

CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF GANBERRA AND GOULBURN
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Archbishop's Message
Archbishop Christopher Prowse



Walking Together

IN THIS
Edition

'Leave behind ways of acting separately on parallel tracks that never meet'

In an eventful beginning to the year, the Catholic Church mourned the life of Pope Benedict XVI and the sudden passing of Cardinal George Pell, the former Archbishop of Sydney and Melbourne.

After attending the Cardinal's funeral, Archbishop Christopher Prowse joined the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania in Fiji. He then went to Rome for the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life's conference called 'Pastors and Lay Faithful Called to Walk Together'.

The Catholic Voice sat down with Archbishop Prowse as he reflected on the lives of Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Pell and gave his thoughts about the two important conferences he attended last month.

POPE BENEDICT XVI, A 'GREAT CATHOLIC THEOLOGIAN OF THE 20TH CENTURY'

The theological writings and papal teaching of the late Pope Benedict XVI were and will continue to be a rich theological treasure for the Catholic Church.

"He was one of the great Catholic theologians and teaching popes of the 20th Century," Archbishop Prowse said.

"And in reflecting Pope John Paul II's terminology of faith and reason being like 'two wings,' he was convinced of the profound link faith and reason has in the contemplation of truth."

Archbishop Prowse noted that Pope Benedict XVI will long be remembered fondly in Australia as the Pontiff who led young people from around the globe in prayer at World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008, the biggest gathering of people in Australia's history.

"Future generations will also remember him for his dramatic resignation from the papacy, which was an extraordinary step for him to make and one that will have considerable influence on future popes," he said.

CARDINAL PELL: 'BOTH A LION AND A LAMB'

Less than two weeks after the death of Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal George Pell died suddenly in Rome.

During his time in the Vatican Cardinal Pell had risen to be a very important figure, serving as the first Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy.

"He was a great defender of the truth of the Catholic faith," Archbishop Prowse said. "And he revealed enormous courage and faith - particularly during his imprisonment."

After his death, the Cardinal was called a "lion of the Church" and a "giant of a man with a big vision".

"I like to think of him as both a lion and a lamb," Archbishop Prowse

said.

"Being the son of a boxer and a Publican provided a unique background for the Cardinal, who became a formidable defender of the truths of our Catholic faith. But also, and perhaps, this is less known, a real lamb, attentive to the 'battlers' of life, especially their education.

"Cardinal Pell was a great networker and loved gathering people around a table to discuss the events of the day both in church and world," he said.

FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF OCEANIA.

After attending Cardinal Pell's funeral in Sydney, Archbishop Prowse joined over sixty other Bishops in Fiji at the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania.

Bishops representing the Episcopal Conferences of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and the Pacific Islands gather every four or five years.

This six-day conference for Oceania highlighted the ecological issues of the region.

Speaking of his response to the conference, the Archbishop noted that there was a particular concern for more existential matters in this part of the world.

"The rising sea levels and the exploitation of underwater minerals by international companies was of great concern," he said.

"Disturbingly, mining destroys ancient fishery nesting areas, which is not well known in Australia, so we need to be able to listen carefully to what's happening."

DICASTERY FOR THE LAITY, THE FAMILY AND LIFE – CONFERENCE IN ROME

After returning from Fiji, Archbishop Prowse, in his role as chair of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry, attended a conference in Rome with the Holy Father on 'Pastors and Laity called to walk together.'

Joined by Clara Geoghegan, the Bishops Commission's executive secretary, and Malcolm Hart, director of the National Centre for Evangelisation, the three-day Vatican conference was attended by over 170 leaders worldwide from 70 Bishops' Conferences.

Promoting 'integral ecclesiology' to combat acting separately, Pope Francis urged delegates and the wider Church to refrain from walking in 'parallel lines'.

"This is a unitary understanding of the Church, which sees us not walking in parallel lines but together," Archbishop Prowse said.

"Conversion in Lent does not just mean personal conversion from our appetites and deepening devotional practices but also an ecclesial conversion and, indeed, conversion of structures not only in the Church but within the world.

"If we can walk together like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) or as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), then I trust we can move ahead with the emerging synodal Church of today.

"I was particularly pleased to listen to how the Church in Latin America and Africa are responding to Synodality and walking together. They have much to teach us mainly because of their strong links with family life and marital life, distinct from the more individualistic and atomistic world in which Australia and Western countries are living today. We will hear far more about this topic in the times ahead," he said.

Pope Francis addressed the participants at the recent Dicastery For the Laity, the Family and Life conference with a call for the Church to "leave behind ways of acting separately on parallel tracks that never meet".

Download his talk here
<https://bit.ly/PopeFrancisFeb2023>



Cathedral Parish celebrates Golden Jubilee



50 years of friendship and faith



Preparing to vote on the Voice



Understanding the implications of Voluntary Assisted Dying



Having faith in humour



Bishop Frank Leo



Easter Mass Times for 2023



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Cover picture: St Mary's Primary School, young students in the garden. Story pg 6

‘Everything to do with God’

The Archdiocese is set to welcome many new or returning members to the Catholic faith at this year’s Easter Vigils across its parishes. Four being received into the church share their inspirational stories with DON SMITH from the Catholic Voice.



Archbishop Christopher Prowse with this year’s ‘catechumens’ and ‘candidates’ who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) at the upcoming Easter Vigils across the Archdiocese.



“Recognising the values and the framework for life that a Catholic faith provides, why wouldn’t I want it for myself and for my children?”



Sherly Tatang with her husband

Sherly Tatang (St Christopher’s Cathedral Parish)

Sherly came to Canberra from Indonesia with her husband eleven years ago. Last year her mother died, leaving Sherly devastated. Although a non-Catholic Christian, Sherly said, “I kind of lost my faith in God. I didn’t have the courage to pray anymore. And I was thinking, it’s useless.”

Still, she visited St Christopher’s Cathedral at one point, looked up at the crucified Christ and pondered his suffering. She thought of the Virgin Mary. She felt Mary’s heart was maybe more broken than her own heart.

Though still not keen on going to church, Sherly started in the RCIA program at the Cathedral parish where she was supported and encouraged by the team.

The more she learnt about the faith, the more it left its mark on her, especially the Mass’s penitential prayer. The part where it says “...in what I have failed to do” made her sad as she felt she had failed to look after her mother.

Yet there was a sense of hope, too, when on behalf of all the faithful, the priest later prayed with a “humble spirit and contrite heart” to seek God’s acceptance.

For Sherly it underlined the importance of “acknowledging that we sin and asking forgiveness from that.”



Grace Bontjer (Holy Spirit Parish, Amaroo)

In her younger years Grace Bontjer regularly went to church with her grandparents but was never baptised. An incident last year changed it all.

Grace was loading firewood into the back of a vehicle when she fell head first to the ground. A fractured skull, broken neck, or crushed vertebrae could so easily have been the outcome.

But incredibly for the twenty year old everything later checked out okay at the hospital.

“I don’t know how I was fine,” Grace said. “It should have been a lot different.”

Grace later told her grandparents about the incident and how she was astonished no damage was done.

“Grace, I think that’s probably God protecting you,” her grandmother Leanne said.

Her grandmother was on the RCIA team at Holy Spirit, Amaroo, and through her influence Grace entered the program on her journey to the church.

“It’s been a wonderful, spiritual experience seeing God at work with my granddaughter,” said Leanne, who is also Grace’s sponsor. “It’s been a really special time.”

“I’ve been learning so much about our family. It has everything to do with God,” said Grace.



Adam Nisbett (Mary Help of Christians Parish, South Woden)

Adam’s journey to the Catholic Church began when he married his Catholic wife at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne. The priest asked him if they had children would Adam consider raising them as Catholics.

“Not being baptised or raised in any particular religion, I had no reluctance to his request,” Adam said.

Both his boys were baptised and attend Catholic schools.

“As a family, we are at church each Sunday. Catholic or not, I find it an excellent time to pause each week and reflect on where we are at. As a society, I don’t think we do this enough anymore.”

But it wasn’t until the eldest son completed his confirmation and first communion last year that Adam took the steps to enter the RCIA program at Mary Help of Christians Parish, South Woden.

“Recognising the values and the framework for life that a Catholic faith provides, why wouldn’t I want for myself all I want for my children?”

“I am now lining up to be baptised this Easter,” he said.



Tony Wu (Holy Spirit Parish, Amaroo)

Originally from China Tony went to a Methodist school in Singapore where he was baptised a Methodist in 2015.

A year later he said he “discovered” the Catholic faith. “At that moment, it was the right course for me.”

In the event it would be another seven years before he took the steps to become a Catholic. After coming to Australia four years ago, last year he entered the RCIA program at Holy Spirit Parish, Amaroo.

Tony said what he had discerned and learnt from others was that a person cannot alter the direction of their life’s journey under their own power.

“We can choose to go a little bit left or right. But only by God’s grace can we truly switch to another direction to find the meaning of life.”



'A positive approach' to life for 100-year-old

BY VERONIKA COX

AS a young girl, Sister Veronica Dunphy used to gaze up into the night sky, searching for the man in the moon.

"I certainly never thought I'd witness or experience a real man on the moon in my lifetime," she said.

"The changes over 100 years have been quite extraordinary."

Sr Veronica, who celebrated the milestone birthday on 21 March, said although the years passed, her love for life had not diminished at all.

"I am enjoying life at the moment," she said.

"I just love it. Nothing really gets to me."

The centenarian has a clean bill of health, and, perhaps even more impressively, has just had her driver's license renewed for another ten years.

"Not many 100-year-olds are still driving, and I don't have any restrictions at all," she said proudly.

"The man there said I had made his day. It is quite unique, I suppose."

Sr Veronica credits her exceptional good health to a healthy upbringing and a positive approach to life.

"For the first 20 years of my life, we were poor – we grew up during the depression," she said.

"Whatever we had, is what

we had and that was it. We ate what we had on the farm. I have never had any stressful thing in my life – things just don't get at me. You can have a healthy attitude and outlook to life, and a sense of understanding why you are here."

Last year, Sr Veronica returned to the small town in New Zealand where she, along with her six brothers and sisters, spent her childhood.

"It was an extraordinary experience, emotionally," she said.

"It was interesting to reflect on my parents, the life they created for us children and the changes; to reflect on the fact that they were pioneers. At the time, it was only a bush track get in with bullocks or pack horses.

"My parents had to cut the bush down to pitch a tent, which they lived in for the first two years until dad had chopped enough bush to build a little hut for us."

Sr Veronica has seen daily life progress in leaps and bounds over the years.

"Communication has been a big one. We did have a telephone, but it went on the wall, and it was a party line, so you could only reach your neighbours. Now I have an iPhone and I can use it, but if it goes wrong, I wouldn't have a clue! Technology has taken the world



Veronica Dunphy with her rare pumpkins growing in her organic plot. Picture by Michele England

and all of us with it, I guess," she said.

"Transport is another. A horse was my only transport until I was about 20. I rode the 12 miles to school. I was in a classroom recently, and one of the children asked me what I did with the horse when I got to school. Why, we just let it go in the paddock and caught it again at night to ride home!"

Education has developed as well, along with the way people think about food.

"I left school at 12, and that was not unusual. There was no going to university or anything like that," she said.

"And food is one more. People eat out a lot these days

and talk about things being organic. Gosh, I never heard that word growing up. I milked cows by hand. We made our own bread and butter. We ate what we grew. There was no junk food. There wasn't even a grocery shop. Everything was organic!"

Sr Veronica said it sometimes felt as though the world was moving very quickly.

"Am I slowing down, or is the world spinning too fast? Everything is instant – you have to have things immediately," she explained.

"And sometimes I think I would like to sit and wait. I don't mind waiting."

The keen gardener still

grows a huge variety of vegetables and flowers in her community garden plot.

"You've only got the present moment – that's all the life you have, in a sense," she said.

"The past is history, the future is a mystery, and the present is a gift. And life to me is a gift, so I hang onto that thought."

Sitting outside under a lovely, shady tree, waiting to meet a friend, Sr Veronica's words are filled with delight.

"I just love life," she says happily.

"I often pinch myself and say 'Am I real? Am I really real at 100 years old?'"

Father Patrick Haydon's enduring legacy

IN the magnificent stained-glass window of Saint Patrick is the completed Manuka Church, as Father Patrick Haydon had envisaged.

Frank Forde, a close friend of Fr. Haydon and later the 15th Prime Minister of Australia, donated them. In this window, cradled in the arms of the Apostle of Ireland, is the Church doubled in size and adorned with a bell tower. Faithful to this depiction, Archbishop Thomas Cahill, in 1972, over 22 years after Monsignor Haydon's death, would undertake Saint Christopher's extension as it became the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Canberra's first parish priest, Patrick Maurice Haydon, as a 22-year-old, was first assigned to the vastly spread parish of Queanbeyan. At this time, Queanbeyan took in all that is

now known as Canberra, still a part of the Sydney Archdiocese and not yet the Diocese of Goulburn, which existed since 1862.

Only six years later, Queanbeyan parish became part of the Goulburn Diocese. This same year, Fr. Haydon would be installed parish priest of Queanbeyan, succeeding Fr. Matthew Hogan (who returned to Sydney) in 1918.

Just under nine years passed, and the Parish of Canberra, the seat of the new Federal Capital, was booming in every way. The new adventure of Canberra and Fr. Haydon's unimaginable ministry and legacy for the fledgling Capital lay ahead.

Fr. Haydon was a man of profound and practical compassion. He knew his Catholic faith and what it called him to do.

On his motorcycle, Fr. Haydon would visit the work gangs,



celebrating Mass in all kinds of primitive circumstances, even hearing Confessions on the back of his Harley because of its convenience and privacy.

During the Great Depression, Fr. Haydon was described as a particular pillar of direction and strength. As he rallied people of all faiths in the region, he helped lift the burden of those struggling to

'get by'. Providing meals, social gatherings, dances and fetes, he 'cheered their hearts', so they'd know they were not forgotten or left behind.

On one occasion, Fr. Haydon gathered for a meal and gave the unemployed men at a dinner table a bottle of beer and a pack of cigarettes. This was his typical generosity, with an unapologetic humanity and a yearning to make Jesus known and loved.

This fact was acknowledged by the Canberra Times in its leading article the day after the Monsignor's death. He was described as "a builder in Canberra", but one who built much more than edifices of stone.

Fr. Haydon was certainly "at home" with the dignitaries and officials of the day. A confidant of James Scullin, Joseph Lyons, Frank Forde, Benjamin Chifley

and Robert Menzies. He was a man greatly respected in the Canberra community and beyond.

As a student at St. Christopher's, Bishop Pat Power recalls when the Monsignor bought every child an ice cream on one hot summer's day. Describing him as a 'gentle giant', he writes: "I have many other fond memories of this gentle giant and often wonder if he first influenced me to begin thinking of the priesthood."

As we now in 2023, celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Saint Christopher's Cathedral. We can be justly proud of Patrick Maurice Haydon's contribution to Canberra's history and the foundations he laid for this most magnificent Cathedral.

• Fr Trenton van Reesch is the Administrator of St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka



Cathedral parish's Golden Jubilee

'Walking together' past, present and future

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BY DON SMITH

JOHN Kilmartin is one of those who remembers the early days.

When St Christopher's was still a church and not yet a cathedral, altar boy John would pedal hard through the "searing frost" to make it in time for the seven o'clock Mass.

His efforts came with their rewards, not just the spiritual. The parish priest Fr Haydon had a bag full of coins and John told the *Catholic Voice* he'd get "two bob" from that "big, kind, loving man".

On 5 February 1973, Archbishop Thomas Cahill consecrated the enlarged and renovated St Christopher's Manuka as the Cathedral Church of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Fifty years on, John and his wife Maureen were some of the many who gathered at the Cathedral on the feast of St Patrick for a special celebratory Mass and dinner. The anniversary year also coincides with the Archdiocese's 75th anniversary of its establishment.

Fittingly, the dinner was held in the hall named after John's former parish priest, Fr Patrick Haydon.

Among the guests was Archbishop Cahill's nephew, Peter, and Anne Morrison, a descendent of early European settlers in the Canberra region with extensive family connections to St Christopher's and to the Catholic Church.

Speaking to the *Catholic Voice* ahead of the event, Archbishop Christopher Prowse



"The Cathedral parish has a really deep sense of community. It reminds me a little of my studies of the early church and what it was meant to be. It's not perfect, but it's wonderful. This is definitely home".

Francilia Gomes, Anniversary dinner MC and PPC member.



Top: (L-R) Ruth and Daniel De Valentin, the artist of the St Christopher's painting with Archbishop Christopher Prowse and Fr Trenton van Reesch. (Above Right) John and Maureen Kilmartin. Below Left: The gifted painting of St Christopher to be hung in the Cathedral.



"We've always loved the choir, the music, the ambience. And when you hear the bells, you think you're in Italy or France or somewhere. It's just wonderful."
Paul Monagle, St Christopher's parishioner

said the Golden Jubilee was an opportunity to look back over the last 50 years with a "great sense of gratitude" for God's presence in the Cathedral parish

and beyond. As the Archdiocese's 'mother church' and the Archbishop's official 'seat', the Archbishop said the anniversary was also significant for all the Archdiocese. He reflected on Mons

Haydon "as one figure standing on the shoulders of so many others." He was, the Archbishop said, Canberra's first parish priest who set up the church, (and school and hall) for what would eventually become St Christopher's Cathedral. "We can look back in

thanksgiving for this tremendous priest and think also of the wonderful priests, deacons and lay faithful over the years who have come to this cathedral."

Becky Langworthy, the Cathedral's parish pastoral council chair, said it was a "blessing" to reflect on the past 50 years of how the Cathedral had grown not only as a community but as a spiritual home for so many people."

The Cathedral parish's Golden Jubilee overlaps with the Archdiocese's Year of Walking Together and was a timely reflection the Archbishop said that "we're walking together" in the Golden Jubilee, "past, present, and future".

As for that future, in his address at the dinner, the Archbishop foreshadowed the Cathedral's centenary in another fifty years' time.

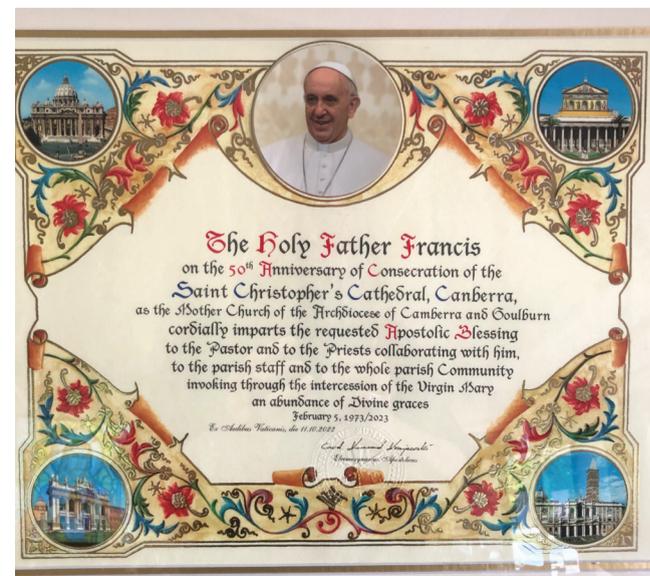
He said he'd be there, laying horizontally, "in the crypt!" He would look up with the hope that all the church would be "preaching all the gospel to all the people all the time."

At the centenary they may even remember John Kilmartin's words from the 50th anniversary, "I've still got a great love for that church. It's part of my family. It's part of our whole community. It's a place I've embraced as part of my life."

• Fr Trenton van Reesch's 50th Anniversary Mass homily can be accessed via the *Catholic Voice* website. Go to www.catholicvoice.org.au



Far Left: Apostolic Blessing. Left: Vicar General Fr Richard Thompson with South Woden parishioners at the Anniversary Dinner Above: Ben Chifley's chair used when he attended Mass at the Cathedral





Young's palm cross ministry

BY VERONIKA COX

AT Young Mission, a small pile of palm crosses waits patiently on a wooden table. Within a few weeks, this pile will grow to almost 15,000. "We sell them through different parishes – mostly in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, but as far away as Victoria and even Queensland," Young Mission palm cross team Sharon Hamill said.

"On Palm Sunday, they will be blessed in the churches by the priest with holy water. People will take them home. Some will put them in their bible, and some will just keep them to remind themselves Easter is coming."

Young Mission has been making palm crosses, created from the fronds of date palm trees, for 16 years.

"Sixteen years ago, we couldn't find them anywhere," Mrs Hamill explained.

"The priest at the time, Fr Richard Thompson, asked if I could work out how to make them. And I said 'Yes, it looks easy.' So, we started it up."

The initiative quickly gained momentum, and as the orders came pouring in more volunteers joined the cause.

"We have had a lot of support. It has become a real social group," Mrs Hamill said.

"While people are making



Volunteers gather to make palm crosses

them, they are all talking. And after covid, people haven't seen each other for a long time, so it works especially well.

As Mrs Hamill speaks, her fingers deftly bend and turn another palm frond, and within moments she places the freshly made cross onto the table.

"We have about 25 volunteers, sometimes more," she said.

"Everybody enjoys it. And the crosses are made in a wonderful environment. It has been such a success over the years. It is just good to see. We wanted to help all the churches, and it has become a good little fundraiser for the Mission as well."

Parish priest Fr Jiss Sunny

said the palm crosses were a way of evangelisation in the modern world.

"They can carry or keep the palm crosses in their family as a sign of a blessing from God," he said.

"It is a symbol that our Lord died for us – a very special blessing for us all," Mrs Hamill agreed.

"You take it home and it just reminds you of Jesus and all that happened."

The palm crosses can only be made from date palms.

"I am always on the lookout for them everywhere I go now," she laughed.

"The fronds can be fairly high up. Sometimes you have to climb!"

Gearing up for World Youth Day

BY CHRISTIAN NOBLEZA

IN a world where most young people are seemingly locked into such fast-paced lifestyles, World Youth Day introduces a dimension of pilgrimage and of journey, of slowing down, and of the importance of reflection.

Since 1984, World Youth Day has gathered young people from all over the world with the Pope. Since 1984, major cities around the world (including Sydney in 2008) have hosted these gatherings, which unite millions of young people on pilgrimage to celebrate their faith and sense of belonging to the Church.

The World Youth Day phenomenon has been a major catalyst that often sparks significant increases in engagement by young people in the life and mission of the Church.

This August, the Portuguese city of Lisbon will host the youth of the 17th International World Youth Day. Over 400,000 registrations have already been received, but that number may likely double or even triple by August.

Archbishop Prowse will be leading a 19-day pilgrimage to World Youth Day this year. Our pilgrimage departs Australia for the heart of Spain to connect



Anita Piper, Parish Secretary for the Cathedral parish, will attend this year's World Youth Day. The 26-year-old said she has always wanted to attend and is looking forward to the opportunities it will bring to deepen her faith.

with the lives and stories of well-known saints including Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. We then make our way to Fatima, which has become a significant place for Marian prayer and devotion. Our pilgrimage culminates with the WYD Week of celebration in Lisbon together with the Pope and the youth of the world.

There will be several formation sessions, both in-person and online, to help prepare our pilgrims to experience the fullness of all that WYD has to offer.

Students feast from paddock to plate

BY VERONIKA COX

AS the lunch bell rings, a group of St Mary's students in Young dash towards the school garden.

With sunflowers and corn stalks waving overhead, happy chatter fills the air as they pluck juicy red tomatoes, pick purple beans and gently pull carrots from the earth.

St Mary's Primary School teacher Warren Ziebowksi beams proudly as he watches the children work, lending a hand here and answering a question there.

"The kids have done really well," he said.

"We have nearly 20kg of potatoes we just harvested. We did zucchinis last week and this week we are doing corn."

Everything in the thriving school garden was grown from



St Mary's students out in the garden gathering produce

seed as part of a project for the school's recently established garden club.

"We want the kids to see the whole process," Mr Ziebowksi explained.

"We pick it, then take it to the kitchen and cook it. We have made zucchini slice, we are making chips with the potatoes, the garlic for the garlic bread and today we are cooking hot

corn with butter."

Mr Ziebowksi said the project had been a mammoth task for the keen gardeners.

"When we first started, they had to weed it all out because it had been left in neglect," he said.

"We got new soil in, and then we planted it out. Our first attempt was a disaster because it was full of weeds. So, we stripped it all back again, topped it up and planted out our summer crops, which have been a massive success."

Year 4 student, Hadley, said she loved learning to grow all kinds of different vegetables and fruits.

"I have learnt that you can grow much more than you think you can," she said. "And they do taste better when you grow them yourself."

Mr Ziebowksi said the garden project, which has already

expanded to include a compost system and a hive of bees, is designed to educate students on the whole food cycle.

"I think it is important because everything is there for us at Woollies these days," he noted.

"Seeing the whole process has huge benefits because they are going home and taking that knowledge. One of the kids took zucchini home, and they cooked it up and fed his family. It is spreading that message out into the community of a healthy lifestyle, choosing fresh and cutting travel mileage."

"I love it!" Year 1 student, Dustin, shouted, pumping his fist in the air.

"The best bit is you can get food to take home. I don't like tomatoes, but I do love to take them home to my family. Once my mum and dad ate tomatoes for three days!"



50 years of friendships and faith

BY VERONIKA COX

IN the 1970's, on Sunday evenings, a group of young people could be found gathered around a coffee urn in an old school building, sharing conversation, listening to music, and forging bonds they did not yet realise would last their whole lives.

St Christopher's Coffee House celebrated its 50th anniversary in March, a poignant occasion for those whose friendships began over "cuppa and chats" so long ago.

Parishioner Tricia O'Keeffe said the golden anniversary was symbolic.

"Links are strong, whether it's by memories of time together or ongoing friendship," she explained.

"Gold has many qualities – beauty and strength. The coffee house was faith, friendship, and fun. We never heard an angry word."

The Coffee House began in March 1973 as a gathering of young people searching for hospitality and friendship.

"The idea was from Fr Michael Burke at the Cathedral," Tricia said.

"It was the 70s – the era of the new 'Folk Mass', so the idea was to go to the 7pm Mass on Sunday evenings and then meet in the old St. Christopher's school building opposite."

Centred around coffee and chats, with local musicians playing in the background, the group got to know each other, as well as the local priests.

"We used to have a core group of about eight of us, led by a young 19-year-old, Tim McKenna from Duntroon, and then a roomful of young people," Tricia explained.

"So, an average night was maybe 30 to 40 people."

Tricia said the Coffee House was a great mix of locals and newcomers.



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(L-R) Tricia O'Keeffe and Bev Brown - then and now

"It was great fun and fellowship. We would learn informally from the priest."

New attendees always found a warm welcome and a hot cup of coffee.

"At that time there were many newcomers to Canberra, mainly to work in the public service," Tricia said.

"I was one of them. Coming to a new city – and, for many of us, living in Macquarie hostel up the road with 599 strangers, encouraged us to find friendship. During the week Fr Burke would visit Macquarie and so over a cuppa after dinner, there was a chance to invite new people to meet us and then come along to the Coffee House next Sunday. So, an open invitation."

Tricia said gaining an understanding that the priests were always there for them was valuable.

"I would imagine everyone needs a trusted friendship group, but more so if it's based at a church. It encourages and develops your faith and

sense of belonging," she explained.

"If we knew of someone lonely or in need, we would share that, and always follow up. No matter who, someone would befriend you and over a cup of coffee you could feel part of the crowd."

The group had many adventures, from picnicking at Pine Island and a football game at St Edmund's through to a retreat in Snake Gully, a cruise to New Zealand and even a Neil Diamond concert.

But on Sunday evenings, they were always ready to gather back around the coffee urn once more.

"The best part was trying to keep the coffee going in the old urn, and to fill up by a bucket from an outside tap on a cold Canberra night," Tricia said.

"We started off sitting on mattresses, then graduated to tables – black and white cloths and green bottles filled with candles. Along the way we also signed our names upon the wall."

Around 50 people from Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Sydney, Albury and Canberra registered to attend the Coffee House reunion on March 24.

"We made special, loyal, lifetime friends," Tricia said.

"This reunion has been great to rekindle friendships over the phone and Facebook whilst we were planning. We look forward to reconnecting with all, and we will also remember those no longer with us."



Five tips to 'snatch victory' during Lent



BY DR PHILIPPA MARTYR

IT'S beginning to look a lot like Easter. All the actual food has now been removed from your local supermarket and replaced with chocolate. Hot cross buns have also been available since 26 December 2022.

This is usually when some of us also realise we haven't been taking Lent very seriously. So how can we snatch victory from the jaws of defeat?

The good news is that we can. God welcomes those who are late to the party if they come with a good intention (Matthew 20:1-16). So here are five things you can do before you hit Holy Week.

1. Daily prayer. It's never too late to start setting aside five or ten minutes at the beginning of each day for a brief morning offering. There is a whole page of Pope-approved prayers for you to choose from. Just say one.

2. Give something up. You can give up anything that you will really feel. It might be scones, or Lotto tickets, or decaf almond latte mochaccinos with a splash of oat milk. Just give it up, feel the burn, and tell God it's for love of Him. You're making room for Jesus in your life every single time you do this.

3. Do something extra. Don't snap at that annoying co-worker today – just once if that's all you can manage. Take those things out of your ears and listen to the world go by, instead of hiding in your

playlist. Go to Stations of the Cross at your local church on Friday evening. Again, don't forget to tell God that this extra thing is your way of showing Him that you love Him right now.

4. Make a really good Confession. I always say this, and that's because a good Confession is more powerful than an exorcism. It might have been a while since you've been, so get a good examination of conscience, work through it, and then go to Confession. You will feel way better. And if you're someone who cares about Church reform, you will have made a real contribution to this by confessing your personal sins that weakened the Church in the first place.

5. Cancel a whole lot of things. Look at the next couple of weeks before Easter and start cancelling stuff now. Try to make Holy Week an oasis of peace where you slow everything down to prepare for the Triduum. Opt out of non-essential meetings, go home on time, and make yourself less available. Go to bed early. This will clear your mind and put you in a much better place to receive the gifts and insights God wants to give you this Easter.

Lent is all about repenting and preparing the way of the Lord. All these things are little ways in which we can own up to our part in the mess that the world's in today.

You can come late to the party. The main thing is that you came. Good luck, and happy Easter!



Walking together - coastal style

BY KATE LISTON

TAKING the theme of 'Walking Together' quite literally, the Parish of Pambula met to stroll around Panboola Wetlands. The three mass centres of Eden, Pambula and Merimbula picked the old racecourse as their first venture because it is "lovely", flat and accessible, and "in the middle of the mass centres."

Pope Francis said synodality is about "a discerning community becoming an acting community", which the south coast parishioners experienced firsthand as they strolled together through the coastal countryside.

What was particularly special were the quiet moments of listening to the cacophony of crickets and watching the wood ducks splash about in the water. Sometimes the movements of the Holy Spirit can be best found in nature, and Panboola Wetlands were alive with colour, motion, sound and

wonder.

The group that gathered in Pambula included a variety of ages and fitness, all bringing with them interesting subjects to consider and mull over.

Keen parishioners from Eden arrived early, clocking up several kilometres before the group arrived. One such parishioner, George, who is almost 91 years old, completed 10 kilometres by the finish!

Eden parishioner Bernadette Woods was excited about the gathering, saying they all "just wanted to chat with each other", and that's precisely what everyone did.

For the first twenty minutes,



we hardly drew breath! Then as we got further around the racecourse, hundreds of kangaroos appeared, sleeping, eating and staring with their little joeys hanging out of their pouches. Talking reduced as everyone slowed down to take in the rural scene.

Teresa Hamer and Frances Clear said they hoped the walking group would increase in size as the year continued.

The monthly walks will be advertised in the parish bulletins with the decision to choose a different spot each time unanimously agreed on.

Record enrolments for St Bede's Primary Braidwood

A BRAIDWOOD school has celebrated record enrolments this year, with three sets of identical twins counted amongst the growing number of students.

St Bede's Primary School principal Mark Chifley said the country town had seen a population increase in recent years, with the re-opening of the Dargues Reef Gold Mine, as well as people looking for a tree change after being locked down in larger cities during covid.

The influx of families has given a welcome boost to the school community.

"This year we have cracked the 150 mark which is an outstanding achievement – this is up from 141 last year," he said.

Mr Chifley said some fourth and fifth generation families were now enrolling their children at the school.

Find the full story at www.catholicvoice.org.au

Eating disorder program gives hope

FAST detection and early treatment are crucial in promoting recovery from eating disorders, according to Supporting Early Intervention for Eating Disorders (SEED) program manager Peter Henry.

The CatholicCare program, which launched in February, has adopted a rapid intervention process to support clients and promote hope.

"Early intervention in disordered eating patterns is critical to improved outcomes," Mr Henry said.

"Treatment outcomes are significantly worse after an illness duration of three or more years, compared to earlier intervention. We are working with clients who are struggling with an eating disorder within that first three-year range."

SEED is a part of the wider expansion of public health



The CatholicCare SEED Team

services for eating disorders, including the ACT Eating Disorders Specialist Clinical Hub, which ensures the delivery of consistent and integrated care.

"When someone is referred

to this program, we have what is called a champion – a clinician – and that champion makes the first call within 48 hours, with therapy starting within two to four weeks," Mr Henry explained.

"This is a big difference from other services, where it may take weeks or months before someone gets contacted."

Mr Henry said SEED's rapid response would better support clients and offer hope in a time of need.

"It lets people know that someone is listening," he said.

"Wait lists across Canberra are horrendous, so with this specific program, being able to get into a service quickly and be seen promotes hope."

While eating disorders typically develop in adolescence

and early adulthood when the brain is still developing, Mr Henry said SEED had received a diverse range of clients.

"What we are finding with the clients already coming through is that they range right across society from men and women through to younger people," Mr Henry said.

"I think it is a big issue because it is such a hidden issue as well. It is one of those disorders people struggle with on their own, and they tend to want to hide it. We are really hoping that this program being out there will help it become less stigmatised."

If you or someone you know wants to self-refer or be referred to SEED, contact (02) 6163 7600 or email SEED@catholiccare.cg.org. Online referrals are available via the CatholicCare.



Building the Church



Preparing to Vote on the Voice

BY FR FRANK BRENNAN SJ

WHAT are Catholics to think about the proposed referendum on the Voice? During the first year of his pontificate, Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* said:

‘An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters.’

Pope Francis then quoted with approval his predecessor Pope Benedict who wrote in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* that ‘the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics’, and that the Church ‘cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice’.

Pope Francis added this observation: ‘All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world. This is essential, for the Church’s social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ.’

Our recent Australian

Plenary Council endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart and encouraged ‘engagement with processes for implementing the statement, including local, regional, and national truth-telling efforts.’

I suggest ten steps for Catholics inspired by our Catholic social teaching when approaching the forthcoming referendum. I couch these suggestions in terms appropriate for those of us who are not Indigenous. We are all invited into constructive dialogue. We must strive to listen to community leaders who know what is good for their communities just as those of us who are not Indigenous know what is good for ourselves and our loved ones.

1. Be attentive to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Stop telling them what is good for them. Start listening to them. Accept that they know what is good for them, just as we know what is good for us and our loved ones.

2. Don’t expect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to agree about legal, political and constitutional questions. It’s called living in a democracy.

3. Form respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and engage in respectful conversations with those who are your friends.

4. Having heard a range of Indigenous voices, make your own decisions about what Aboriginal aspirations are morally justified. What would be



right and proper for Australia in the 21st century? For example, the Commonwealth Parliament has power to make special laws about First Nations people. Many Aboriginal people now say, ‘No special laws without us!’

5. Know your history; know the Aboriginal history. The Australian Constitution does not even mention Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders. They belong in the Constitution. Their belonging should be explicit and particular.

6. The Constitution belongs to all the people. It cannot be amended except with an overwhelming majority of the people. Educate yourselves about the Aboriginal aspirations at Uluru and be ready to discuss those aspirations at the family meal, the workplace BBQ or

the local club.

7. Do something to get this issue of constitutional recognition on the right track. Speak to your local member. Ask that the parliament set up a process so everyone can have their say and so that the major political parties can own whatever is proposed. This is not just a matter for Indigenous leaders. It is not just a matter for the government. It involves all of us.

8. Having decided which Aboriginal aspirations are justified, you then need to make a wise decision about which of those aspirations are politically achievable. Don’t be afraid to talk to people with varying views when making that decision.

9. Having decided which Aboriginal aspirations are not only

justified but achievable, you then need to decide to act. You need to put some skin in the game. You need to decide what concrete and just actions you will take. It’s not enough just to vote when the referendum comes around. You need to get on board urging the parliament to put the right proposition to the vote, and helping your fellow citizens make an informed choice.

10. Be respectful and attentive to those who disagree with you, but don’t be afraid to demand that they be respectful and attentive to you. Any national Voice worth its salt will have an elaborate system of local and regional ears to hear the local and regional voices which are needed to give credibility to any national Voice. That will be complex. There will be plenty of room for disagreement.

Whatever the politics of this referendum, we all need to take to heart Noel Pearson’s chilling observation about his people: ‘We are a much unloved people. We are perhaps the ethnic group Australians feel least connected to. We are not popular and we are not personally known to many Australians. Few have met us and a small minority count us as friends.’

• Fr Frank Brennan SJ was a member of the Langton/Calma Committee on the Voice. His book, *An Indigenous Voice to Parliament: Considering a constitutional bridge*, Garratt Publishing, 2023 is available at <https://www.garrattpublishing.com.au/>

MONDAY 3RD APRIL @ 5PM

CHRISM MASS

AT ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL

Join the Archbishop and the Clergy of the Archdiocese for this most important Holy Week ceremony. It is this Mass that the Holy Oils used in the various Sacramental Rites of the Church are blessed and consecrated. Everyone is most welcome.





Understanding the implications of Voluntary Assisted Dying

GEETANJALI ROGERS

IN December 2022 the Federal Parliament passed the Restoring Territory Rights Act 2022 which will allow for Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) in the Territories. The ACT government proposes to introduce a bill in the second half of 2023.

VAD, where legalised in Australia, has three main conditions with respect to the illness. These are (i) has a terminal illness, disease or medical condition, (ii) which is expected to cause death in less than 6-12 months (depending on the law/condition), and (iii) is causing intolerable suffering.

The first condition is rather ironic though, as all people who are alive will die at some point. You could say that life is a terminal illness. So, this condition seems meaningless. What is noteworthy here is that psychological illness is permitted as the terminal illness, however, only in the Queensland law thus far.

The second condition means that death will happen soon, so

the purpose of VAD laws is to hasten an inevitable death. Here the question of inevitability is important.

Death in an illness is never certain, particularly psychological illnesses. This requirement puts pressure on medical practitioners to make, sometimes impossible, predictions about when someone will die. The reason for this hastening lies in the third condition, VAD is somehow supposed to remediate intolerable suffering.

This third condition is particularly troublesome because it presumes death is better than intolerable suffering, because if something is intolerable then we ought not to permit it. Where this kind of suffering exists, it should be ended.

By passing these laws, governments are supposedly protecting the people from intolerable suffering by providing a solution – death.

As Catholics, we too need to respond to the problem of intolerable suffering. Pope Francis points out in *Samaritanus*



Bonus that we should respond as the good Samaritan did, “drawing nearer to the man who he finds half dead; and taking responsibility for him.” This responsibility requires an investment, as care is expensive, both in terms of emotions and money. The good Samaritan invests both funds he has, and funds he does not yet have, with a promise of repayment. He has already become invested in the person.

Some common reasons cited for VAD, and what intolerable suffering could be, is feeling a

loss of life quality, dignity, or autonomy. We need to advocate for better palliative care and community engagement programs to help ease the suffering of those who are terminally ill or aged so they feel that their life is still worth living. These considerations are notably absent from current Australian laws, other than to mention that medical or palliative care will not be denied to someone who requests it.

As Catholics we need advocate for clarity regarding the care which is currently available.

Such as whether current models of care are sufficient to meet the needs of the terminally ill, whether sufficient access to the appropriate care exists, and whether there is sufficient and sustainable resourcing for this care. We need to change the conversation around VAD as a medical intervention for intolerable suffering, to a conversation about finding ways of caring for those who suffer intolerably. Unfortunately, when it comes to intolerable suffering, there are no simple, or one-size fits all answers. The only certainty is that VAD is an easy solution. VAD is cheaper than care. VAD does not require imagination or investment in those who are suffering intolerably. VAD absolves the government and society of their care responsibilities to people by proposing an alternative “solution,” death which comes dressed as a medical procedure.

• *Geetanjali Rogers is currently doing a doctorate at ACU researching VAD laws and the concept of compassion*

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Adding value to lives through intergenerational programs

BY BETTY SZUROMI

WHILE ABC's groundbreaking series *Old People's Home for Teenagers*, an intergenerational experiment was airing, a more low-key program pairing young and old was taking shape at Calvary Haydon aged care home at Bruce. Called Life Stories, it is an opportunity for residents and teenage students to come together to learn something of each other's lives.

The trial program is one of several intergenerational collaborations between Calvary Haydon and nearby Radford College that is bringing mutual benefits.

Together we are creating ongoing projects that we believe are beneficial for both sides and help foster relationships and promote social engagements between residents and young people. The aim to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities that promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities.

The projects have included

talented art students coming to conduct fortnightly workshops with residents, and that program is starting again in March.

Life Stories involved students spending blocks of time talking with their paired residents and we saw that ties of friendship developed through the regular communication and that people from different life stages were learning and helping each other.

The benefits of participating in such programs can be numerous for both the young and elderly through supporting emotional, social, cognitive, physical and sensory aspects of their lives.

As we know our residents, we found that it encouraged, motivated and added value to their lives. There were the opportunities for companionship for both the students and our residents, some of whom are living with dementia or are in palliative care, to remember.

In our experience, these programs can help reduce social isolation and depression for residents, who have the chance to be engaged and have increased communication. The



Resident and former teacher Mark Smith chats with a Radford College student during last year's Life Stories program.

residents' are having obvious fun learning about a younger generation which can help reduce stress and anxiety by keeping their mind busy with positive thoughts. It is a two-way street. They are not just learning; they are sharing their experience and skills, which gives them a sense of purpose

and, in some cases, greater self-esteem.

Residents were excited and looked forward to the sessions. There were smiles and laughter. They seemed to put aside or forget any limitations and just enjoy being in the moment.

For the students, it can help them to develop confidence

and communication skills with the older generation, develop empathy and listening skills, and provide an opportunity to connect to older people, something that is not always possible for students in today's lifestyle. They learn to develop the capacity to build relationship with those that are different, helping them stay social.

One boy said how much he enjoyed coming along on Tuesday mornings and the enlightening conversations he had with one of our residents, a retired diplomat. Their discussions ranged far and wide.

"He has a very personal and interesting view on life that I can't really get from anyone else in my social circle. He offers a fresh perspective about things and really encourages me to think deeply about my environment. Above all he's been really fun to talk to, he's a really entertaining fellow."

The level of feeling and respect from our residents was mutual.

• **Betty Szuromi is Calvary Haydon's Diversional Therapist**

Questions to consider regarding proposals to enact euthanasia laws in ACT

The ACT Government has opened a consultation period regarding proposals to enact euthanasia laws.

The Archdiocese believes that as many people as possible should take part in the Consultation. We do not support the proposals; we unambiguously seek to defend life from conception to natural death, but, if there is to be legislation, we seek to make sure it has full protections for the vulnerable.



Get more information here

The Consultation materials (a position paper and a series of discussion guides) and the site for submissions can be found at: <https://your-sayconversations.act.gov.au/voluntary-assisted-dying-in-ACT>

The Archdiocese suggests that there are other questions prompted by this proposal and these discussion guides. Your thoughts about these could be included in any submission you might make

QUESTIONS	ISSUES
Should the Bill be taken to the 2024 Election?	No political party in the ACT sought a mandate for this very significant legal change in 2020. Should those seeking to bring forward this Bill take it to the 2024 election?
Why doesn't 'life choices' include comprehensive and adequately funded palliative care?	The discussion paper stresses that, "the ACT government is committed to quality end of life choices" and yet, funding for palliative care in the ACT is inadequate to community need, despite years of promises from the Government. If this proposal is about enhancing choice and people's human rights, why is the ACT government not FULLY funding palliative care according to the needs of the ACT Community?
Why do some beds at Clare Holland House (the only specialist palliative care facility in the ACT) remain unfunded by the ACT Government?	Surely the introduction of VAD is not a health or budget efficiency measure?
Should anyone be able to request VAD at any time?	Who should be eligible to access VAD? The Government wants to know if VAD requests should only be from those living with a terminal illness? What kind of life expectancy should be anticipated before VAD? Should the access be limited to adults?
What administrative and health safeguarding will be implemented to protect a patient's outcome?	Discussion Guide 3 asks questions about the processes for seeking VAD; the administration of the substance; and, what should appear on death certificates. To ensure the maximum protections, should the request need to be made multiple times? Should there be independent witnesses?
Who should be the practitioners in VAD?	Discussion Guide 4 raises questions about only a limited number of doctors being willing to be involved and trained to be involved. It asks if others, such as nurses and pharmacists should play a role in the process? How will we ensure that the patient is free from coercion?
What of conscientious objection?	Will the proposed Bill include genuine conscientious objection provisions? Will health providers be coerced into participating in a practice they find morally reprehensible?
Practical Safeguards	How will the drugs used in this procedure be stored before being dispensed? How will others be protected from their use after being dispensed?

Walking Together

The Catholic Voice has been out on the road gathering stories from our large and diverse communities and their faith and endurance, ones that uplift our spirits and unite us. 88,000 sqm and 140,000 people proclaim the faith.

“The path that God is indicating to the Church is precisely that of a more intense and concrete experience of communion and journeying together. He asks the Church to leave behind ways of acting separately, on parallel tracks that never meet. Clergy separated from laity, consecrated persons from clergy and the faithful; the intellectual faith of certain elites separated from the faith of ordinary people; the Roman Curia from the particular Churches, bishops from priests; young people from the elderly, spouses and families disengaged from the life of the communities, charismatic movements separated from parishes, and so forth. This is the worst temptation at the present moment.”

Pope Francis
 Dicastery For Laity, Family And Life Conference 18 February 2023

“Our common belonging to Christ makes us all brothers and sisters”



GRENFELL

Grenfell OAM recipients ‘Walking Together’ with community
 Deidre and Terry Carroll
 Read now at www.catholicvoice.org.au

YOUNG

Young’s palm cross ministry and Paddock to Plate
 Stories from the parish and primary school in Young
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TALBINGO

Talbingo - one of our smallest church communities
 The first interdenominational church in New South Wales
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TUMUT

‘We cannot evangelise unless we know each other’
 Interview with Immaculate Conception parish priest
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ADELONG

Adelong students learn how to ‘pray from the heart’
 A SENSE of peace and calm permeates the classrooms of St Joseph’s Primary School in Adelong
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GUNDAGAI

Non-English speaking students embraced school
 St Patrick’s Gundagai welcome Chinese students
 PAGE 14

in the Archdiocese

and varied Archdiocese. Our plan for 2023 is to find stories which speak of hope
 000 Catholics, let's follow Pope Francis' call "to join forces and walk together to
 the Gospel".

In this one People of God that is the Church, the fundamental element is our belonging to Christ. In the moving accounts of the Acts of the early martyrs, we often find a simple profession of faith: "I am a Christian", they would say, "and thus I cannot sacrifice to idols". These were the words, for example, spoken by Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, [1] and by Justin and his companions, laypersons. [2] These martyrs did not say: "I am a bishop", or "I am a layperson" — "I am from Catholic Action, I am from that Marian Congregation, I am a member of the Focolare Movement". No, they said simply: "I am a Christian". Today too, in a world that is increasingly secularized, what truly distinguishes us as the People of God is our faith in Christ, not our state of life considered in itself. We are the baptized; we are Christians; we are the disciples of Jesus. Everything else is secondary.

Pope Francis
 Dicastery For Laity, Family And Life Conference 18 February 2023



CAMPBELL

Canberra's Top performing school in NAPLAN
St Thomas More Primary
 Read now at www.catholicvoice.org.au



BRAIDWOOD

St Bede's Primary, Braidwood celebrates record enrolments
 Read now at www.catholicvoice.org.au



PAMBULA

Walking Together - coastal style
 Parishioners from Eden, Pambula and Merimbula gather to enjoy the coastal countryside
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Proposed laws to affect religious schools

BY GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

RELIGIOUS leaders around the nation have expressed concerns about how potential changes to federal discrimination law could affect the freedom of religious schools to function in accordance with their faith and beliefs.

Released in January of this year, a consultation paper by the Australian Law Reform Commission advised the Federal Government to remove the exemptions for religious schools in the Sex Discrimination Act. If implemented, critics argue that these changes would compromise a religious school's ability to operate in accordance with its mission and ethos, especially regarding its teachings on gender, sexuality and family.

In the examples given in the ALRC report, it is implied that the teaching of religious doctrines, especially on sexuality and gender, may be harmful to students and might also constitute discrimination against students and teachers. As a

result, the ALRC recommends changing federal discrimination law so that, although a school could require the teaching of a religious doctrine in their school, the teacher must be "permitted to objectively discuss the existence of alternative views about other lifestyles, relationships, or sexuality in a manner appropriate to the context".

The ALRC report further recommends that the right of religious schools to favour teachers of the same faith in employment should be severely restricted by federal discrimination law. Although the vast majority of religious schools eagerly employ people of all faiths or no faith, the proposed changes could force faith-based schools to employ staff who may be antagonistic to the school's religious teachings.

The ALRC paper also states that the availability of alternatives for staff and students who may not wish to participate in religious schooling, such as secular state schools, "does not



take away from the necessity of the reforms."

The ALRC's recommendations have drawn harsh criticism from religious education organisations across the country, including from groups of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Jews, Muslims and more. Critics of the report have highlighted the proposal's potential to curtail religious freedom and the rights of

parents to enrol their children in schools that uphold their religious and moral beliefs.

An open letter critical of the ideas was delivered to Attorney-General, Mark Dreyfuss, in February, bearing the signatures of representatives from nearly 90 per cent of all religious schools in the nation. The letter explains that the ALRC report pays "lip service" to parents' rights to exercise their religious

freedom and send their children to religious schools. The letter also notes the consultation paper's failure "to provide real protections for religious schools to effectively operate and teach according to their beliefs".

The signatories reiterated criticisms of the ALRC proposals made by National Catholic Education Commission executive director Jacinta Collins in January.

The letter echoed comments made in the NCEC submission that "the proposed reforms fail to provide real protections for religious schools to effectively operate and teach according to their religious beliefs and ethos, and that if the proposed reforms were adopted it would be a major blow to authentic faith-based education in Australia."

The ALRC report follows a national debate regarding safeguards for religious freedoms in Australia, including a failed attempt to adopt legislation to guarantee religious freedom in early 2022.



SHAPE YOUR FUTURE



Try a Day: 3 May

We invite prospective Year 7, 2024 students (current Year 6 students) to join us for the day to experience the exciting and enriching opportunities that our College has to offer.

Open Evening: 4 May

Open Evening is an opportunity for families to look through our facilities and talk to staff and students. An information session will be held in the College Hall from 6.00pm – 6.30pm.

Register your attendance today on the College website.

Non-English speaking students



Chinese students from St Patrick's Primary School, Gundagai

WHEN Year 5 student Ryan stood in front of the school and made a leadership speech last year, his teachers could not stop smiling.

The Chinese student had arrived at St Patrick's Primary School in Gundagai earlier the same year, not speaking a word of English.

"It was amazing to hear him get up and make that speech," principal Christine Baron said.

"It was the pinnacle for us. It just melted our hearts."

Ryan is one of eleven non-English speaking students who have joined the school since 2020.

"We have families coming out to work in the local meat processing industry," Mrs Baron explained.

"We are so grateful they have chosen our school, and we are working hard to help them settle in and find ways to be inclusive in everything that we do."

Mr Baron is currently advocating for a Chinese classroom support person to join the school two days a week.

"It can be quite challenging, and we are learning on the job," Mrs Baron said.

"Ten per cent of the student population has come from a non-English



'We cannot evangelise unless we know each other'

BY VERONIKA COX

IMMACULATE Conception priest Fr Joseph Neonbasu has a bright vision for his new parish.

"My vision is always to create a strong Catholic community that is on a journey to encounter Christ and face to face (with one another)," he explains, eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

"This is synodality – we journey together to build a kingdom of God."

The softly spoken priest, who joined the Tumut parish this year, exudes a sense of joyful determination as he outlines his hopes for the region.

"My first strategic plan for this mission is to build relationships," he said.

"We have to know each other. I need to know you, and you need to know me. And you need to know each other. We cannot evangelise unless we know each other."

In order to know everyone

in this parish, Fr Joseph has a lot of ground to cover.

"I celebrate a vigil Mass in Gundagai, then Mass in Tumut on Sunday morning. The first and third Sunday of the month is in Adelong, the second and fourth is Batlow, and the fifth is Talbingo," he said.

"There are also daily masses, three nursing homes and four schools to visit – McCauley Central in Tumut, St Patrick's in Gundagai, St Joseph's in Adelong and St Mary's in Batlow. It is very important to journey with the young people and be among them as well."

Fr Joseph said there is great hope to be found in knowing one another and sharing the gift of each person.

"We have to represent Christ for one another," he said.

"We are one family. Listening to each other and knowing each other is something we can always continue to work on. We are in this together, I am there with you."

Fr Joseph said while he

would usually greet people after each Mass, it was not always possible as he is often driving straight to Mass in the next town.

"So instead, I asked if they could arrange one day a month that we can have lunch or dinner instead, because I want to know them," he smiled.

"We have done that in Adelong and Batlow – the church communities organised it – and it was beautiful."

Fr Joseph said he greatly enjoyed making new connections in the various towns of the parish.

"It is encouraging for me, as the community of people is beautiful," he said.

"First, we build all the relationships. Second, we feel



Fr Joseph Neonbasu outside Immaculate Conception Church, Tumut

the sense of responsibility for one another. It is about the ownership of that relationship, the Church and its ministries. Then thirdly, we celebrate together!

"It is all about living out the baptismal call as we journey

together as one family of God! In short, my strategy for evangelisation is to win (building relationships), to own (having responsibility toward each other and the ministries) and to wine and dine (to celebrate and to live out the Baptismal call!)"

embraced by school

speaking background now, and we really just want these students to have equal access to the curriculum."

The school has introduced measures to support the students, including individual iPads for translation and daily targeted intervention sessions.

"Communication is the most difficult thing – Google Translate is not always correct," Mrs Baron explained.

"We want them to be able to communicate with other children and be part of the lesson. A classroom support person would bridge that gap."

Assistant principal Lisa Wilson said as soon as new students joined the school, they became part of the class.

"It can be quite daunting for them when they first arrive, but within one or two weeks there are big smiles," she said.

"The kids absolutely embrace them, and they are learning with the use of these tools. It has been hard, but once they feel comfortable and established, they start showing initiative because they feel safe and supported."

Year 3 student Jasper, who now speaks fluent English

after joining St Patrick's in preschool, said his favourite things about school were excursions and experiments.

"It is like there is always a little source of happiness when I do anything at school," he said.

"I felt welcome the day I went here. It felt like I never wanted to leave the same class or the same school. And I get to eat lots of delicious things." Jasper's mum, Wei, had a good impression of the school when she first arrived in Gundagai.

"The teachers are very passionate in teaching Jasper," she said.

"We have been with St Patrick's for three years now, and they are willing to devote time and energy to help us."

Mrs Baron said the multicultural nature of the school had been a blessing.

"We have a lot of cultures here now, and it is beautiful the way the community embraces everyone," she said.

"It adds a whole different layer to our school. We are learning from all our students, and we are so lucky to have them."

Volunteering helps wellbeing

AT a retirement village nestled in the suburb of Narabundah, residents gather in small groups to strum ukuleles, play a round of mah-jong or chat about their favourite books.

Azure Village residents committee chair Cathi Moore said social groups such as these are imperative to enhance the wellbeing of those in the aged care community.

"The value is immeasurable," she said.

"The social club organises activities around the village, and they are very important for social engagement."

Mrs Moore said the village offered a sense of community, which was of immense value to many in the older generation.

"Often people move here from interstate to be near their adult children," she noted.

"Or if you were recently widowed and you moved in here, it gives you that immediate access to community that you don't always have otherwise. We look out for each other."

Marymead CatholicCare CEO Anne Kirwan said it was one thing to build a retirement village, "but to see what the residents bring in supporting



Azure Village residents

each other and also giving back to Marymead is something truly special."

"We are quite an unusual retirement village in that we are embedded within the Marymead community," Mrs Moore said.

"The evidence shows that when you are volunteering, your wellbeing is improved. And so, I think residents feel they are contributing. Most people try to contribute throughout their lives, and when you are 80 years old you can keep right on contributing here."

The community shed, for example, will refurbish wooden tables and chairs for use in

Marymead programs. The garden club enhances the beauty of the grounds. Women in the village bake cakes for fundraising appeals.

"It has been carefully planned so that people can engage at whatever level they are at," Mrs Moore said.

"It gives them a real positive lift, to still be contributing to society. They are interacting with younger people who work at Marymead, and a broad circle of people, and they are giving back.

"Yes, I'd say it makes a real difference in our lives."



Discerning young women drawn to serve

BY BECKY LANGWORTHY

AS Catholics, the questions of ‘who was I created to be’, and ‘how is God inviting me to dedicate my life’, are some of the most important we ever ask.

These are not questions we answer once, rather they journey with us through life and require a continual response. In each moment we should discern how we are being called, and whether our current path is helping us and those around us to grow in holiness. These questions include, but are not limited to, the state of life vocation (that is marriage, consecrated life, or single life) we are invited to embrace.

While discerning any state of life can be complicated, there are unique challenges for women discerning a call to religious life or other forms of consecration. It begins with a general discernment of state of life vocations, before discerning between hundreds of orders, each with its own charism and way of life. Finding support to just begin a discernment process, before looking to specific orders, is not always straightforward.

And yet, in Australia and around the world, young women are demonstrating that Christ continues to call them



(L-R) Brianna, Becky and Erin actively discerning God's call in their lives

today as His Bride and as Spiritual Mothers to His Church. In the past few months alone, women from this Archdiocese have entered religious communities, and there are many who are seriously discerning a vocation to religious life.

The dedication with which many women are seeking these answers was beautifully illustrated to me on 4 March 2023, when 23 women from Sydney, Canberra, Geelong, and across NSW, gathered in Sydney for a Nun Run. After Lauds and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we travelled across the city to meet five communities of religious women. While externally their lives looked very different - from teaching to running aged

care facilities - we found in every community a radical joy, lives dedicated to prayer, and a selfless desire to serve Christ in His Church.

These experiences made manifest the talk that started the day, which expounded the true complementarity of men and women in the Church, and particularly the unique and essential role that women religious play by nurturing our Parishes and communities as Spiritual Mothers.

Let us all pray for the women of our Archdiocese, that they may actively discern, and be open to, God's call in their lives, and for an increase of women's vocations to religious life!

Adelong students to ‘pray from the



(L-R) Cohen and Rhett participating in Christian Meditation

A SENSE of peace and calm permeates the classrooms of St Joseph's Primary School in Adelong as the day begins.

Each Monday and Wednesday, staff and students welcome the new school day with a brief session of Christian meditation.

Religious Education Coordinator Stacey Braun said the meditation had been a great success, and it was wonderful to see students and staff had strengthened their relationship with God.

“Christian meditation is the ‘prayer of the heart’ where we let go of all thoughts and words,” she explained.

“It is seen as the work of

love and is found in the teachings of Jesus about prayer.”

The sessions were introduced at St Joseph's to nourish staff and students' spiritual growth and formation.

“Christian meditation not only helps us continue to develop our connection to Jesus and prayer but in the process can support mental health including the reduction of stress and anxiety,” Ms Braun said.

“Students have shared that it brings ‘peace’ and ‘calm’ to them.”

World Community for Christian Meditation Australia National Co-ordinator for Meditation with Children and

More ‘silence’ and less ‘noise’

STEPPING out of the “noise” and providing opportunities to step into the “silence” was the key to helping those discerning a path to religious life, according to the Archdiocese's recently appointed vocations team.

Possibly for the first time – at least for some years – the team comprises three members: Fr Emil Milat (Canberra Cenral), Fr Joshua Scott, (St Gregory's, Queanbeyan) and Fr Eden Langlands (Holy Spirit, Amaroo).

Fr Milat told the *Catholic Voice* he'll have overall responsibility for the team, bringing to it his general parish background and a previous stint as a vocations director.

The other members brought complementary qualities,



(L-R) Fr Joshua Scott, Fr Emil Milat and Fr Eden Langlands

he said, with Fr Scott being a great connector to young adults and Fr Langlands fresh out of the seminary.

Discussing the challenges for attracting vocations to the

priesthood, Fr Scott explained there was “a lot of noise” in the world that's trying to grab people's attention, especially through the plethora of social media.



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St Joseph staff and students begin the morning with 3-4 minutes of Christian meditation.

Young People Penelope Sturrock said over 400 schools in the country practice Christian meditation as part of their school prayer life.

"[Children] have a natural capacity to meditate, and they do it easily and simply," she said.

"They have the ability to sit in silent prayer and respond with awe and wonder."

St Joseph's student Alice, Year 4, said she found Christian meditation calming and soothing.

Year 6 student, Lochie, agreed.

"I like to start my day with Christian Meditation because I feel happy after it," he said.

"I like talking to God and saying ma-ra-na-tha," Emily Matthews, Year 1, said.

to hear God's call

"With all the things going on in life, it's hard to stop and hear the call of God," Fr Scott said.

The team is planning initiatives including existing events such as dinners hosted by the Archbishop for discerning single men. Other events in the pipeline include social get-togethers at less formal venues, retreats, vocations weekends, and presentations to school leaders at the Cathedral.

Fr Langlands was delighted when he was asked to help on the vocations team earlier this year.

"I see this ministry of supporting and encouraging men and women in responding to God's call in their life as extremely important.

"I think it is so important for us as an Archdiocese and as a vocations team to promote a

culture of vocations within the Archdiocese," he said.

Fr Scott noted that several of the Archdiocese's recent new priests had grown up through the public school system and not via the Catholic school culture. "Where are all the other people?" he asked.

He believed every man was called to be a father – whether in marriage or the priesthood – "and you can't really be a good priest if you weren't called to be a good father."

"The vocations events allow time to discern what fatherhood you are called to," he said.

The next vocations event will be a Passover meal at 5.30 pm on Holy Thursday, 6 April, at Fr Milat's Dickson presbytery. For further details contact: emil.milat@cg.org.au

Having faith in humour

BY DON SMITH

IT'S safe to say that a sense of humour is alive and well in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Rarely a week goes by that parish bulletins don't contain a cartoon, a joke, or a funny little story.

The work of Canadian Cuyler Black is especially popular and his Inherit the Mirth cartoons often makes appearances around our parishes.

Black, a church pastor, told an online forum in 2011 he believes that "God is a God of Joy...Laughter is part of who God is."

"I'm not making fun of faith, and I don't want people to think I don't take church seriously," he said. "I consider my cartoons to be playfully reverent, or reverently playful."

He has red lines he won't cross. He would never make fun of Jesus, he said, the humour comes at someone else's expense.

Having that sense of humour is a good thing, too, according to American author James Martin.

In his *Between Heaven and Mirth*, the Jesuit priest makes the case for adding a sprinkle of light-heartedness to our practice of the faith at the right time and in the right way.

Humour helps spread the Gospel, Martin says, show's one's faith in God and deepens it, keeps us grounded and humble. A laugh and a smile can help us heal and build better friendships.

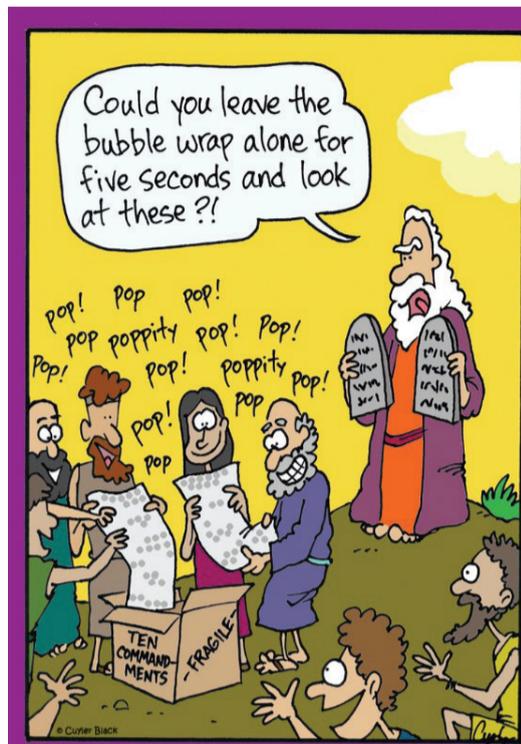
"There may be no better reason for humour than that it's fun...God may be giving us humour as an outright gift," Martin wrote.

Numerous popes and saints are quoted in his book, especially Pope Saint John XXIII and his legendary wit.

There's the time, Martin wrote, that Pope John visited the 'Hospital of the Holy Spirit' in Rome.

Shortly after entering the building he was introduced to the religious sister in charge who was caught out by the pontiff's surprise visit.

"Holy Father!", she said,



flustered. "I-I'm the superior of the Holy Spirit."

Well, good for you, the smiling pope more or less replied. "I'm only the Vicar of Christ!"

We don't have a vicar of Christ in the local area but in 2021 the Catholic Voice told the story of the "Santa Claus and the Joker" - the Archdiocese's Frs Georgh Ogah and Namora Anderson.

The parish priest and assistant priest, respectively, at Tumut were known for the light hearted banter they brought to their ministry in the parish.

As we found out, this

playfulness is a virtue taught in the seminaries. It's called eutrapelia, a Greek word meaning 'wittiness'.

Was Jesus a witty person?

James Martin believed so and says his humour "leaps off the page" in many of his parables.

The importance of wit and humour resonates for the Archdiocese's Vicar General Fr Richard Thompson who told the Catholic Voice his special image of Jesus is Fred Berger's "The Laughing Christ". A copy of the famous sketch hangs in his South Woden parish office.

One of Fr Thompson's favourite quotes comes from a Trinity Sunday sermon that German theologian Meister Eckhart once delivered:

"When the Father laughs at the Son, and the Son laughs back at the Father, that laughter gives pleasure, that pleasure gives joy, that joy gives love, that love is the Holy Spirit."

There's beauty in Eckhart's words and symbolism in Berger's sketch. Both suggest a line can be drawn from humour to the heart of the faith, a line drawn by the Saviour who has the last laugh.

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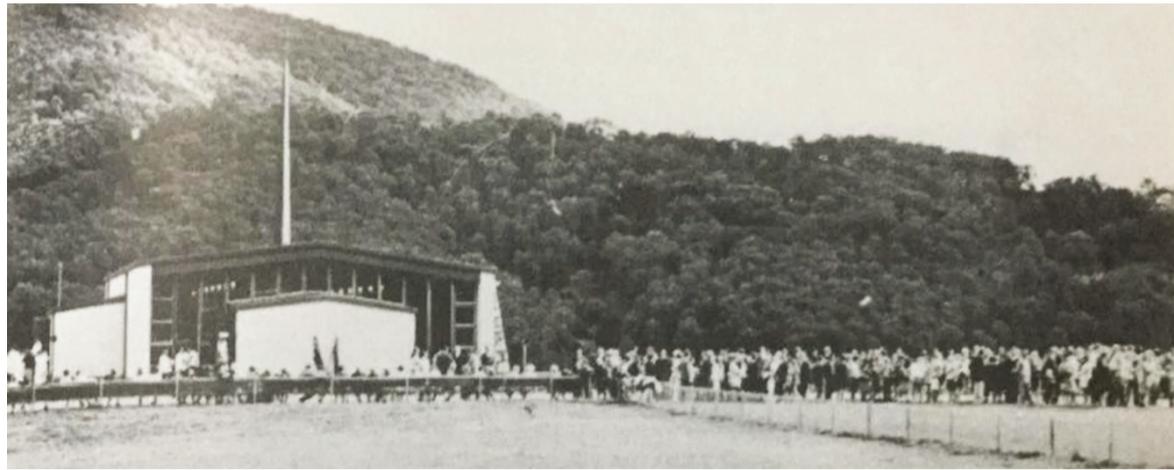
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Talbingo - one of our smallest church communities



Talbingo's St Paul's Church, the first interdenominational church in New South Wales, pictured on the occasion of Princess Anne's visit to Talbingo SOURCE: 'Talbingo' by Jack Bridle

BY VERONIKA COX

TUCKED in amongst the Snowy mountains, Talbingo is home to one of the Archdiocese's smallest church communities.

"We all know each other," parishioner Leanne Dunn said.

"It is a real family community."

The country town, on the edge of the Kosciusko National Park, was home to only five families before growing rapidly in the 1960's to house workers on the first Snowy Mountains

Scheme Development project.

Today, the six to eight regular parishioners are quietly but determinedly working on ways to sustain the church community.

"We have Mass in each month there is a fifth Sunday," Leanne explained.

"It is a long way for the priest to come for such a small congregation, and we are grateful for the effort to come out here."

Leanne said the local Catholic population was aging.

"We don't see many children,

and we aren't really getting new parishioners here in Talbingo," she said.

"Due to the travel distances and conditions, we don't expect to have a Mass every Sunday, but we are always looking for options of what we can do to strengthen the church."

The community is exploring options such as weekly liturgies, or perhaps pre-record a Mass in the region to play on a large screen in the church. Unreliable internet reception makes online alternatives difficult.

"When they were building the Snowy Mountains Scheme the first time around, there were a lot of people – hundred, thousands of workers and family members – and a great range of nationalities and religions. Snowy Scheme developers recognised the need for a church, so they built one everyone could use."

Last year, the community held a traditional Christmas Carol Service organised by representatives from the different churches. This service was led by the Wagga African American Gospel Choir.

"Everyone was invited, and we had a great turn out. Post Covid it was the first big event in our church. The Gospel Choir were amazing and it is something we want to do again," Leanne said.

"So, we do things within our own denominations, but we also look for things we can do together."

The Church of St Paul's building itself is quite unique.

"If you come to this church, and you see the outlook, you

will see why we love this church so much," Leanne said fondly.

"The front of the church is all glass, and it looks out over the mountains. We do get weddings here, and we are always open to things like that. You don't have to wait three years looking or waiting for a church booking here!"

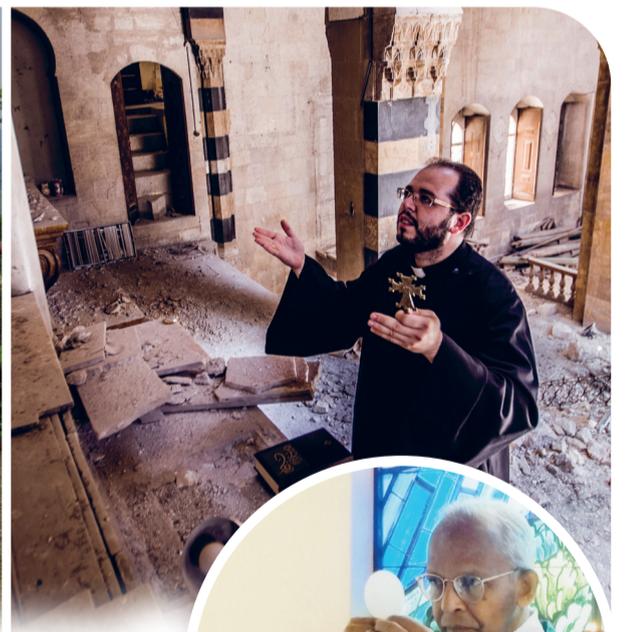
"It is a beautiful church," parishioner Annie Aichroy agreed.

"The ambiance is spiritual. It includes nature into its architecture."

For Mrs Aichroy, who misses a more regular Mass, travelling to Tumut is not always an option. The 40-minute drive can be challenging, particularly on the icy roads of colder months.

"To drive in the early morning when it is cold and dark and miserable it takes a strong leap of faith to get there," she said.

"But there are things we can do. Florence Nightingale has a lovely quote that says no system can endure that does not change. And it is true. We are looking for opportunities."



Mass offerings for priests in need

In many regions of the world the priests are as poor as the people they serve. **For over fifty years Aid to the Church in Need has passed on the Mass offerings of our benefactors to help poor priests survive.** In return these priests **offer a Mass for the intentions of the donor.**

This custom of Mass offerings - dating back to the second century - is a tangible sign of the spiritual and material dependence

we Christians have on one another. There is no more beautiful gift than the gift of the Mass. **Every year, over 40,000 priests – ten percent of the world's priests – are supported by 1.5 million Mass offerings.**

Masses can be offered for the living or the dead, they can be offered for family, friends, or for those who have no one to pray for them. Mass offerings are a spiritual gift that can be given in times of joy or trial.



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Bishop Leo; Canberra to Toronto

BY GEOFF ORCHISON

THE newly appointed head of one of the leading archdioceses in the English-speaking world has a strong connection to Canberra.

Canadian Bishop Frank Leo, 51, who has been named Archbishop of Toronto, which serves nearly two million Catholics, spent three years in Canberra as a diplomat in the Vatican's Apostolic Nunciature or embassy.

He was born in Montreal in 1971 to Italian migrant parents. He was ordained priest in 1996, later served in the Holy See's Diplomatic Service for six years before returning to Canada and joining the formation team of the Major Seminary of Montreal. His next appointment was as General Secretary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. In July last year, Pope Francis appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal. He speaks English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Archbishop Leo, who left Canberra in 2011, is remembered fondly by many individuals and families as his easy-going, humble nature made him many friends.

Canberra mother-of-three Jeanine Doyle said her family met Fr Leo when he began celebrating Mass regularly at the Carmelite monastery at Red Hill.

"He was young and had a really easy way of relating to children," she said. "He was smart, joyful and had real sense of holiness. He didn't know many people, so we asked him to dinner."

The first dinner invitation coincided with a Friday in Lent and Mrs Doyle naturally believed fish should be on the menu. Fr Leo managed to eat only half the fish to the bemusement of the hostess.

Later she found out that he is allergic to fish and had been taken to hospital for treatment after the meal.

Mrs Doyle's young children were particularly impressed by Fr Leo's interest in McDonalds, Batman and Star Trek. "The kids thought that was really cool," she said. He fitted in well at many family barbeques.

Sue Orchison, who worked at the Nunciature during Fr Leo's time of service, remembers he had a long-time wish to ride a horse. "So, he went to a



horse-riding school in Canberra with my daughter Charlotte and her friends on her birthday. "It cured him of his horse-riding dream," she said.

"When my husband and I bought a property at Harden, I told Fr Frank we had a farm. He said, 'do you have a goat? My grandmother said if you don't have a goat, it's not a farm'. Alas, we never had a farm!"

Archdiocesan Chancellor Dr Patrick McArdle, who has maintained a friendship with Fr Leo, was particularly impressed by his "level of care and concern that drives him to serve people and to maintain relationships.

"He speaks with his father every day. They have a set time and Frank will take time out to make sure they talk. It is ordinary and human but also profound."

When Dr McArdle was campus dean at Australian Catholic University, Fr Leo asked if there was an opportunity to teach theology or philosophy.

"From that point he taught one or two units each semester for the three years he was in Canberra. At the same time, we became friends – sharing hopes, dreams and aspirations for the Church in this part of the world

as well as globally," Dr McArdle said.

He describes Fr Leo as a theological polymath: "a gifted systematic theologian with very good philosophy both as a grounding and then later graduate level study; a solid canonist – though I doubt he would claim a love of canon law. Woven through all of this is a very deep spirituality distinctly Marian in style but without undue piety.

"His pastoral zeal is what really reaches out – the theology, philosophy and law are the servants of the mission of Jesus to proclaim the kingdom to all. He genuinely wants to share Jesus with others and to bring all to Jesus.

"He has an incisive mind and is able to recognise the real issues at the heart of problems rather than just the symptoms of matters that arise."

Mrs Orchison also remembers Fr Leo's "great devotion to our Blessed Mother. He arrived at the Nunciature shortly after his mother died; this reinforced Mary, the Mother of God, as his own dear Mother.

"Fr Frank is a pastoral priest. He loves to say Mass, loves people and is passionate about sharing his deep faith and love



Top Left: Fr Leo with Joseph and Sam Doyle Top, (L-R): Fr Leo with Raymond Canning and Alan Cadwallader. Bottom Left: Fr Leo with the Carmelites from Red Hill, Sr Mary Agnes (dec) Sr Beth (dec) and Sr Monica

"I left a big piece of my heart in Australia," Archbishop Leo told Catholic Voice.

"My three years there (at the Apostolic Nunciature) were wonderful years, among the best of my life.

"I got to meet great people, share faith and serve through the diplomatic service, ACU, as chaplain to the Carmelites, in talks to youth, the Italian community and many other people. It brought me great joy."

Archbishop Leo said he was surprised by the appointment to Toronto.

"I didn't believe it at the beginning."

He said he drew on the Blessed Mother's fiat at the Annunciation. "Wise people I spoke to encouraged me to accept."

"At the end of the day it is a service. I don't do miracles. I try to integrate myself into the movement of the Holy Spirit. I'll just bring my five loaves and fish."

Around the age of 12, he said he experienced "a vivid intuition of God's presence".

"It was gradual not Paul on the road to Damascus. But I realised I needed to get serious."

He realised "we all have two vocations; one is a general vocation to holiness, the other is a personal vocation to find how to reach the first vocation. The God who loves me has a plan for my happiness.

"I pray, reveal to me your will. Help me to do your will."

Archbishop Leo said he admired the selfless way mothers and fathers serve their families, often in circumstances that are far from ideal. "They make sacrifices in love for their family. It's not all about me, me, me.

"I'm married, too. I don't see myself as a single person. I am married to the Church. I love my parish. I love my diocese."

of God and His Mother."

Mrs Doyle said she was taken by Fr Leo's charming way of relating to people and his sense of humour. "You could sense he always gives everything to his role," she said.

One of his regular sayings, which her children picked up, was the importance of the 3Fs, faith, family and friends.

Dr McArdle believes Australia was fortunate to benefit

from Archbishop Leo's "presence and care. I like to think we also assisted him in shaping the kind of pastor that he has become and will continue to grow into."

• Archbishop Frank Leo was installed as Archbishop of Toronto during a special Mass and ceremony on the Solemnity of the Annunciation in St Michael's Cathedral Basilica on Saturday, March 25.



St Vincent de Paul Society elects new national leader

MARK Gaetani was officially inducted as the 18th National Council President by Archbishop Christopher Prowse at St Christopher's Cathedral in Canberra last weekend.

"It's an absolute honour to have been chosen by my peers, my fellow servant leaders," said Mr Gaetani. "I look forward to taking on the responsibility of leading the Society nationally."

During the ceremony, Archbishop Prowse thanked Mr Gaetani on behalf of the Bishops of Australia for taking up this "important role", noting that even in a popular city like Canberra homelessness is rife.

"We walk with you with great anticipation and hope, especially we think of those

who you will directly affect – who are on the margins, the peripheries of life, as you do the work of the Lord," Archbishop Prowse said.

Archbishop Prowse with National President Mark Gaetani and his predecessor, Claire Victory

As part of the ceremony, Mr Gaetani was presented with items symbolising the importance of his role.

They included a bible, to be guided by the principles of the Gospels; a loaf of bread and a glass of water, symbolising those most in need; the rule of St Vincent de Paul Society, reflecting the leadership and responsibility of the role and a candle representing the hope that Jesus brings us.

Mr Gaetani thanked his

predecessor, Claire Victory, for her "inspiring leadership" and generosity in supporting him and the councillors. Ms Victory has been a member of the National Council for over 12 years.

Mr Gaetani commenced his involvement with the St Vincent de Paul Society in Tasmania as a member in early 2016, taking on the role of Treasurer of the State Council.

In November 2018, he was elected President of the State Council and then joined the National Council of Australia the following year as the Tasmanian representative on Council. He is also a member of the National Social Justice Committee and National Audit, Risk and Finance Standing Committee.



(Top) Mark Gaetani receives a loaf of bread symbolising service to those in need. (Above L-R) Claire Victory, Archbishop Christopher and Mark Gaetani

Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Financial Results for the Year ended December 2022

The financial results for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn for the calendar year 2022 have been finalised and are currently being audited by our external auditor – Deloitte. Although we will report a loss (\$102,000), this result was better than budgeted.

The various areas reported below show the breadth of services and work the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation has done in the last 12 months.

Bookshop: Served the Archdiocese and beyond with over 50,000 sales.

Communications: 18,000 copies of the Catholic Voice produced 4 times a year. Daily Voice goes to 4,000 subscribers twice a week. Our YouTube channel has 4,200 subscribers – many of whom access Livestreaming Daily Mass. Living word daily reflections reaching 2,000 subscribers. Various Social Media platforms regularly engage with 7,000 followers.

Administration: Served all 56 parishes with regard to payroll, HR, training and other support. Served 26 parishes

by doing all financial work on behalf of the parish. Reporting to the ATO monthly.

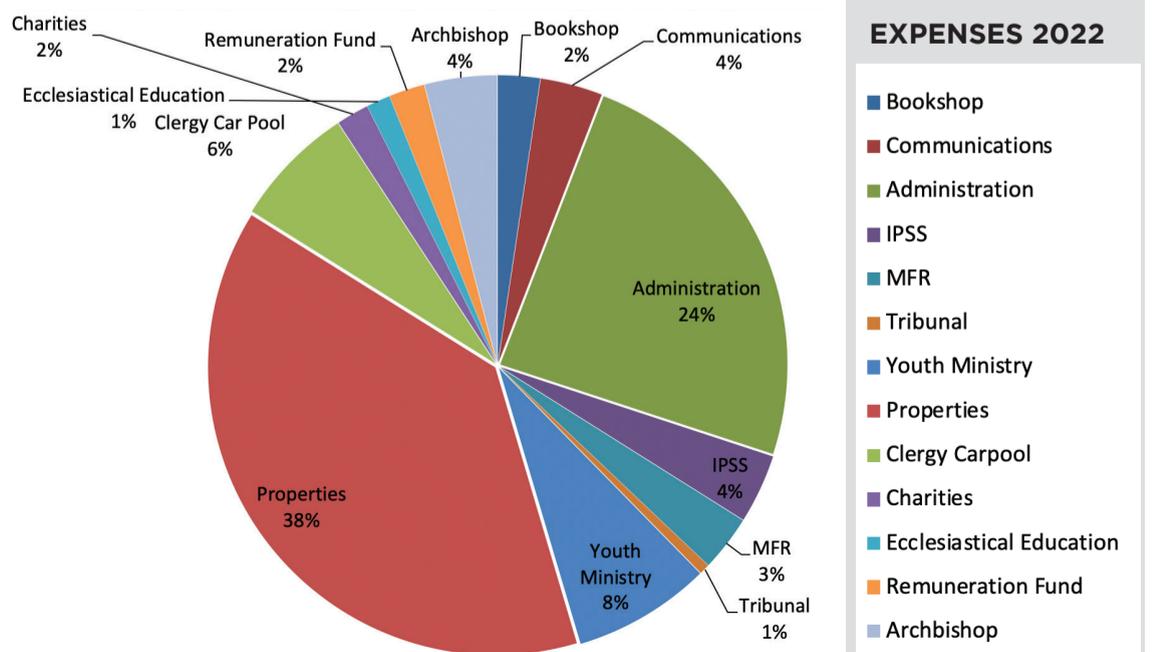
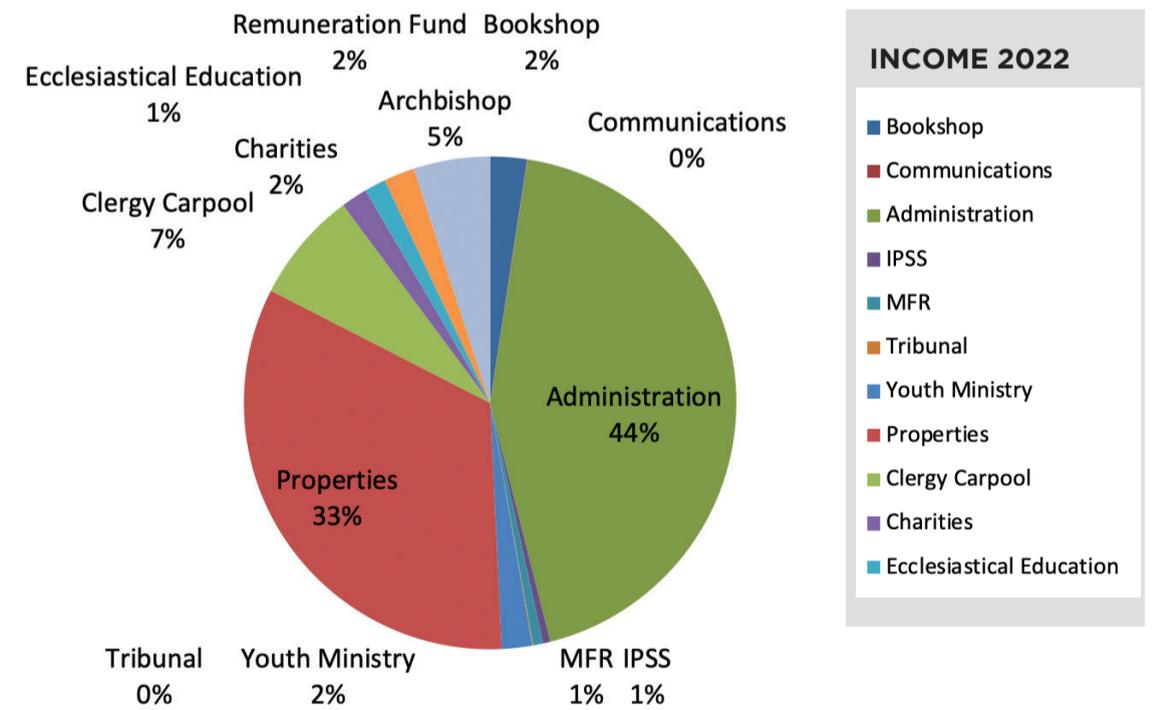
IPSS: Manages both historical civil and redress claims for all Archdiocesan agencies. In addition, IPSS is leading the Chancery through the QIP safeguarding accreditation process, and continues to both oversight and assist (including training) Parishes on their civil compliance and safeguarding obligation

MFR: 90 sessions in catholic primary and high schools reaching 3,085 students with programs designed to present catholic values.

Tribunal: 10 cases were introduced during the year, and 11 cases were finalised.

Youth: Employed 18 Youth Ministers in 10 parish communities, 16 primary schools, 9 secondary schools, and the ANU; University Chaplaincy, Sunday Sessions in Braddon, Lakeside, Provocation, and various other young adult opportunities for young people.

Helen Delahunty
Archdiocesan Financial Administrator
16 March 2023





New Parish-based Youth Ministry team

A COMBINATION of need and circumstances led 22-year-old Lucy Koelmeyer to a deeper faith.

Straight out of school and arriving in unfamiliar Canberra to study Nursing and Paramedics, Lucy knew she needed to connect with a new network of friends.

“I was probably searching for people first, and then people brought me to God,” Lucy said.

Lucy is one of the six youth ministers employed by parishes in the Archdiocese.

The Parish Youth Coordinators (PYC) role involves organising regular gatherings (primary/secondary and young adults), instructing volunteers and connecting with other young people in their parish. They are currently placed at South Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and the Cathedral parishes.

Christopher Gilroy, the new Manager of PYC's believes it is important that young people feel like they belong to a faith community and that there are programs relevant to their age group.

“Beneath the complexities of being a young person today, is the desire to fill the hole in their hearts with meaningful and purposeful things. In essence they are seeking God,” said Mr Gilroy.

“As it was for Lucy, I think



(L-R top row) Chaira, Christopher Gilroy, Matthew, Kayla, Emma, Andre and Lucy

for some, the seeds of faith are already there. Sometimes all that is needed is an accepting environment with like-minded people to give them a sense of freedom and an opportunity to learn more about their faith.”

Mr Gilroy believes that youth and young adult groups have a particular role to play and can add to a parish.

“A parish youth group can edify a parish community and bring joy and life,” he said.

Welcoming young people into parish life can often feel daunting, but Mr Gilroy believes the solution is working together as a community.

“Run an alpha, a youth group, catechesis, or some form of a small group (circle) after Mass. Work as a parish community to accompany our young people prior, during and after these experiences,” Mr Gilroy said.

Lucy described her experience of belonging to a parish

community has being a “turning point”.

“I started the Youth Ministry position with South Tuggeranong last year. I enjoy belonging to the parish, which is a wonderfully supportive community. I've made beautiful friends - we attend Mass together and meet for coffee afterwards. Looking back at where I was a year ago, I feel like a different person.”

“I love that I've found my faith,” she said.

Although Lucy's parents are very supportive, her school and university friends are unsure of her involvement with her faith.

Friends outside the catholic community think I'm different,” she says with a smile, “But I've learned just to be authentic rather than hide my faith.”

In 2023 the Archdiocesan Youth Ministry model moved from a shared school and parish format to focusing on just parishes. In addition, Catholic Education has employed Youth Ministry Officers to work in schools. According to Mr Gilroy, this new model enables more support for the Parish Youth Coordinators.

“This year, we are focusing on their personal faith formation, particularly in prayer and discernment, catechesis and kerygma, liturgy and sacraments, Catholic life and ministry, and apologetics,” he said.

“In addition, our Parish Youth Ministry Coordinators have access to Ministry Skill Masterclasses developed by the Archdiocese and a network of mentors to support them in their role.



Lucy Koelmeyer
Parish Youth Coordinator
(Corpus Christi Parish)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
I was encouraged to move out of my comfort zone and to put my faith into action.

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Travel to Fatima and Graduate from University

Favourite Saint:
St Therese of Lisieux

What was cool when you were younger, but isn't it anymore?
Side ponytails



Matthew Allen
Parish Youth Coordinator
(Holy Spirit Gungahlin)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
I enjoy helping young people explore their faith and help them grow.

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Travel through Europe and see the Swiss Alps

Favourite Saint?
St John the Beloved

What was cool when you were younger but isn't anymore?
Bottle flipping



Chaira Catanzariti
Parish Youth Coordinator
(St Christopher's Cathedral)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
I have a great passion for drawing people closer to Christ through the life of the Church

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Growing closer to Christ and making a pilgrimage to all the Italian Saints

Favourite Saint:
St Clare of Assisi

What was cool when you were younger but isn't anymore?
Everything is still cool!



Andre Le
Parish Youth Coordinator
(St Christopher's Cathedral)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
After experiencing a supportive faith community myself, I want to help create that for others.

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Find the biggest roller coaster in Australia and ride it and go on a jet ski

Favourite Saint:
St Andre Bessette

What was cool when you were younger, but isn't it anymore?
Beyblade (spinning tops)



Kayla Walker
Parish Youth Coordinator
(Corpus Christi Parish)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
Faith has always been an essential part of my life, and now I want to give back

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Travel to Mexico and learn to ride a motorbike

Favourite Saint:
St Geraldine

What was cool when you were younger but isn't anymore?
The use of abbreviations in speech like 'lol.'



Emma Kinmonth
Parish Youth Coordinator
(Corpus Christi Parish)

What inspired you to become a Youth Minister?
Experiencing Youth Ministry through the school system

Top 2 things on your bucket list?
Travel through Asia and travel to Papua New Guinea

Favourite Saint:
St Mary MacKillop

What was cool when you were younger but isn't anymore?
Bottle flipping

ARCHDIOCESAN EASTER TRIDUUM / HOLY WEEK TIMES

ARCHDIOCESAN CELEBRATION Monday, April 3, 5.00pm Mass of the Oils, St Christopher's Cathedral

ADAMINABY:
Easter Sunday 8am

ARDLETHAN:
Stations of the Cross, 10am
Easter Sunday Liturgy, 8am

ARANDA:
Holy Thursday 7pm
Good Friday Service 3pm,
Holy Saturday
Easter Vigil, 7pm
Easter Sunday 10am
Korean 3pm

ARIAH PARK:
Good Friday Service, at 3pm
Holy Saturday, 8th April
2023, at 4.30pm

BATLOW:
Easter Sunday: 10.15am

BATMANS BAY:
Holy Thursday 6pm Mass
Good Friday
Stations of the Cross 10am,
Celebration of the Passion
3pm
Easter Vigil 6pm
Easter Sunday 9am Mass

BARELLAN:
Easter Sunday, 8am

BERMAGUI:
Easter Sunday 7.30am

BINALONG:
Please check
<http://cg.org.au/Boorowa>

BOOROWA:
Holy Thursday 6 pm
Good Friday
Passion 3 pm
Easter Sunday 9am

BOMBALA:
Holy Thursday 6pm
Stations of the Cross 9.30am
(Leader)
Easter Sunday 10am

BRAIDWOOD:
Holy Thursday 7pm (Mass of
the Lord's Supper)
Good Friday: Stations of the
Cross: 10am;
Passion: 3pm.
Easter Vigil: 6pm

CHARNWOOD:
Holy Thursday – 7:30pm
Mass of the Lord's Supper
(no morning Mass)
Good Friday – Passion and
Veneration of the Cross 3pm
(no Morning Mass)
Easter Vigil – 7pm
Easter Sunday – 9am

COOTAMUNDRA:
Holy Thursday Mass:
7.00pm
Stations of The Cross
conducted by Sacred Heart
School 11.00am
Veneration of the Cross
3.00pm
Easter Vigil 7.00pm
Easter Sunday Jugiong
10.00 am

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S
CATHEDRAL**
The Lord's Supper 7:30pm
Good Friday 3pm Lord's
Passion
Easter Vigil 7:30pm
Easter Sunday 9 April - 8am,
11am & 5pm

**ST PETER CHANEL'S
CHURCH**
Holy Thursday 7pm
Good Friday
Stations of the Cross 10am
Easter Sunday 9:30am

COBARGO:
Easter Vigil: 5pm

CROOKWELL:
Holy Thursday 7 pm 3pm
Passion
Easter Vigil 7pm

GOULBURN:
Holy Thursday
7 pm Sts Peter and Pauls
Good Friday- 12 md Stations
of the Cross, Sts Peter and
Pauls, Goulburn
3 pm Passion
Holy Saturday 7 pm Easter
Vigil,

COOMA:
Holy Thursday 6pm
Good Friday:
Stations of the Cross 10am
3pm Passion
Holy Saturday April: 6pm
Easter Sunday 10am

GARRAN:
*Sts Peter and Paul Church
(Latin Mass)*
Maundy Thursday: 7pm
followed by Adoration until
mid-night.
Good Friday: 10am (Stations
of the Cross), followed by
confessions.
3pm: Mass of Presanctified
8pm: Tenebrae Service
(Divine office)
Easter Vigil: 9pm

GRENFELL:
Good Friday
Passion at 3 pm
Easter Sunday at 8am

GUNDAGAI: St Patrick's
Holy Thursday, 7pm
Good Friday, Stations of the
Cross, 10am
Good Friday Service, 3pm
Holy Saturday, 2 6pm

GUNGAHLIN:
Good Friday 9:00am Walk-
ing Stations of the Cross
- Procession starts at the
church carpark. 93 Burdekin
Avenue, Amaroo.
11:00am Stations of the
Cross (St Francis Xavier, Hall)
Liturgy of the Passion

3:00pm
Easter Vigil Mass 7.00pm
Easter Sunday Mass 8:00am,
9.30 and 5.30pm

**HARDEN /
MURRUMBURRAH:**
Holy Thursday: 700pm
Stations of the Cross: 3pm
Easter Vigil 7.00pm

JINDABYNE:
Good Friday Stations
of the Cross: 10am (Leader)
3pm Passion
Holy Saturday 6pm

KIPPAX:
Holy Thursday 7:00pm
Good Friday:
Stations of the Cross
10:00am
The Passion of the Lord
3:00pm
Easter Vigil 7:00pm
Easter Sunday 8:30am and
10:00am no evening Mass

LAKE CARGELLIGO:
Good Friday: 3pm Passion of
the Lord
Holy Saturday Easter Vigil:
6pm Mass
Easter Sunday: No Mass

MICHELAGO
5:30pm Easter Saturday
night

MORUYA:
7 April—Good Friday
Stations of the Cross 10am:
Church grounds
The celebration of the Pas-
sion of the Lord 3pm
Holy Saturday
Easter Vigil Moruya 6pm
Easter Sunday
8am (Tuross), 10am (Moruya)

NAROOMA:
Easter Vigil 7pm
Easter Sunday 9.30am

NARRABUNDAH:
Holy Thursday Mass of the
Lord's Supper, 7pm
Good Friday, Stations of the
Cross, 10:30am
Celebration of the Passion of
the Lord, 3pm
Holy Saturday
Easter Vigil, 7:30pm
Easter Sunday
9am Mass
6pm Mass (Charismatic)

NIMMITABEL
Easter Sunday 10am

NORTH WODEN:
Holy Thursday: 7.30pm Mass
of the Lord's Supper, Adora-
tion until 10.30pm
Good Friday: 10.00am
Stations of the Cross and
3.00pm Commemoration of
the Lord's Passion
Holy Saturday: 7.30pm
Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday: 9.30am Mass
and 5.30pm Mass

PAGE:
Easter Sunday 8.30am
St Matthew's Page

PAMBULA:
Holy Thursday: 7pm, St
Peter's Church, Pambula
Good Friday: 11am Stations
of the Cross, at all Mass
Centres
3pm Passion of the Lord and
Veneration of the Cross, St
Joseph's Church, Merimbula
Easter Vigil: 6pm, Our Lady
Star of the Sea Church, Eden
Easter Sunday: 8am, St
Peter's Church, Pambula
10am, St Joseph's Church,
Merimbula.

QUEANBEYAN:
Easter Saturday night 6 pm
Sunday morning, 8 am and
10 am
Sunday evening, 5 pm

ARCHDIOCESAN VACCINATION POLICY

As the Australian community negotiates the realities of 'living with the COVID-19 pandemic' questions have arisen regarding the continuation and application of the Archdiocesan Vaccination Policy.

Is the Policy still in force?

The Policy remains in force and applies to all members of the Clergy, Archdiocesan staff and volunteers. Some Archdiocesan agencies, acting consistently with the advice of regulatory bodies have relaxed similar policies.

What is the Policy?

The Archdiocesan Policy states that the people who it applies to should be fully vaccinated. At the time the Policy was most recently updated that was 'three doses'. Clearly now, 'fully vaccinated' has different meanings for different groups depending on age, vulnerabilities and other factors.

Why is the Archdiocesan Policy still in force?

The Archdiocese's risk assessment during the early phases of the

pandemic and the possibilities of vaccination were based on the particular factors of the people we serve: a high proportion of older Australians, a very high proportion of people living with illness or with co-morbidities. This assessment has not changed.

What are the practical implications?

The Archdiocese insists that its clergy, employees and volunteers comply with the Policy – though it acknowledges that now this is

largely an honour system.

The Archdiocese urges all its members to be cognisant of their responsibilities to each other and to the wellbeing of those we serve. For this reason, everyone who is able to do so should be 'fully vaccinated' in line with Government advice. If people are feeling unwell or sick in any way, they should seek appropriate medical advice and try to minimise contact in the wider community.

There are also liturgical implications: for the foreseeable future,

communion on the tongue is not encouraged due to the higher risks to the Minister of Communion and the risk of cross-infection. For those who have a strong preference in relation to the reception of communion, they should discuss this with their Parish Priests. Similarly, the Sign of Peace should be offered and received in a manner that promotes well-being. Parish priests are in the best position to know the circumstances of their communities.



ARCHDIOCESAN EASTER TRIDUUM / HOLY WEEK TIMES

ARCHDIOCESAN CELEBRATION Monday, April 3, 5.00pm Mass of the Oils, St Christopher's Cathedral

All services to be held at St Raphael's Church in Lowe Street.

SOUTH TUGGERANONG:

Holy Thursday
7pm Mass of the Lords' Supper & Washing of the Feet, Holy Family Church
Good Friday
11am Stations of the Cross outside at St Clare of Assisi school Conder
3pm The Passion & Death of our Lord, Holy Family Church
7pm Easter Saturday Vigil, Holy Family Church
8am & 10am Easter Sunday, Holy Family Church

SOUTH WODEN:

Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper 7pm
Marist College, Stations of the Cross, 10.30 - 11.30am
Good Friday, Passion of our Lord, 3pm
Easter Vigil, 7pm
Easter Sunday 8.30am & 10am

TARALGA:

3pm Passion Christ the King, 7pm Easter Vigil

TEMORA:

Holy Thursday, 6pm
Good Friday, Stations of the Cross, 10am
Good Friday Service, 3pm
Holy Saturday, 6.30pm
Easter Sunday, 8am

TALBINGO:

Easter Sunday, 8.30am

TUMUT MISSION:

Holy Thursday, 7pm
Good Friday,
Stations of the Cross, 10am
Good Friday Service, 3pm
Holy Saturday, 6pm
Easter Sunday, 10am

UNGARIE:

Palm Sunday: 8am Mass
Easter Sunday: 8am Mass

WANNIASSA:

Holy Thursday 7 pm
Good Friday Way of the Cross at 10.30 am on school oval
Passion at 3 pm
Easter vigil at 7 pm
Easter Sunday at 9am (no evening mass on the Sunday)

WATSON:

Holy Thursday, 6.30pm
Good Friday,
Stations of the Cross, at 10am
Good Friday Service, at 3pm
Holy Saturday, at 7pm
Easter Sunday, 10am

WESTON CREEK:

St Jude's Church
Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper 7.30pm
Stations of the Cross, 11.00am
Good Friday, Passion of our Lord, 3pm
Easter Vigil, 7.30pm

Easter Sunday 5pm
St John Vianney Church
Good Friday, Passion of our Lord, 3pm
Easter Sunday 9am

WEST WYALONG

Holy Thursday: 6pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday: 10am Stations of the Cross; 3pm Passion of the Lord
Holy Saturday Easter Vigil: 6pm Mass
Easter Sunday: 9.30am Mass

YASS-GUNNING:

Good Friday Stations of the Cross 10.30 am
Murrumbateman & Gunning
Commemoration of the Passion 3.00 pm
St Augustine's Church, Yass
Easter Vigil Mass 7.00 pm
St Augustine's Church, Yass
Easter Sunday Mass
8.30 am St Francis Xavier Church, Gunning 10.15 am
St Augustine's Church, Yass

YOUNG:

Holy Thursday 6 pm
Good Friday Way of the Cross at 10.00 am (*Arboretum Park commencing at the Yass Street bridge*)
Passion at 3 pm
Easter Vigil at 6 pm
Easter Sunday at 10am

Multicultural Mass
St Christopher's Cathedral
Sunday April 16 at 11am

SUNDAY
APRIL
16

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