



**Archbishop's Message**  
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

## EASTER WOUNDS

In all the lists of the Apostles in the Gospels, St Thomas is always prominent.

One important encounter of the Risen Lord with St Thomas features in the post-Resurrection biblical appearances of Jesus.

Following the Resurrection, our ancient tradition says Thomas became a great evangelist in present day Middle East and went on to mission in Western and Southern India. There is still great devotion to him in these parts with many Catholics from Southern India (Kerala) naming their sons 'Thomas' in his honour.

When the Risen Jesus visits the apostles, Thomas seems to be having a crisis regarding his faith.

He was not with the other Apostles when the Lord appeared and seemed to be in a bit of a huff! Having been told of the Lord's appearance, Thomas says he does not believe until he has further "scientific" proof. He insists on putting his hands in the sides and wounds of Jesus.

Some days later the Risen Lord appears to St Thomas in the way he insists. It is almost as if the Lord says: "If you can't give me 100 per cent of yourself, I'm more than happy for you to, at least at this stage, give me 50 per cent". The Lord invites St Thomas to put his hands in his side and wounds as he had previously insisted.

Thomas immediately sees the stupidity of his stubbornness and egoism and repents. In his repentance he gives us a beautiful expression which could be seen as one of the first creedal statements of early Christianity. It is only five words, "My Lord and my God!" Then the Lord says to St Thomas "Doubt no longer but believe."

St Thomas is like all of us.

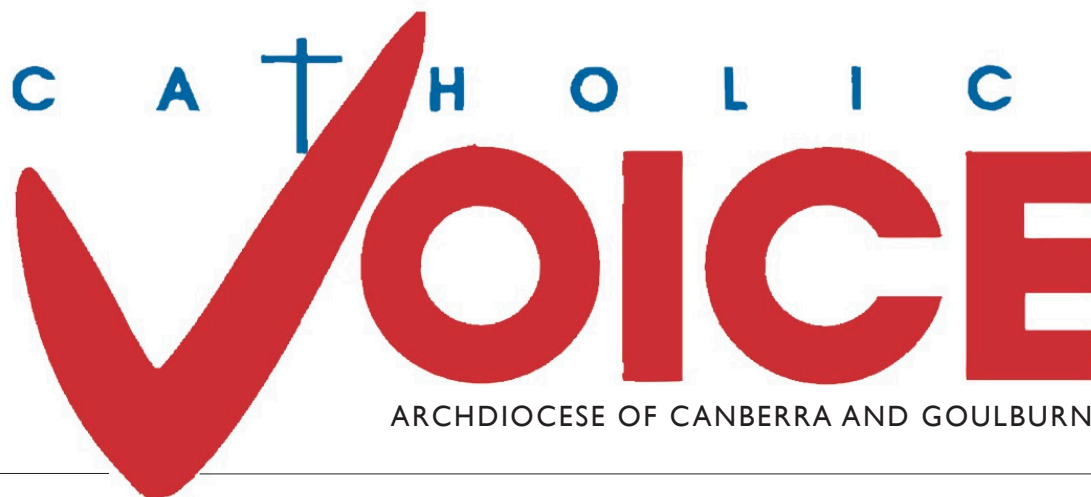
In these days when we celebrate the Divine Mercy of Jesus, we thank the Lord for His merciful forgiveness which established us as His Community of the Holy Spirit: His Church.

Indeed, this episode with St Thomas teaches us a great lesson.

It is simply phrased in this way; when the wounds and vulnerability of the Risen Lord come to us and is met by our own wounds and repentance, there we find divine mercy.

In these fragile times of the Covid-19 pandemic, never let us forget that we come to the Lord in our wounds and place them in the Risen wounds of the Lord Jesus. Only from there comes healing, peace and hope – mercy.

"For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and the whole world."



ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



Aren't we living in such top-sy-turvy times? How much we miss and crave touch, a hand-shake and a hug. The simple things always

mean the most don't they? Thank God for our autumn sunshine.

**EDITOR: Felicity de Fombelle**  
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## A new-found calling as a hairdresser

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

AFTER more than 40 years working in aged care, Kerry Kelly has found a new calling as a hairdresser. And she loves it.

Visits from the hairdresser are a highlight for the 30 residents at Blakeney Lodge in Tumut but the home is in lockdown. So Kerry and her team have taken over.

"I should have been a hairdresser," residential manager Kerry chuckles. "I've wasted 40 years. I'm putting rollers in, teasing hair and doing sets under the dryer."

With the coronavirus banning visitors to aged care homes, staff have worked hard to help residents maintain contact with families and keep entertained.

Blakeney Lodge liaised with the local Tumut radio station to have a seniors hour each Sunday at 11am where they play residents' requests and families send messages on air.

And while the choirs and line dancers can no longer entertain the 88 residents at Maranatha Lodge at Batehaven, the music has been ramped-up with one of the activity staff doing sing-alongs and karaoke.

Prayer and Mass is important at the Catholic homes.

"Praying for an end to the coronavirus is at the top of the residents' prayer list," Maranatha Lodge care manager Jill Davis said.

Kerry Kelly said Blakeney Lodge "runs on faith".

"The residents feel quite safe through their faith," Kerry said. "A lot of people say this home is different and for us it's the presence of God."

"The residents come from Tumut and have a long association with their parish. We play hymns during the day and the residents take turns to say grace. There have been a lot of impromptu conversa-

tions about the virus and faith and where is God in the chaos."

Kerry wonders if the changed circumstances are not harder on families.

"You can sense the families' separation anxiety and grief whereas the residents are so resilient and stoic and matter-of-fact," she said.

"It really does call on a lot of trust from our families and of course some of those family members are elderly too."

With 100 aged care residents and another 100 in independent living, Calvary Haydon Retirement Community in Canberra is usually a "hive of activity", according to pastoral carer Chris Nelson.

"Sometimes you have to make an appointment to see a resident, they are so busy with concerts and going out to lunch," Chris said. "Now residents are craving any interaction they can get."

Staff help with video calls to

family and the home has organized music and entertainment online, but Chris said there can be increased anxiety, depression and boredom as residents lack the stimulation they need.

It is a particular struggle for several couples where one is in aged care and the other living independently.

"The spouse used to visit several times a day, to share meals and activities, but now that's gone," Chris said.

He worries residents may forget loved ones.

"It's all about routine and memory and the hardest part is memories fade," Chris said.

"The longer this goes on, being apart from loved ones, it could have long-term implications for some residents and you might not be able to recover that."

"That time they would have had together has been lost."



L-R: Kerry Kelly does Edna's hair, Ernie has a video call with family at Maranatha Lodge Batehaven and Nancye and Mona catch up with the news at Blakeney Lodge in Tumut.

## A Scottish clan comes on board

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A SMALL slice of Scotland has joined the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, thanks to the friendship of two priests and whiz-bang technology.

The "Scottish fan club", as Scottish priest Fr William McFadden puts it, built up during Holy Week with a group of his parishioners tuning in for the Easter services livestreamed from the crypt at St Christopher's Cathedral.

Fr William and Archbishop Christopher are friends, with the pair first meeting as students in Rome in the mid-1980s.

Parishioner Wendy Hampson, who lives in a village of 50 people on the south-west coast of Scotland named Kirkbean, said Fr William recommended Archbishop Christopher's Masses.



Wendy Hampson



Fr William McFadden

"Well that was it, I never left you," Wendy wrote in an email this week.

"In all my years as a Christian, with the Church of England and since converting to Catholicism eight years ago, I have never enjoyed and had such spiritual feelings during Holy Week as I have this year."

"I found Archbishop Christopher truly inspiring and spiritual. The way we clasped our hands when we could not partake in the washing of the feet, I have never felt quite so at one with Jesus. Thank you for including your Scottish viewers at Mass."

Fr William lives in Kirkcudbright which is 135kms from Edinburgh. About 350 parishioners attend weekend Masses at his three parishes which cover a large area of rural South-West Scotland.

"Christopher came to Rome for further studies after he was ordained and I was already there, having arrived in 1979 and being

ordained in 1985," Fr William said.

"We shared some classes and since I had learned Italian I helped him settle in. We just hit it off and have remained friends ever since. I like to think we have the same character traits and the same vision and energy for the pastoral mission of the church."

Archbishop Christopher has twice visited Fr William in Scotland and Fr William travelled to Melbourne not long after Archbishop Christopher was made an auxiliary bishop.

"I tuned in to your Holy Week Masses as I knew Christopher would have some insightful things to say and connect with my parishioners," Fr William said.

"Someone told me she watched in her pyjamas in bed! Quite a number tuned in with the result you now have a Scottish fan club!"



# Repairing the church's reputation

BY DENIS O'BRIEN

For so many years now the revelations of child sexual abuse within our church have left many Catholics feeling humiliated and shamed. The breach of trust which these crimes involve has had a stultifying effect. Many of us have laid low, unwilling or hesitant to proclaim too loudly the Christian message of joy. Others of us have quietly walked away.

Cardinal Pell's acquittal lifts some of the weight from our shoulders. It enables us more confidently to get on with the job of addressing fundamental problems highlighted by the Royal Commission and to reimagine our church in today's world.

Moving forward requires us to continue to give compassion and support to those who have suffered abuse and to provide monetary compensation as appropriate. Participation in, and cooperation with, the national redress scheme are baseline requirements here.

Secondly, we must address past failures of church leaders to take action to protect children. Those failures are now so much part of folklore within the community that a mountain of work is required to repair the church's reputation and standing. The work of Catholic Professional Standards Limited is a step along the way. It has developed the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to provide a framework for church entities to build safe environments and to ensure the consistent application across the church of safeguarding practices. Importantly, it is now auditing dioceses and religious orders for compliance with the standards. Its recent audit report on the Diocese of Rockhampton is an example. Its work must be seen to be supported by church leaders and they must continue to fund it appropriately.

Thirdly, cultural change within the church is essential. To pick up on something said by Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli about 12 months ago, we need to move on from the landscape of the church built around its insti-

tutional centre. We need also to move on from a church which has historically catered to a community whose roots were very different from those of modern Australia. Priests and laity need to go out of their way not only to warmly welcome parents and kids from all ethnic groups but also to encourage them to take on leadership and ministry roles.

Cultural change also demands that women have enhanced leadership roles in the church. Pope Francis has established a group to advise him about women deacons in the church and Archbishop Mark Coleridge recently announced the appointment of a woman to the Council of Priests in Brisbane. These are steps in the right direction. I hope and pray that the forthcoming Plenary Council of the church in Australia leads to actions that further enhance the role of the laity and of women in particular. Ways can and should be found for the laity to have a role in the appointments of parish priests and the selection of bishops.

New ways of engaging in this technological age must be explored. Paradoxically, the restrictions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic may assist here. I note that at least one parish priest in Melbourne is posting his sermons on line and the number of views he is receiving far exceed the number of backsides that occupy his pews on Sunday.

It is time to embrace the encouragement we received from Pope Francis in his 2013 exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, and embark on a new chapter of evangelisation, not held back by old obsessions and procedures.

**• Denis was the chief lawyer of the Truth Justice and Healing Council. He is a director of Australian Catholic Redress Ltd**



## Our veteran buddies



Deacon Mick O'Donnell and wife Cora (far left) with friends at the War Memorial

A buddy system has been set up with former Australian Defence Force personnel each assigned five veterans to keep in touch with as Anzac Day approaches.

"We are not experts in well-being but we can empathise and let the members know we care," said Deacon Mick O'Donnell, chaplain to the Woden Valley RSL sub-branch.

"I am proud to be part of this initiative supporting such special people at a time we remember their service to Australia."

A former Vietnam veteran and ex-chaplain to the Australian Federal Police, Deacon Mick said veterans were often depressed, fearful and frustrated in isolation.

"We need to show we care with calls and emails, doing the shopping and maybe dropping off some DVDs," he said.

"We can also give simple advice like avoiding negative emotions. Watching or listening to the endless stream of fearful coronavirus updates is not the way to go."

Having been chaplain to the Woden Valley RSL subbranch for seven years, Deacon Mick said God is often part of the conversation.

"Now is the time to reassure and bring hope," he said. "We also need to dispel the notion that this pandemic is God's judgement on us. Rather it's a chance for us to judge what really is important in our lives."

## Anzac service on TV



Deacon Mick O'Donnell

AN Anzac Day commemorative service at the War Memorial in Canberra on Saturday April 25 will be shown live on ABC TV at 5.30am.

There will be no veterans' march and the service will not be open to the public.

"It is heartbreaking," Australian War Memorial director Matt Anderson said.

"People have attended Anzac Day commemorations at the Memorial for many years and are disappointed they are unable to do so this year.

"It is vital we take time to pause and reflect on Anzac Day, if not as some brief respite from the overwhelming nature of the pandemic, but because it's what we do," Mr Anderson said.

## Empty corridors at school

BY JOE ZAVONE

To say the COVID-19 scenario has been challenging is a significant understatement.

Like all areas of our society, our schools and communities have suffered. Making matters worse is the almost daily political babble exchange between politicians and the media about the starting date for the return of face to face learning.

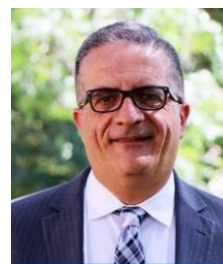
It is quite strange walking around school in the last few weeks, walking along empty corridors and empty grounds. This was never the nature of the teaching career that any of my colleagues signed up for.

This has brought home to us more than ever that the bottom line to this current situation is that our students give our schools life and energy. They are at the very core of what we do and they give shape and meaning to our work.

One of the expressions I dislike hearing at the moment is "this is the new normal". I would absolutely hate to think that what we are doing at the moment becomes normal; it might become an alternative to mainstream pedagogy but hopefully never the norm.

Already a flurry of educational consultants and experts have jumped on the COVID-19 bandwagon and been waving the flag for an educational revolution and how we can never return to schooling the way it was.

It amuses me and infuriates me at the same time that these people are not current educators – they do not work in schools and have not



done so in quite a while.

Education, especially Catholic education, has been and always will be relation-

al. It is about community, and the healthy interactions of all members of a school community and what we give to each other – things that can never be achieved in an online environment.

While online teaching and learning serves a functional purpose of allowing education to continue while students stay at home in times of uncertainty and crisis, it does not serve the relational or communal environments of a Catholic school.

Sure we can and do check in with vulnerable students through phone calls, emails and video conferencing, but that is not the same as having the student there with you at school, making eye contact, asking the important questions in a safe environment and knowing that security is only a door knock away.

Even our most resilient students need their community around them – to connect, collaborate, create, communicate, contemplate and celebrate, and to share, learn together, laugh together and cry together.

Our community of parents is lost to us in an online environment – the sense of partnering in a child's education is greatly lessened when parents and carers cannot be at the school to share time with teachers and other families.

When describing community in his weekly general audience on June 26 2019, Pope Francis looked to St. Luke's account of the first Christian community and the "communion of love" that was fortified by listening to the apostolic teaching, sharing goods with one another, taking part in the Eucharist and prayer.

This tells us that a Christian community shares stories, shares goods, shares rituals and shares faith. These signs of a strong Christian community establish a "genuine covenant with God" for the community to become a force that fascinates and "conquers the hearts of many." An online community can only do some of this.

There is a limit to the relational quality you can create and achieve online.

At St Edmund's College we have a wonderful and meaningful ritual of gathering informally on the afternoon of the last day of every term, and as the boys depart the College, they shake the hand of any teacher they walk past and thank them. It saddens me greatly that we finished this term in a completely different form – in isolation from each other.

Let us pray that our students can return to their communities in the near future, able to once again actively participate in and contribute to their "community of love where each of us learns to relate to others and to the world around us" (Pope Francis).

**• Joe Zavone is principal of St Edmund's College in Canberra.**

**LIVE**  
**STREAMED**

**Mass from**  
**St Christopher's Cathedral**  
**Monday - Friday: 12.15pm**  
**Saturday: 9am**  
**Sunday: 11am**

[www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/](http://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/)

