

What we really need is a great big full stop. An ending. A complete thought before the next: “We did our best for 2018 and it is done. No hope of changing it. It is what it is.”

Why does this matter? If our years are just giant run-on sentences, there is no room to breathe, to give thanks and to ... rest.

That’s right—*rest*. We don’t earn rest, we remember to rest. God didn’t rest on the seventh day of creation because he’d “worked hard and really, really needed it”. God finished his work and rested.

When we are doing God’s work—that is, being human in all spheres of life (family, work and serving his people)—it is easy to feel like nothing is ever really done. There’s always another class, another student, another Christmas or Easter concert, and another lesson to prepare. At home, there’s always another family occasion to prepare, another disagreement to resolve, or another birthday to celebrate. There will always be something.

The Lord is my shepherd—so, I can rest. I shall not want—so, I should

**What we really need is a great big full stop. An ending. A complete thought before the next: “We did our best for 2018 and it is done. No hope of changing it. It is what it is.”**

**Why does this matter? If our years are just giant run-on sentences, there is no room to breathe, to give thanks and to ... rest.**

rest. He makes me lie down in green pastures—I can close my eyes. He leads me beside still waters—it’s just my God and me, even for a day. He restores my soul.

And in that place, we can allow our hearts to be filled with thanks: *Thank you Lord that you have gotten us this far. Thank you for this year. Thank you that you are with us—rain or shine. Thank you for the children I have taught. Thank you for the battles fought (and some won)! Thank you for your love.*

Please, don’t forget to rest and hear God say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant ... come and share your master’s happiness” (Matthew 25:23). ■

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

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# JOURNEY

*in excellence*

## Journey Magazine scoops the pool at Australasian Catholic Press Association Awards

BY DANIEL HOPPER

The Diocese of Wollongong's *Journey Magazine* took out six awards including the prestigious *Bishop Philip Kennedy Memorial Award for Overall Excellence* at the recent Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA) Awards held in Brisbane on 5 September 2018.

The *Bishop Philip Kennedy Memorial* trophy winner is chosen from the winners of the three main awards: Best Newspaper, Best Magazine and Best Online Publication. On commenting on *Journey Magazine*, the judges said: "Amongst some excellent contenders, this magazine was a stand-out in terms of presentation, style, layout and content. The layout was varied enough to be interesting, while maintaining consistency. It is immediately impressive in its cover pages, and the layout is both simple and elegant—a very sophisticated combination.

"Content is interesting and varied, always supporting the Church, and providing useful contacts, relevant detail and highlights of diocesan activities. Given its small staff, this is an excellent example of what can be achieved, covering both local news, feature articles and issues. It looks good, it feels good and thoroughly deserves this award."

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli of Melbourne and Emeritus Bishop Joseph Oudemann of Brisbane were on hand to present the awards on the evening. Outgoing ACPA president, Jenny Brinkworth, said the awards were a great celebration of the dedication and faith-filled commitment of professionals from

across Australia. "There is an amazing amount of talent and passion among our Catholic press, and it really is pleasing to see the enthusiasm of those who entered," Jenny said.

This is a wonderful recognition for everyone in the diocese who work tirelessly, not only on *Journey Magazine*, but with everything the diocese does to make Jesus known and loved in our parishes, schools, CatholicCare, agencies and communities. *Journey Magazine* took out the following six awards (judge's comments included):

**WINNER**  
**Bishop Philip Kennedy Memorial Award for Overall Excellence**

**WINNER**  
**Best Print Magazine**

**WINNER**  
**Best Feature Story**  
*He Must Increase, I Must Decrease*  
by Daniel Hopper

The story captivated well the extraordinary work of retiring Bishop Peter Ingham. Both the imagery and the words gave the reader a beautiful insight into his life and role.

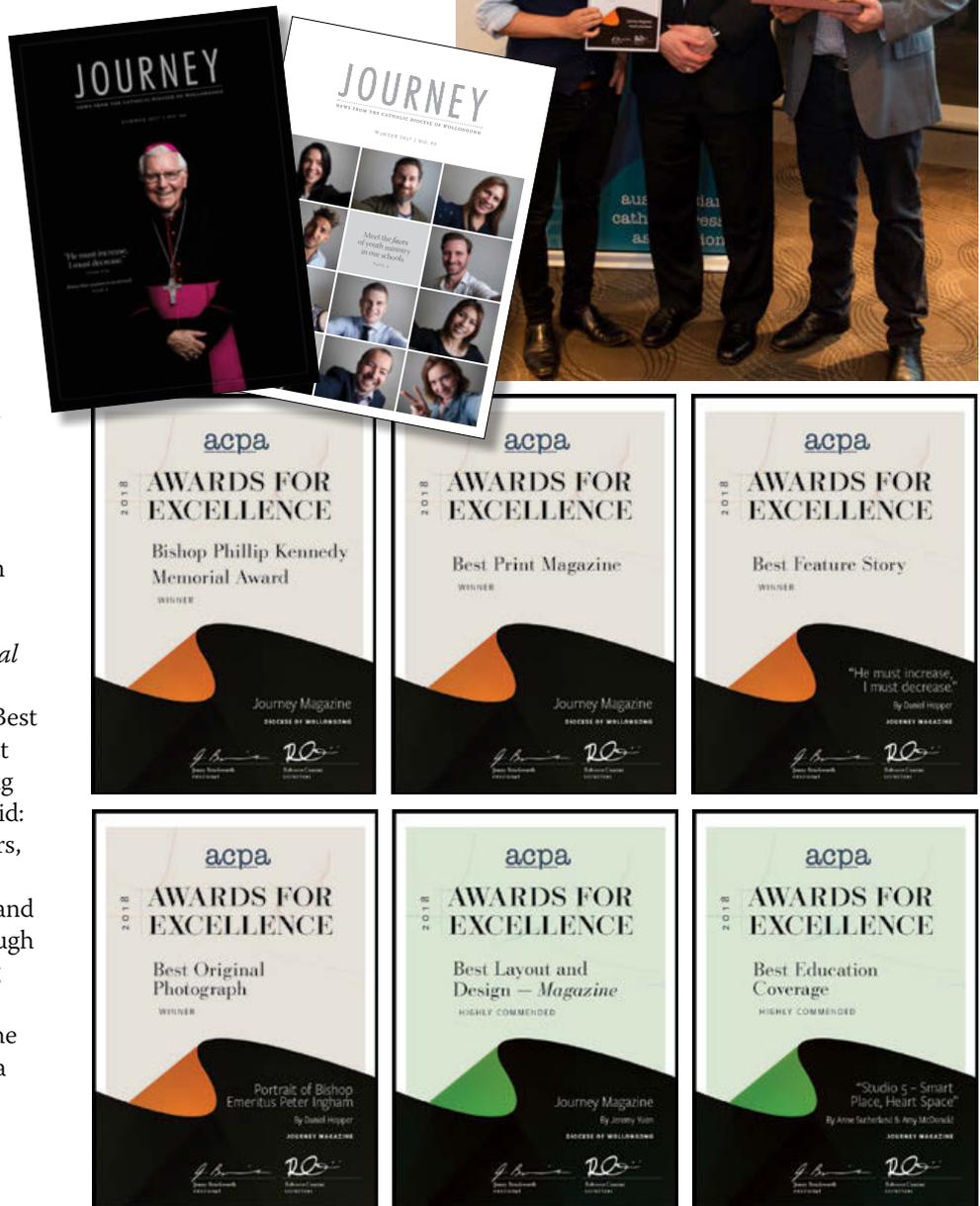


PHOTO: NEIL HELMORE

**WINNER**

**Best Original Photograph**

*Portrait of Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham*  
by Daniel Hopper

This photo was of exceptional quality and from a technical sense was taken very well. The photo would speak to all those who had come across Bishop Ingham and were familiar with him as a person. It reflected his essence and the situation he was in.

**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Best Layout and Design, Magazine**

by Jeremy Yuen

Journey is a beautifully bold publication with amazing use of quality photography to capture the interest of the reader. Journey makes great use of empty space, strong design and engaging content to connect with its readers. A publication that understands the importance of its cover to stand out in a crowd, entice its readers to pick it up, and I suspect keep for many months or even years to come. If there was ever a category to have two winners, this would be it.

**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Best Education Coverage**

*Studio 5—Smart Place, Heart Space*  
by Anne Sutherland and Amy McDonald

This beautifully presented article highlighted with its eye-catching sub heading “smart place, heart space, showcased an innovative, technical support learning space called the Emmaus Catholic Education Centre in Western Sydney that nurtures as it instructs. Focussing on educational and mental health support the report highlighted feedback from students on the efficacy and caring of the space especially during stressful times – this article is commended for highlighting ‘a heartbeat of Catholic education.’

A special congratulations needs to go to the *Journey Organising Committee* including: Helen Bennett, Trish Cooney, Trisha Cunningham, Debbie Gates, Tim Gilmour, Jude Hennessy, Elle Holder-Keeping, Daniel Hopper, Jacqueline McCormack, Lisa Metcalfe, Leah Mireylees, Diana Novak, Tony Sanderson, Jessica Sparks, Lorraine Tobin and Jeremy Yuen, as well as our fantastic reception staff that help behind the scenes with the distribution of the magazine including: Jane Hollier, Cesia Holowinski, Bernadette Kuper and Kerri-Anne Rossit. ■

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



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

**Clergy, like parents, never retire from their calling**

BY DEBBIE GATES

Popular and well-loved Monsignor David O’Brien retired as the parish priest of St Therese Parish at West Wollongong earlier this year.

Ordained in 1972, David ministered as an army chaplain, industrial chaplain and hospital chaplain before joining the Diocese of Wollongong in 1992. Since, he has served as an assistant priest in the parishes of Campbelltown, Ingleburn and Camden and as a parish priest in Milton and then West Wollongong.

Even though now retired, Mgr David continues to celebrate Mass in different parishes when the parish or resident priest is on holidays or unwell, and to serve as a clergy representative on various diocesan advisory councils and committees.

Clergy, like parents, never retire from their calling.

Mgr David is one of 11 priests who are now retired and who are cared for by our diocese. Looking ahead to the next five years, it is likely that there will be an additional nine clergy retiring.

As the proceeds from the first collection at Mass are used to provide support for

our *active* clergy, the diocese needs to look for other sources of income when it comes to providing support to our *retired* clergy. This is where the *Bishop’s Annual Appeal* held every September, steps up.

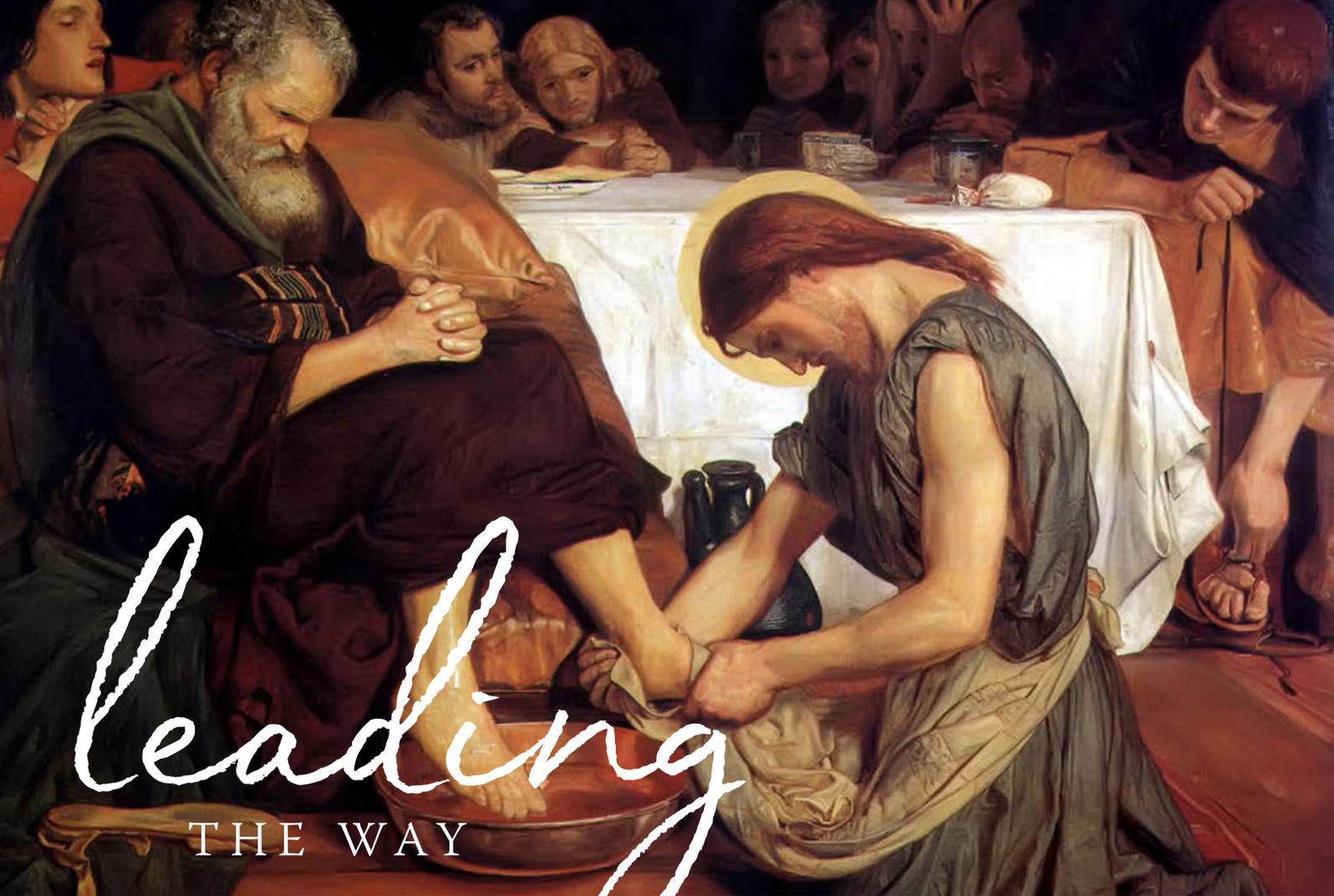
The proceeds from this appeal are used to help provide accommodation, transport assistance and health care to support and care for the retirement and health of our diocesan clergy.

Bishop Brian wishes to thank everyone who supported his recent Appeal: “Please be assured that your generous response helps me to ensure that clergy, like Mgr David, has a dignified retirement. Your practical support is very much appreciated and something for which I am very appreciative.”

Mgr David is also thankful. “*I am grateful that the diocese has provided me with private and comfortable accommodation and some part-time domestic assistance. I am also reassured knowing that Sue Daniels (a registered nurse and the clergy care coordinator) is only a phone call away if I need her support.*”

This year approximately **\$70,000** has been raised. A video featuring some of Mgr David’s story can be viewed, and donations can still be made, online at [baa.dow.org.au](http://baa.dow.org.au) ■

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



Jesus Washing Peter's Feet by Ford Madox Brown (1852)

# Leading

## THE WAY

BY DARREN MCDOWELL

*What is your hope and desire for yourself, your family, your parish and our world? I'm sure the answer to this will vary from person-to-person. We all desire health, happiness and a place to belong where people are treated with dignity, respect, inclusion and support.*

From a faith perspective, my hope and desire is that all people experience the life-transforming effects of an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, that they are fully engaged in living a life of fruitful discipleship, that they are growing in faith and love for God and one another, and sharing their faith in word and action in an ever-growing community.

Do these hopes and desires sound like pipe dreams? Perhaps? But, aren't all of our hopes and desires pipe dreams unless we intentionally do something about them?

This is, largely, the role of leadership. Through leadership, our hopes and desires can come into meaningful reality. I've heard many people say, "We're all leaders." That's wonderful, but what does it mean? A useful definition for leadership might be: "A person who inspires, empowers and equips individuals and teams to work collaboratively towards a common vision."

**A leader is a person who inspires, empowers and equips individuals and teams to work collaboratively towards a common vision.**

Using this definition, how do *you* lead? Let's take our families. We have a vision for how we want our family to live, behave and act. We inspire and empower family members to live up to this reality and provide, especially our children, with the skills and resources needed to attain this goal. Similarly, in

our working lives, many of us take on leadership roles when we inspire and empower colleagues to live up to team values, to perform at their best, or to find hope in a common vision for the outcome of their work.

There is an important distinction here—we are not discussing management. Whilst related, leadership and management are two distinct roles and ways of operating. A leader focuses on the person themselves—getting to know them personally. Getting to know their strengths and weaknesses and empowering them with authority to take responsibility for building, with others, a common vision and goal. My brother shared a story that the best leader he ever knew spent 80% of his time inspiring, guiding and empowering his team, with the remaining 20% of his time doing his own tasks. This is true servant leadership.

Management, on the other hand, focuses primarily on "getting tasks done", and getting them done correctly.

**... the best leader spends 80% of their time inspiring, guiding and empowering their team, with the remaining 20% of their time doing their own tasks. This is true servant leadership.**

How often do we hear it said, “I’ve got so much to do,” or, “I am a great coordinator because I get all the jobs done,” or “We need more people to do this or that in the parish,” or, “I got everything that I needed to get done today.” We’re happy when we can tick the boxes that say that the parish has “done” everything. In management mode, we’re spending most of our time “doing things” rather than “being with.”

In July of this year, we had the pleasure of having Ron Huntley, director of coaching for *Divine Renovation Ministries*, speak in our diocese. Much of his time was spent with our clergy and parish leaders discussing the intentional leadership required in order to bring our parishes from a “maintenance” (management) mode, in to a “mission” (leadership) mode of being.

One of his key messages was that if we wish to have the fruit of mature, intentional missionary disciples, then a culture of real, effective and engaging leadership must be developed. This leadership culture supports teams in building unanimity of vision,

balancing strengths, enabling healthy conflict, and upholding openness and vulnerability towards one another that builds trust and accountability.

Similarly, Fr Simon Lobo, in his book, *Divine Renovation Apprentices*, suggests that, “Parish transformation will remain a hypothetical theory without clear and consistent leadership.... In order to sustain parish renewal beyond its initial appearance, we must raise up and equip new generations of leaders who understand the principles behind our shared culture, bold vision and pastoral strategy.”

If we are to take seriously this paradigm shift towards a culture of leadership, what might some of the qualities and characteristics be of such leaders?

Firstly, like Jesus, having a vision and desire for individual people. Whilst always preaching the kingdom of God, Jesus’ focus was, first and foremost, on building relationships with people—initially with his apostles, then with his wider group of disciples, and then with the broader community. As a leader in my parish, how much *time* do I spend with the other leaders—nurturing, empowering and inspiring them?

Secondly, like Jesus, mentoring (and being mentored) with purpose. Jesus’ purpose was that his disciples would carry on the work that he, himself, was doing. He mentored them in order to send them out to “make disciples”;

confirmation that “you will do even greater things” (John 14:12). In spending *time* with ministry leaders, what is my purpose? Is it simply to ensure they’re doing a good job, or am I assisting them to deepen their faith and understanding of themselves in their relationships with God and others?

Thirdly, like Jesus, do I have—what Fr Simon Lobo calls—a “multiplication mindset”? This mindset encourages a leader to raise up a further six leaders, who each raise up another six leaders, who then raise up an ever-growing chain of mature leaders that are developed and nurtured.

I began this article by asking, “What is your hope and desire?” I will end with a challenge! If we are all supposed to be leaders, then can we please be so? Who are you inspiring? Who are you empowering? Who are you mentoring and guiding? Let’s make it personal. Let’s make it real and tangible. Let’s break out of managing all our tasks and focus upon raising up leaders who will raise up leaders and thus—through the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit—we will ever more closely see the transformative power of the Father in the lives of individuals and our world. ■

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



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# Walking with survivors

## An interview with Joan Isaacs and Eric Hudson

INTERVIEW BY ANNA TYDD

In the last edition of *Journey Magazine*, we outlined the diocese's continued commitment to developing a culture of safety in relation to child protection. 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. In response to this, the diocese has implemented a training and education program that requires each person in positions of leadership to undertake a minimum of 10 units of training per year.

As part of this, the diocese recently hosted *Walking with Survivors*—presented by Joan Isaacs and Eric Hudson. The session focused on the challenges facing both survivors and the agencies who provide services to survivors.

Joan is a wife, mother and doting grandmother. At the age of 14, her life changed irreparably when she was sexually abused by the chaplain at her school. She was the first witness to give evidence in Case Study 4 for the Royal Commission. In 2016, she released her book, *To Prey and To Silence*, to encourage others who have experienced similar challenges.

Eric is a relationship counsellor with over 30 years experience. He works with adult male survivors of childhood



**It is important to ensure that survivors are in control and are able to make choices about their own journey. The image of “walking alongside” survivors is very instructive in knowing how to best support them.**

sexual assault, and also works with men who have used violence against women. He most recently worked at the Royal Commission as a clinical advisor, providing leadership to the counselling and support team.

I was lucky enough to sit down with Joan and Eric to ask them some questions about their life and work.

**Joan, it is important for survivors of abuse to tell their stories to help bring much needed awareness about the impact of abuse on children (and the adult that child later becomes). How has your experience as a survivor impacted you?**

The sexual abuse of a child has grave impacts for most survivors, and my case is no different. The impacts are wide ranging and can fluctuate in intensity at varying times in one's life. I have found that I will never get to the point where I am “over it”. It is a matter of coping from day-to-day and being well supported.

The impacts I have experienced are mental health issues, (anxiety, depression and PTSD), trust and relationship issues, loss of educational and employment opportunities, and loss of faith. All of this has an impact on my physical health as well.

The abuse has also had profound impacts on those who are close to me. My husband has suffered greatly and has also lost his faith. So too have my children, and our grandchildren will never be baptised. My husband and I have been very vigilant with our own children to the point where they probably thought we were too protective of them.

**Eric, as a clinical advisor, what are the key learnings for those in the community in supporting and walking with survivors of abuse?**



PHOTO: DANIEL HOPPER

There are so many ways to answer this question, but I think the best way to understand how to provide support is by listening to survivors themselves and hearing from them what they most need. Survivors often talk about the stigma that society attaches to those who have been criminally assaulted. They feel blamed and judged and are often actively disbelieved.

For those who want to create a safe environment for supporting survivors, there are many ways that messages can be communicated to those too afraid of being disbelieved. It is important to ensure that survivors are in control and are able to make choices about their own journey. The image of “walking alongside” survivors is very instructive in knowing how to best support them—not by taking over and directing the path, or lagging behind—but alongside, in company with, and being tuned into what the person wants.

**Joan, in your experience what has provided you with the most support as a survivor of abuse?**

I was very fortunate having a wonderful mother. When she realised what was

happening to me, she believed me and gave me immediate support as well as protection from my abuser. I am also very fortunate to have a wonderful husband who has walked with me on my journey. I have ongoing support from a psychologist and a psychiatrist. These visits fluctuate as my needs fluctuate.

The Royal Commission has been a painful, but wonderful, experience. Not only did I have the chance to be heard and believed, I have met many other survivors. Instead of feeling alone in my journey, I have support and love from others who have experienced similar lives.

**Joan and Eric, to what extent do you think it is possible to heal as a survivor of abuse?**

**Joan:** That is a difficult question to answer. In my case, I initially believed that when I married and had my children that I had put it all behind me. Little did I realise that I had merely buried it—not dealt with it. This led to a crisis in my 40s when I was forced to address my abuse.

Being silenced by the Catholic Church as a result of my *Towards Healing* experience brought me enormous pain and suffering. By being unable to speak about my abuse, I was prevented from healing, and further abused.

Since being released from my silence through giving evidence at the Royal Commission and also the publishing of my book, I feel I have taken back some of the power that was taken from me, and I feel better able to heal. However, it is an ongoing process for me, and I doubt I will be ever fully healed.

**Eric:** Many survivors echo Joan’s experience. It is very common for people to find ways to continue with life as though nothing has happened—hiding the secret for many years. Then, as if out of the blue, the reality emerges. This is testament to the incredible resilience and survival strategies of children. It also speaks of the very powerful impact of the blaming, shaming and threatening actions of the abusers that effectively silence children for many years. Is recovery possible? Is healing possible? I certainly believe it is, although as Joan says, “It is an ongoing

process.” Nothing will change the facts of the abuse experienced or their lifelong impacts on the person’s life. But, I believe it is possible to reclaim power, to shift the blame and the shame to where it belongs, and to begin to rebuild the sense of self-worth and identity that was so grievously damaged by the abuser.

Safe and trusting relationships are needed for this process. In addition, the opportunity to identify what has been lost or taken from them, and to grieve these losses, is a part of the recovery journey. I know many survivors of childhood sexual abuse who are courageously pursuing their healing journey.

**Joan and Eric, how important do you think it is that leadership within organisations, such as the Diocese of Wollongong, are educated in the area of professional standards and child protection?**

**Joan:** The Diocese of Wollongong should be congratulated. Many priests and school leaders attended the workshops. It was a pleasure to work with people of goodwill who were intent on grasping the key issues and making the world in which they operate a safer place for children.

**Eric:** The leadership of all organisations working with children have an imperative to be well educated, informed and active in promoting child safety. They also have an ongoing pastoral responsibility to care for those who have been abused by people within their structures. Too often, the institutional response to survivors has been to see them as a thorn in the side of an organisation—somehow damaging to their finances or their reputation. Words of contrition and offers of support must be backed-up with genuine understanding, compassion and action that demonstrate to survivors that they are believed and that there is genuine compassion for the impact that the abuse has had on their lives. ■

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Anna Tydd is the executive officer of the Implementation Advisory group for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia and former director of professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong.

# CREATING A *safe* CHURCH FROM WITHIN

**600 people gather to hear from pope's expert on child safety**

BY JOSEPH YOUNES AND  
JOANNA LABA

On 31 August and 1 September 2018, more than 600 people gathered at the Campbelltown Catholic Club to hear from the pope's expert on safeguarding children as part of an ongoing commitment by the diocese to provide regular training and education to all those engaged in ministry.

Fr Hans Zollner SJ was the keynote speaker at the *Creating a Safe Church from Within* conference which aimed to foster discussion and engagement in relation to the response of the Church to child sexual abuse, especially responses to survivors and measures that can be taken to ensure child safety.

In attendance were victims and survivors of abuse, clergy, religious, school principals, teachers, parishioners, volunteers and Church employees.

Bishop Brian Mascord of Wollongong and Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv of Parramatta were part of the opening welcome, along with students from John Terry Catholic High School in Rosemeadow who gave a moving Welcome to Country.

Each day commenced with a reflection. On Friday, the reflection was given by Mr Tony Kane—a survivor of child sexual abuse and teacher from Edmund Rice College in West Wollongong. Saturday's reflection was given by Mr John Crowley—principal of St Patrick's College in Ballarat.

As part of his reflection, Tony said, "It is us here also, who need to put prayer into action and to reach out, to understand and truly empathise with any of these men and women that we do know." John

emphasised that the process of healing past hurt is "a journey of unreserved acknowledgement" of wrongdoing. "Walk with victims and survivors, acknowledge the abuse. Without trust, how can hope exist? Restore the dignity of those we have hurt," he said.

**Child protection "needs to get into our system, our core, our heart. Safeguarding needs to get into the DNA of the Church."**

The highly experienced and widely respected governance expert, Ms Susan Pascoe AM, facilitated proceedings.

German by birth, Fr Hans is a theologian, psychotherapist and psychologist. He has been a member of the pope's *Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors* since 2014 and is head of the *Centre for Child Protection* at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Both days of the conference featured significant audience participation and interactive workshops. Fr Hans outlined what is being done around the globe to support victims and survivors of harm and what members of the Church, including leaders, can do at an individual and collective level to make the local Church a safer place.

Child protection "needs to get into our system, our core, our heart. Safeguarding needs to get into the DNA of the Church" he said. He went on to

discuss the need for everyone to let go of power we hold, allow the governance to change, and deeply consider the type of Church we wish to be.

In addition to the physical and psychological damage of abuse, Fr Hans pointed out the deep theological damage, saying "What we did was destroying the message of the Gospel."

He said that the Australian Church is a laboratory for the whole Church at the moment. He spoke about not waiting for the necessary changes in Canon Law or hierarchical governance shifts, but that we all have a responsibility to open the discussion and to act—to change ourselves no matter our role within the Church.

Kate Temby, former general manager at the Royal Commission, attended both days and prepared a public report that focused on capturing the voice of the attendees over the two days. Kate's report can be downloaded at [dow.sh/cscw](http://dow.sh/cscw)

The conference was organised by the Diocese of Wollongong and the Diocese of Parramatta, supported by the Diocese of Broken Bay, the NSW Ombudsman, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, the NSW Professional Standards Office, Carroll & O'Dea, Makinson d'Apice and Catholic Church Insurance. ■

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Joseph Younes is the head of communication services for the Diocese of Parramatta.

Joanna Laba is a research and support assistant for professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong.



PHOTOS: DANIEL HOPPER

## Walk in the footsteps of royalty and experience your Kairos moment

What if you had the chance to walk where royalty had walked; to retrace the ancient paths that led a saint and thousands of pilgrims to one of the most enriching spiritual sites on earth, Santiago de Compostela?

Catholic Mission Immersions is offering you the chance undertake one of the world's most transformative spiritual journeys—the Camino Portugués.

Registrations are now open for the 250km walk, which follows in the footsteps of St Elizabeth of Aragon, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Queen Consort of Portugal.

Over 17 days, beginning in May 2019, pilgrims will walk from the beautiful Portuguese city of Porto, crossing into southern Galicia in Spain before arriving in Santiago de Compostela.

John Kerrigan, immersions business manager at Catholic Mission, says the Camino is more than just religious tourism, offering travellers a chance to reconnect with their spiritual selves.

“A pilgrimage such as this is both an internal and external experience. Regardless of why people set out on the Camino, the journey itself becomes a



spiritual adventure, drawing them into a deeper retreat experience.

“This is, after the famous Camino Francés, the most popular Camino route among pilgrims with good reason,” says John. “The journey takes in lush forests, vineyards, farmlands and small villages along with the historic cities which line the route.

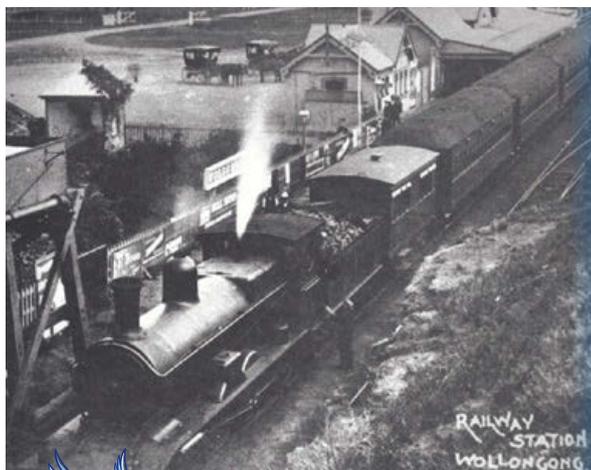
“To be walking the Way of St James and sharing that deep spiritual experience with other pilgrims is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Catholic Mission will operate two immersions in May and June 2019. Groups will meet in Lisbon, take in a full day in Fatima, before heading north and setting out on the Camino from Porto. The pilgrimage will also stop in historic Braga, before reaching its conclusion in Santiago de Compostela.

In the style of a true immersion, pilgrims will be asked to leave technology behind. “The Camino is about freedom,” says John. “To really immerse ourselves in the spirituality of this ancient Christian journey, we encourage those who join us to take a break from social media for a few days.”

Places are limited with two groups of only eight pilgrims departing in May 2019, so don't delay in booking your place on this incredible adventure. ■

For more information about the Camino Portugués, visit [catholicmission.org.au/immersions](http://catholicmission.org.au/immersions).



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# Bishop recognises student excellence

BY JESSICA SPARKS

Eight graduating Year 12 student leaders from our diocesan Catholic secondary schools were recognised for exemplifying the best of Catholic education at the recent *Bishop's Student Excellence Awards* at the Campbelltown Catholic Club. The vicar general, Fr Bernard Gordon, was on hand to present the awards on behalf of Bishop Brian Mascord at a special afternoon ceremony in front of proud family members, teachers, principals, and senior leadership from Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong.

The annual awards, proudly sponsored by the Catholic Development Fund, seek to recognise the religious, academic and community-based achievement of our Year 12 students and serve as a diocesan-wide celebration of all the young people graduating from our Catholic schools and the cumulative contribution of Catholic school staff over the years in support of these students.

The director of schools, Peter Turner, said the award recipients exemplified the positive influence of a Catholic education. He expressed his pride in the students and their outstanding



## Congratulations to the following award recipients:

<b>Lleyton Callaway</b>	St Joseph's Catholic High School, Albion Park
<b>Isabelle Tannous</b>	Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Oak Flats
<b>Declan Cleary</b>	Holy Spirit College, Bellambi
<b>Mikayla Gauci</b>	St Benedict's Catholic College, Oran Park
<b>Sarah Vella</b>	Magdalene Catholic High School, Narellan
<b>Eleanor Petricevic</b>	St John the Evangelist Catholic High School, Nowra
<b>Jeswin Jo Joseph</b>	John Therry Catholic High School, Rosemeadow
<b>Lachlan Walsh</b>	Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville

achievements, and his high hopes for them becoming agents of change and good works in the world. "You have embraced the opportunities provided to you through the gift of a Catholic education ... you have grown and developed values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that can benefit you, and more importantly, be of benefit to

others. I urge you to remain focused on those values most clearly seen in the example of the person of Jesus Christ and know that authentic leadership is found in the service of others." ■

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

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## Students celebrate end of school chapter with Bishop Brian

BY JESSICA SPARKS



Thousands of student leaders from 44 diocesan Catholic primary and secondary schools recently came together for a series of Year 6 Masses and Year 12 gatherings with Bishop Brian Mascord. Each event was a special opportunity for students and staff—normally spread over all corners of the diocese—to join together in prayer, song and conversation as communities of faith. The exchanges between Bishop Brian and the students were genuine and meaningful, and all were grateful for this unique chance to grow their relationships with the bishop, each other, and God.

Bishop Brian used the occasions to engage with the students directly—involving them in discussions and an exchange of experiences and ideas. In this national *Year of Youth*, he appealed to them to think about how they could

be the light of Christ to others in their school and parish, at home, and in their community.

He particularly encouraged students to create change from within the Church and to make a difference in the world—not as future leaders, but as present ones. He called on our youth to be open to a relationship with God. “Each of us is a child of God. At almost 60 years old, and as a bishop, I’m still a child of God. Like you, I’m still learning, because none of us has all the answers. You have to be open to all the things you can continue to learn, be open to what God has in store for you, and the experience of God being present in you,” he said.

The director of schools, Peter Turner, echoed the bishop’s encouragement of students continuing to develop their

relationships with Christ: “Throughout your lives, you have had—and will continue to have—a whole range of relationships ... but, the one that will always be a constant, that will always be a safe relationship, and the one you can always trust, is the one that you have, nurture and develop with Jesus,” he told those present.

Each gathering was uplifted by the talented Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong team, whose performances had students of both year levels singing and dancing along to their popular array of songs—music that’s liveliness and joy stayed with those present long after all the instruments were packed up and the days had concluded. ■

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

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## When in drought

BY LEAH MIREYLEES

“It’s just survival right now. All the animals are dying, even the kangaroos and the emus.” This is the reality Nicole Van Ingen—principal at St Mary Star of the Sea Primary in Milton—discovered when she travelled to the New South Wales country town of Walgett to explore how she could support local families suffering from the drought.

“It was an amazing experience,” said Nicole. “We met Connor, aged seven. He told me that when he was younger, the whole river was full to overflowing. Now, it’s so dry and steep that the animals can’t even get down there to drink the ‘green muck’ that’s left.”

Nicole took her family—including her ten-year-old daughter, Celia, and four-year-old son, David—on a “Western Wonders” road trip to make connections with the Walgett community. They visited the local Catholic school, St Joseph’s Catholic Parish Primary School, and discovered that children in the town won’t be having swimming lessons this year because there’s not enough money to fill their local pool.

“They’ve had to mix bore water with town water in order to help stretch supplies,” she says. “My ‘city’ kids, who have only ever experienced town water, refused to bath or shower for the two days we were in town. They saw it as an opportunity to save water.”



This became her inspiration. Upon her return, Nicole got her school community behind an initiative to raise money to provide a sausage sizzle for the students and staff at St Joseph’s. The aim of the sausage sizzle was to help support the local businesses in Walgett and “bring some joy” to the school in a time of great need—and hopefully keep the local swimming pool full.

And she’s not alone.

It’s one example of the many initiatives championed by Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) who have united to gift almost \$50,000 to the St Vincent de Paul Society’s *NSW Drought Appeal*.

There’s been “Dress as a Farmer” mufti days, “Fiver for a Farmer” fundraisers, talent quests, maps of Australia filled

with coins, a walkathon at St John’s Catholic Parish Primary School in Dapto that raised \$11,000, and an innovative spell-a-thon at St Therese Catholic Parish Primary School in West Wollongong, fundraising \$10,500. Additionally, one enthusiastic student from St Therese raised \$3,000 by approaching his father’s workplace for sponsorship.

At Corpus Christi Catholic High School in Oak Flats, they raised \$3,000 in 30 minutes—that’s \$100 a minute! One student from Stella Maris Catholic Primary School in Shellharbour, Beau Hart, generously donated his entire holiday savings.

CEDoW community development officer, Josie Cooks, said the efforts have been astounding: “With the enormous level of media attention around the drought and the severity starting to hit home, this has generated a great deal of interest from our schools wanting to do something to help. This is a perfect example of how students have been called to service and are able to put their faith into action.” ■

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



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# Diocesan youth *Rise Up!* to record with international artist

BY JESSICA SPARKS

It's not every day that a primary or secondary school student gets to participate in the recording of a music album for a renowned international artist. But, that's what eight lucky children in the Diocese of Wollongong recently experienced when they were hand-picked by Butterfly Music's, Andrew Chinn.

The young singers were part of a group of 23 students ranging from 8–15 years old, from Catholic schools and parishes across NSW. They gathered at the Robertson Brothers Studio in the Blue Mountains for a choir recording of seven songs for Andrew's latest album, *Rise Up!*

Andrew said the day was a lot of fun, with plenty of laughter and smiles: "It's always an amazing moment to hear these voices from all over the state sing their first notes together. They were a very sweet choir and very efficient. It took us less than two hours to record all seven songs."

Sisters, Georgia and Hannah Finlay, said the experience was something they would treasure for life. "I have so much respect for Andrew's gifts with music and his commitment to celebrating faith through music, as they are key elements



in my own life, too. I was overjoyed to be there and felt a sense of purpose in the studio," Georgia said.

"I was honoured to sing with Andrew on this album, as I knew only a few children were asked. It was so much fun. Recording on the day was casual and relaxed, yet professional at the same time," Hannah said.

Congratulations to the following children:

**Georgia Finlay**  
Holy Spirit College, Bellambi

**Hannah Finlay**  
Good Samaritan Catholic Parish Primary School, Fairy Meadow

**Karolyn Kelemete**  
Stella Maris Catholic Parish Primary School, Shellharbour

**Ella Nyers**  
St John's Catholic Parish Primary School, Dapto

**Gabby Gillespie**  
St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish Primary School, Bowral

**Charlotte Gillespie**  
Chevalier College, Bowral

**Cecilia Hart**  
St Michael's Catholic Parish, Mittagong

**Eden Hart**  
St Michael's Catholic Parish, Mittagong

*Rise Up!* is the 11<sup>th</sup> album for Andrew Chinn, who has visited more than 1,000 Catholic primary schools and performed in over 2,000 concerts, sharing his faith-inspired music with children, teachers and parents across Australia and the world. *Rise Up!* is available at [butterflymusic.com.au](http://butterflymusic.com.au) and iTunes. ■

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

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## Relic of St Mary MacKillop finds a home at the cathedral

On Wednesday 15 August 2018 (feast of the Assumption), during the midday Mass, Bishop Brian Mascord blessed and opened the St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Chapel in St Francis Xavier's Cathedral. The chapel holds a relic of St Mary MacKillop's original coffin given to the cathedral by the Sisters of St Joseph.

The cathedral worked closely with Sr Joan Goodwin RSJ in planning for the chapel, and it was an honour to have her there for opening—accompanied by Sr Margaret Paton RSJ and Sr Monica Barlow RSJ.



Relics remind us of the holiness of a saint and their cooperation in God's work. At the same time, they inspire us to ask for the prayers of that saint and to beg the grace of God to live the same kind a faith-filled life. The veneration of relics is an ancient custom dating from the reverence shown at the graves of the martyrs even in the time of the apostles.

The new chapel is available during St Francis Xavier Cathedral's opening hours each day.



## Legion of Mary celebrates 55 years in Wollongong

The Legion of Mary is the largest lay apostolate organisation in the world. It was started in Ireland in 1917. On Sunday 22 July 2018, the Legion of Mary Curia Wollongong celebrated 55 years. The curia is made up of many praesidia (or parishes). A second curia started later in the diocese known as the Illawarra Curia.

Bishop Brian Mascord celebrated the Mass that was concelebrated by Mgr Graham Schmitzer and Fr George Condookala. The Acies were incorporated into the Mass and it was wonderful to see so many active and auxiliary members and friends attend.

The celebrations were even more poignant with Evelyn Gardner being in attendance. Evelyn was present at the first curia meeting in 1963. Special thanks go to the curia's spiritual director, Sr Joan Goodwin RSJ, who organised the day and continues to provide spiritual guidance.

The Wollongong Curia consists of the following parishes: Albion Park, Corrimal, Dapto, Fairy Meadow, Port Kembla and Warrawong.

The Illawarra Curia consists of the following parishes: Bowral, Campbelltown, Eagle Vale, Ingleburn, and Varroville.

For any information about joining the Legion of Mary in your parish, contact the Wollongong Curia president, Tess Ricardo Moors, on (02) 4284 0970 or the Illawarra Curia secretary, Edwina, on (02) 4625 3019.

## Inspirational local parishioner leaves artistic legacy

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish in Warrawong is mourning the recent passing of parishioner and local artist, Maria Danuta ("Dana") Zaklikowski. Dana and her husband, Janusz, migrated from Poland to Australia in 1981. She studied at the Academy of Fine Art and Pedagogy in Cracow (Poland) and had a masters degree in both subjects. She was a prodigious artist, painter, graphic designer, fashion designer and teacher of the arts.

In 2015, Dana survived an acute bilateral and distractive stroke that affected her life in many different ways. Not prepared to accept her limitations—and as a part of her therapy program—she started sketching again on paper and then progressing further into painting with oils on paper and canvas. Using his engineering background, Janusz was able to build Dana a special device that assisted her with multidirectional arm movements by removing the gravity element of the arm.

As a result of the damage to Dana's brain, she was forced to develop a new style with the assistance of Janusz who helped her with the practical elements of colour scheme and brush



size selection, and the mixing of the paints. They signed the artworks under the common brush name, "Deer."

In May 2018, Dana experienced a heart episode that caused further damage to her already very fragile body and she succumbed to her illness in November 2018 during preparations for her upcoming art exhibition on 2 February 2019 at the Community Access Gallery (Wollongong Art Gallery). The exhibition will go ahead as planned—presenting all of their works created during Dana's post-stroke period—with the aim of raising an awareness that life after a stroke can be meaningful and have purpose.

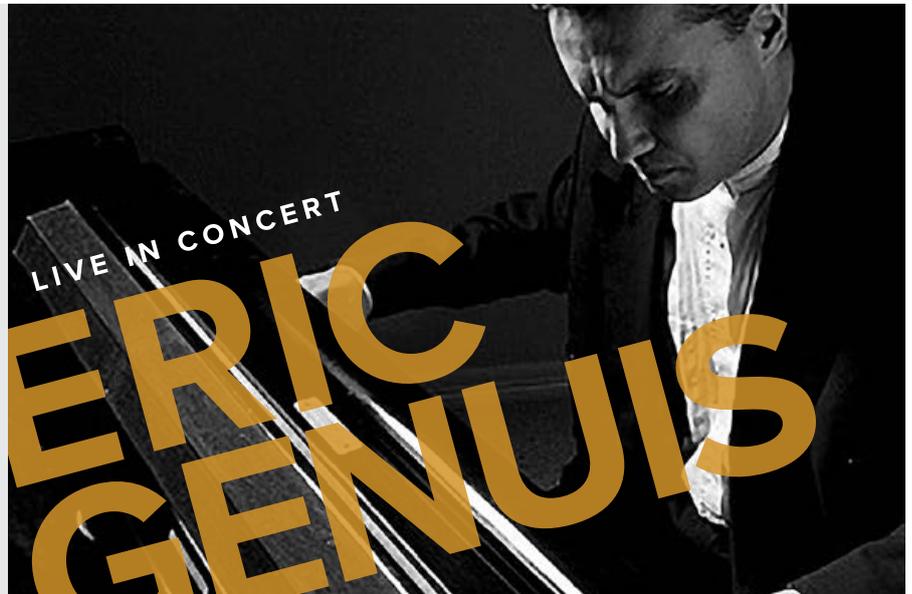
"For it is in dying that we are born to eternal life" (St Francis of Assisi). Rest in peace Dana.

## World renowned composer to tour the diocese

Acclaimed composer, virtuoso pianist and powerful inspirational speaker from the USA, Eric Genuis, is gearing-up to tour the diocese from 20 February–20 March 2019 in conjunction with the centenary anniversary of St Patrick’s Parish in Port Kembla.

Eric’s exhilarating music will touch the hearts of both classical and contemporary music lovers alike. He brings with him a world class violinist, cellist and soprano to perform his original compositions in parish churches, schools and prisons.

Eric’s concerts are an unforgettable experience. He gives powerful testimonies of life transformations as he talks about mercy, perseverance, hope and



forgiveness. As a dynamic speaker, he engages his audience with wisdom and humour and shows how beauty is redemptive.

Eric has already announced 17 concerts in churches around the diocese with discussions underway for him to play in a couple of prisons in NSW.

If you would like to bring Eric to your parish or school, please contact Fr Mark De Battista who is coordinating Eric’s tour in the diocese.

To see where Eric is playing and to purchase your tickets, visit [ericgenuistour.com](http://ericgenuistour.com)

## Catholic Women’s League

BY ANNE KELLY

The Diocese of Wollongong Catholic Women’s League (CWL) recently hosted the State CWL Conference at the Novotel in Wollongong on 4–6 September 2018. The theme for the conference was: *Do not be afraid, I will help you.*

The opening Mass for the conference was celebrated at St Francis Xavier Cathedral by Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham, and concelebrated by Fr Ron Peters and CWL chaplain, Fr Patrick Vaughan. A supper followed the Mass at the Xavier Centre. Lord Mayor Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM also attended.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Andrea Dean (Office of the Participation of Women), Sr Noelene Simmons SM (national president of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) and Frances Rush (CEO of the Asylum Seekers Centre in Sydney). Fr Patrick closed the conference with Mass in the Novotel Conference room.



More than 40 of the 60 members from the diocese’s Catholic Women’s League that attended the state conference with CWL chaplain, Fr Patrick Vaughan.

Many messages of appreciation for a successful and enlightening event have been received from those attending. I extend my appreciation to the State Executive for holding the Conference in Wollongong—Ann Pereira (president), Irene O’Grady (secretary) and Pauline O’Malley (treasurer). Many local CWL members were involved in staging the event.

The diocesan Consoling Mass at Mater Dolorosa Church in Balgownie was celebrated on Friday 14 September 2018 by Fr Ron Peters with the choir from Holy Spirit College, Bellambi. The Fairy Meadow Branch hosted a lunch afterwards.

The theme for my three-year term of office (that concludes at the end of 2018) has been: *Be a gift of love and compassion for one another* (taken from St John Paul II’s words at the beatification of Mary MacKillop in Sydney in 1995.)

I extend my grateful thanks to Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham and Bishop Brian Mascord for their encouragement and support during my term as president, and I wish the incoming president as many rewards as I have experienced.

.....  
Anne Kelly is the outgoing president of the Catholic Women’s League in the Diocese of Wollongong.

# Christmas

MASS & RECONCILIATION TIMES 2018

CHURCH / COMMUNITY	CHRISTMAS EVE 24 December (Monday)	CHRISTMAS DAY 25 December (Tuesday)	RECONCILIATION
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## ILLAWARRA

<b>WOLLONGONG CATHEDRAL:</b> 36 Harbour St	7pm	Midnight (Carols 11pm), 7am, 10:30am & 5pm	21 Dec 11am (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 12noon (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>ALBION PARK:</b> Tongarra Rd	6pm	Midnight & 10am	13 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>BALGOWNIE:</b> 47 Balmoral St	6:30pm <i>Syro-Malabar</i>	10am	18 Dec 6:30pm ( <i>Syro-Malabar</i> )
<b>BERKELEY:</b> Northcliffe Dr	5pm	8:45am	
<b>BULLI:</b> 48 Park Rd	6pm & 8:30pm	8:30am	21 Dec 7:30pm
<b>CROATIAN:</b> Bellevue Rd, Figtree	8pm	Midnight & 10am	20 Dec 6pm–8pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>CORRIMAL:</b> 99 Princes Hwy	6:30pm	Midnight, 9:30am & 11am <i>Italian</i>	20 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>DAPTO:</b> 24 Jerematta St	6pm & 9pm	7:30am & 9:30am	19 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>FAIRY MEADOW:</b> Princes Hwy	6pm & 8:30pm <i>Vietnamese</i>	8:30am, 10am <i>Italian</i> & 7pm <i>Vietnamese</i>	16 Dec 3pm–4:30pm <i>Vietnamese</i> (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite), 18 Dec 7pm–8pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 5pm–6pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>GERRINGONG:</b> 166 Fern St		8:30am	
<b>GWYNNEVILLE:</b> 115 Gipps Rd	5pm	9am	22 Dec 4:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>HELENSBURGH:</b> 4 McMillan St	6pm	8:30am	19 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>ITALIAN:</b> Stewart St, Wollongong		Midnight & 8:30am (See also Fairy Meadow & Corrimal)	
<b>JAMBEROO:</b> 22 Chapel Lane		9:30am	
<b>KIAMA:</b> Manning St	6pm & 9pm	9am	21 Dec 5pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>PORT KEMBLA:</b> O'Donnell St	7pm (outdoors on the Green)	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9:30am	20 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>SHELLHARBOUR CITY:</b> College Ave	6pm & 8pm	9am	18 Dec 7:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 12noon–12:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>SLOVENIAN:</b> 136 Princes Hwy, Figtree	8pm		24 Dec 7pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>THIRROUL:</b> 325 Lawrence Hargrave Dr	6:30pm (in school grounds)	9am	18 Dec 7:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>UNANDERRA:</b> 48–50 Princes Hwy	6pm	7am, 9am & 10:45am <i>Polish</i>	17–22 Dec 4:30pm–5:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>WARRAWONG:</b> Cnr Flagstaff & Bruce Rd	6pm (Carols 5:30pm) & 10pm (Carols 9:30pm)	9am	
<b>WEST WOLLONGONG:</b> Princes Hwy	6pm (TIGS) & 9pm	9am	
<b>WINDANG:</b> Windang Rd	5pm	7:30am & 10am <i>Spanish</i>	
<b>WOMBARRA:</b> Cnr Lawrence Hargrave Dr & Morrison Ave	9:30pm		

## MACARTHUR

<b>CAMDEN:</b> Cnr John & Mitchell Sts	5pm (Children's Mass), 7pm & 9pm	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	20 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite) & Saturdays 9:30am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>CAMPBELLTOWN:</b> Cordeaux St	6pm & 9pm	Midnight, 8:30am & 10:30am	18–20 Dec 10am–10:30am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite), 20 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite), 21 Dec 9:30am– 10am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite), 22 Dec 11:30am–12:30pm & 5pm–5:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)

<b>DOUGLAS PARK:</b> 415 Douglas Park Dr	8pm (Carols 7:30pm)	9am	
<b>EAGLE VALE:</b> 2 Aquamarine Dr	<i>3pm Spanish,</i> 5:30pm (Children's Mass) & 7:30pm (Family Mass)	Midnight & 9am	19 Dec 7pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 10am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>INGLEBURN:</b> Oxford Rd	6pm & 9pm	Midnight & 9am	15 Dec 11am–12noon & 4.30pm–5:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 11am–1pm & 4:30pm–5:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>LEPPINGTON:</b> Cnr Ingleburn & Dickson Rds		8am	7 Dec 6pm–6:45pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>MACQUARIE FIELDS:</b> 58 Edgar St	7pm (Family Mass)	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	18 Dec 7:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>MENANGLE:</b> 119 Menangle Rd	6pm		
<b>MINTO:</b> Moss Glen St & Guernsey Ave	7:30pm (Outdoors)	9am	
<b>OAKDALE:</b> Blattman Ave	6pm		
<b>ORAN PARK:</b> 94 Oran Park Dr	6pm (Family Mass outdoors at St Justin's Primary) & 8:30pm	8am	8, 15 & 22 Dec 3:30–4:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>ROSEMEADOW:</b> 80 Demetrius Rd	6pm	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am	<i>15 Dec 3pm–4pm Vietnamese (1<sup>st</sup> Rite),</i> 18 Dec 7pm–8pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite), 20 Dec 9:25am–10am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite), 21 Dec 8:45am– 9:30am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 5:15pm–5:45pm
<b>RUSE:</b> 43 Acacia Ave	6pm (Carols 5:30pm) & <i>9pm Syro-Malabar</i>	Midnight (Carols 11:30pm) & 9am (Carols 8:30am)	18–21 Dec 10am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & 22 Dec 11am–12noon & 4:30pm–5:30pm, 24 Dec 11am–12noon (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & <i>20 Dec 7pm Syro-Malabar (1<sup>st</sup> Rite)</i>
<b>TAHMOOR:</b> Stratford Rd	7pm	9am	14 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>THE OAKS:</b> Merlin St		Midnight & 9am	13 Dec 7:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>VARROVILLE:</b> 193 St Andrews Rd	7pm (Pageant & Carols 6pm)	<i>Midnight Samoan &amp;</i> 9am	21 Dec 7:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)

#### SHOALHAVEN

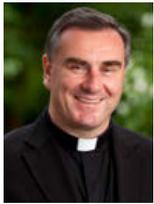
<b>NOWRA:</b> 20 North St	<i>2pm Syro-Malabar,</i> 7pm & 10pm	8am & 9:30am	19 Dec 7pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>BERRY:</b> Albert St	9pm	8am	
<b>BOMADERRY:</b> Bunberra St		9:30am	
<b>CULBURRA BEACH:</b> Silvermere St	6pm	8am	
<b>KANGAROO VALLEY:</b> Moss Vale Rd	8pm		
<b>SHOALHAVEN HEADS:</b> Shoalhaven Heads Rd	6pm		
<b>ULLADULLA:</b> Green St	6pm (Outdoors, BYO chairs) & 9pm (Carols 8:30pm)	8am at Mollymook Beach & 10am	18 Dec 6pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>SUSSEX INLET:</b> Banksia St	6pm	7:45am	19 Dec after 8.30am Mass (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite)
<b>VINCENTIA:</b> St George Ave	6pm & 8pm	8am & 9:30am	

#### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

<b>BOWRAL:</b> 2 Bendooley St	<i>4:30pm Syro-Malabar,</i> 6pm & 11pm	9am	15 Dec 9:30am & 22 Dec 9.30am (1 <sup>st</sup> Rite) & 19 Dec 6:30pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> Rite)
<b>BUNDANOON:</b> Hill St		8am	
<b>BURRADOO:</b> 25 Eridge Park Rd	7:30pm (Carols 7pm)	8am	
<b>BURRAWANG:</b> Church St	5pm		
<b>MITTAGONG:</b> Alfred St	8pm	7:30am	
<b>MOSS VALE:</b> 24 Garrett St	7pm	10am	By request or see parish website
<b>PENROSE PARK:</b> 120 Hanging Rock Rd		Midnight (Carols 11:30pm), 9am & 11am <i>Polish: Midnight &amp; 10am</i>	

# Clergy news

## Appointments



**Fr Bernard Gordon VG** (September 2018)—Vicar general of the Diocese of Wollongong.

In accordance with Canon 479 §1, the vicar general possesses—by virtue of his Office—the same executive power as belongs by law to the bishop throughout the whole diocese. This means that the vicar general can perform all administrative acts as the bishop does, with the exception of those administrative acts which the bishop has reserved to himself, or which by law requires a special mandate of the bishop.

Fr Bernard is based in the Office of the Bishop, Xavier Centre, Wollongong.

**Fr Victor Vincent** (September 2018)—Assistant priest at Lumen Christi Catholic Parishes, Wollongong.

**Fr Stephen Varney** (November 2018)—Administrator of St Aloysius Catholic Parish, The Oaks.

## Honours

In one of his last acts as the bishop of Wollongong, Bishop Emeritus Peter Ingham nominated four priests of the Diocese of Wollongong for the title Prelate of Honour of His Holiness (monsignor) in recognition for their exceptional service to the Church.

In July 2018, Pope Francis reviewed the nominations and granted the title of Monsignor to **Fr Bryan Jones, Fr Patrick Faherty, Fr David O'Brien and Fr Graham Schmitzer.**

## Anniversaries

**Fr Christopher Roberts** (2 September 2018)—40 years ordination to the priesthood.

**Fr Anthony John (Jack) Whitty** (7 December 2018)—50 years ordination to the priesthood.

**Fr Anthony Ha (Thanh Son)** (8 December 2018)—25 years ordination to the priesthood.

**Fr Douglas Rheinberger** (20 December 2018)—60 years ordination to the priesthood.

## In memoriam

**Fr Valerian Jenko OFM OAM** (June 2018)—Former leader of the Slovenian Community and All Saints Slovenian Church at Figtree. Fr Jenko retired in 2014, returning to Slovenia where he resided until his death. In 2000, Fr Jenko was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for services to the Slovenian Catholic community in Australia—a tribute to his personal qualities and his commitment to his community.

# Getting Involved

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

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<input type="checkbox"/> Clergy Care Fund <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> Where most needed in a parish or school <sup>2</sup>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>I would like to give a MONTHLY gift</b> <small>(please send me further details)</small>				
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Made payable to: The Catholic Diocese of Wollongong				
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STREET ADDRESS		SUBURB	POSTCODE	
PHONE NO.	EMAIL ADDRESS			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>PLEASE CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD</b> <small>Cardholder details are stored in line with PCI Security Standards</small>				
CARD NO.	EXPIRY DATE	SIGNATURE	DATE	

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PO Box 1239 Wollongong NSW 2500 **or email to** [giving@dow.org.au](mailto:giving@dow.org.au)

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*May you experience welcome, support and understanding.*

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38 Harbour St Wollongong  
(entry via Crown St)

**Diocesan Ministry Resource Centre**

*Books, DVDs and more for borrowing*

Xavier Centre

(02) 4222 2481

38 Harbour St Wollongong  
(entry via Crown St)

**CCD Resource Centre**

(02) 4640 8550

Micah House

35a Cordeaux Street, Campbelltown

## Office of Renewal and Evangelisation

Faith formation, liturgy, youth ministry, CCD, planning & outreach  
[jude.hennessy@dow.org.au](mailto:jude.hennessy@dow.org.au)  
or (02) 4222 2407

## Vocations Support

General information can be found at:  
[catholicozvocations.org.au](http://catholicozvocations.org.au)  
For enquiries contact: (02) 4222 2400

## Marriage Tribunal

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

## Needing Help?

CatholicCare Wollongong provides a range of services: (02) 4227 1122

## Mass Times, Churches and Upcoming Events

[www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au)  
[info@dow.org.au](mailto:info@dow.org.au) or (02) 4222 2400



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The Fund is required by law to make the following disclosure. Investment in the Fund is only intended to attract investors whose primary purpose for making their investment is to support the charitable purposes of the Fund. Investor's funds will be used to generate a return to the Fund that will be applied to further the charitable works of the Catholic Church. The Fund is not prudentially supervised by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority nor has it been examined or approved by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). An investor in the Fund will not receive the benefit of the financial claims scheme or the depositor protection provisions in the Banking Act 1959 (Cth). The investments that the Fund offers are not subject to the usual protections for investors under the Corporations Act (Cth) or regulation by ASIC. Investors may be unable to get some or all of their money back when the investor expects or at all and investments in the Fund are not comparable to investments with banks, finance companies or fund managers. The Fund's identification statement may be viewed at [www.cdfcommunityfund.org.au/aboutus](http://www.cdfcommunityfund.org.au/aboutus) or by contacting the Fund. The Fund does not hold an Australian Financial Services Licence. The Fund has entered into an intermediary authorisation with CDFCF AFSL Limited ABN 49 622 976 747, AFSL No. 504202 to issue and deal in debentures.

\* Rates as at 15 November 2018 and are subject to change. The current interest rate can be viewed at [www.cdfcommunityfund.org.au](http://www.cdfcommunityfund.org.au). The minimum Term Investment amount is \$2000.