



**Archbishop's Message**  
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

## Holy Trinity, Holy Actions

Our teaching on the Most Holy Trinity is central to Christian Life.

It is expressed in our Creeds and Teachings in a most comprehensive manner. Yet, at the same time, our proclamation that God is one in three persons is not an abstract belief separated from our life as missionary disciples. It is the impulse for all evangelisation.

Here is a good example.

In 2007 I was invited to an international youth conference of 8000 people in the southern part of India called Kerala. It was organised by "Jesus Youth", a fantastic international Catholic youth network based in Kerala. They are in most major Australian cities including Canberra. I am honoured to be one of their Patrons.

In small groups, we were asked "How has God touched you?"

A young man said he was part of a group of four or five youth who met daily for prayer and practical charity. They had heard of a badly deformed baby abandoned by her parents in the area.

God the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts by raising up a moral imperative within them which said: "This is not to be!" They courageously went to the medical authorities and volunteered to care for the baby. Eventually the authorities relented and gave the care of the baby to the young people.

Then some beautiful things happened.

They washed, clothed and fed the child. They named her Elizabeth and had her baptised. Most of all, they loved her.

In so doing, they imitated God, our loving heavenly Father. Especially in her baptism, they enabled God to make her a daughter of God.

Two days later, little Elizabeth died.

But the youth leader, in relating the story, was so full of joy. "She died being loved!" he exclaimed.

This is such a wonderful statement about Jesus, the Son of God who died on the Calvary Cross being love to us for all time.

The young man concluded: "And now we can pray to Elizabeth! We so much look forward to meeting her again in heaven!"

To me, this touching story represented the Holy Trinity in action. These humble and holy youth activated the life of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their own baptised lives.

They saw a need and gave that saving Trinitarian life to others.

May the Holy Trinity be active in our hearts where we see need, especially in our Covid-19 world. Love of the Holy Trinity leads to holy actions.

# CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



A well-deserved gong to Francis Sullivan AO, who pulls no punches when it comes to the church's history of the sexual abuse of children.

Francis saw his role to keep the church's face staring straight at that scandal. For his leadership and courage we thank him.

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## The power of pen on paper

ARCHBISHOP Christopher Prowse has encouraged Catholics to put their name to a petition calling on the ACT government to boost Mass numbers to 50.

More than 1200 Catholics have signed the petition since it was kicked off a week ago, including the Archbishop.

But more signatures are needed to show the strength of a Catholic community eager to return to parishes to pray and be together.

The petition asks for equal treatment with gyms, theatres and concert venues which will be permitted 50 people from 11.59pm on Friday June 19.

The petition to Chief Minister

Andrew Barr calls on the government to increase Mass numbers from 20 to 50 at the same time.

Masses in New South Wales have been allowed 50 parishioners since June 1, meaning the Archdiocese faces different rules for NSW and Canberra parishes.

"I encourage Catholics to read about our efforts to increase the numbers of Catholics able to attend Masses," the Archbishop said.

"There is an electronic petition you may wish to sign. I have signed it and encourage you to do the same."

The petition outlines the Archdiocese's reasons for the request including:

- Churches are large public buildings that can easily comply with physical distancing and hygiene requirements,

- It is consistent with 50 people allowed for funerals since May 29,
- It is consistent with 50 people allowed for concert venues, theatres, gyms, health clubs, fitness and wellness centres from 11.59pm on Friday 19 June 2020 and,

- It is consistent with NSW which gave the green light to 50 people attending Mass from June 1.

Mr Barr has stated it would be impossible for the ACT to have different arrangements to NSW.

On March 22 he said, "We must face the reality that, as a Territory

within NSW, it would be impossible for the ACT to have different arrangements than those in our surrounding region."

In mid-April, Mr Barr said the ACT would move "in concert and in discussion" with NSW.

www.catholicvoice.org.au

**SIGN THE PETITION**

For the ACT Catholic Community to be permitted to conduct religious services with 50 persons

## A Queen's Birthday gong for telling the truth

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

THE man who has championed the cause of people abused in the Catholic Church says his Queen's Birthday award is a personal honour that also values the people he strived to represent.

Francis Sullivan, 63, said it was wonderful to be appointed an Officer (AO) of the Order of Australia, adding the gong "implies their value, the people I have worked for."

"We needed to step up and tell the truth and reveal the really dark side of the culture of the church, and that wasn't easy," the former chief of the Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council said.

"For many people it still isn't easy."

A prominent church figure with a background in health and aged care, Francis described the church's response to the Royal Commission's recommendations as "patchy".

In other observations he said:

- The church is still "very brittle" when it comes to public scrutiny and criticism,

- The role of women has improved markedly but not at the level of participating in decision-making and,

- The church needs to move beyond structures and be open to how it can best represent Catholics in a way that is contemporary and relevant.

"I worry that we don't put relevancy high enough up on the needs list," Francis said.

"We sometimes put compliance and conventionalism in front of



A chuffed Francis Sullivan AO at home with wife

relevancy and imagination and creativity which may be more reflective of the broader community of baptised Catholics and how they are being asked to do life."

The confronting experience of sitting through shocking Commission hearings changed the father-of-three's own faith journey.

"It really called me to take personal responsibility for my own faith life, not to outsource it to conventional religious practice," he said.

"To find my own ways of participating and nourishing my faith."

While some parts of the church were responding with "innovation and enthusiasm" to the Royal Commission's findings, in other areas there was a lack of resolve.

"There has been an openness by bishops and religious leaders to be more accountable for actions although I feel there is a tendency for that openness to slip into defensiveness when they are con-

fronted by public scrutiny," Francis explained.

"The church is still very brittle when it comes to public scrutiny and criticism with an element that falls back too easily to tribal mentalities that 'everybody is against the church'."

Reflecting on the role of women in the church, Francis said giving women senior roles was not enough.

"Women need to be at the table, lay people need to be at the table, part of the discussions where decisions are made," he said.

"One of the real challenges today in any internal church conversation is let's not define our conversations in the static framework of structures.

"Let's start by asking how we want to be and do church not how we will merely administer the church.

"It's a richer more ecclesial conversation we need."

Francis currently works three days a week as executive chair of Mater Group Ltd, leading the One Mater project to merge three Mater health systems in Queensland under a single board of governance.

Wife Susan has for many years led a Ministry Leadership Program at Catholic Health Australia that is being taken on by Australian Catholic University.

The couple's three children are dotted around the world.

"The Sullivan diaspora," Francis chuckled.

Clare works for mental health organisation Beyond Blue in Melbourne, Camille is doing a two-year stint at a law firm in London and Tim lives in Brooklyn and works at a law firm in Manhattan.

The Sullivan clan catch up twice a week for a WhatsApp video link. To coordinate time zones, the dial-in times for Francis and Susan are Tuesday nights and Saturday morning.

"The last time we all got together was Easter last year," Francis said.

"The next time is anybody's guess unfortunately."

**NEXT WEEK: Canberra lady Anne Walsb was also named in the Queen's Birthday honours. A member of the L'Arche Genesaret community, Anne has an intellectual disability and was awarded a medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to people with an intellectual disability. Read Anne's story in next week's Catholic Voice.**

# Connected Learning from a Teaching Mum

*Teacher Suzanne Stacey, from St Patrick's Parish School in Cooma, shares her recent experiences of balancing online learning for her 76 students with being Mum to three boys.*

BY SUZANNE STACEY

Teaching in this new world has brought many challenges and unexpected highs as both a fulltime teacher and a mum.

I have three busy, growing boys in Years Three, Five and Seven. So when connected learning from home came along, I transitioned to teaching 76 students learning at home alongside my own three boys.

This was uncharted territory for all.

As a family we are one of the lucky ones; we have great internet, each child has their own iPad and study space and a new laptop and desktop was bought hurriedly for me.

My virtual timetable gave me one dedicated face-to-face teaching slot per day and the boys

quickly learned this meant mummy was offline to them at this time.

With this new arrangement came some interesting realisations.

As a forward thinking and innovative school, we were already ahead of the curve with online learning. My St Patrick's colleagues and I were already using a myriad of digital learning platforms to adeptly support future focused learning, so the transition to our 'connected learning' was quite seamless.

It was reassuring seeing that what I thought was happening from my teacher perspective, was playing out in the learning of my own boys.

Classes were interesting, varied and engaging.

My three boys embraced the working day mentality by following my lead of logging on at 8.30 to start their school day. The two youngest learned quite quickly that if they got stuck in, they could be finished their core learning by mid-morning and the rest of the day was theirs for extension tasks or to pursue their passions.

And yes, I will admit that occasionally ran to whatever world they were building online.

There were days, too, when we just pushed the pause button and let their teachers know that today was not a learning day, that they just needed some 'me' time.

With a motto of 'Strength in Gentleness' this, too, was embraced by our school.

For me, being a teaching mum from home had its challenges. The most formidable of these was a healthy dose of 'mum guilt', when in the early days I caught myself feeling like I was caring more about the 76 students in my virtual classroom, than my own children's learning.

I realised this is pretty much always the case.

As we neared the end of the first week, I was helped to look at it from a different perspective.

My kids had flourished in this brave new online world. They had completed their learning, received excellent feedback from dedicated teachers and had done all of this relatively independently.



St Patrick's Cooma teacher Suzanne Stacey at home with sons Ethan, Hunter and Devon

While I have been busily nurturing, caring and teaching all of the children I have taught during the 13 years I have been a teaching mum, what I have inadvertently taught my kids is that education

matters, that a love of learning will take you places and that they should find their own path, knowing that I am always there to catch them if they can't fly on their own.

## Narooma locals touched by generosity 'up north'



Vinnies Narooma Conference president Christine Huntsdale with secretary Bill Clark

NAROOMA locals say receiving letters of support from Brisbane kids after the summer bushfires was just as important as the donation from their generous parish.

The South Coast Vinnies members were overwhelmed to receive over 220 messages from Queen of Apostles school in Stafford and \$20,000 from parishioners.

The president of the St Vincent de Paul Society Narooma conference, Christine Huntsdale, said the community had tears in their eyes reading the kids' cards.

"There were all these lovely little messages like 'You used to be strong, you can be strong again' and 'You're awesome'," Christine said.

"And all of these wonderful drawings for children from families who had lost their homes or been affected by the fires.

"In one way the letters and cards were as exciting as the money because it meant people 'up north' could be there for people 'down south'."

Narooma covers a large area of the coast and hinterland including the small town of Cobargo that was hit hard by the summer fires.

In the northern Brisbane suburb of Stafford, it was parish priest Fr Denis Scanlan and Alison Golden, president of the St Vincent de Paul Society Stafford Conference, who organized the fundraising.

"Our parish raised an impressive \$20,000 over one weekend of Masses, the highest ever for an appeal," Fr Denis said.

At Narooma, Christine recalls the "call out of the blue" from Brisbane.

"This lady said, 'You don't know me but we've heard about what you are going through and we want to help,'" Christine said. "And then she told me they'd raised all this money."

"I was astonished. You can't find words to express that a whole bunch of people have thought about you. They don't know you and are a long way away, but they care so much and are giving what they can."

Christine did not tell her fellow Vinnies members about the generous gift. She left that to Alison, who phoned in to a Narooma Conference meeting with the news.

"All the Vincentians were cheering," Christine said.

## Cardinal Pell and the Commission: Part Two

BY DENIS O'BRIEN

*IN last week's Catholic Voice, lawyer Denis O'Brien examined the recently released unredacted reports of the Royal Commission concerning the Archdiocese of Melbourne and church authorities in Ballarat.*

*The reports enable an assessment of the behaviour of Cardinal Pell who as a younger man served in the church hierarchy in both places, Denis suggests.*

*"Does the Commission's narrative provide a basis for levelling against him (Cardinal Pell) the criticism that has rightly been made of other church leaders who failed to deal appropriately with child sexual abusers?" Denis asks.*

*"I suggest it does not. In this second and final part of the series, Denis looks at the Commission report about the Melbourne Archdiocese.*

The Commission report about the Melbourne Archdiocese deals with Pell's role in connection with Father Peter Searson.

Searson was a weirdo, given to strange and unpleasant conduct. When he was parish priest of Doveton there were also some suggestions he had sexually abused children, although at the time no such complaints had clearly emerged.

Pell's principal involvement concerning Searson occurred in November 1989 when Pell as auxiliary bishop of Melbourne received a delegation of teachers

from the parish primary school to discuss a list of incidents and grievances about Searson which the teachers had prepared.

The list made no reference to sexual abuse.

Towards the end of the meeting, which was also attended by the union representative Mr Palmer, one of the teachers said that they would give Searson a second chance. This caused Pell to say to Palmer something like: "Your evidence seems to have disappeared, Mr Palmer".

The Commission criticises Pell in its report for failing to recommend to Archbishop Frank Little that Searson be suspended or removed from ministry.

Soon after Pell became Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, he established the Melbourne Response to respond to complaints of abuse within the archdiocese.

In November 1996 complaints of Searson physically assaulting two boys were referred to Peter O'Callaghan QC, the Independent Commissioner under the Melbourne Response. This resulted in Pell as archbishop removing Searson's faculties as a priest.

Having been appointed as an auxiliary bishop in 1987, Pell was part of the Curia of the archdiocese whose role it was to advise and assist Archbishop Little in his pastoral care and administration of the archdiocese.

Pell, along with other members of the Curia, is criticised in the Commission report for failing to stir Little into action against certain priests against whom complaints had been made. The indis-

putable fact, however, is that only the archbishop had the authority to discipline priests.

The Commission further criticises Pell when, after becoming archbishop, he did not stand Father Baker down after being made aware that the police were likely to charge Baker over an incident at Brighton that had occurred in 1965.

The nature of the incident was, however, unclear. There was no indication that it was sexual or that it involved a minor.

Throughout its reports concerning the church, the Royal Commission is critical of church authorities for failing to report allegations of child sexual abuse to the police in the period before the Church developed national procedures in 1996.

The Commission is correct that the failure to report was consistent with the attitude of the times that such things should be dealt with internally to avoid scandal.

However, it is fair to observe that the attitude was also one to be found within the Catholic laity at the time.

It reflects why, when told in 1978 of the allegation that Baker was sexually abusing a boy in the Gladstone Park parish, two parishioners, one a magistrate and the other a barrister, sought to meet with Archbishop Little about the matter rather than report to the police.

• Denis O'Brien was chief lawyer of the Truth Justice and Healing Council during the Royal Commission.

