

CATHOLIC VOICE

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#PANAMA2019





Archbishop’s Message
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

“Listen humbly & speak courageously” in 2019

WE make the journey into 2019 with faith, hope and love. May we not allow the darkness of despair and selfishness to cloud our vision of Jesus who leads us with joy.

During last year’s Synod on Youth, Pope Francis mentioned several times words of encouragement that we can all take into 2019. He insisted that we are to LISTEN WITH HUMILITY and SPEAK WITH COURAGE.

Let us first consider the wisdom to LISTEN WITH HUMILITY.

Pope Francis wants us to be open to newness. We are to be open to the surprises of God. For this to happen we must be the People of God who listens to the voice of God who whispers deep within the human heart. There is a beautiful expression from our Catholic Tradition whereby St Benedict (480-547) instructs us to “Listen carefully and incline the ear of your heart.” It is the opening expression in his famous Rule. To “listen carefully” is an act of profound humility. Our heart becomes docile and receptive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit within us.

Then there is the allied response to SPEAK WITH COURAGE. Pope Francis

wants us to cease all gossiping and idle chattering of shared prejudices. “Love never fails” (Cor. 13/8) us! With only love there is true freedom in truth and charity. We can dialogue in honesty. This is the case even when we have rather challenging things to share. Pope Francis insists that we can speak even then with boldness and frankness. In the love of “only Jesus” (Mark 9/8) in our heart and words, we can be used mightily by the Holy Spirit.

Let us be aware, however, of two deadly traps to dialogue as we enter into 2019.

The first trap is that we LISTEN WITH HUMILITY but we do not SPEAK WITH COURAGE. In other words, we keep to ourselves something that we really feel needs to be said. This is a form of selfishness. It deprives others of what, indeed, maybe Godly wisdom. A beautiful quote from the 4th century Archbishop of Milan, St Ambrose, could be extended here, although it was originally applied to sharing generously our money and possessions with the poor. He said, “God does not consider what one gives but what one keeps.”

Another trap to real dialogue in 2019 is the other extreme.

Namely, this is to SPEAK WITH COURAGE but refusing to LISTEN WITH HUMILITY. Here we likely become victim to our own prejudices and narrow ideologies. Ultimately, we inflict our opinions on others. Dialogue now too becomes a monologue. Surely it is a form of arrogance.

So, as 2019 opens up, let us dialogue with two lungs: Listening humbly and speaking courageously! It is a real Gospel strategy. It reminds me of the saving words of Jesus: “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13/34). Let us imitate Jesus always!

May I offer a final observation? To SPEAK WITH COURAGE does not always need to be expressed verbally. Non-verbal communication, as we all know, can also be very powerful. Indeed, in regard to evangelisation, it is a superb way of drawing others into conversion to Christ Jesus, the love of our lives. It makes me recall the famous words attributed to St Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), “Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary use words.”

May you all be truly blessed by the Holy Spirit in 2019.

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SUNDAY, 3 11.00am
Mass, Feast of Senior Sto Nino, St Christopher’s Cathedral

SATURDAY, 9 – SUNDAY, 10
10.00am Community of the Risen Lord Conference, Dickson

SUNDAY, 10 11.00am
Mass, Association Giuliani Canberra Memorial Mass, St Christopher’s Cathedral

TUESDAY, 12 7.30am 50th
Anniversary Opening of 2019

Parliamentary Year, St Paul’s, Manuka

SUNDAY, 17 9.30am,
Installation Mass for Fr Dominic Byrne, St Mary’s West Wyalong

WEDNESDAY, 20 10.00am
Diocese of Wagga Wagga Consultors

THURSDAY, 21
12noon Marist College Commencement Mass, Pearce

FRIDAY, 22 7.00pm
Australian Catholic Women’s

Commission Conference, Adelaide

SUNDAY, 24 11.00am
Mass, St Christopher’s Cathedral

MONDAY, 25 –
WEDNESDAY, 27 9.00am
Bishop’s Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry, Sydney



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when losing everything isn't losing everything

BY CHRIS GORDON

I don't normally add a comment to a story I've written but I just wanted to make a couple of quick points. This was an incredibly confronting and emotional time for Paul and Jo, and I was, and am, very appreciative and respectful of his willingness to share with me such a raw and recent trauma. Also, this has impacted on his wife Jo every bit as much as it has on Paul. It is her story too. As I didn't meet her, I wasn't able to incorporate her comments or reflections but this is obviously equally impactful and life-changing for both of them. My thoughts and prayers remain with them both as they continue to adjust to what has happened and what lays ahead. *Chris Gordon*

Author Marisha Peel once said "life hinges on a couple of seconds you never see coming... and you have no idea what you'll do until you're there."

For Deacon Paul Rummery of Tuross Heads, those few seconds came on the evening of Friday December 21 as he and his wife Jo were enjoying dinner with friends in Batemans Bay.

"We were in Batemans Bay having a meal with Fr Dominic and Fr Martins and mutual friends for a Christmas celebration we have every year as a group together," Deacon Rummery recalls.

"We were sitting at the table together and the waitress came up to me with a phone in her hand and said to me 'there's a policeman wants to talk to you?'"

In the few seconds between passing the phone from her hand to Deacon Paul, his mind had enough time to race through some of the reasons a policeman needed to speak to him, and why it was so urgent he tracked him down at a restaurant.

And then the few seconds that changed everything.

"I'm standing in your driveway, and your house has been completely gutted by fire. It's gone."

You can throw in any cliché you like... that you freeze, your heart stopped beating, it felt surreal... The reality is even deeper. It's too much to comprehend. You're mind tries to take on this new information... that all of the physical, material things of your life are gone forever. That your routine has changed forever. And the unanswerable question poses itself. What do I do now?



Deacon Paul Rummery standing in the burnt out shell of the house he and wife Jo lived in for nearly 28 years.

Unsurprisingly, Deacon Rummery chokes up as he recounts the story. It's still very emotional and traumatic. As he speaks, it's only three weeks since the fire and the after effects and repercussions to the Rummery's lives are still in flux.

As the policeman spoke to him on the phone that night, he asked Deacon Rummery and his wife to go via the Batemans Bay police station to make a statement about his ownership and when he left home.

We've had 52 years of marriage, and so much of that was contained here. Pictures of our children, our grandchildren, pictures of things we did together... all the things that families collect. All in here, all gone.

They followed all of the necessary procedures then headed home to find devastation that was hard to comprehend. Brave firefighters were trying to protect neighbouring properties. One neighbour had even stood steadfastly in the blistering heat of the flames fixing his hose on the Rummery's small home office and garage to try and save something.

But the house itself was gone.

It's emotionally confronting walking through the remains of

the house with Deacon Paul, even intrusive. He points out various piles of ash and where a newcomer sees just that pile, Deacon Paul can still see the couch that used to be there. The table, the walls, the carpet, the pictures.

"Standing here looking at what was once our home is... it was our home for nearly 28 years," he says.

"We've had 52 years of marriage, and so much of that was contained here. Pictures of our

children, our grandchildren, pictures of things we did together... all the things that families collect. All in here, all gone.

Two key areas of loss regard his and his wife's great passion – reading and music.

"We had a great collection of music," he explained.

"First of all there was the vinyl, that's now melted. Over there was an extensive CD collection. That's all gone.

"There were books... we are both avid readers and kept a lovely Library of books which

we used to refer to, books that we enjoyed, even some books I picked up on travels to the Holy Land in 2010. They're all gone too."

Even these weeks later, Deacon Paul said he and Jo will think to get something or use something only to have to remind themselves that it's gone.

When his three adult children got the news, they couldn't make their way from Coolangatta to Tuross Heads quick enough, Deacon Paul advised there was nothing they could do, but they argued they could at least be there. That they needed to be there.

With 11 grandchildren in tow, they set up a tent embassy behind the remains of the house... laughing, preparing a BBQ, pitching in with anything they could. It was a very poignant experience.

Standing in the backyard, Deacon Paul could look in one direction and see the life he and his wife had acquired. Looking the other way, towards his family, he could see the world they'd made.

In Deacon Paul's new reality, he and Jo are staying at places owned by friends while they sort through the processes of their insurance company.

It's the sort of event that has the potential to shake a person's faith, but nothing could be farther from the truth for Deacon Paul.

"It hasn't tested my faith. It's made me so grateful that I have a faith," he said.

"I'm just so grateful for the people who supported us in prayer. We have felt particularly uplifted by the people. The Archbishop has been great. Fr Tony Percy came down here on Christmas Day especially to see us. Fr Tom Thornton came over from Young, Fr Joe Tran from down the road in Narooma and so many others. And not just the clergy... so many people who've known us for years, reaching out and praying for us.

"The extraordinary thing to come to terms with was the extraordinary generosity of people, including many that don't know us. The people of Tuross in particular have been amazing. I couldn't imagine living anywhere else.

"We've just had stuff dropped in front of us. Plastic bags of food, towels, the sort of things you need to move on with... all of the things that we've lost.

"People have given us accommodation, given us money... they took up collections at Narooma, Batemans Bay, Moruya, Tuross people all did collections for us and it's just been overwhelming. I remember receiving an envelope at the door from someone with \$70 in it. No note, no identification.

It's a bit of a paradigm change for Deacon Paul.

"In the ministry that I have, it's a giving ministry, a pastoral ministry. It's hard to be on the receiving side of it. We don't receive as well as we give. "

But the community want to give. Some want to repay the Rummery's generosity over so many years, some just want to help a stranger in need. All of which helps sustains Deacon Paul and Jo for the tough times ahead.

Restarting from scratch is a difficult task for anyone to consider. Moreso for retirees in their 80s. But restart they will.

That quote by Marisha Peel about life hinging on a few seconds you don't see coming... there's one more sentence to it.

"And what you decide in those few seconds determines everything from then on."

Deacon Paul and his wife decided to keep going. They decided to start again. They decided to live, to be fulfilled by the gift of family they have always had, and the gift of community they've always known and recently been reminded of.

Bega abuzz for 150th celebrations

CAN a whole town be abuzz with excitement?

Jo Scott-Pegum, principal of St Patrick's Primary believes it can... and is... as the town prepares to celebrate the upcoming 150 years of Catholic Education in the Bega Valley.

"There's a real sense of anticipation," Jo said.

"And not just from within Bega. So many people have been educated at St Patrick's that we're hoping to spread the word far and wide to come back and join in the celebrations."

The event will commemorate the opening of the Catholic Denominational School of Bega in 1869 by Mr John Mangan.

As years went by, the Sisters of Charity (1884) and later the Sisters of St Joseph's (1926) came to run the school which now falls under the responsibility of Catholic Education.

The role and presence of the school, in its various forms, has been significant in the broader community, so the organisers have ensured the event will reflect that significance.

The Sesquicentenary celebrations will take place over three days – Friday March 15 to Sunday March 17... St Patrick's Day.

Ms Scott-Pegum believes all the effort in planning the event will culminate in a memorable celebration.

"It's been 18 months that we've been thinking and planning, the committee has been working hard coordinating the long weekend of events without overdoing it," she said.

"And now we're almost there. We're all quite excited with just a little bit of nervous anticipation about just how many will hear about the celebration and come."

The reunion weekend will open with a Mass at 9.30am on Friday March 15 followed by an open day at the school with a theme of 150 running through the classrooms.

The school hall will be set up as a little museum/art gallery featuring artefacts that have been collected across the last 18 months.

On the Saturday, Bega Valley Council has approved a St Patrick's Day parade through the main street then up Gipps Street to the School Hall, and there the P&F are putting on a number of activities.



On Saturday night there'll be a bush dance and dinner and on Sunday morning Archbishop Christopher Prowse will say Mass to be followed by Morning Tea to wrap up the festivities.

Ms Scott-Pegum said the response, not just by the school community but also by the community in general, has been overwhelming.

"Bega is quite a close community so there's quite a strong community sentiment towards the event," she said.

"We're hoping that on the Saturday night when we have the bush dance and dinner at the local showground we will also see some past students, teachers and families who may not be as interested in the open day at the school but want to join in the event and sit around and talk about old times."

Ms Scott-Pegum has only lived in Bega for the last three years, having moved from Brisbane. Aside from the proximity to the sea and starting with the letter B, the two places are like chalk and cheese, but says it's one of the best decisions she

and her family have made.

"We took a big family adventure from Brisbane to Bega to experience something of the beauty of the rural countryside and life," she said.

"The beautiful coastline and the green hills... we bought a farm and we're just relishing the opportunity of a rural lifestyle for a while."

In that time she has experienced not only the highs but also the lows of rural life, including the nearby Tathra bushfires and even a fire on her own property in August. But she has no regrets.

"St Patrick's is a really amazing school. And the depth of the community as-tounds me at times," she said.

"It's been that gathering together of the school community... the strength of the people... that has been so powerful and so true to heart."

"Everyone looks out for everyone from the littlest to the biggest. It's a special place and I'm sure the reunion will showcase that."

Sesquicentenary schedule:

Friday March 15

- 9.20 Welcome to Country
- 9.30 School Mass
- 10.30 School Open Day, Museum Open (Hall)
- 2.00 School Assembly

Saturday March 16

- 12.00 St Patrick's Day Parade
- 1.00 Fun on the Flats
- 3.00 History talks and Museum (Hall)
- 5.30 Bush Dance and dinner

Sunday March 17

- 9.30 Parish Mass
- 10.30 Morning Tea (Hall)

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JUSTICE MATTERS
CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Taxation: the price of civilisation or a form of theft?

Popular attitudes to public finance often seem to resemble a cargo cult. We want taxes to be lower, public spending to be increased and budgets to be balanced. Our more realistic selves know that we cannot “have it all”, that there is no “magic pudding”, but we are still prone to feeling that the taxes we pay are unfair and that the public services we receive are not enough.

All this is natural (and, for some people, eminently justified). In the end, however, the capacity to provide government services depends largely on the level of tax revenue. Decisions have to be made as to who benefits and who pays.

Inevitably, and rightly, we expect such decisions to be fair. From the viewpoint of Catholic social teaching, they should reflect “a preferential option for the poor” – in plainer language, they should give priority to their impact on the wellbeing of poor people. They do not always meet this standard.

For instance, unemployed people who find part-time work while receiving Newstart Allowance can face an effective tax rate of more than 60 cents in the dollar. By contrast, the highest rate of income tax is 45 cents in the dollar and applies only to taxable income above \$180,000. This hardly seems fair.

Anomalies like this undermine the credibility of the tax system, but should not be allowed to obscure the fact that that tax revenue makes possible a wide range of services that we are inclined to take for granted – pensions, health care and schools (to name a few). We would do well to recognise the value of the tax system as an enabler in creating a fairer society than would exist without it. This may not make us jump for joy at the taxes we pay, but may keep things in perspective.

Please send comments on the article, or requests for further information about the Commission, to Social. Justice@cg.org.au.

60 grace-filled years

FR HILTON Roberts celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination on Saturday December 1, 2018.

The actual anniversary date was November 23, the Feast of St Clement of Rome, and on that date Fr Hilton con-celebrated a Carmelite Mass with Bishop Emeritus Pat Power.

On December 1, Mass was celebrated at St Matthew's church at midday followed by a lunch at St Matthew's Primary School Hall. Numerous parishioners were on hand to share and celebrate the occasion with him.

To mark the occasion, Bishop Emeritus Pat Power, who was unable to attend, provided the following tribute.

I wish every joy and blessing today on Father Hilton and everyone celebrating with him sixty grace-filled years as a priest of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. At our Archdiocesan clergy assembly at Galong last May, I conducted a fascinating interview with Hilton and yesterday week, I was privileged to concelebrate with him at the Carmelite Monastery on the actual anniversary of his ordination. It was always my intention to be with you all today and I especially looked forward to catching up with Hilton's three sisters and his other extended family members and friends. As it turned out, I had to make the tough decision

to go to Moruya for the funeral Mass of Shane Madden who died suddenly a week ago. His Mass is taking place at exactly the same time as yours. I don't know if Shane and Hilton knew each other, but they both were/are beautiful men who responded to God's grace, especially in their love and service of others. Shane was many things in the legal world, but outstanding as a compassionate magistrate in the ACT Children's Court.

Hilton has been for me the dearest of friends and the best possible model for me in my life as a priest and bishop. Seven years my senior, he has been my confidant, confessor and “companion on the journey”. With you all, I have been enriched by his preaching which flows authentically out of his personal holiness and reflection on the word of God. He sometimes feels that his great love of reading is self-indulgent but it further provides him with riches to be shared with us all.

Despite his gentle nature, he was always a tough competitor on the squash court. Rarely did I ever manage to beat him or my other old mate, Peter Gannon. The three of us had a lot of fun together and were part of the same support group, travelling around exotic places in the Archdiocese including going up and down the Clyde Mountain and being given by Hilton a knowledgeable tour of Araluen. But I won't tell any tales out of school.

Hilton's musical talents are



legendary. When I went to Propaganda College in Rome in the 1970s to do some further studies, his colourful choir master, Bucci, on finding out that I was from this diocese, immediately enquired about Hilton and spoke of him in very laudatory terms. It was during his time at the College that Hilton played the piano at a concert for Pope John XXIII when he visited “Prop” shortly after his election.

I remember well Hilton's introduction as the first Parish Priest of Kaleen in 1976. At the time, I was the secretary to Archbishop Thomas Cahill. The Mass was to be celebrated on the back verandah of the presbytery with the congregation gathered in the sloping back yard. It was a very Australian setting. But as Tommy and I drove into the suburb we were greeted by the music of bells of many of the

famous cathedrals of Europe. All this was orchestrated by Eric North, an eccentric former Benedictine monk, a good friend of Hilton. Not often Archbishop Cahill was lost for words but he was that day.

Finally, I want to say how greatly influenced Hilton has been by the Second Vatican Council and how he has consistently shared its teaching and spirit by word and example. I know too that, like me, he has been mightily encouraged by Pope Francis since his election five years ago. Pope Francis and Father Hilton Roberts are about the same age. How indebted we all are to them both for sharing with us the Joy of the Gospel.

(Bishop) Pat Power
1 December 2018

Five minutes with John Voytas in Narooma NSW



What parishes have you been involved in?

The Parishes I have been involved in have being Emu Plains and Springwood in the Blue Mountains in NSW ,38 Years in Springwood Parish.

What's great about where you live?

I live in a beautiful part of the South Coast at Narooma 5 hours from Sydney. A peaceful and quiet environment with wonderful beaches and lakes.

Who inspires you in your faith?

My inspiration for my Faith in recent times have been two recent friends - Father Joseph Tran parish priest at Narooma and Matt Ramson Catechist

coordinator for the South Coast. They are humble people, always smiling and pleasant I can see the influence of Jesus in their lives.

Do you have a favourite Saint?

My favorite Saints are Saint John Paul II and Saint Sister Faustina both wonderful and spiritual people, both Polish who made a strong Catholic influence on our Faith and the World.

Have you been to any great concerts?

My most loved concerts were Cats and Jersey boys both in Sydney wonderful joyous music.

Do you have a favourite sporting team and/or sport (and why)?

My favorite sporting team is the Bulldogs rugby league team in Sydney. I was raised in the area in western suburbs and they were a home-grown club with many local players over the years.

What is your favourite food or beverage?

My favorite food is Wiener Schnitzel with mashed potatoes and homemade lemon meringue pie.

Do you have a favourite place to eat?

I don't have a favorite eating place, I like to eat at all local restaurants and cafes

What is your favourite movie?

My favorite movie is The Quiet Man with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara made partly in Ireland and Hollywood.

What is your favourite book and last book read?

I don't have a favorite book but I like reading History especially by Peter Fitzsimmons. One of his

best books was Ned Kelly with lots of background information about the times and life of this bushranger.

What is your favourite place for a holiday?

Favorite holiday destination is anywhere in Europe especially the historical areas in any country to experience the culture and food in the different towns.

Do you have any places you particularly like to visit?

My favourite place to visit is Medjugorje in Bosnia / Herzegovina I have been there twice. It is a Spiritual place where some young Visionaries over 30 years ago saw our Blessed Mother and still convey messages every month.

What is your favourite quote, phrase or motto?

My favorite quote was from Saint John Paul II's speech when he was elected Pope “Do not be afraid, open your heart to Christ “.

Young faithful bucking the trend for Summer School

It's already been a long hot summer, and we're only half way through it.

In this heat it takes a bit of extra effort to do anything.

So, while many head to the beaches and coastlines of Australia, it's a measure that something special must be happening when 215 participants fight the soporific seduction of the sun to head inland for the very active annual Summer School at St Stanislaus College, Bathurst.

The Summer School, an initiative of the Disciples of Jesus (DOJ) and now in its 35th year, is a regular highlight on the calendar for young people from not only Bathurst but all around NSW.

Tim Kirk, one of the organisers of the Summer School, said participants come from as far as Sydney and Canberra... and some even further... to participate in the School.

"In Australia, the Disciples of Jesus run four summer schools, and have for some time," he said.

"There's one in Bathurst, that's the biggest of them. We also run one in Melbourne, one in Patterson in the Hunter Valley and one in Perth."

"The target Audience is Young People – we encourage people ages 16-35. We do get some oldies, like me, but more in a support role. Interestingly for this school, to our joy and a little bit of a challenge, 60% of our participants are under 21."

At a time when youth participation is falling in many areas, including team sports and community organisations as well as religious activities, the numbers of young people buck the trend which Mr Kirk finds very encouraging.

"It's an age group the Church often worries about reaching," he suggested.

"But by some amazing circumstance we seem to be able to draw them for a week of spiritual growth, great music, dynamic liturgies and a deeper encounter with the key elements of our Catholic Faith."

"We struggle attracting young people to Mass these days but to come out here in the Chapel at St Stanislaus, to see it crammed full of young people, all singing at the top of their voices, it's an incredible thing to experience that would edify the heart of any faithful Catholic."

This year's Summer School ran from Sunday January 6 to Sunday January 13.



Each year the Summer School follows a fairly set program, with each day having its own theme.

"Monday was on the love of God, Tuesday was Reconciliation, Wednesday was on following Jesus as a disciple, Thursday was encountering the Holy Spirit and Friday was on Mission," he said.

"Participants come in and are deepened in their own faith then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you get sent out to do good things in the World."

"The participants come with all sorts of levels of experience and involvement. For some it's a bit of a shock – going to Mass every day, full bands and youth rallies every night.

"There's preaching... we have drama and testimonies. Some activities are compulsory and some aren't, but people who come find their own level they are comfortable with and take what they need from it. For some it's self-growth and discovery, for some it's Mission.

Our aim is, whatever level you've come to the School with you've, advanced a few steps from your involvement."

While there is no DOJ Summer School held in the Archdiocese, around 50 of this year's participants – almost a quarter – were from the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Locally, the DOJ runs the

Explosion event that was held at St Clare's in Canberra during the third term holidays.

"The Explosion event is for all students from Year 7 to 12, and this Summer Camp is for a slightly older audience but what they have in common is the same dynamic, trying to present our faith in all its power and beauty in a way that energises young people," Mr Kirk said.

To ensure that participants aren't left on a high that dissipates upon contact with their regular life, DOJ has a number of follow up events to support the experience.

In addition to Explosion, DOJ run a Youth Group St Benedict's Narrabundah on Friday nights which they invite all of the kids to come to.

Also coming up in a few months is the "Light to the Nations" celebration at Chevalier College in Bowral over the Easter Triduum.

"We get over a 1,000 people to that, and it's an amazing experience," said Mr Kirk.

"People come and camp... a lot of young families."

"We have a number of events across the year which try to plug the people who attend the Summer School into, but we also try to teach them some of the ways they can be strengthened, and strengthen themselves in their



own faith by developing their own prayer life and developing a love for the sacraments."

"We also use other forms of communication like Facebook and so on... but there's no substitute for face to face connection and we try to keep the momentum up so it doesn't all end when this experience ends."

The Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community exists in many places around Australia and a couple of spots internationally... Papua New Guinea, Philippines and

Indonesia. Their focus is on renewal and evangelisation and their Mission Statement is "A community of Disciples moving together under the grace of the Holy Spirit to renew the Church and evangelise the world."



Fr Tony Percy
is the Vicar General of the
Archdiocese of
Canberra and Goulburn

Family 2050

Over our four-thousand-year history the community of the faithful has come to understand that “marriage is for family, family is for society.”

Great societies are built from within. Social, educational and political institutions do make a difference, to be sure. But marriage and family are the primary and most basic forms of community that form the foundation of every other form of association.

Politics

It is unfortunate that we have seen a rise in the politicisation of marriage and family. One commentator in the past year astutely observed that extreme political and social groups desire to take “natural institutions which have social ends and transform them into activist institutions with political ends.” Human sexuality, with its natural inclination towards intimacy and its orientation towards children and the development of society, continues to be affected by these extreme groups. Sexuality programs in some schools, for instance, are of deep concern.

These radical movements need to be challenged by organised groups of the faithful and people of goodwill. If there is no resistance and if there is not a new, robust defence and promotion of marriage and family, then we will witness further descent into social chaos.

Violence

Marriage and family face other challenges, besides. Violence, unfortunately, is one of them. The fact that a woman dies each week in Australia through domestic violence is surely enough incentive to try and make a difference.

Pope John Paul II observed in 1993, that violence was not absent in the life of the Holy Family either, providing a clear motive for them to become “refugees” in Egypt:

Almost immediately after his birth, the gratuitous violence that threatened the life of Jesus fell down on many other families too, provoking the death of the Holy Innocents.

In the face of these and numerous other challenges, we can ask:

How might we respond as we look to 2050?

Is there a paradigm of action, transcending time and culture?

In 1964, Pope Paul VI visited Nazareth and gave what is now considered a perennial address. He referred to the “Home of Nazareth” as the “School of the Gospel.” In this “School” there are three lessons, which could form our paradigm of action: Silence, Family Life, Work.

Silence

Silence leads to stillness and the Psalmist delivers the promise of all promises:

Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46).

Just a few minutes of silence each day, giving way to stillness of body, soul and spirit, and we are promised that we will come to know and love God:

May the silence of Nazareth teach us recollection, inwardness, the disposition to listen to good inspirations and the teachings of true masters.

May it teach us the need for and the value of preparation, of study, of meditation, of personal inner life, of the prayer which God alone sees in secret (Paul VI).

Silence and stillness emerges as a new language, capable of speaking into the hearts of more than a few, surrounded and impeded as we are by the cacophony of noises that deadens and drowns vitality.

Silence and stillness could and should become a building block for a new civilisation founded on marriage and family, but it requires more than a little courage and commitment. Enveloped with a plethora of communication devices, we find it easy – and enjoyable, it must be admitted – to be involved in what is curious, but often superficial

Yet, the promise holds good. If we can become silent and still for just a few minutes a day, we shall come to know and love God, and importantly, too, we shall come to know and love ourselves. Knowledge and love of self is a “bridge” to others – a key to social advancement.

Family Life

Time with family, too, proves elusive. Yet, faced with the alternative of the pursuit of individual satisfaction without regard for the common good, the fight for time with family is a noble ambition, not beyond reach if we so desire it.

Paul VI speaks of the communion of love in the family, of its simple beauty and its sacred



character. Like silence and stillness, however, time with family is not on “automatic pilot.”

In the 1950’s affordable housing was at its best in Australia. But now, in 2019, all of the state capital cities in this country are in the worse thirty cities in the world for housing affordability. Many now struggle to provide one of the most basic necessities of life. Pressure on family life is perhaps unprecedented.

Still, history tells us that each epoch has its own particular challenges, making it difficult to pursue the essentials of human flourishing. It seems always a struggle to “survive and thrive.”

We should take comfort in the knowledge that when people bury their dead, they hardly ever mention the material objects their mothers and fathers provided. Rather, they reflect upon, and are grateful for, the interpersonal values and virtues of their forebears. At the end of our days, none of us will ever regret having spent too much time with our children. Imagine the joy of facilitating such a culture.

Work

We work well when we work with the rhythm of God, who worked for six days and rested on the Sabbath. We are stewards of

the gifts of God, which are, more often than not, given in embryo form. By working, therefore, we participate intimately in the creative act of God. By resting, we are able to “stop,” “look back” and thus “see” the providential hand of God in our work. Resting is important for physical and psychological health, but equally important for spiritual harmony.

One of the motives for work is remuneration, which is an undeniable truth. But there are a variety of meanings of work and parents are suitably placed, through their example and conversations with their children, to help them come to deeper understandings.

Henry Parkes, Father of the Federation, once said that the “holiest thoughts” and “lofty purposes” emerge during times of work. What a marvellous spiritual vision of work that is. It surely challenges the array of materialistic and hedonistic visions peddled by many of our peers.

The New Year has begun with all its hopes and aspirations. May we make our small contribution to a new culture of marriage and family – the bedrock of civilisation.



Shane Dwyer is the Director of the National Centre for Evangelisation and the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

Listen to what the Spirit is saying

Who is the Holy Spirit? The woman who asked me this question recently attended a seminar I gave at which I had touched on this important aspect of our faith.

The Holy Spirit isn't easy for us to come to terms with. I believe that is the way it is meant to be. For God is not something we can domesticate to bring fully within our grasp. This is in fact one of the most consoling things about our faith. Sometimes we are accused of having 'made up' God as a simplistic answer to questions that science will one day address. Where that argument falls down is in our experience of God. If God were made up we would have constructed one who is comprehensible to human beings, fits within predictable patterns, and (quite frankly) does as he's told.

But that is not the Christian God. We believe in a God who has revealed himself to be One God, manifest in Three Persons. Just how we can get our head around that is beyond me...which is the point. I often say to people that we will spend eternity coming to understand who God is and, as a result, who we are in response to God. Heaven won't be you and me sitting on clouds playing harps. It will be each of us expanding into infinity as we encounter the extraordinary reality that is God and allow ourselves to be transformed by that encounter.

Eternity starts now. In the Christian experience, God is already at work in us bringing about this transformation. The

great Catholic mystics speak of 'darkness' as intrinsic to this experience. This is necessarily so as God leads us beyond our desire to be in control and challenges our predisposition to try to contain God within our preconceived boundaries. That which we believe we see is soon either rendered inconsequential, or just a foretaste, as God leads us forward into that which we cannot see.

Darkness is inconvenient. People stumble in the dark. When darkness descends many either abandon ship or, with the best intentions in the world, seek to return to where they believed they were in control. This is true for us individually and collectively. The history of the Church is, in many ways, the history of a people being led forward by God, with some stretching forward into the dark (the prophets and the saints) and the rest of us reluctantly following along behind or attempting to go back to what we knew and understood. Just look around you at what is happening in the Church at the moment. There is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

For this reason, the Holy Spirit has been given to us to lead and to guide. The Holy Spirit is the great consoler, but also the fire in which we are refined and transformed. I believe this is one of the

reasons why so many Catholics effectively abandon their faith after confirmation. The sacrament of confirmation is closely associated with the Holy Spirit. It is where we commit ourselves to becoming adults in the Christian faith, and open ourselves to learning what it means to live in, and be guided by the Holy Spirit. That always sounds fine in theory but, if the experience of the Chosen people (e.g. Exodus 13-14), Jesus (e.g. Matthew 3-4) and the Church is anything to go by, it takes us places we would rather not go (see John 21:18). It is understandable that many of us fail to stay on that journey, for it costs us everything and is, at least initially, incomprehensible to us.

We all know that the Church needs renewal and reform, although we possibly disagree on the elements that should go into that. As we continue to prepare for the 2020 Plenary Council the ideas on what 'the Church should do' are coming thick and fast. That's a good thing. But there are questions lurking around behind all this. For example: what are you going to do if your convictions are not enough to sway the direction of the Church? How will you respond if something that appears to you to be an obvious solution doesn't even make it on to the floor of

the Council? Or to look at it from another angle: what if we all got what we wanted but, as a result, we were no closer to more authentically living our Christian vocation? After all, many other Christian denominations have implemented the changes a number of Catholics are currently aspiring to: are they necessarily any more authentic in living the Christian vocation as a result? What would be the point of any change, if by the end of it all we weren't any better at allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, or to becoming more active in our service of the poor and those in need (Matthew 25:31 – 46).

For here is the thing about the adult Christian faith. While we look to the Church for support and guidance, and rightly so, in the end there is nothing stopping you and me living the faith we have received now, and allowing God to transform us in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Renewal will always be required, and we must get on with that. Yet, enough has already been given to allow you and me to begin the journey into eternity now, without having to wait for 'change'. No excuses.

Using Social Media to connect and care

CATHY DRUMORE

Apparently it is the custom in some dinner circles to place your mobile phones on a pile in the middle of the table and whoever can't resist reaching for theirs first pays the bill.

I suggested to my elder children that this was a great idea but they pointed out that a) they were broke, and b) Dad was worse than they were anyway and he was already picking up the tab!

I have to admit that I, too, love my phone. Some 25 or so years ago, I remember standing outside an electronics store and in the window was the very latest in "portable" entertainment – a

device larger than a regular video player which had a television, cassette player, radio and alarm clock all in one!

My children (and most adults) take for granted that we have access to all of this in truly portable form and a hundred times more. The mind of my 14 year old self would have boggled. Imagine a portable phone (instead of one attached to the wall) to keep in touch with our friends instead of being continually told to get off Mum and Dad's.

Imagine watching the movie of your choice, whenever you want to, and without ads! And taking photos which can be

viewed instantly and sent across the world! We are so fortunate to live when, where and how we do.

The downside can, of course, be the misuse of this fabulous technology. But this is not a new concept. I grew up with TV addicts where now they'll watch Youtube. People were bullied by letter and phone whereas Twitter and Facebook provides more choices. This doesn't mean that TV, letters, phones or social media are evils that we need to avoid, just that we need to be conscious of the pitfalls associated with their use.

It has occurred to me when thinking of the sermon on the

mount story that Jesus must have had a powerful voice to reach so many. Nowadays, if he didn't have access to a microphone, there are many wonderful apps and websites which he could use to spread his message of peace and draw us closer to him.

As with everything, moderation and self-control is the key. Does it really matter if we miss a Facebook message? It's part of our human condition to want to feel others are listening to us, and sometimes this means being truly present in the flesh rather than "online."



Set a volunteering resolution for 2019

Your local Parish

There is probably no broader job description than the potential list of tasks you can help with at your local parish. Many jobs are quite practical and located at the parish office – washing cars, cooking, housecleaning, mowing lawns, assisting the parish secretary, folding bulletins.... the list goes on and on.

You may also be able to assist with local parish programs... visiting the sick in hospital, helping elderly or ill parishioners with shopping, preparation of meals or housekeeping. Again, it depends on the needs of the parish. We won't try to list them all here, there are too many and something for every skillset, but you may even be able to offer a suggestion for something they may not have even considered.

Getting involved helps build friendships, helps alleviate the workload of others and add a very practical component to living out your faith.

To find out more, contact your local parish priest or parish secretary and see what help they need.

St Vincent de Paul

As a Vinnies volunteer you will benefit from working for an organisation that makes a real difference to people in need.

By volunteering at any of our 27 Vinnies shops across Canberra/Goulburn you will meet like-minded people, build friendships and gain new skills. Funds raised through the centres go to providing emergency relief and ongoing support to people doing it tough.

Our shops are run by experienced and professional retail managers who are supported by dedicated volunteers. There are a variety of roles, from retail assistants, sorters, administrators, merchandisers, cashiers, to the heavy lifting, driving and more specialised roles involving pricing valuables and books.

If you are interested in becoming a valued volunteer, please call 02 6234 7348 or email at volunteer@svdp-cg.org.au.

As often happens over the New Year period, many people have set resolutions for the New Year. Lose weight, do more exercise, write that book...

But how many have wondered if there was something practical they could do within the Church?

There are many organisations and groups with the Catholic Church that rely heavily on volunteers to achieve their good works. Here are a sample of a few ways you can get involve and do a bit in 2019.

Marymead

Marymead values all energy and time willingly given to help us support vulnerable children and young people. There are many ways to contribute: supporting our programs, fundraising or by offering other skills that help us achieve our strategic goals. Anyone can make a great volunteer! We aim to provide our volunteers with a fulfilling experience in a structured and safe environment. Our volunteers also benefit in knowing they help us, meeting new people, and having fun! Further, Marymead loves to assist volunteers develop new skills and perhaps build their resume.

For more information on volunteering opportunities email volunteering@marymead.org.au or visit marymead.org.au/volunteering.

Catholic Voice Ambassador

Catholic Voice Ambassadors assist in the handing out of new editions of the Catholic Voice on the first weekend of each month before or after Mass. Ideally they'll be able to point to a couple of stories they particularly like... or even tailor their suggestions to the person they are speaking to.

A Catholic Voice Ambassador may be able to provide story tips from their parish to the Catholic Voice and will also promote stories that they like online, encourage people to like the facebook page or subscribe to the Daily Voice email.

If interested, please email us at catholic.voice@cg.org.au.

Catechists

Catechists are a gift to the community. Why not consider becoming an Amazing Catechist, teaching scripture to Catholic students in government schools. Only 30 minutes/week, with plenty of support. www.amazingcatechists.org.au

What is a catechist and what do they do? How many are there?

A Catechist is a trained volunteer who teaches Catholic students in Government Schools. 50% or our Catholic children are in state schools! We have 220 volunteers across the Diocese doing an epic job, they take a class for 30 minutes each week, are provided with a clear curriculum from Catholic life, they are trained and received regular, bi annual professional development

Who can become a catechist? What commitment is involved?

Any church going Catholic can become a Catechist. Classes go for 30 minutes/week, and 30 minutes of preparation is required.

How can I find out more?
Contact Matt Ransom on (02) 6239 9832 or matt.ransom@cg.org.au.



The right to Refuge

ON 24-25 NOVEMBER 2018, more than 150 NSW students came together to take part in a junior leadership week-end conducted by UN Youth Australia.

This organisation is entirely run by volunteers aged between 18-24 years with the aim of educating secondary school students about international relations and global affairs.

The theme for the 2018 week-end was "The Right to Refuge" and focused on refugees within Australia, the media portrayal of refugees and Government refugee policies.

The camp also provided an avenue for the participants to formulate and express their opinions and gain confidence when speaking in public.

This year three girls from Hennessy Catholic College in Young were selected to take part in the camp held at Narrabeen in Sydney. Year 7 students, Sienna Capra and Chrissy Garlick as well as Year 8 student Sarah Dillon had a wonderful time meeting new people, engaging in discussions and formulating personal views around refugees and asylum seekers.

They represented only a small number of country students who were present at the camp.

Sarah said, "it was very interesting learning more about the struggles and hardships refugees face when they come to Australia".

She said it was particularly good to learn both sides of the refugee/asylum seeker issue, not just those views portrayed in the media.

Sarah was particularly impressed with the commitment of the UN Youth Team who ran the weekend with so much excitement and enthusiasm and she thought it would be good to do something similar when she is older.

Sienna said that the whole week-end developed her confidence in public speaking but also "made me realise that there are a lot of refugees in NSW country areas and we should greet them with open arms and listen to their stories rather than telling them how we live".

She said that we needed to "research more to realise the full extent of the problem." She said it was "so sad to learn that



Photo Left to right (Sienna is the one with the dark hair tied up) Sienna Capra, Chrissy Garlick and Sarah Dillon

many children in refugee camps experience a childhood of pain and suffering."

Chrissy also enjoyed the weekend and particularly appreciated the panel of refugee guest speakers who told their stories and shared insights with the students.

She gained an understanding of the media's portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers, realising that "the media will only

show you what they want you to see to influence your thinking." During the weekend the girls were involved in group work and were tasked with creating campaigns and ideas that could further help refugees.

After a long drive to Sydney and a busy weekend the girls have returned to Hennessy with a renewed sense of confidence and enlightenment that will stay with them forever.

MARISTS PLAY B-BALL IN THE US, BY CRIKEY:

A team from Marist College recently toured parts of the United States, and even made the pages of the local paper. Crikey! Kittitas boys host traveling team from Australia proclaimed the headline. Marist gets an opportunity to make the memorable trip every couple of years. Off the court, they visited the Space Needle, Museum of Pop Culture and a few Portland Trailblazers games.

Marist lost against Kittitas by 79-38. NBA player Patty Mills had a short stint in high school at Marist College, before moving to the US and playing for the San Antonio Spurs.

HENNESSY PLAYERS IN FIJI SOCCER CUP

In early December two students from Young's Hennessy Catholic College represented NSW at the 2018 Ultimate Fiji Soccer Cup.

Year 11 student, Alyssa Armstrong played in the U17s senior girls NSW International Football Group team and Mitchell Brown who is a student in Year 9, competed in the U16's team.

Teams from South Australia, New South Wales, New Zealand and Fiji took part.

McAuley Year 10 enjoying the apple isle

YEAR 10 of McAuley Catholic Central School, Tumut have had an action packed time in Tasmania.

The students enjoyed visiting Trowunna Wildlife Park and the town of Sheffield (well known for its ever changing murals)

after a rough crossing of Bass Strait.

At the zoo they met McAuley - the Tasmanian Devil sponsored by the school.

Next up was zip lining at Hollybanks adventure tours in Launceston where they visited

the longest park bench in the world (and proceeded to Lay along it).

After that they travelled south to Port Arthur, where they went on an eco-cruise around the southern-most point of Australia & visited world renowned sights

such as Tasman's Arch and the totem pole.

They were also lucky enough to spot a whale migrating to Antarctica, as well as having Mr Hughes help cook tea for them.

Year 10 thoroughly enjoyed the Ghost Tour at Pt Arthur as

well as exploring the land marks in the area such as the tessellated pavement.

The women's prison in Hobart provided a valuable insight into the history of Hobart.



Story and photos courtesy of McAuley facebook page

Lapsed Catholics are Catholics too

Catholic Voice Journalist CHRIS GORDON pondered the role of less-active Catholics in the Plenary process and, more broadly, in the Church today.

RECENTLY the Catholic Voice published some statistics that showed the average percentages of Catholics in the Archdiocese who are attending Mass.

As at the 2016 census, there were 655,897 people living in the geographic area that is the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

Of those, 155,084 identified as Catholic. That's a bit less than a quarter of the population.

And of those 155,084, around 16,160 attend Mass weekly.

In the two years since the census, additional information has recorded that Mass attendance has gone up by around 10%... which means around 17,776 are attending each weekend, about 11.5% of the Catholic population.

One of the points that jumps off the page isn't so much that 11.5% of the Catholic population are still going to Mass. It's that 88.5% are still hanging in there.

To be a Catholic in the consensus doesn't require evidence or a level of involvement. It only requires that you tick a box. It's easy to NOT tick Catholic with no repercussions. And still 138,924 people in this region that AREN'T attending Mass decided to tick Catholic.

They haven't ticked Atheist. They haven't written in Jedi or Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. They haven't left it blank.

They've said Catholic. And in that one act, I believe they are saying "I'm hanging in there. You haven't lost me yet. Show me something."

To paraphrase the quintessential Aussie philosopher Jimmy Barnes, they're standing on the outside looking in. But at least they're still looking, and that's not nothing.

What does it mean to be Catholic?

There's a hymn we sang a lot at Mass when I was a kid that went: "And they'll know we are Christians by our love."

That's well and good, but how are you able to tell a Catholic? What defines a Catholic?

It's easy in a census. Just tick a box. Outside of the census, if you were baptised a Catholic, you're a Catholic.

It's a binary result: Yes or no. you're a Catholic or you're not. It's a bit like pregnancy. You can't be a little bit Catholic. Not technically.

But of course few things in life are that simple.

Baptism is your ticket to ride, but it doesn't mean that you got on board.

Then there are the other sacraments. Chances are, if you were baptised, you have also celebrated reconciliation, communion, and confirmation...and possibly marriage. Four or five sacraments in total.

Now those aren't merely boxes to tick or notches on a belt. They are significant gifts of God's grace that touch our lives deeply. They are also the elements that help define a Catholic.

If you've received extreme unction you might be up to six Sacraments... if you've married AND been a priest... maybe even seven.

But for the most part, four or five Sacraments is what adult Catholics have, from busiest bishop to laziest "Lapsed" Catholic.

How did it lapse?

In fact the term "Lapsed Catholic" is a misnomer.

Catholicism doesn't lapse. It's not like a library card, or club membership, or an insurance policy where you cease to be covered if you don't update, or pay, by a certain time.

You don't at some point cease to be a Catholic (unless you make a conscious decision to leave) any more than you cease to be a child of God.

It's used to describe "less active" or even inactive Catholics. And there are many levels of activity, of commitment or involvement, of interest and possibly of belief within the spectrum of Catholicism.

So the non-Mass-attending Catholics, the "lapsed Catholics", how did they get to where they are? Did they get busy? Were they only ever casual participants? Did they have a change of heart or a change of mind? Are they angry with the Church? There could be dozens of reasons.

But they haven't given their religion the flick. Not yet. So it

seems to me important to hear what they have to say.

A Plenary indulgence

The Catholic Church is now well advanced in its preparations for the Plenary Council of 2020. It is a watershed moment, and a timely opportunity for the Church.

And it comes at a time when people's commitment to and engagement in ALL external activities in the broader community appear to be on the decline.

Against that backdrop, the Catholic Church has some other challenges to deal with, some of which relate to poor governance and abuse of trust.

Amidst addressing those issues, there is also that requirement all organisations have... to continually examine processes and practices to see if they remain relevant and on track.

To that end, the voices of the 88.5% are crucial. The voices of the full 100% are crucial, but the non-attenders, who are the overwhelming majority of Catholics in the Archdiocese, may have unique insights about why they've drifted away, and how they might return.

These are insights the Plenary Council could benefit from.

What you want is not necessarily a bad thing

We recently ran an editorial piece in the Catholic Voice that was very popular and very well received.

It raised some very valid points:

- that participants in listening and dialog sessions should be respectful and use their discernment well;
- that they should not be belligerent and dominating;
- that they should be prayerful and use silence as a way to centre themselves.

But to one particular aspect of the piece... that we should get over ourselves and not be concerned with what we individually want... like the candle entering a darkened room, I beg to differ.

Considering what you want, is NOT mutually exclusive from what God wants. If you were asked what you most wanted

in life and answered "World Peace"... it's a pretty worthy wish.

Surely it's important to hear the widest array of responses, throw them all on the table, before rejecting them.

The very question of "what God wants" is extremely hard to answer. If there was even one person out there that knew the answer we could skip the entire Plenary process.

But in the absence of that, "what God wants" is a contested notion, and if figuring out what God wants is the entire purpose of the process, it shouldn't be used as a tool to limit the discussion.

For the most part, I'm sure people wouldn't throw in suggestions like "no more Masses" or "less commandments." And if they did, well the sillier ones would deserve to land on the editing room floor.

But people need to know they will be truly heard. That offering a different perspective is ok, and not necessarily a bit radical. And even if they were, the teachings of Christ were pretty radical for their day.

The question of the question

The phrasing of the Plenary Council question itself... What is God asking of the Church in Australia today... although a worthy question, has the potential to be used as a stop sign to stifle alternative and dissenting viewpoints.

It's a good question... it's a great question... but if ever it's used as a way to retain the status quo and block heartfelt, well-discerned ideas, then it kind of defeats the entire process of examining where the Church is at today.

I've heard people mention ideas like priests getting married... or women being ordained... and then heard them talked down or rejected with reference to "formation" and "catechism."

I've heard people suggest we shouldn't suggest ideas that the Church in Australia isn't empowered to change without permission from Rome, but surely part of the process should be to pass on to Rome the more

common thoughts of Catholic Australians.

The Plenary Council is a process of the Catholic Church. And that's all Catholics. The whole 100%.

What next?

Having established that the 88.5% are full current members of the Catholic Church, that's not to say they should just sit back and do nothing. This is not meant to be a celebration of laziness or a sanctioning of apathy.

It's crucial to hear from them in the Plenary process, but if they want to really be involved, they need to make a bit of an effort. If you want a say, you should also have a crack. With rights come responsibilities.

If they aren't going to Church at all... maybe attend a bit. If they're going a bit, go weekly. Perhaps get involved in parish activities or community groups.

And by no means criticise the 11.5%.

Using a sporting analogy, that would be like casual bike riders pouring scorn on the Tour de France riders for working harder, making sacrifices and promoting the activities of cycling.

Using a biblical analogy, the 88.5% are the prodigal sons and daughters. They are welcome back. But that does not undermine the constant efforts of the committed ones keeping the place going.

In the end, in all organisations, people find different levels of involvement. And fortunately, that's not a fixed point. It can grow. It can increase. But it starts with a first step.

The 88.5% are needed. Their input is needed.

And if their input comes as a matter of true soul-searching and discernment, it will be part of what God wants of his Church today.

But stop standing on the outside looking in. Step in.

MEDIA RELEASE:

Federal Government cuts Vinnies emergency relief funding by 25%



Warwick Fulton, President, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn, said this cut will place an enormous strain on the organisation.

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY Canberra/Goulburn has been advised that Emergency Relief grant funding for Financial Crisis and Material Aid will be cut by 25% per year between 2020 and 2023. The cut comes as a demand for services continues to grow.

"In 2017-18, the Society distributed in excess of \$2 million on the most vulnerable members of our community in the form of food, food vouchers, furniture or medical costs. The \$335,000 per year grant allows Vinnies to commit to caring for these vulnerable members

while we raise donations from the community," said Warwick Fulton, President, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn.

"We cannot reduce the amount of relief we provide to people who call on us for help in times of crisis, and the effect of this cut will place an enormous strain on the organisation and the services we provide as we expect the number of people calling for help to increase even more."

A key driver of the 14% national increase in homelessness since 2011 is the inadequate Newstart payment.

"No-one can live on a \$272.90 payment in Canberra where the average rental is \$540 per week. The failure of Newstart to provide stability for vulnerable Australians undermines good health, education and social outcomes. Newstart doesn't help if you don't have a place to call home or if you are in imminent danger of becoming homeless," Mr Fulton said.

"The lack of political will to fix Newstart requires charities to step in to provide emergency relief and to rely more and more on communities to assist while homelessness and poverty continue to grow. We find that each day our services are at full capacity – this is a time to increase funding and make long lasting change rather than cut funding," Mr Fulton said.

St Vincent de Paul Society calls on the government to review its decision.

"In the capital city of the lucky country we have more than 1,500 people who are homeless and up to 30,000 living in poverty. Australia wide there are 2.9 million living below the poverty line. These people are not lucky. They face daily choices of paying the rent or having food on the table," Mr Fulton said.

"For many of the people we assist Vinnies is the last option. We work with the most vulnerable and challenged members of our community and we do it because nobody else is there for them, and they deserve the love and support many of us take for granted."

Symposium to focus on preserving Church art and architecture

PRESERVING Australia's beautiful heritage Catholic churches for future generations will be a major focus of a National Church Architecture Symposium in Melbourne in February.

Jointly organised by the National Liturgical Art and Architecture Council (NLAAC) and the ACU Centre for Liturgy, Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also will be held at the Australian Catholic University's St Patrick's campus from February 6 to 8. Harry Stephens, secretary of the NLAAC, an advisory body to the Bishops Commission for Liturgy of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said the symposium was a timely event for the Catholic Church in Australia.

"We have many old churches, many of which are important historically and some of which are protected with heritage listing," he said.

"The symposium is a completely unique event – there's never been anything quite like this in Australia before."

Mr Stephens said two major events would happen at the symposium: the release of a new set of guidelines for heritage churches and the launch of *Cultura* – a digital catalogue of Church-owned items including buildings, sacred vessels, vestments, sacred books, pieces of furniture and altars.

"The book we have just finished writing is called *Fit for Sacred Use: Stewardship and renewal of places of worship*. We've never attempted anything like that before and it is something that is incredibly important now," he said.

"This new book and its guidelines seek to ensure that damage is not done to the heritage value of our churches during any work

undertaken to make them fit for sacred use."

The document is a companion to the Council's last publication, *And when churches are to be built: Preparation, planning and construction of places of worship*, released three years ago.

Mr Stephens said while the *Cultura* catalogue was a first for the Church in Australia, England's Catholic and Anglican churches had been compiling similar registers for many years.

"We also have two amazing international guest speakers. Keynote addresses will be presented by British architecture historian, author and heritage expert Sophie Andreae and leading American liturgical design consultant Richard S. Vosko," he said.

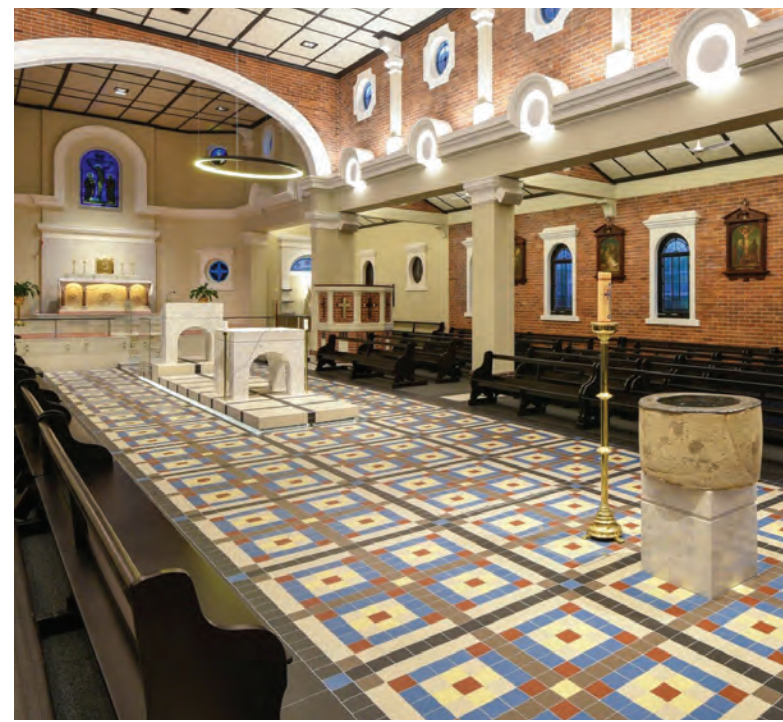
There will also be other dynamic and engaging local presenters offering workshops, problem-based learning sessions, case studies and site visits.

Mr Stephens said Ms Andreae has looked after the heritage of the Catholic Church in England and Wales for many years, while Fr Vosko has completed hundreds of Church projects in the United States, earning him honorary membership of the American Institute of Architects.

"This symposium is for all those who care about the places of Catholic worship, including clergy, parishioners, architects, artists, teachers, liturgists, designers, theology and architecture students, academics and anyone with an interest in architecture, art, artefacts and heritage," he said.

"We are expecting up to 170 people to attend this year and there is still time to register."

For more information or to register, visit the National Church Architecture Symposium 2019 website



Every goodbye is different

Some things are more important than others, like finding a local funeral director you can trust. We bring a depth of experience and understanding that could only come from being an integral part of the community.

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New Congress is more than one-third Catholic



WASHINGTON, DC: The 116th Congress was gavelled into session on January 3, bringing almost 100 new law-makers into office, and with Catholics making up nearly 30 percent of the congressional freshman class.

Catholics account for 28 of the 96 new members of Congress, including newly-elected Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN), the only Catholic freshman in the Senate.

In total, there are 163 Catholics sitting in either the Senate or House of Representatives, a drop of five from the 115th Congress, but still more than 30 percent of the legislature.

According to figures from Pew Research, the new session sees an end to what had previously been a near even split of Catholic members between the parties in the House of Representatives, with 86 Catholic Democrats now serving alongside 55 Republicans.

Among the newcomers in the House is Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN), who represents Minnesota’s 8th Congressional District. Stauber a former profes-

sional hockey player, police officer, and city councilman, is the second Catholic to win the seat in seven decades.

Stauber, a married father of four, campaigned as a defender of life from “conception until natural death” and promised to “always be a strong and constant voice for the right to life.”

Another notable Catholic in Congress is Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), who now represents New York’s 14th Congressional District, covering parts of the Bronx and Queens. This November, Ocasio-Cortez became the youngest woman ever elected to Congress at the age of 29.

Widely expected to become a leading voice for the progressive wing of the new Democratic House majority, Ocasio-Cortez won a surprise primary victory over Democrat incumbent Rep. Joe Crowley, a result considered to be one of the biggest upsets of the 2018 election.

In June, the day after her primary win, Ocasio-Cortez published an op-ed in America

magazine about how her Catholic faith has inspired her to work on criminal justice reform.

Catholic education also played a role in shaping many members of the new Congress. According to the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, one out of 10 members of Congress graduated from a Jesuit institution, including 12 Senators and 43 members of the House of Representatives.

Of the 12 Jesuit schools with alumni currently in Congress, Georgetown University has the highest number of graduates with 28. Boston College and Fordham University each have six alumni serving on Capitol Hill.

The 116th Congress is also one of the most religiously diverse in U.S. history, with the first two Muslim women elected to the House, which has already moved to change procedural rules so that Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) can wear her Muslim hijab on the House floor.

Twenty killed in explosions during Mass in Philippines cathedral

JOLO, PHILIPPINES: At least 20 people were killed and 111 wounded after two bombs exploded minutes apart during Sunday Mass in a Catholic cathedral on the southern Philippine island of Jolo.

After the initial blast inside the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Jan. 27, which destroyed the wooden pews and glass windows, Mass-goers were rushing to get outside when a second bomb detonated near the cathedral’s entrance, the Associated Press reported.

Police and army troops stationed outside the cathedral were also caught in the second blast when trying to enter the cathedral.

According to police, at least 15 civilians and 5 soldiers were killed in the explosions. Among the wounded there were at least 90 civilians, 17 soldiers, two police officers, and two coast guards. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Philippines bishops’ conference condemned the attack as an “act of terrorism.”

“We condole with the families of the several soldiers and civilians who were killed by the explosions. We also express our sympathies with those who were wounded and extend our solidarity with the rest of the church-goers inside the Cathedral and the rest of the church community in the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo,” they said Jan. 27.

The bishops also noted the recent creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARRM), which was created with the hope of ending a nearly five-decade

long separatist rebellion in the southern Philippines.

The new autonomous region was endorsed by most Muslims in the majority Catholic nation, though it was rejected by Muslim voters in the Sulu province, where Jolo is located.

“As we begin a new phase in the peace process ... we ask our Christian brethren to join hands with all peace-loving Muslim and Indigenous People communities in the advocacy against violent extremism,” the bishops said.

Jolo island has a population of more than 700,000. The island’s Catholics, estimated in 2014 to be around 31,000, mostly live in the capital of Jolo.

The country’s defense secretary, Delfin Lorenzana, said in a statement Sunday that he has directed troops “to heighten their alert level, secure all places of worships and public places at once, and initiate pro-active security measures to thwart hostile plans.”

There has long been a presence of Muslim Abu Sayyaf militants on Jolo island. The group is defined as a terrorist organization by the United States and the Philippines due to years of kidnappings, beheadings, and bombings.

A statement from the office of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte Jan. 27 said, “We will pursue to the ends of the earth the ruthless perpetrators behind this dastardly crime until every killer is brought to justice and put behind bars. The law will give them no mercy.”



PICTURE: Courtesy Armed Forces of the Philippines Western Mindanao Command

THANKSGIVING TO ST JUDE – PATRON of the HOPELESS and THINGS DESPAIRED of.

Confirming that my dear friend Mrs M Peterson of Bonnor, praying the recurrent nine day novena with the intercession of St Jude has resulted in prayer of immeasurable value and mercy from the almighty and holy trinity, specifically through God, Our Father.

In thanks for averting financial bankruptcy, loss of employment and homelessness.

In thanks for hearing the prayers of those despairing and lost in a difficult world full of hurdles.

Humbly and eternally grateful to God and his Saints and faithful

earthly companions on the journey like Mrs M Peterson, of Bonnor.

The following prayer may be said in times of great affliction, or when one seems deprived of all visible help, and for cases despaired of.

Most holy apostle St Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor who delivered your beloved master into the hands of his enemies has caused you to be forgotten by many people. But the church honours you and invokes you universally as the patron of hopeless cases and things despaired of. Make use, I implore you, of that particular privilege accorded you of bringing

visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of.

Come to my assistance in this great need and grant me the consolation and succour of heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (make your request) so that I may bless God with you and all the elect through eternity.

I promise you, blessed St Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favour, and I will never cease to honour you as my special and powerful patron and to do all in my power to encourage devotion to you.AMEN.



Pilgrims enriched by World Youth Day 2019

The festivities that culminated in World Youth Day in Panama have now ended and the pilgrims from our Archdiocese are headed home after a full and engaging experience. The event ran from Tuesday January 22 until Sunday January 27 and across the period the pilgrims immersed themselves in Panamanian culture and experienced the universal Catholic Church alongside pilgrims from around the world. Some of the key elements of the pilgrimage, as documented by Luke Donnelly and Fr Adrian Chan, included:

January 21: Getting there was half the fun. After flying to Houston, then Mexico City, then Guadeloupe, the pilgrims set foot on Panamanian soil and started the day with Mass in a small church.

January 22: Pilgrims from around Australia came together at the Australian Gathering in Panama this morning. Following the opening service, pilgrims experienced catechesis with Archbishop Christopher Prowse. Archbishop Christopher urged the pilgrims to be Catholic in two ways, vertical and horizontal. Vertical Catholics dare to say yes, as Mary did. They give themselves to the will of God. His Grace also urged the pilgrims to be horizontal Catholics who work to Become, Belong and Be.

January 23: The pilgrims finished their second day in Panama with two highlights. (1) Celebrating Mass at the catechesis site with Fr. Namora Anderson at the altar and distributing communion; and (2) Being just in time to see Pope Francis and his motorcade pass the hotel on his arrival to Panama. They also had the opportunity to spend an afternoon at the hotel relaxing in their rooms, catching up on washing and in reflection taking in all the experiences they'd had to this point.

January 24: Following catechesis the Pilgrims and His Grace walked to Omar Park for the vocations fair, garden of reconciliation and music. The confessionals were a beautiful image lining the hill. The park

had a sense of peace. At night they experienced a once in a lifetime opportunity, coming so close to Pope Francis. They opted for a shady patch with an ocean breeze for the Welcome of the Pope Ceremony.

January 25: The pilgrims had a slower day, opting to have catechesis and mass as a group in the hotel. His Grace listened to each of them share reflections and then provided a summary of what he had heard in line with their catechism. Following this, Fr. Adrian celebrated Mass for them in the meeting room of the hotel. The intimacy of this session provided a special time to come together, reconcile with their thoughts and become closer as a group. The evening was spent at the Way of the Cross where they experienced

the stations of the cross with the Pope.

January 26: The pilgrims embarked on the long walk to the site of the Vigil before the Final Mass. The Pan Americas Highway was closed for the pilgrimage. After 9 hours the pilgrims were securely in their seated area before the lengthy vigil.

January 27: After braving the night on the ground with up 750,000 other pilgrims, the Canberra-Goulburn pilgrims saw the sun rise on the final day, ahead of the final Mass of the World Youth Day event. Then it was time for the 8km trek back to their motel in 32 degree heat, followed by a squashy bus ride. Then showers, swims in the pool, naps and some food.





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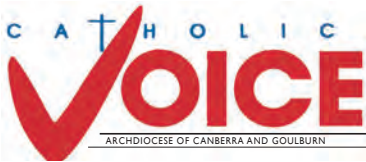
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GARDEN: Bags of garden sheep manure, \$7 per bag. Minimum order is five bags. Free delivery around Canberra area. Phone Mark on 0427 053 988.

KENWOOD: Chef food mixer \$100, microwaves from \$40. Six month warranty. Free quote for repairs. Will trade-in or purchase old items. Microwave glass trays from \$10. Phone John on (02) 6166 5512 or 0403 050 960.

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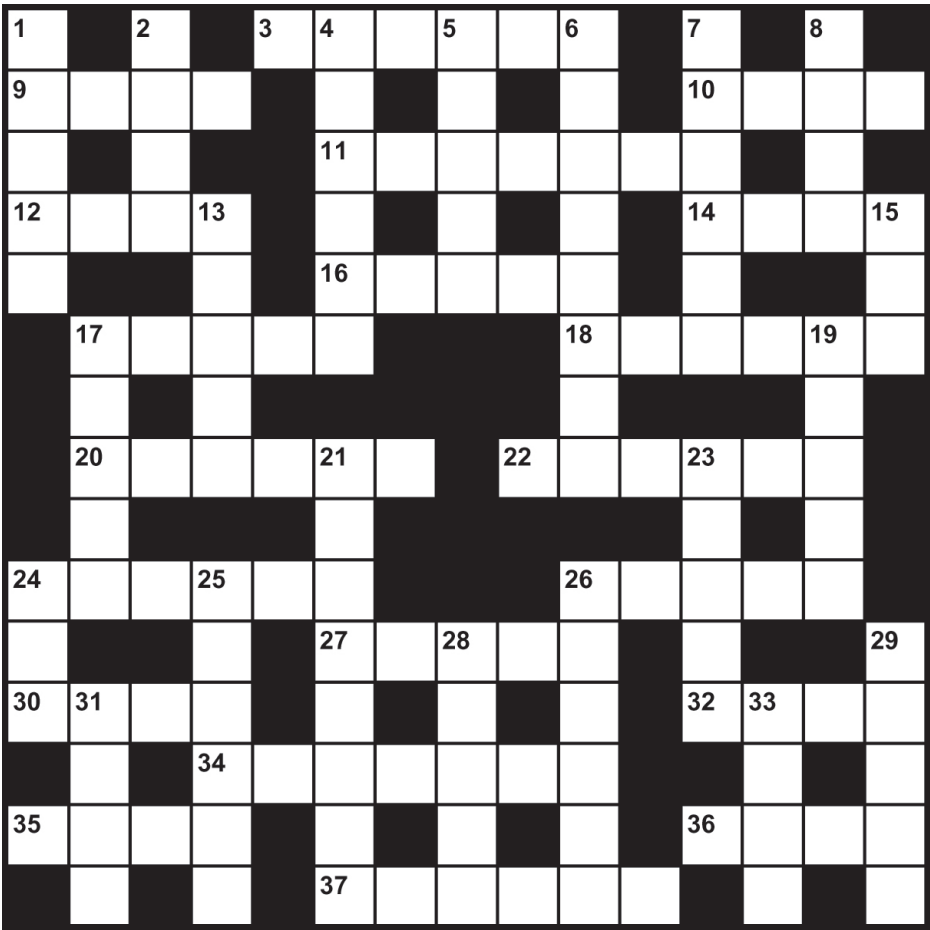
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COUNSELLING: Things not going to plan? Sometimes we need to talk to someone who can help. Maybe it is time to contact a professional at Counselling Solutions ACT. Visit www.act-counselling.com.au

CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 3 Number of New Testament letters that bear the name of a person
- 9 The Garden of Eden might have been in this modern-day state
- 10 He called for justice to roll down like water
- 11 Extreme ____
- 12 "What God ____ joined together..."
- 14 French clergyman
- 16 Her tomb was the first thing bought in the Bible
- 17 Number of days Jonah spent in the belly of a large fish (Jon 1:17)
- 18 Saint for sore throats
- 20 St. Nicholas is a patron of this country
- 22 Nativity scene
- 24 Doubting apostle
- 26 Color of Ordinary Time
- 27 "____ Noster"
- 30 Funeral ____
- 32 There were 40 days and nights of this
- 34 Penance ____
- 35 Mary made a request of Jesus here
- 36 Sydney's first archbishop, John ____ Polding
- 37 Author of The Models of the Church

DOWN

- 1 Number of humans in Noah's ark (Gen 7:13)
- 2 Nod, vis-à-vis Eden
- 4 St. ____ de Marillac
- 5 ____ of Christ
- 6 "Love your ____ as yourself"
- 7 North American country with

- 8 approximately 40% Catholic population
- 8 "...the babe leaped in her ____" (Lk 1:41)
- 13 They blew these outside the walls of Jericho
- 15 Wife of 31D
- 17 The Law
- 19 50's Catholic televangelist-bishop
- 21 Moved by God
- 23 Sacre ____
- 24 Abbr. for two NT epistles
- 25 Book with the words and rubrics of a liturgy
- 26 Catholic author of The Power and the Glory
- 28 "And do not bring us to the time of ____," (Lk 11:4)
- 29 One of the seraphim or cherubim, for example
- 31 First man
- 33 Cry from the congregation



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

Coming Events

FEBRUARY 2: Evenings for the Engaged is a series of sessions for engaged couples run one evening a week for five weeks OR over two consecutive Saturdays (9am-3pm). The course is presented by married couples and topics include, Family of Origin, Communication, Intimacy in Marriage, The Sacrament of Marriage (presented by a Priest), God in Marriage, Building a Stronger Marriage. The cost is \$150 which includes catering and resources. For more information, contact Pru and Peter Grist at prugordon@gmail.com. Next courses: Saturdays 2 & 9 February 2019, Murrumbateman.

FEBRUARY 2: The KSC extend an invitation to all Catholic men to attend their first meeting for 2019 in the Parish Centre, Transfiguration Parish North Woden, Strangways Street, Curtin ACT from 11.00am – 1.00pm. The branch will be meeting at Curtin every 2 months in 2019. Come along and share a cuppa!

FEBRUARY 8: The Bread of Life Retreat. February 8 @ 6:00 PM - February 10 @ 3:00 PM. Spend a great weekend at Shalom, Carcoar and explore how making sourdough bread can be a very spiritual exercise. Cost: Suggested Donation of \$200 (includes all meals and accommodation). To register: Ph:02 63673058 or email: shalomcarcoar@gmail.com or book online at: shalom-carcoar.com
FEBRUARY 8-10: The Community of

the Risen Lord invites you to a life transforming retreat of healing, adoration & the Word of God conducted by Lalith Perera, Most Rev Archbishop Christopher Prowse (DD) and Rev Fr Ken Barker.
Friday 8th February 2019 7.00pm-9.00pm at Holy Spirit Church, Amaroo
Saturday 9th February 2019 10.00am – 5.00pm at St Brigid's Church, Dickson
Sunday 10th February 2019 10.30am – 5.30pm St Brigid's Church, Dickson Entrance Free. A crèche will be available for children.

FEBRUARY 16: The Parish of St Thomas the Apostle, Kambah invites you to celebrate the Love, Romance and Joy of Christian Marriage with a St Valentine's celebration Mass on Saturday 16th February 2019 at 6pm. Mass will include a Renewal of Marriage Promises for married couples, and a Special Blessing for engaged couples. EVERYONE is welcome. Any enquiries to Elizabeth (6231 9219) or Trish (6231 8468)

MARCH 15, 2019 to MARCH 17, 2019: SAVE THE DATE. St Patrick's Primary School Bega will celebrate their 150th Anniversary.

APRIL 12-14, 2019: Finding life and joy in today's world: A retreat using worship from Taizé, 12-14 April 2019 at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, Sydney. Facilitated by Fr John Armstrong and Annemarie Nicol. All welcome (with a special invite to

young people between 18 and 35). Cost: \$300.00 Private facilities, fully catered Friday dinner to Sunday lunch. Address: Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, 247 St Andrews Rd, Varroville NSW 2566
Bookings: Mount Carmel Retreat Centre (02 8795 3400) or visit <http://carmeliteretreats.com.au/>
More information: Annemarie (0421 492 554)

OCTOBER 11 to 17, 2020: Australian Catholic Plenary Council Session One in Adelaide.

MAY 2021: Australian Catholic Plenary Council Session Two in Sydney.

REGULAR GROUPS

CANBERRA CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY (CLC): Meets fortnightly. It's part of an international lay organisation originating from St. Ignatius of Loyola who formed the Jesuits. Groups are based on ordinary people leading ordinary lives practising Ignatian spirituality, the essence of which is finding God in the everyday. Contact Steve on 0407 147 540.

CATENIANS IN CANBERRA: A Catholic men's group sharing faith and friendship and supporting each other and their families. Meet on the third Thursday of each month, 6.45pm Southern Cross Club Woden followed by dinner, often with guest speaker. Contact: Phil Murray 0419 695 927.

CANBERRA CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY (CLC): meets fortnightly. It's part of an international lay organisation originating from St. Ignatius of Loyola who formed the Jesuits. Groups are based on ordinary people leading ordinary lives practising Ignatian spirituality, the essence of which is finding God in the everyday. Contact Steve on 0407 147 540.

COMMUNITY OF THE RISEN LORD CANBERRA: Meet at 7.30pm each Friday evening in St

Brigid's Church parish hall (2 Bancroft St Dickson) for charismatic praise & worship with an anointed sharing of the Word. Contact Shan on 0412 310 364 or Sean 0448 510 237

COUPLES FOR CHRIST (CFC) CANBERRA CHAPTER: For more information contact Chris Carlile 0414 938 831.

CONCERNED CATHOLICS OF CANBERRA-GOULBURN is a group actively committed to church renewal and reform in the spirit of Pope Francis. For further information, go to www.concernedcatholicscanberra.org or contact John Warhurst (john.warhurst@anu.edu.au – phone 0439 498 283).

COUPLES FOR CHRIST (CFC) CANBERRA CHAPTER: For more information contact Chris Carlile 0414 938 831.

GOOD SHEPHERD PRAYER GROUP: Meets each Wednesday from 7pm to 9pm in the parish room at St Peter Chanel's Church Yarralumla. Rosary, charismatic praise and worship, teachings, testimonies, prayer ministry, intercession and fellowship. Contacts Susanna on 0419 902 293, Neda on 0415 266 019 and Gabriel on 0432 082 642.

HOLY SPIRIT SECULAR FRANCISCAN FRATERNITY: Meet on the third Friday of the month at 7.45pm, St Augustine Church, 262 Beasley St Farrer. Secular Franciscans try to follow Christ in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi. Call Tony on 0407 072 139 or Hélène on 0420 533 264. Email: sfo@fastmail.fm

IGNATIUS GROUP OF CANBERRA: Meets fortnightly for discussion and reflection. Based on the international movement Christian Life Community. Contact Steve on 0407 147 540.

LEGION OF MARY: Meets on the third Sunday of each month at St Joseph Church O'Connor at 2pm.

MAN OVERBOARD: A monthly gathering of young men discerning priesthood. It is a time to gather, reflect; and commune in order to feel supported during a time of such importance. Each gathering will be held on the first Friday of every month (public holidays excepted). Please RSVP to Fr Paul Nulley at paul.nulley@cg.org.au
For catering purposes or follow the prompts at <http://www.manoverboard.org.au/>

MARIAN MOVEMENT OF PRIESTS: Meets to pray a Cenacle at St Joseph's Church O'Connor each Wednesday following the 8.30am Mass. Contact Maria on (02) 6247 4026.

menALIVE: Encouraging authentic Christian manhood, the Canberra chapter of 'Men Alive' meet on the first Monday of each month at St Christopher's Cathedral for Mass at 5pm. Mass is then followed by drinks at 'Public Bar' in Manuka.

MINISTRY TO THE NEWLY MARRIED: A mentoring program for newly married couples or engaged couples soon-to-be married. Contact Debbie and Brian on (02) 6231 3389 or 0414 878 167. Email: mnm@grapevine.com.au

TAIZE PRAYER GROUP: The Canberra Friends of Taizé Ecumenical Group meets regularly for prayer every second Sunday of the month at Weston Creek Uniting Church at 5.30pm. Prayers, songs, Scripture readings and silent meditation as used in the monastery in Taizé, France. All welcome. Enquiries to Annemarie (0421 492 554) or CBRTaizeFriends@inter-node.on.net

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Hail damage to Merimbula Church

THERE’S an old motto attributed to American Postal workers that goes something like this: “Neither rain, nor snow, now sleet nor hail shall keep the postmen from his assigned rounds.”

It could just as easily fit St Peter’s Parish after a hail storm flooded St Joseph’s Church in Merimbula and new arrangements had to be made at a moment’s notice.

Parish Secretary Sandra Bray was one of the first to hear the news when large hail stones riddled the roof of St Joseph’s until it leaked like a sieve and began to fill with water.

“It was the sixteenth of December, a Sunday,” Sandra said.

“A choir was in there singing when the hail hit. They rang me at home and I said you better lock the church, turn the power off and go home.”

The damage was swift and the Church was quickly unusable.

“Water just poured through the roof and it was flooding inside the church, particularly the front part where the sanctuary is,” said Parish Priest Fr Pale Leota.

Just days before Christmas and with the biggest congregations of the year expected, they needed a quick solution and a suitable venue.

“We decided to move down to Lumen Christi School Hall,” Fr Pale recounted.

“Due to its capacity it could cater to the number of people down here holidaying and visiting over Christmas. The hall is quite

big – we couldn’t have fit everyone into Pambula Church.”

Since then, Masses have been at Lumen Christi, but as the seasonal tourist numbers have dropped, they’ve recently been moved to St Peter’s at Pambula.

Finding a venue for Mass was one thing. Getting word out that the Church was closed and Mass would be at Lumen Christi was another.

Fortunately the local radio station and Merimbula News Weekly were quick to help and, added to a ring around and word of mouth, the temporary relocation was successful.

That still left the biggest problem. Assessing the roof for insurance and repair.

Sandra got straight onto the phone and spoke to Archdiocese Chancellor Victor Dunn and then to Catholic Church Insurance, who said they’d been inundated with storm related claims.

“But they were swift to assist us and soon figured out asbestos was involved,” she said.

“They got in touch with their assessor and he came down and found it was positive for Asbestos, so they sent down a team to fence it all off. That was just two days after the hail damage so they were really very quick.”

Updated advice informed Sandra that a hygienist would need to spray every 10 days for safety to seal off the fibres, adding thousands to the cost of repairs. Initial assessments and testing indicate the Church will



Parish Secretary Sandra Bray

now be out of use for between three and five months.

“Ideally, we’d like them to replace the whole roof because it’s all got asbestos now but we’re hoping that the insurance will cover it,” Fr Pale added.

The changes have impacted on parishioners, some more than others, not just in terms of their regular habits and routines, but also in terms of transport and accessibility.

Fr Pale said he understands this is a difficult time and said they have tried to do their best to balance acting quickly with responding to parishioners con-

cerns.

“We really didn’t have much opportunity for consultation in the first instance... we had to act fast,” he said.

“Also many parishioners were still away and able to consult with. But we’ve now been able to consult more broadly. We realise it’s difficult and we’ve tried to find the best options but, whatever we decided, there was no option to stay.”

The changes of venue have now been advertised in the Parish Bulletin and a number of people have offered to assist with transport.

St Peter’s Church at Pambula sits around 120 people... less than the 300 capacity at St Joseph’s but enough for most weekends with two morning masses being held.

Come the Easter holidays, however, a bigger option will be needed.

“Pambula may struggle to cater for the holiday numbers, so to accommodate that we will be transferring service down to Our Lady of the Sea in Eden which holds around 300 people. There’ll be some disruption for a while but we’re doing our best and we’re just glad no-one was hurt.”

Student selection for state swimming

HENNESSY Catholic College Year 9 student, Emily Dillon has been selected as a new member of the Swimming NSW Youth Advisory Panel for 2019.

In 2017, Emily attended a Lane Ropes to Leadership camp in Annangrove.

She participated in workshops on communication skills, event planning, time management, Technical Official Training, personal development and team building. She brought these skills back to the Young Swimming

Club and is the 2018 Club Captain.

This year, Swimming NSW hosted a Lane Ropes to Leadership camp in Wagga and Emily was invited to give a presentation about her experiences.

Emily also decided to apply to become part of the Youth Advisory Panel and created a video application promoting why she would be a good selection for the panel and how she views the future of swimming in NSW.

Emily was a successful

applicant and is the only panel member to come from the Southern Inland NSW region.

The Youth Advisory Panel assists the Swimming NSW Board to develop ideas on how to improve the current state of swimming in NSW and retain teenagers in the sport.

The Panel not only advise the board, but host and run the Lane Ropes to Leadership camps each year.

