

Horizons

FREE Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba



Diamond
Jubilee of
Fr Lino
Valente



New Director
of Centacare
Toowoomba
Welcomed



Message of
Pope Francis
for the World
Day of Migrants
and Refugees

HORIZONS is a quarterly magazine produced by the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. Grateful acknowledgement to the Catholic Education Office for their contribution to production costs, as well as to our advertisers for their support. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily held by the editor.

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Front Cover: TRAMS' floral display at St Patrick's Cathedral for Carnival of Flowers. Full story page 12.

Graphic Design:

Thorley Creative 1300 883 454
www.thorleycreative.com.au

DEADLINES

Editions will be seasonal.
Deadline for the Summer Edition 2015
is **27 February, 2015.**

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FROM THE EDITOR

By Michael Hart

As I reflect on the many and varied contributions in this edition of Horizons it is impossible not to be struck by the scale and scope of activity that parish and school communities are involved in. If you include the work undertaken in the name of the Church by Diocesan agencies and organisations, you start to see a picture of how significant a role the Church plays in the life of our local communities. The Church does reach an incredible number of people in innumerable ways in its mission to share the Gospel and work for justice.

At this time of year there can be a frenetic energy to get things done before the year is over. Teachers and students are busily bringing the academic year to a close with all its associated stress and anxiety. Those of us in the workforce are deciding what tasks need to be completed before everything starts to wind down for the Christmas period. Shop owners and business are preparing for the onslaught of Christmas shoppers eager to get their shopping done before it's too late.

A theme that emerged for me as I read through this edition was the concept of 'preparation'. Let's hope that in the chaos and busyness of the year's end we don't forget that this is also a time of preparation and joy filled anticipation. As we get ourselves ready to celebrate the birth of Christ we should remember that, as Christians, we are awaiting the arrival of God's beloved Son, the Saviour of the World! Nothing can be more joyful!

May this be a truly blessed and holy time for all of you and your families! 

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with news from
across the Diocese

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ADVENT – CHRISTMAS 2014



From Bishop Robert McGuckin

As the year draws to a close we both will backwards and forwards. Globally it has been a very mixed year. From where we are we not say how fortunate we are when we consider many problems around the world for example: Africa and the Ebola crisis; the Ukraine, Syria and the Middle East with wars and conflicts.

Even locally we shouldn't become so self-absorbed that we overlook the plight of many in our area who continue to struggle because of drought and other difficulties. Our preoccupation at this time might be what we have to do in preparation for Christmas: who do we have to buy presents for? What do we expect to receive in the way of presents? What will we eat at Christmas and where will we go during the holidays?

May we be outward thinking and be considering practical ways in which we could be assisting others. In Lent with Project Compassion, we are encouraged to forgo something we might have planned for ourselves and make an offering to a worthwhile charity like Caritas, the St Vincent de Paul Society or other charity who could direct our offering either locally or overseas. Perhaps your local parish may have some specific projects to which you could contribute.

Towards the end of 2013 the Holy Father, Pope Francis called and Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on

the topic Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelisation. This synod was held in October 2014. Prior to the Synod the Pope sent a questionnaire around the world seeking views from pastors and lay people. There was a process of listening to varying pastoral challenges so that these challenges could be named and faced.

Pope Francis in the closing Mass of the Extraordinary Synod on the Family and Beatification of the Servant of God Pope Paul VI said:

In these days, during the extraordinary Synod of Bishops, we have seen how true this is. "Synod" means "journeying together". And indeed pastors and lay people from every part of the world have come to Rome, bringing the voice of their particular Churches in order to help today's families walk the path the Gospel with their gaze fixed on Jesus. It has been a great experience, in which we have lived synodality and collegiality, and felt the power of the Holy Spirit who constantly guides and renews the Church. For the Church is called to waste no time in seeking to bind up open wounds and to rekindle hope in so many people who have lost hope.

For the gift of this Synod and for the constructive spirit which everyone has shown, in union with the Apostle Paul "we give thanks to God always


for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers" (1 Th 1:2). May the Holy Spirit, who during these busy days has enabled us to work generously, in true freedom and humble creativity, continue to guide the journey which, in the Churches throughout the world, is bringing us to the Ordinary Synod of Bishops in October 2015. We have sown and we continued to sow, patiently and perseveringly, in the certainty that it is the Lord who gives growth to what we have sown (cf. 1 Cor 3:6).

On this day of the Beatification of Pope Paul VI, I think of the words with which he established the Synod of Bishops: "by carefully surveying the signs of the times, we are making every effort to adapt ways and methods... to the growing needs of our time and the changing conditions of society" (Apostolic Letter Motu Proprio Apostolica Sollicitudo).

May the Holy Spirit guide Pope Francis and the Church as we move towards the Ordinary Synod in October 2015.

This Advent may we hear the call to prepare a way for the Lord and generously respond preparing a way for the Lord in our heart and in our world.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones now and throughout 2015.

Bishop Robert McGuckin
Bishop of Toowoomba 



Bishop Robert with most of the Council of Priests who recently met in Roma.



Commissioning Mass kicks off St Vincent de Paul Festival Meeting.

DIOCESAN AGENCIES NETWORK

Directors and Coordinators of Diocesan agencies and ministries gathered on Friday 14 November for the Diocesan Network Meeting. This meeting was an opportunity to come together to share information and discuss issues of common concern. Bishop McGuckin addressed those present and highlighted the breadth of ministries and areas of work the diocese is involved in. Participants shared something of the achievements and challenges they have faced this year but special emphasis was placed on the exciting plans agencies have for 2015. The spirit of collaboration and mutual respect was evident through the networking that occurred during the meeting but also in the lunch that was held at its conclusion. [H](#)

SCHOENSTATT CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

On the weekend of the 18 and 19 October the Schoenstatt Movement celebrated its centenary of foundation. Locally, supporters gathered at the James Byrne Centre for Mass and commemorations of this significant milestone in this Catholic lay movements history. [H](#)

ROSARY IN THE PARK



The Rosary in the Park event was held at Queens Park on Saturday 11 October. People started gathering before 2:00pm and the event continued until 4:00pm. 150 local people from Catholic parishes joined with others from across Australia to pray for God's blessings on our country and for peace in the world. The event, which included music and the praying of the Rosary, was a great success in the eyes of the organisers who very happy with the feedback they have received. [H](#)

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL GATHERS

On Saturday 15 November Bishop McGuckin called together a group from across the diocese to focus on the formation of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Nominees from deaneries and invited guests gathered with the Bishop to explore the role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and look

at the current reality of parishes within the diocese. People travelled from afar afield as Quilpie, Charleville, Dalby, Tara and Toowoomba to be at this event. There was a hope-filled and positive spirit to the discussions that left attendees keen to gather again to further explore the possibilities for the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the role it might play. [H](#)

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY FESTIVAL MEETING

On Sunday 28 September representatives from across the Toowoomba Diocese gathered for the St Vincent de Paul Society Festival Meeting. The meeting was held at Sacred Heart Parish and included Mass (celebrated by Fr Ray Crowley), guest speakers and report presentations. Regional reports were presented from Toowoomba, Dalby, Warwick and Roma regions in addition to the Diocesan Central President's Report and the Overseas Development Report. The gathering was an opportunity for St Vincent de Paul Society members to come together in a spirit of solidarity and support. This was clearly evident in the celebration of the Mass and the sharing that happened during the meal breaks. [H](#)

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD ECUMENICALLY

Recently Bishop McGuckin asked agency representatives to indicate some items of our year that have been significant for us. For my role as episcopal vicar I noted the following events:

1. TWO FORUM EVENTS:

One, sponsored by the University of Southern Queensland, was held on February 13 and 14, on the subject of "PEACE." My task was to discuss Peace as it was presented in the Documents of Vatican II. On March 29, Toowoomba Churches Together and the Buddhist Pureland Learning College organised a day's discussion on "The Benefits of Interfaith Dialogue" For me, the highlight of the day, a truly spiritual experience, was a talk by an Iraqi born Sufi preacher. He sounded like a "mystic" from the early church!

2. The document 'Living Church In Rural Queensland', prepared locally, is now the basis of a Commission of Queensland Churches Together. Its first country meeting was held in May, in Rockhampton, to coincide

with the ordination of Bishop Michael McCarthy. Attendees came from Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and Brisbane. A further meeting is planned for Cairns in January. 3. Another happy event was the establishment of the new Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue.


Amongst CHALLENGES I

included a move discussed at a meeting on June 21 in Charleville, to revive the Western ecumenical muster; this needs further thought and work. I also note the difficulty, also mentioned there, for all denominations to get the ecumenical/interfaith message across; this includes the difficulty many clergy seem to encounter to preach on the subject, even with obvious scripture passages in front of them. Likewise it seems hard to sell the notion of the need for prayer for ecumenical & interfaith causes.

EXCITING PLANS for the future obviously include the challenge before us for the Lutheran and Catholic churches to work towards a joint commemoration in 2017 of the

500th anniversary of the Reformation.

A closer exciting event will be the ecumenical retreat on 6,7,8 February 2015 led by Bishop John Henderson, Lutheran Church, Australia, who led the first ecumenical retreat 12 years ago with Bishop Michael Putney.

Finally I'd like to share my favourite quote from the Decree on Ecumenism: **"there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart."** 2:7. 



By Fr Brian Sparksman

Fr Brian Sparksman was appointed Episcopalian Vicar for Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue in February 2014 after serving as Chancellor of the diocese for many years. Fr Brian has a passion for ecumenism and interfaith dialogue which grew during his working life, time at the Seminary and then significantly while he was studying at Catholic University in Washington.

Continuing the Family Tradition of Care...



Kevin and Jacaline McGrath (now retired)



Judith McGrath-Colquhoun

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Fr Michael McCarthy
now Bishop of Rockhampton
(on the funeral of his mother)

**AUSTRALIAN
HERITAGE
FUNERALS**

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS **POPE FRANCIS** FOR THE 101st WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

(18 January, 2015)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus is “the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person” (Evangelii Gaudium, 209). His solicitude, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized, invites all of us to care for the frailest and to recognize his suffering countenance, especially in the victims of new forms of poverty and slavery. The Lord says: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-36). The mission of the Church, herself a pilgrim in the world and the Mother of all, is thus to love Jesus Christ, to adore and love him, particularly in the poorest and most abandoned; among these are certainly migrants and refugees, who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind. For this reason, the theme for this year’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: Church without frontiers, Mother to all.

The Church opens her arms to welcome all people, without distinction or limits, in order to proclaim that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8,16). After his death and resurrection, Jesus entrusted to the disciples the mission of being his witnesses and proclaiming the Gospel of joy and mercy. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples left the Upper Room with courage and enthusiasm; the strength of the Holy Spirit overcame their doubts and uncertainties and enabled all to understand the disciples’ preaching in their own language. From the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world, and has been without borders. This mission has continued for two thousand years. But even in the first centuries, the missionary proclamation spoke of the universal

motherhood of the Church, which was then developed in the writings of the Fathers and taken up by the Second Vatican Council. The Council Fathers spoke of Ecclesia Mater to explain the Church’s nature. She begets sons and daughters and “takes them in and embraces them with her love and in her heart” (Lumen Gentium, 14).

The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as



useless, out of place or disposable. When living out this motherhood effectively, the Christian community nourishes, guides and indicates the way, accompanying all with patience, and drawing close to them through prayer and works of mercy.

Today this takes on a particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions.

Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants’ lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.

On the other hand, we sense in our conscience the call to touch human misery, and to put into practice the commandment of love that Jesus left us when he identified himself with the stranger, with the one who suffers, with all the innocent victims of violence and exploitation. Because of the weakness of our nature, however, “we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length” (Evangelii Gaudium, 270).

The courage born of faith, hope and love enables us to reduce the distances that separate us from human misery. Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognized in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches. Pope Paul VI spoke of this when he said that “the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others” (Octogesima Adveniens, 23).

The multicultural character of society today, for that matter, encourages the Church to take on new commitments of solidarity, communion and evangelization. Migration movements, in fact, call us to deepen and strengthen the values needed to guarantee peaceful coexistence between persons and cultures. Achieving mere tolerance that respects diversity and ways of sharing between different backgrounds and cultures is not sufficient. This is precisely where the Church



contributes to overcoming frontiers and encouraging the “moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization ... towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world” (Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014).

Migration movements, however, are on such a scale that only a systematic and active cooperation between States and international organizations can be capable of regulating and managing such movements effectively. For migration affects everyone, not only because of the extent of the phenomenon, but also because of “the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community” (Caritas in Veritate, 62).

At the international level, frequent debates take place regarding the appropriateness, methods and required norms to deal with the phenomenon of migration. There are agencies and organizations on the international, national and local level which work strenuously to serve those seeking a better life through migration. Notwithstanding their generous and laudable efforts, a more decisive and constructive action is required, one

Church without frontiers, Mother to all

which relies on a universal network of cooperation, based on safeguarding the dignity and centrality of every human person. This will lead to greater effectiveness in the fight against the shameful and criminal trafficking of human beings, the violation of fundamental rights, and all forms of violence, oppression and enslavement. Working together, however, requires reciprocity, joint-action, openness and trust, in the knowledge that “no country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration” (Message for the World

Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014).

It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.

Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress.

Dear migrants and refugees! You have a special place in the heart of the Church, and you help her to enlarge her heart and to manifest her motherhood towards the entire human family. Do not lose your faith and hope! Let us think of the Holy Family during the flight in Egypt: Just as the maternal heart of the Blessed Virgin and the kind heart of Saint Joseph kept alive the confidence that God would never abandon them, so in you may the same hope in the Lord never be wanting. I entrust you to their protection and I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 3 September 2014



By Mark Copland

Mark Copland is the Executive Officer of the Diocesan Social Justice Commission. Mark has a PhD in Australian History through Griffith University and has worked as a teacher, historian and as a senior researcher on the Forde Inquiry into Child Abuse in Queensland. He is a former member of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (2004 – 2008) and passionately believes that his faith calls him to form respectful relationships with those at the margins of society and to act in solidarity to challenge existing structures of injustice.

Inspirational! That would be the word to describe "Towards a Better World" the Fourth National Conference on Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees hosted by the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO). Dr Mark Copland attended this conference in Sydney in October on behalf of the Toowoomba Diocese. "There was a very real linking of faith with our encounter with those who come from abroad and knock on our door seeking friendship and support," stated Mark. Highlights included Graeme Mundine's (Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Sydney Archdiocese) Indigenous perspective on a migrant church, Fr Maurizio Petena's passionate and informed discussion around overseas priests, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Tim Soutphommasane on how when one faith is threatened all

TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD: THE FOURTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES ACMRO CONFERENCE

faiths are threatened, Rev Fr Patrick McInerney on Islam and Christianity and Archbishop Paul Gallagher (Papal Nuncio to Australia) on 100 years of Teaching on Refugees and Migrants.

"I felt very proud to be a part of a Church grounded in teaching and action when it comes to advocacy, support and pastoral care for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants," stated Mark. In so many ways our Church is standing with people seeking Australia's protection. As Fr Maurizio has so often said, as Christians we have no other option. You can view all of the presentations online at the ACMRO website and Mark Copland will be offering



L – R: Fr Maurizio Petena, Bishop Gerard Hanna and Dr Mark Copland.

and presenting a summary of the conference in December. For more details contact the Social Justice Office on 07 46130895 or email justice@twb.catholic.org.au

MELBOURNE CUP FUNDRAISER

It was the night before the race that stops a nation that saw over 190 people gather at the Cathedral Centre for a fundraiser benefitting the work of the Social Justice Commission and Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS). Highlights included a phantom call from Fr Jeff Scully, a poem by poet laureate Michael Rooke, a trivia competition with Jim Tiernan and a song by Brett Rangiira which included the names of all of the runners for the cup. A small group



Fr Jeff Scully running the phantom call of the race.

of local asylum seekers helped serve the food and shared some of their delicious cooking with all of those who attended. "Along with TRAMS it is a real privilege to work every

day with some of the bravest people I know," stated Dr Mark Copland, Executive Officer for the Diocesan Social Justice Commission. When you bring together generous people, good food and a great cause, you can't go wrong. We had some people label it the social highlight of their year! Over \$3600 was raised. This money helps support TRAMS volunteers who deliver free weekly English classes. It will also help a number of people who are not allowed to work and forced to live below the poverty line.

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION



In the dark cold morning hours of Christmas day in 1914, a British soldier on guard duty on the German front heard the strains of a familiar song as he crawled along the trenches. To the German version, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht", he responded "Silent Night, Holy Night" and was gradually joined by others until, back and forth across the trenches, choruses of German and English soldiers sang carols to each other. A brave soldier crept under the barbed wire and crawled across the space that separated the two armies to share the sardines he carried with him. It was not long before soldiers from both sides of the trench sat in the open space sharing wine, chocolates and packages from home as they discussed their families or played cards until dawn and then into the day. Before the day was over, however, they had succumbed to commands and threats of court-martial by their officers and returned to their own sides of the trench to kill on command those whom they had earlier acknowledged as brothers and fellow Christians.

What is our response to this and other such events? Are we satisfied to marvel at the power of the Christmas song which enabled these soldiers to bridge the division caused by war and to embrace the enemy as brothers for those few hours? Or are we moved beyond this to grieve that these men allowed their inner song to be silenced and that Christmas lasted only one night, thus trivializing its meaning by mocking the identity of the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace? Are we truly able to join the chorus of angels to sing the glory of God, not just in words and occasional sporadic gestures but in decisions, stances and ongoing relationships of nonviolence and universal communion? Do we have the courage to suffer the consequences of remaining true to our inner song

by refusing to accept unquestioningly the popular values of society?

There is a custom in a certain African tribe that when a woman is pregnant, she goes out into the wilderness with a few friends to pray and meditate until they hear the song of the child. When they have attuned themselves to the unique flavour and vibration of the child, its identity, they sing it aloud and return to the tribe to teach it to everyone else. This song is then sung by the community to the child at important moments throughout his/her life – birth, entrance into education, initiation into adulthood, marriage and death. Recognizing that the correction for antisocial behaviour is not punishment but love and the remembrance of their identity, this African tribe also gathers around individuals to sing their personal song to them if they have committed a crime or deviant social act. It is an important insight for us that to listen attentively to the strains of our own song and to reverence the unique song that is each person will enable us to live in peace with ourselves and our world.

During this time of Advent, let us take time to journey into solitude with Mary so that we may recognize and embrace in our life choices the song of love that creation sang at our birth, one which echoes the song of freedom and joy sung into the universe so long ago and proclaimed by the angels at the birth of Jesus: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men and women on whom his favour rests." (Luke 2:14) It is for us on whom God's favour rests to claim the identity that comes from our brother Jesus by being messengers of God's peace in our war torn and suffering world.

We are called as disciples of Jesus to journey into this advent season with Mary, taking time to ponder the mystery of Christ being born within



By Sr Elaine Morzone MFIC


Sr. Elaine Morzone is a Missionary Franciscan Sister who came to the Toowoomba diocese in September 2012. Her diocesan role as Spirituality and Mission Development Officer embraces three main areas - spirituality enrichment by the provision of parish retreats and spiritual enrichment days; practical faith formation and facilitation of parish pastoral councils and other parish or deanery groups; coordinating a training program for lay leadership in parish ministry

us and into the world which we are invited to celebrate liturgically this Christmas and prophetically each day of our lives. In his journal "A Search for Solitude", Thomas Merton challenges us to acknowledge the ways in which we as individuals and cultural groups have sought to bring to birth in the world an image of ourselves and of our own society. He comments that in so doing we have killed the Innocents and forced Christ to flee into Egypt. It will be in moving out each day from our comfort zone to cross the trenches dividing us from those brothers and sisters we do not yet recognize as such that we will experience the deep joy and peace of this Christmas season.

May Mary guide us in birthing the Holy One in our lives and in birthing Love in others. May Joseph engage us in deeper questioning and listening and give us courage to risk the next step. May our lives become a shining presence leading others to the place in their hearts and in the world where Christ is always being born anew. Happy Christmas to all! ☪

PASTORAL CARE IN HEALTHCARE GRADUATION

By Lyn Cash

Six happy people celebrated their graduation during the first week in November. The ceremony was held at Herries House whereby family and friends of the graduates were able to share the joy. Co-ordinator of the Service, Lyn Cash, spoke to the graduates about the vital and rewarding ministry to the sick. In a very tangible way, she stated, it expresses out deepest love and concern for each other. It too recognizes that ill people deserve special attention and consideration. 



L-R Front row: Joe Ellsum, Rev. Heather Den Houting (Uniting Church Commission Office) L-R Back row: Joe Coorey, Christine Jolley, Paul Howard, Sue Stevens, Mark Betts.

PASTORAL CARE WEEK


By Lyn Cash

Pastoral Care Week was celebrated in Healthcare facilities in Toowoomba during the last week in October. The theme this year was 'Spiritual Wellbeing'. Each year, the Pastoral Care team at the Toowoomba Hospital organizes a Staff In-Service for the Hospital workers.

This year the workshop was well attended by staff. The theme of the In-Service was "Why Suffering is

not a problem to be solved but an experience to be lived". The topic referred to the psycho- spiritual needs of dying patients and was facilitated by well known palliative care physician Michael Barbato, who for a time held the position of Medical Director at the Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst, NSW.


Michael encouraged the participants to come to really know

that what dying patients need most of all is a healing presence, someone who will sit and listen, someone who cares and despite one's own sense of helplessness and vulnerability, are willing to accompany the person on their journey without feeling a need to make things better. People who journey with patients who are dying, can create an environment where healing may take place, he stated. 

PINK RIBBON DAY 'WALK OF HOPE'

By Lyn Cash

Breast cancer awareness month is held each year during the month of October. One of the events during this time is a "Walk of Hope". Many women living with cancer walk with their families to celebrate life. Also, it can be a sad time for some families as they walk to remember their loved one who has died. This year

a meaningful Ecumenical Service was held, facilitated by Toowoomba Hospital Pastoral Carer Nicole Rangiira and her team members. Mayor Paul Antonio was in attendance on the day and invited those who participated in the walk to a beautiful morning tea organized by the Toowoomba Regional Council. 



Toowoomba Mayor Paul Antonio with Nicole Rangiira for Pink Ribbon Day.

CHANGES AT SPRED

In July, after 24 years at the heart of SPRED, Carmel Sheridan retired from the position of SPRED Administration Assistant. Carmel was formally farewelled by the SPRED Community at our Annual Social on Sunday June 22nd. The SPRED Friends honoured her with the presentation of a beautiful orchid, and Brett Rangiira a colleague of Carmel's from the Catholic Education Office entertained us all with a rendition of 'We'll Miss You Carmel' to the tune of Waltzing Matilda. The SPRED Advisory Board then gathered on August 16th to thank and acknowledge Carmel's significant contribution to SPRED at a special celebration at Encores Restaurant.


Over the years Carmel has worked with dedication and humility behind the scenes quietly and capably at first supporting, Sr Monica McNamara CSJ in establishing the SPRED Ministry in the Toowoomba Diocese, and then Sr Colleen Noonan when she took over the reins in 2001. Her knowledge, expertise and patience were also instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition of the ministry to lay leadership with the appointment of Mrs Petrea Hass in 2005, and then myself in 2009. Carmel's dedication and commitment embody the spirit of SPRED, as she approached every aspect of her role with a generous and loving heart. Carmel's husband Nick's quiet and steadfast contribution both on the Board, and behind the scenes, has also been significant. It has been a privilege to reflect on, and acknowledge with deep gratitude all that they have contributed to the life of the SPRED community.

We are indeed fortunate though



The SPRED Advisory Board farewells Carmel at Encores.

that Mrs Mandy Cuskelly has been appointed as the new Administration Assistant. Mandy brings her own unique gifts to this role, and true to the spirit of SPRED, she has received a most warm welcome from the Volunteers, Friends, and families of SPRED since she commenced in July.

In June, another significant change occurred for SPRED when after 16 years under the auspices of the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office, the management and administration of SPRED returned once again to a more direct relationship with diocesan personnel. The Director of Catholic Education, Mr John Borserio and the staff of TCEO while not directly involved in the day to day management of the ministry, have always been enthusiastic and encouraging advocates and supporters of our work and have provided during this time direction and support across a range of issues. 



Loretta Coman

Loretta Coman has been the SPRED Coordinator since 2009. Prior to commencing in this role she was a full-time primary school teacher for 28 years, serving most of that time in the Toowoomba Diocese with a brief stint in Cairns. She is married to Paul and has a son, William. As coordinator Loretta is responsible for the management and running of all aspects of the Diocesan SPRED Centre, and for the recruitment and training of volunteers. She also has a participatory role in the delivery of the program as a group member and Leader Catechist.



EACH ONE, REACH ONE!

WE ARE CALLING FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN OUR SMALL FAITH-SHARING GROUPS IN 2015

In these groups people with and without intellectual disability gather to pray together, laugh together, share life and respond to God's love.

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CATHEDRAL COMES ALIVE WITH FLOWERS

By Fr Peter Dorfield



The Cathedral decorated thanks to the efforts floristry students, parishioners, school children and diocesan staff.

Cathedral



Donna Ariell, floral artist from Flowers to Impress, with her completed maypole floral display.



Leonie Hart, Flowers to Impress student, working hard on her display.


Each year St Patrick's Cathedral mounts a Floral Display as part of the city-wide celebration of the Carnival of Flowers. We enhance the already welcoming interior of the Cathedral with the beauty of flowers and the enthusiasm of creative arrangers. The Floral Display brings alive a sense of wonder, reminding us that creation itself is the first revelation of the presence of God in our midst.

Words of Jesus found in the gospel of John guided our Display: "May my joy be in you and your joy be complete" (John 15:11). Connections were made between joy and music, joy and life, joy and

prayer, joy and beauty – all expressed in different creative ways through the arrangement of flowers.

Joan Falvey, for many years the heart of our Floral Display at St Patrick's, was fond of saying "Flowers are the song and symphony of the earth. Flowers speak every language and address every situation of life. Flowers reflect love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness and gentleness". Sadly, Joan died a month before the Floral Display but her presence and memory were with us just beyond finger's touch and perhaps ruffling the occasional flower's bloom!

In recent years we have been delighted with our partnership with local florist, Debbie Birach-Mayer and her colleagues (Flowers to Impress) and with the students of her Floristry School. Each year, wisdom about flowers and arranging is shared and friendships renewed and deepened.

We could not manage this annual Floral Display if it were not for our regular parish, school and diocesan arrangers who steadfastly support us and the cheerful merry band of voluntary workers from St Patrick's Parish who tackle all the practical preparations... and then admire the flowers! 

WHAT'S BEEN **HAPPENING** IN **CHARLEVILLE**

By Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe



Left to Right - Fr Peter Doohan, Hannah McDermott, Michelle Sheehan, Peta Kingsford, and Louise Pfingst.

On October 24th Jeeva Rajapakshage, our IT man from Catholic Education, along with his wife, Thenuja, became Australian citizens. To mark the occasion Fr Peter presented them with congratulation certificates from the St Mary's Catholic Community. Jeeva not only assists with the IT issues of the school but he is always willing to assist us with our personal and parish issues as well.

October also saw us celebrating our very successful second St Mary's Art Show. More than a dozen artists, many from the local area, exhibited over eighty pieces of art in various mediums. Also included in the display was work done by all the children of St Mary's School from Prep to Year 7. These included paintings, mandalas and art of various descriptions. One of the highlights of the evening was an auction of two patchwork quilts, which had been made by the Year 6 and 7 students. These raised almost \$500 between them. Also auctioned



Left to Right - Two representatives from Recognise, Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe and Louise Pfingst, Principal of St Mary's School, Charleville.

was a painting by one of our parents.

This month Charleville received a visit from Recognise, the people's movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution. A small group of both indigenous and white Australians met to learn more

about this important movement.

Our Constitution does not recognise our First Australians and it still allows the States to ban people from voting based on their race. Recognise identifies that this needs to be changed and sees it as the next step in our journey to reconciliation. <#>

FR JEROME DAVADI: FIRST PARISH PRIEST OF STANTHORPE

By Dorothy O'Reilly

Renewed interest in the life and achievements of Fr Jerome Davadi, the first Parish Priest of Stanthorpe (1874-1900), is gaining momentum in St Joseph's Parish and the Granite Belt. The spirit of this Italian pioneering Priest and one of the pioneers of the fruit industry has never been forgotten.

This renewed interest is the result of a former parishioner who now resides in Upper Mt. Gravatt, Ian Bonaccorso, undertaking extensive research into the life of Fr Davadi. Last year Ian gave an extensive paper to the Brisbane Catholic Historical Society entitled Jerome Davadi – Priest and Orchardist. In May 2014, Ian continued his research when he travelled to Montecarotto, Province of Ancora, Italy to make contact with the descendants of Fr Davadi and the Parish of his birth. He received an enthusiastic welcome from the Parish Priest, the Parish Council and parishioners who are

now keen to establish a relationship with the Parish of Stanthorpe and themselves discover more about the achievements of one of their sons. Ian is being enthusiastically supported in his research by the Parish of Montecarotto and the Bishop of the Diocese who he also met. His research continued in Rome where Fr Davadi studied for the Priesthood.

After returning to Australia on 11th June, and a visit to Stanthorpe to speak to the Parish Council, Ian has now commenced writing a book on the life of Fr Davadi. Further visits to Stanthorpe by Ian are planned to talk to the parishioners and the students of St Joseph's School about our pioneering Parish Priest. It is also hoped to establish a Committee to promote knowledge of Fr Davadi and to establish an ongoing relationship with the Parish of his birth.



Fr Jerome Davadi

If anyone has any information on Fr Davadi, photos or documents from those pioneering years of the Stanthorpe Parish (1874-1900), would you kindly contact the Parish on (07) 46812157 or stjosphsparish@halenet.com.au

FAITH FORMATION FOR HOLY CROSS MILES PARISHIONERS

By Noreen Bourne

On Sunday 2nd September, twelve parishioners of Holy Cross availed themselves of the opportunity to participate in a workshop presented by John Briffa and they were not disappointed. The day focused on Lay Leadership of Liturgy. Not all who attended are or plan to be Lay Leaders of Liturgies in our community but with such a well prepared and delivered presentation everyone gained much from the day.


Such topics as what is ministry and functions of Sunday Celebration of the Word, together with the role, qualities and practical skills and issues surrounding a lay leader gave the ritual of a Liturgy

of the Word greater meaning and an understanding of the importance of this liturgy in our faith community when the Eucharist in not able to be celebrated.

We have celebrated Liturgies of the Word with Communion in our parish, and particularly in our country centres, now for many years. Condamine and Dulacca communities endeavour to meet once a month for Liturgy and have Mass once a month. We all feel that this coming together as a community to worship has been very unifying for our local church and the team involved in preparing these liturgies have gained much from

this experience. We thank John for this refreshing and reaffirming day.

Another stimulating day held in Chinchilla, that some Miles Parishioners were able to attend was a presentation of "Walking the Emmaus Journey Together" facilitated by Sr Elaine Morzone with the assistance of Sr Mary Cleary.

We do appreciate having these experiences brought into our region to provide ongoing formation for our parishes although it is not easy in our modern world to organise times that best utilise the talents and expertise of these valuable people in our Diocese. 

DIAMOND JUBILEE OF **FR LINO VALENTE**

By Dorothy O'Reilly



Fr Lino Valente celebrates his Diamond Jubilee. *Photography by Selina Venier.*

On Sunday 29th June 2014, family members, visitors and parishioners joined Fr Lino at St Joseph's Church, Stanthorpe to celebrate his Diamond Jubilee as a Priest of the Diocese of Toowoomba.

The son of Tony and Tullia Valente of "Bellbrook", Inglewood and brother of Aldo and Rita, Lino was Ordained in St. Mary's Church Warwick on 29th June 1954. It was the first Ordination for the new Bishop of Toowoomba, William Brennan. The Ordination was followed by a dinner in St. Mary's Hall, long remembered in the Diocese because of the many long speeches, one by the newly Ordained who explained at length the whole seven year Seminary course! It might have been a long day, but it was a day of joy as our Diocese was given a wonderful Priest.


Fr Lino celebrated his first Mass in St Patrick's Church, Inglewood on

June 30th, 1954. During his sixty years as a Priest of the Diocese, Lino served as Assistant Priest in St Joseph's Dalby (1955-1960); St Joseph's Stanthorpe (1960-1974); Priest Supply, Crows Nest and Annerley (1974); Parish Priest St Mary's Wallangarra (1974-1978); Administrator, St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba (1978-1981); Parish Priest, St Joseph's Stanthorpe (1981-2003). After his retirement and three years as Priest In Residence in Inglewood Parish, Fr Lino has continued his Priestly Ministry to the parishioners of St Mary's Wallangarra and Sacred Heart Church, Lyra and St Joseph's Parish Stanthorpe.

Following the Jubilee Mass in St Joseph's Church, a Dinner for two hundred and forty was enjoyed in the Bathersby Centre. In proposing the toast to the Jubilarian at the dinner, Fr Brian Connolly recalled Pope Francis, when he was asked recently how

he would like to be remembered by history, saying: "I have not thought about this. But I like it when you recall someone, and say 'He was a good guy, he did what he could, and he was not that bad.' With that I would be content." Pope Francis is a very humble man and so is our Fr. Lino!

Fr. Brian concluded, "Lino, we all think you are a good guy, you did what you could over the last sixty years, which was to be a totally dedicated Priest... But, of course, you are so much more than all that, you are a friend, a happy priest, a brother priest, a beautiful man, a fine human being and above all you are just Lino. You allowed the Lord to use you and work through you as a Priest for sixty years."

Very appropriately, Fr. Lino's Jubilee Card, featured the image of Pope Francis and the request which he constantly repeats, "Pray for me" Pope Francis, "and for me" Fr Lino. 

PARISHIONERS STEP INTO THE BREACH AT ST. THOMAS MORE'S

By Bevan Devine



St Thomas More's Parishioners celebrate with Sr Patsy.

Sr Patsy Grundy completed her ministry as Parish pastoral Leader at St. Thomas More's on Sunday 5 October. The celebrations of the day acknowledged her leadership over the past twelve years and the community's appreciation of it. Symbols reflecting Patsy's role were brought to the table and included a lantern which is the symbol of the congregation of the Presentation Sisters which was founded by Nano Nagle in 1775. She used a lantern to light her way in her work in the dark and dangerous streets of Cork (Ireland).

The Mass was concelebrated by St. Thomas More's Priest Director, Fr Peter Dorfield and by Emeritus Bishop Bill Morris. After Mass, sincere speeches were delivered on behalf of the community. The community presented Patsy with a canvas print of the church's stained glass resurrection window, a hot air balloon ride and a purse. Patsy made a heartfelt response. A happy party in the church annex and courtyard followed.

The Parish Pastoral Council, in conjunction with the Diocese has undertaken a process of recruitment for a replacement Parish Pastoral Leader. In the meantime the Priest Director and Pastoral council have asked two senior parishioners to provide co-ordination on an



Sr Patsy cutting the cake with some eager onlookers.

honourary volunteer basis.

Parish life continues undiminished in the current situation. On 17 October, anticipating by one day the feast of St. Luke, patron saint of Health professionals, Fr Peter Schultz led a special Eucharistic celebration to acknowledge and give thanks for the work of all health care workers and their families. In the area of Faith Education two illustrated discussions were led on Sunday 19 October by the redoubtable Sr Patsy Grundy, returning by

invitation. Family Day has been celebrated and White Ribbon Day to promote the elimination of violence women is planned for 23 November.

In the current circumstances St. Thomas More's Faith Community is particularly mindful of the recent words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*: The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. [H](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN JANDOWAE?

By Margaret Atkinson



The newly restored painted window bathes the back of the church with bright colour.

The sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion were celebrated on Sunday 21st September. Bishop Robert McGuckin and Fr Michael Cooney concelebrated and this was followed by a shared lunch in the church hall.

Repairs and renovations are thanks to a very generous legacy from the estate of Bill Sullivan, a well known local identity, as well as the sale of the Cooranga North Church. Parishioners have been busy organising tradesmen and others to refurbish our church. The Church was built 52 years ago and it has been a timely effort to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the Church in 1964. Some of these repairs and renovations include, seal and paint the roof, repair the spire that had been struck by lightning some time ago, two gum trees over 60 feet tall growing close to the Church were removed, and new carpet and vinyl flooring has been laid. The coloured glass panels at the rear of the church have been repainted by Graham McCullough.

Graham was fortunate enough to track down the original painter from 50 years ago who told him how to mix the exact colours. The painting has been restored to a perfect match from the time the Church was built. Another much needed replacement was a lovely new organ. Utilitarian items such as a photo copier and new vacuum cleaner have also been purchased. On the drawing board is a small hot water system for the vestry and the exterior painting of the church as well as various small maintenance jobs that need to be carried out. Some maintenance has also been carried out in the Presbytery such as new blinds and a new stove.

On October 8th we were pleased to welcome Sister Elaine and Sister Mary who came to Jandowae to present a day of Prayer and Reflection by way of the "Walk to Emmaus" story. This was an inspiring day and well attended by local parishioners and others who travelled from Dalby and Tara. The Anglican Church was also represented. [H](#)



FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

By Rebecca Lynch



Roma parishioners enjoy the parish picnic.

All Saints Day is a very special day for All Saints Parish, Roma. It is one night during the year where we come together as a community to celebrate the lives of saints – known and unknown, in an outdoor Mass followed by the yearly Parish Picnic. This year

students of St John's School helped plan and prepare the Mass with Fr Jamie Collins, and participated in all the ministries within the Eucharistic celebration. It was tremendous to see so many young people being involved. The picnic was a most enjoyable

social event for the parish with food, drinks, raffles and winners adding to a happy atmosphere. Terry and Bronwyn Sheehan were this year's lucky winners of the "Money Tree" raffle. Thank you to our youth and all who helped put together a lovely evening. [H](#)

Roma

A BIRTHDAY MILESTONE



By Anne Moloney

After a recent Sunday Mass, the All Saints Parish community in Roma held a morning tea to mark the special occasion of Victor Wichlacz's 90th birthday. The young and not-so-young all enjoyed a delightful time and some warm fellowship, celebrating this milestone with a much loved member of the parish community. [H](#)

RECONCILIATION

By Anne Moloney

On 10th September, thirty-nine children from the All Saints Parish in the Roma and Injune areas celebrated their First Sacrament of Reconciliation with Fr Jamie Collins. They were joined by many family and friends to take this next step in their faith journey. [H](#)



CHINCHILLA PARISH DELEGATE REFLECTS ON PROCLAIM

By Deonne Crowe

I attended the Australian Catholic Bishops conference on 'The New Evangelisation' in Sydney this September, as a representative of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish. The focus for Proclaim 2014 was 'Living the Joy of the Gospel' and was an opportunity to discuss how we achieved this within our local Parishes. Two of the key speakers, Father Michael White and Tom Corcoran from America, began their address on the first day, urging us to not only acknowledge what was going well in our Parishes but to talk about what was not working. This was to say the least, confronting, but also liberating! Knowing it was okay and actually healthy for the vitality of a Parish to talk about the areas of ministry that needed addressing, revamping and revitalisation is actually the first step on the journey towards making our Parish a more dynamic, welcoming source of faith practice and faith growth, where we live the joy of the Gospel.

Of the many points and possibilities that were discussed, here is a brief overview.

- Are we merely CONSUMERS within our parish or are we CONTRIBUTORS?

- Prioritise THE WEEKEND EXPERIENCE – make gathering in community to share the Eucharist matter, so that people engage, contribute and return.
- MUSIC – is integral to the experience, invest commitment and courage to get talented people into that ministry in your church.
- MESSAGE – the homily feeds the congregation on God's word and must connect us with Him in the here and now.
- MINISTERS – offer support to families and members through various ministries, make getting to and being at church easier and welcoming.
- How are we engaging children and youth? "The Church looks to the young: or rather the Church in a special way sees herself in the young." Blessed John Paul II (Dilecti Ameci)
- Recognise that 'church' is not referring to our building, but

our faith community. The word 'church' in Greek means a movement, which means it's got to move, it's got to grow and with growth comes change.

- Is there clarity amongst the Parish leadership team on how to help people grow in their faith? How to reach those 'invisible' members of our Parish?

To paraphrase Ruth Powell, one of the conference key speakers, when Jesus spoke about being

fishers of men, he wasn't

talking about a single

line at a time. He's

talking about a net.

Our Parish is a

net – a network of

people who can

share their gifts and

faith to evangelise

its members and

wider community.

Our challenge then

is to think about the health

of our Parish into the future, rather

than simply maintaining the status

quo. How can we cast our net and

ensure the health, happiness and

growth of the Catholic Church and

our own faith communities? [H](#)

**'Living
the Joy
of the
Gospel'**

FEEDING SOULS – FEEDING BODIES

By Sr Maureen Andrews

Sacred Heart Parish was delighted that Emeritus Bishop Bill Morris was present to preside at the Confirmation and First Communion of Ashton Dyball, Ella McCarthy, Brodie Burke and Abbey Palmer. Neil Spence, a talented musician and artist played music that created an ambience of gentle contemplation. Bishop Morris was able to make this occasion memorable as he gathered the four candidates around him for the gospel reflection and spoke personally to them about life as a Christian. At the conclusion of the celebration the congregation moved into the courtyard to enjoy supper whilst the children practised their running

skills on the lawn. Such occasions warm our hearts and fill us with hope.

In the satellite church life is a little different. This month in Thargomindah the heat was so unrelenting we moved to the shire hall with its kitchen. Twenty people plus Father Peter, gathered around the large table for the celebration of the Eucharist. Holding hands around the large table as we recited the Our Father was very moving. After the Eucharist the adults sat around the table to eat whilst the children spread out large cloths so they could enjoy a picnic tea. God was smiling on us and all was well. [H](#)



OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH & SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

By Janice Moore

On Sunday October 19 the whole Parish community came together for a Family Mass celebration. Over 400 people attended and most then stayed for a shared morning tea. The Parish Pastoral Council provided snow-cones, helium balloons, face painting and popcorn for the young and young at heart.

The following weekend the Baptism team organised the annual Baptism Mass – inviting over 40 families that had children baptised in the previous 12 months. A special blessing was given to these families and their children during Mass and once again a beautiful morning tea was provided after Mass. It was lovely to see how the children had grown over the year.

On Wednesday the 29th October the Parish Ladies Group celebrated their 40th Anniversary with a reunion morning tea in the Church foyer. Approximately 30 ladies attended this event and reminisced about the good times they have shared over the past 40 years and the sad times as some members have now



Andrew entertains the kids during a workshop.

passed away. What a great feat, to have maintained the group and their friendships over the 40 years.

On Thursday the 30th October Our Lady of Lourdes School experienced a wonderful visit with Gospel singer and writer Andrew Chinn. The children from Years 4-7 enjoyed music workshops with Andrew, he then presented 2 concerts – one to the P-3 classes then another to their parents and friends. It was time of fun, laughter and wonderful entertainment. We

were so lucky that Andrew is willing to share his enormous talent and he shines the light of Jesus for all to see.

In November, the Seniors of the Parish are looking forward to the Senior's Christmas Party – an annual event in the school hall, which includes lunch and some lively entertainment from the school children and a number of parishioners. We are blessed to have a great relationship between our school and parish community. [H](#)

FIRST BAPTISM IN NEW LOCATION DELIGHTS THE CONGREGATION

By Patti McNaught

On Sunday 14th September, Mary of the Southern Cross Catholic Parish at Highfields held its first Baptism in the new location at the MacKillop Centre. A large number of Parishioners who attended Mass on that day experienced a beautiful ceremony. Sisters Dayna and Megan Bailey, daughters of Craig and Karin Bailey were the very first to be Baptised during Mass.

The service was celebrated by Parish Priest Fr Brian Noonan. Fr Brian always seems to make important ceremonies extra special and this was no exception. As the girls were presented one by one to be Baptised,

the congregation watched in silence as Fr Brian continued the ceremony, explaining all details such as the oils and why they were used in Baptism. The girls certainly felt very important, as did their parents to be able to have this wonderful ceremony in front of the Congregation in which the girls would continue on their faith journey in life. Each member of the congregation very proudly renewed their Baptismal Vows as the ceremony continued. A member of the Congregation, representing the wider community, made a sign of the cross on the forehead of both the girls, which was considered by many

to be a beautiful gesture. One of the features was the candle ceremony, where the girls and their parents held the candles together. The parents with their arms around the children during this ceremony, truly gave a feeling of a family as one in Christ.

At the end of the ceremony when the girls received their Certificates, everyone congratulated them with acclamation as their faces beamed with delight. Many Parishioners came forward after Mass to introduce themselves and congratulate them personally. Thank you Fr Brian for a joyful and very moving celebration. We will all remember this for some time. [H](#)

LANCE ANDREI'S CHRISTENING

By Kristine Dela Cruz

On Saturday, the 18th of October 2014, St. Francis De Sales Parish community in Millmerran welcomed Lance Andrei Gongon to the Christian world. Officiating at the baptismal rites was Fr. Roque Maguinsay of the Sacred Heart Parish in Toowoomba. He was assisted by Margaret Barry and Margaret Stevens, our ladies from the baptismal committee. This was followed by a sumptuous meal at the Gongon residence, which Lance's parents, Louie and Gennie, prepared.

Lance Andrei was born on the 23rd of June 2014. He was mentioned in The Chronicle when he became the first baby born at the Millmerran Medical Centre. This may be a sign that this baby boy is not only a blessing to his parents, but also to the Millmerran community. We wish him all the best as he embarks on this journey of faith.

Lance is the 3rd Filipino baby to



Lance with his happy parents Gennie and Louie Gongon, Father Roque and Margaret Barry, Baptismal team member.

be baptised at the St. Francis De Sales Parish. His family is one of the 20 plus Filipino families who are now residing in Millmerran, thanks. Thanks to the job opportunities in this lovely town. Filipino workers in Millmerran initially arrived on a 457

Working Visa and were employed by a company seeking individuals to work for poultry and piggery farms. They are able to apply for Permanent Residency after a few years, then eventually for Australian Citizenship, if they wish to. #

ST COLUMBA'S REUNION

By Donna Burke

On the long weekend in early October, a school reunion was held to celebrate 50 years since the opening of St Columba's High School in Mitchell in 1964. The weekend commenced with a Mass at St Columba's Church at 11am concelebrated by Fr Jamie Collins and Fr Peter Doohan. It was a wonderful thanksgiving Mass with a large crowd present.

Following Mass it was off to St Patrick's School where St Patrick's School held a fete and there was a room set up of old school photos and memorabilia. A large crowd attended and it proved to be a very nostalgic visit for those attending with former classmates catching up and reminiscing of their school days and youth. On Saturday evening over 250 people gathered at the showgrounds pavilion for a night of entertainment and joy for the

Reunion. Many people travelled from far and wide to the Reunion and it was a demonstration of the great affection for the place Mitchell holds in people's hearts.

A huge thank you must go to all those involved in the organization of this event. In particular, Rosalie Sharpe who was the stalwart in making the Reunion happen. To co-ordinate such an event takes a lot of work and congratulations are in order for Rosalie. Also to the Principal of St Patricks, Vanessa Alexander and her team from the school in making the fete such a fantastic success, and also to all the other organizations, people who undertook tasks in anyway a big thank you, you all know who you are.

It was wonderful to have present five Sisters of Mercy to share in the celebrations, Pauline Smoothy, Patricia Sullivan, Esther Dowling,



Elizabeth O'Keefe and Nora Fitzgibbon and we thank them.

Donna Burke, one of the last students to attend St Columba's High School delivered a welcome to open the Mass. #

VOCATIONS UPDATE

By Fr Jamie Collins


Toowoomba Diocese Vocations Directors, Fr. Michael Cooney and Fr. Jamie Collins recently attended a National Vocations Directors Conference in Brisbane. It was an opportunity to meet up with Diocesan Vocations Directors from around Australia and share resources, while looking to the future with renewed optimism in the way Vocations are promoted.

Vocations Directors seek to support and inspire priests to talk about and encourage priestly vocations.

Conference Delegates endorsed the strengthening of a working relationship with Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia (CVMA), and to work towards a deeper understanding of the Diaconate Programs where possible.

The delegates at the conference sought to work towards a National Vocation Directors Handbook – a national understanding with local nuance. Those present at the conference understood the needs seminarians from overseas have

in the discernment process but also stressed the need to continue to encourage a focus on the local scene and local vocations.

The conference was valuable in bringing together Vocations Directors in a spirit of working together and supporting each other in this important ministry. All present supported the idea of a national gathering of Directors on a regular basis and found the conference to be informative, supportive and an opportunity for valuable networking. 

Thinking Priesthood?

Contact: Fr Michael Cooney:

Phone 07 4662 4011
St Joseph's Parish
PO Box 32, Dalby,
Qld 4405

or: Fr Jamie Collins:

Phone 07 4622 1075
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PO Box 119, Roma,
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NEW DIRECTOR OF CENTACARE TOOWOOMBA WELCOMED

Bishop Robert McGuckin, has welcomed the appointment of Mr Geoff Argus as the new Director of Centacare Toowoomba. Bishop McGuckin was enthusiastic about Mr Argus' appointment. "I look forward to Geoff leading this valuable service to the Southern Queensland region. There were a significant number of high-caliber applicants received for this role which attests to the reputation and work of Centacare," he said.

Mr Argus brings excellent knowledge of the social services sector and the energy and expertise to lead Centacare Toowoomba in delivering quality services assisting vulnerable and disadvantaged people across the Darling Downs and South West Queensland. He has an outstanding record of professional, management and academic achievement and relishes the opportunity to continue the solid foundations built by Centacare over the last three decades.

Mr Argus is a Master of Clinical Psychology (USQ) and has worked for Queensland Health, St Andrew's Hospital and USQ. His outstanding abilities saw him granted an Australia Day award in 2013 for Outstanding Commitment to the Delivery of Health Services to Local Communities.

Mr Argus said he is excited about the opportunity to lead an organisation with a proud history across the region.


"I'm looking forward to working closely with communities throughout



the Diocese of Toowoomba as well as other organisations within the social services sector who assist us in providing such a valuable service," he said.

Centacare plays a key role in the mission of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba and provides a range of services including the Family Support Program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Peoples Services, Counselling and Psychology, Refugee and Migrant Support and South West Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Support and Mental Health Support Services.

Bishop McGuckin also thanked Mr Andrew O'Brien for capably leading the organisation over the last three months while the recruitment process was being undertaken. 

TRAMS TOOWOOMBA REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SUPPORT



Volunteers urgently needed!

Volunteers are required in and out of work hours for a range of activities including:

- In-home primary tutoring • Secondary homework tutoring
- Driver training program • Primary homework tutoring (centre based)
- Casual bus drivers • Teaching or assisting in English classes • Childcare



TAKE THE OATH AND SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

By Kate Gaffney

Maranoa Regional Council's Mayor Robert Loughnan is standing up and saying no, and he is encouraging other men to do the same on White Ribbon Day.

White Ribbon is the largest movement of men and boys working to end men's violence against women and girls and to promote gender equity, and healthy relationships.

On Tuesday, November 25, Centacare Toowoomba is inviting men to publicly swear the oath and sign their name to help eliminate violence against women.

"This is a really important issue that we need to be speaking about publicly in order for change," Cr Loughnan said.

"Sadly domestic and family violence is something that affects most communities and the Maranoa is no different.

"I have pledged the oath and will now live each day committed to ending violence against women and I encourage other men to do the same," he said.

Centacare Toowoomba's Safer Families Support Service

works across the South West region supporting families and individuals affected by domestic and family violence.

The program provides counselling and support to men, women and children with a focus on safety and also delivers community education and development to rural communities.

Centacare Toowoomba Director Geoff Argus said White Ribbon Day was a significant event to raise awareness around what domestic and family violence is and how the community can help prevent it.

"Unfortunately it is a topic that many people don't like to speak about, but it is important that, as a community, we don't remain silent on the issue.

"One woman is killed in her home every week in Australia as a result of domestic and family violence.

"Research also tells us that in difficult times, such as drought, incidence rates increase.


"Domestic and family violence is not a family matter to be kept behind closed doors, it is a serious problem that requires a community response



Pledging the oath: White Ribbon Day – Maranoa say NO Ambassador Mayor Robert Loughnan has pledged the oath and is encouraging other men to do the same to eliminate violence against women.

in order for change," Mr Argus said.

White Ribbon Day will be held at the Roma Saleyards from 9am-12pm. There will be a signing station for men to swear the oath, sign their name and commit to being a part of the culture of change towards violence against women.

For more information on the event contact Centacare Toowoomba on 1300 477 433. 



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COMMUNITY ART PROJECT HELPS BUILD RESILIENCE IN TARA

By Kate Gaffney



Generating ideas: Maree Foster, Leonie Allan, Alaina MacDonald, Melissa Riddiford, Lori Suter, Carolyn Harrison, Heather Gibbons and Gail Dicks get some ideas on paper for the upcoming art mural.

A recent workshop to develop an art mural in Tara evoked important conversations about what it's like to live in Tara and the vital strengths of the community.

Centacare Toowoomba has been delivering a community capacity project in the Tara region for the past four months and is finalising the project with a mural developed in collaboration with locals.

Heather Gibbons participated in a workshop to share her thoughts around what should be included in the mural and is looking forward to taking pride in the finished product.

"It's a fantastic idea to have something in the town centre, formed by the community, that not only looks appealing but represents Tara and the people of Tara.

"I'm proud to be involved in the process and for me personally I got so much out of the workshop.

"Just to be able to sit together in a social and supportive environment discussing what is important to us, it doesn't happen often

enough so it was a really enjoyable experience," Heather said.

The group discussed what they liked about living in Tara as well as the challenges of living in a small rural community.

A workshop was also conducted with the Tara Youth Council, a group of females aged 13-15 years.

Western Downs Regional Council Youth Development Officer Sarah Kelly facilitates the Youth Council and also attending to contribute to the workshop.

Key messages formed from each session included the important role volunteers play in the community and determining strategies to cope with feelings of isolation in both youth and adults.

A need for a women's group and activities to engage youth was also discussed.

"A lot of great ideas came out of the workshop and not just for the mural.

"Ideas that could help connect the community further and make sure everyone feels included," Heather said.

The workshops were the first of a few in what is the development stage of the mural.

A site for the artwork and local artists to assist in painting the piece are yet to be determined.

Centacare Toowoomba Community Capacity Practitioner and artist Carolyn Harrison said the plan for a community mural was a way of encouraging community input into a long lasting reminder of everything the Tara community has to be proud of.

"Whether you are an artist or not you can have input into determining features of the Tara community that are important to you and what best represents you as an integral part of the community.

"Art allows for involvement from everyone regardless of age, race, gender and ability.

"This is an activity that promotes positive discussion and gets people working together," Carolyn said.

If you are interested in participating in a mural workshop, contact Carolyn Harrison on 1300 477 433. [\[H\]](#)

ST MARY'S COLLEGE **STUDENTS EXCEL** TO REPRESENT QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIA

By Pamela Fisher



Front Row: Campbell Coghlan, Nicholas Moore, Zane Willshire.
Second Row: Reiley Mason, Samuel Neale, Brady Mason.
Back Row: Nicholas Murphy, Lincoln Walk, Joshua Bidgood.

St Mary's College, Toowoomba continues to be a powerhouse in sporting success for the boys in its care. In 2014, 11 students excelled in their chosen sporting field, going on to represent Queensland and Australia. The boys represented in a variety of sports including: Hockey, Softball, Futsal, Soccer, Swimming, Cricket and Rugby League. Of particular note was Sam Neale who Captained the Queensland Primary Schools Team which won the Australian Schools Championship and he went on to represent Australia. Campbell Coghlan, Nick Moore and Brady Mason will represent Australia and Will O'Gradey and Zane Willshire played for

Queensland against N.S.W before the State of Origin at Suncorp Stadium.

"It was great representing Australia facing the Hakka for the first time and being named as one of the best players in the country" Nick Moore. "The atmosphere was unbelievable. It was nerve wracking but an honour to play for Queensland" Will O'Gradey. "It will be 'pretty cool' playing against France, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium for Australia, in Europe next year. I'm pretty excited and will be training hard" Campbell Coghlan.

St Mary's prides itself on skill development and good sportsmanship of its students, promoting a 'mates become brothers' bond. College



Joshua Marcinkowski and Will O'Gradey.

Principal, Mr Michael Newman said that "These boys have demonstrated both strong individual and team performances at every level of competition and we congratulate them on their hard-work and achievements in their respective sports".

The Australian representatives were Campbell Coghlan in Hockey; Nicholas Moore for Softball; Brady Mason for Futsal and Sam Neale in Cricket. Queensland representatives included: Joshua Bidgood in Hockey; Lincoln Walk and Nicholas Murphy in Softball; Reiley Mason in Soccer; Will O'Gradey and Zane Willshire in Rugby League and Joshua Marcinkowski for Swimming. 



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STUDENTS LOOK AT THE MANY ROLES OF MARY

By Sr Elizabeth O'Keefe



Mary Icons created by the students on display.

As part of their religion lessons the Year 5's at St Mary's, Charleville examined the role of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as a mother as well as her role in the community. In doing this they learnt about the many titles and images that we have of Mary. They also learnt about how to make connections between prayer, living and action in our Christian lives. The culmination of their study was for each of them to create their own icon of Mary. An important part of this process was their reflection on their image of Mary.

The image has revealed that Mary is a caring mother, peaceful and very important. This icon has helped me understand Mary's role as a mother. The image to me means a sign of caring,

love, peace and joy. My chosen image has two halos, a green and blue robe for Mary, dark skin colour and a blue and black robe for Jesus. I like the fact that Jesus is included in the image. William.

To me my icon is a symbol of peace and happiness. What I like about my icon is that Mary has a gold halo. The image tells me that Mary is happy and peaceful. The main features of the image are the veil, heart, halo and smile. My image is looking forward which makes it demanding. I really enjoyed making this and I hope we get to do it again. Thando

This image reveals to me that to be happy, be giving, enjoy life as much as you can and don't doubt yourself. This image that I have chosen means to me that Mary was always happy and

caring. She lived life to the very fullest and she was a really great mother. This image helps me in my understanding of Mary because it tells me, be happy, love yourself no matter what, even if someone tells you differently and live life to the fullest because life is quite short. What I liked about my icon is that Mary is looking at you and that Mary is all dressed up because people wore a lot of interesting clothes. I really enjoyed this whole experience and I hope to do it again soon. Zoe

For the month of October, the month of the Rosary, our Year 5 students very proudly displayed their icons both in the church and in the school office. It is obvious that we have many budding artists among them. 🎨



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MISSION WEEK AT ST JOSEPH'S CHINCHILLA

By Michelle Nitz



L to R: Wendy Ferguson, Katie Walsh, Tanya Stackman, Bianka Rookas, Hannah Ramsey, Rebekah Bowdler and Michelle Nitz.




L to R: Toby Allen, Lawson Llewellyn and Charlie Geldard.

To raise funds for Catholic Mission, the students at St Joseph's School Chinchilla, held a week of fun activities. A Guess the Lollies Competition, Coin Trails and a Crazy Sock Day were popular with the students. Some very creative socks were displayed, while

Year 6/7 G made the longest line of coins measuring 31 m. The Year 4 class led our school in a prayer liturgy to highlight how fortunate we are and how others, not as fortunate as us need all our prayers and support.

The total amount raised over the

week was \$917.90. This amount is fantastic considering our school has only 220 students. Well done to everyone for following in the footsteps of St Mary MacKillop when she said "Never see a need without doing something about it". 

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MARY MACKILLOP GIFT FOR INGLEWOOD

By Paula O'Rourke

Past and present Principals of St Maria Goretti School Inglewood, Sr Marie Dowling rsj and Mrs Paula O'Rourke, welcome a sculpture of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop to the entrance of the school.

This beautiful sculpture of St Mary is a gift from a Vietnamese family in Sydney. The sculpture was carved & moulded in Vietnam, where the white marble is a natural resource.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop sculpture stands as a reminder of her great courage and living God's loving and compassionate care of those in need, together with her desire for each child to be given the opportunity to be educated with the knowledge of Christian faith and values.

This St Mary of the Cross MacKillop sculpture is also a symbol of gratitude for the Sisters of St Joseph, who founded the school in 1951 and for all the Sisters and teachers who have and are still sharing her Spirit in continuing the work she began in 1866. 



Sr Marie Dowling rsj and Mrs Paula O'Rourke with the St Mary of the Cross MacKillop statue.

SCHOOL OFFICERS' DAY


By Melissa Hampson



School Officers (L to R) Kim MacKay, Ann McDonald, Melissa Hampson, Shauna McNeil, Kerry Weber, Debbie Menkins

The School Officers at Sacred Heart Primary, Toowoomba, have often been called 'Angels' by the teaching staff, so on School Officers' Day, October 15, they donned angel wings as they carried out their tasks. Mrs Melissa Hampson, Admin School

Officer, said it was the idea of School APRE, Mrs Maria Booth. She said: "Maria supplied the angel wings for us. The other staff provided a lovely morning tea." Mrs Debbie Menkins, Admin School Officer, commented: "It means so much to be acknowledged

for the job School Officers do. To be compared to an angel is definitely an honour." School Principal, Mr Chris Rosentreter said that everyone wanted to show appreciation for the support the School Officer team gives the school. 

WHILE **THE BISHOP** WAS IN TOWN

By Anne Moloney

Bishop Robert McGuckin was recently the special guest at St John's School Presentation night as he was in town when priests from the region had all gathered in Roma. He presented the All Saints Future in Faith Awards to a student who values their own and others personal Spiritual development. They contributed positively to the Religious Life of the School and wider community, as role models of the values of the Catholic faith. The recipients of the All Saints Future in Faith Awards for this year were highly involved in Christian community service, retreats, liturgies and Masses at school and All Saints Parish and displayed excellent Christian characteristics. They were Hannah Coonan (Y6), Hannah Hughes (Y7) and Donald Cruz (Y12). The Bishop was also on hand to draw a raffle which was a fundraising venture for the Year Twelve students touring France and Belgium in



Donald Cruz, Hannah Hughes and Hannah Coonan each received an All Saints Future in Faith Award

2015 to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the ANZACs. The tour

will have a Religious, Art, History and Home Economics focus. <#>

MINI VINNIES ACTIVE IN ROMA

By Mark Brennan

St John's School Vinnies Youth Conference, in conjunction with the All Saints Liturgy Committee, recently completed an eye catching banner for the month of November Remembrance. It carries the words "We Remember, We Celebrate, We Believe" and was displayed in the sanctuary of All Saints Church and at the recent Parish Picnic. Always on the lookout for projects, Vinnies Youth are involved in social justice activities, fundraising and church cleaning. <#>



Mini Vinnies

ST JOHN'S SCHOOL ENRICHMENT NIGHT

By Bernadette Makim



Zoe Dawes models Nicky Wildermuth's wearable art



Mariah Thom models Gabriel Stanford's wearable art.

On Tuesday 21 October, students from Grade 3 to 12 presented a variety of enthusiastic performances and brilliantly researched displays for the St John's School Enrichment Night in Roma. The packed program included the official launch of our new school song, eisteddfod performances, poetry sharing and a fashion parade featuring wearable art based on the theme 'Hats off to the Fascinator'. School leaders Daniel Lynch, Mariah Thom and Bridget Treasure shared their experiences of the Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association Conference. Parents, teachers and students were entertained by the 'Stage Traffic' dance troupe, as well as participating in exhibits from secondary Mathematics, Physics, Design Technology, Art and German.

The Parents & Friends Multi-Purpose Centre was buzzing with activity; primary and secondary students went above and beyond to present a display on a topic of their choice. From Sonic the Hedgehog and racing cars to unicycles, dance and Scouts, students presented their passions with enthusiasm and flair. 📺



Adrian Marcial and Nancy Allen.

SISTER ACT

By Katharine Bigby



Alice (left) and Lucy (right) catching up at Concannon College.

Lucy and Alice Galea are sisters who moved from Bundaberg to Toowoomba to study at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). Lucy has just finished her honours thesis as part of her Bachelor of Science studies, while Alice is settling in to her first year studying a Bachelor of Education (Secondary).

When asked why they chose to live at Concannon College, Alice said that she 'liked the idea of being on a smaller college'. Lucy added that, 'you get to know everybody really well and you don't get the feeling that you're left behind because someone's forgotten about you, which makes for a nicer college experience.'

The girls enjoy competing in Residential Shield events as part of the inter-college cultural and sporting competition. Lucy explained that 'It's a huge part of college life because it is on once or twice a week and is a fantastic opportunity to meet people from the other colleges.' Alice highlighted that it doesn't really matter about your sporting ability because there's cultural events and you are encouraged to just give your best and have some fun.

In her time with USQ, Lucy has been involved with numerous extra-curricular activities. Lucy is Secretary of the invitation only Golden Key Honours Society and was also the Secretary of the USQ Charity

Committee in 2013. Lucy is also a Meet-Up Leader, assisting first year students with course content and settling into their studies and helped to set-up the Meet-Up program on USQ's Residential Colleges. Now entering the job market, Lucy has found many of the skills she has learnt at college and

college together. 'It's been nice to have her (Lucy) settle me in', Alice explained. Lucy added that 'we catch up every now and then and have good chats.'

Lucy and Alice both agree that pastoral care and support, and the small college atmosphere and people make Concannon



Alice getting ready to strike the ball in Residential Shield T-Ball

through the extra-curricular activities beneficial for job applications.

Alice has taken her first year to settle in to university and college life and in 2015, is looking forward to helping organise the formal and semi-formal, being a member of the USQ Charity Committee and participating in further Residential Shield events.

The sisters share an academic rivalry but agree that it is nice to live on

College a great place to live.

In the future, Alice is looking forward to becoming the best teacher that she can while Lucy is going to take some time to enjoy the workforce before hopefully pursuing a PhD.

For more information about the University of Southern Queensland and Concannon College, visit usq.edu.au/accommodation

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CHARLEE BECOMES A CATHOLIC

By Sarah de Byl

Congratulations to Charlee Carey from Stanthorpe who completed her Sacraments of Initiation at the Saturday Vigil Mass in St Joseph's Church on November 15.

Charlee along with classmates and friends Alaina Savio and Mikaela Sullivan spent every Thursday lunch break for the last three terms going through the YouCat Study Guide with Sarah de Byl as a new form of RCIA for young people.

Charlee was very excited to finally be able to take communion with her graduating class at their Year 12 Graduation Mass at St Joseph's School in Stanthorpe on Thursday November 20.

Young Catholics wishes this former Mover and Shaker all the best in her future and May God continue to watch over her and help make even more hopes and dreams come true. [H](#)



Charlee with her sponsor Alaina.

IGNITING THE FAITH WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

By Sarah de Byl

More than 1100 adults, students, primary school children, ministry leaders, teachers, parents, priests and religious will took part in this year's four-day Ignite Conference which was held in Brisbane from 25-28 September. The event was an incredible experience that gave young people the opportunity to encounter Jesus, be formed in faith, and equipped with skills for ministry. Ignite included some incredible rallies, inspiring speakers and seminars, as well as opportunities for reflection and prayer. By being strengthened in their faith within an environment of young people who are passionate about Christ, the event provided encouragement to participants; that they are not alone in their faith. [H](#)



The small but lively group from the Toowoomba Diocese that attended Ignite 2014.

YOUNG CATHOLICS AT ACYMC

From the 3rd to the 5th of October, Sarah de Byl along with 400 Catholic youth leaders from dioceses, parishes, schools, universities, movements and religious communities across the country went to Adelaide to take part in the third Australian Catholic Youth Ministry Convention (ACYMC), hosted by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Commission for Pastoral Life.

The theme for the convention was taken from the WYD 2014 theme 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:3). Formation, information and inspiration were delivered by Bishops and Australia's best Youth Ministers for the three days.

It also included a National WYD launch of the new official tour operator for Krakow 2016 – Cosmos. It was a Polish themed dinner at the Convention, complete with Polish dancers during the night and a mini- concert by Fr Rob Galea.

The next Australian Catholic

Youth Festival to be hosted in Adelaide in December of 2015 was also launched on the Saturday evening of the convention. The big announcement was accompanied by great food, entertainment and a festive venue.

The ACYMC included plenary sessions across a variety of topics and workshops on how to speak to young people about vocations, safe-guarding young people, training new leaders, studies in youth ministry and more.

The youth leaders who attended were able to gain resources and teachings from a wide variety of youth ministers from around Australia.


Nationally, the 2nd edition of the 'Anointed and Sent – Australian Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry' was launched by the ACBC Office for Youth. It has been five years since the document was initially given by the Bishops of Australia to the Church and some great progressions have occurred in developing the Bishops support for youth ministry around the country.



By Sarah de Byl

Sarah de Byl commenced in the role of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator in February 2013. Sarah is a graduate of USQ Toowoomba and taught in the Lismore diocese at Laurieton and at St Joseph's Millmerran. Sarah is currently completing her Masters of Theology.

The convention concluded with a Eucharistic celebration with Bishop Eugene Hurley of Darwin.

It was fantastic to see people from different dioceses, parishes, movements, communities and organizations, all connecting in one place, to be formed in their faith and to assist each other in the development of ideas for youth ministry throughout the broader Church. It will be exciting to see how the Australia Catholic Youth Ministry framework is developed from this Convention and the many other initiatives that are growing throughout the country. 



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ROOM IN THE INN OF OUR LIVES

By John Meneely

It looks like we will be entertaining family for Christmas this year. Like many other households this will invariably mean a major clean up as we make room to accommodate the guests that will celebrate this festive season. The clutter that is invariably collected throughout the year will need to be sorted through and in some cases discarded as we aim to clear space so that family and friends can feel at home. It is fitting that this time of preparation will occur during Advent.

As a season in the Church's liturgical year, Advent is a time rich in meaning and symbol. In openness and invitation we proclaim, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Unfortunately this season's richness can get lost amidst the busyness and clutter of the end of the school year and preparations for the holiday season.

Sadly this is an opportunity lost, as Advent recognizes the very essence of what it means to be

human – the need to still our minds and our hearts and allow space for Christ to incarnate in our lives.

Advent isn't simply a time period of a few weeks, it is an attitude of the mind and the heart; a spiritual quest for the committed disciple that characterizes one's faith journey. How can we be Christ for others if we don't allow the space for Christ to be embodied within ourselves?

This is a process of subtraction not addition. To be true imitators of Christ, as St Paul calls us to be, doesn't mean doing more, however well-intentioned that 'more' may be. Rather an Advent spirituality requires us to de-clutter the many boxes of 'I' or 'ME' or 'MY WAY' that stops us reflecting the light of Christ.

So may this time of readiness for the season of Christ's birth be an opportunity to reflect on our own readiness to receive Christ anew so that it can be truly said that unto the world is born this day in the city of our lives a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11 paraphrased) <#>

**Advent
spirituality
requires
us to
de-clutter**

A Simpler Way

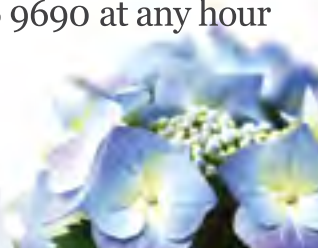
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ADVENT & CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS: MORE THAN JUST A WREATH AND A CRIB

By John Briffa

The General Norms of the Liturgical Year & Calendar state that, 'Advent has a two-fold character: as a season to prepare us for Christmas when we commemorate the birth of Christ and also as a season which directs our minds and hearts to await Christ's second coming at the end of time'. (#GNLYC 39)

In our 'external' Advent preparations we focus on the cyclical changes; the wreath, its candles and the colours in the church. These are images which remind us of the season (if for some reason the shopping centre Christmas decorations have gone unnoticed). Advent is a time of waiting and preparation, a time of joy and hope. My hope is that Advent also reminds us to look for and see the person of Christ in the here and now. In our Advent preparations we can ask ourselves, what can I do to make Christ's presence a reality for those around me?

Advent liturgies remind us that we are all people on 'the way', preparing for something better, anticipating a better way of living, holding on to the promise that there really is something to believe in, even if the many signs in the world around us try to convince us otherwise. The readings from the Second Sunday draw together the two-fold theme


of Advent. While they speak to us of the past and of the future, they also remind us that it is still 'Good News' for our ears. "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord", 'then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it'. (Is 40:3,5) Advent liturgies should challenge us to ask, what can I do to spread the Good News and do my part in building the reign of God?

Advent leads us into Christmas and the focus in our churches often shifts to the crib and its nativity scene. Advent should prompt us to take stock of our lives and to ask ourselves what does Christmas really mean to me. Christmas is not just about the historical baby Jesus born in a manger, with the shepherds, the wise men and angels.

While Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ as the saviour of all people, the readings of the Christmas Day Mass give us an insight to the true significance of the feast. "And the Word was made flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory", (Jn 1:14) Christmas is all about the fact that God loves us so much that he would become part of our lives! Emmanuel; God is with us. God lives with and shares in our joys and suffering. How can we share this great truth with the many 'special occasion' Mass goers who will join us

just once this year on Christmas Eve?

Given that more people see our churches from the outside, maybe part of our Advent and Christmas preparation needs to consider the exterior of the church and grounds. Can we do something to prompt passers-by to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas before they turn up for Christmas Eve Mass?

As we wait with hope and joy for the coming of Christ this Christmas, let us remember that he has no hands or feet but ours. Let us be reminded that we make the presence of Christ real to all those we encounter this Christmas and beyond. 



By John Briffa

John Briffa joined the Diocesan Liturgical Commission in 2014 as Liturgy Officer. He has experience working in parish ministry and as a school chaplain. John holds a Diploma in Christian Ministry & Theology and is currently studying for his Bachelor of Theology.

Christmas Blessing

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ,
may your family feel the love, peace and joy
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Part of the
 Milky Way over
 Jandowae.
 Photo taken by
 Ingrid McTaggart.

Advent is a season of waiting and preparation. How has waiting helped you to grow spiritually?



Kath Quinn:

St Mary's Parish, Goondiwindi
 Waiting brings eager expectation and hope into our lives. This time of waiting allows me to live each day in the present, entrusting all my worries and cares to God, to give thanks for the wonderful blessings in my life, especially my family and friends and for the gifts that God has given to me. Taking enjoyment and finding happiness in the ordinary events helps me to live my gift of life. Engaging in prayer, self reflection and living each day well by being patient, respectful, loving, caring, compassionate and a listening presence to others, allows me to be prepared to welcome with joy and love the birth of Jesus and to Christ's coming of glory.



Margaret Grew:

St Patrick's School, Allora
 As a mother of 3 (not so young now) boys, the season of Advent, the birth of Our Lord and the weeks afterwards, has always been very special to me. Their excitement leading up to Christmas was most often a time of planning and expectation. As the boys grew older, I was able to reflect its importance and what it means to me in deepening my understanding of Jesus and his message of God's love. In my many years of teaching, I love telling "The Christmas Story". It is a beautiful story of love and commitment, struggles and fear. The love of a mother and father for their child reminds us always of the hope and love that can be shared no matter where we are in the world.



Deonne Crowe:

Our Lady Help of Christians, Chinchilla
 'Good things come to those who wait,' not always in the material sense, but often in a spiritual sense. There are many times when I am forced to wait, when I cannot control all factors involved. Times like these provide the opportunity to reflect and anticipate. I have discovered great value in these experiences and am learning that there are times when the waiting needs to be self-imposed. To take my time before reacting to a situation, and think carefully about the impact my words, actions and choices will have on others. I have learned to trust the path that God has planned for me and to find his love in the final outcome even if it is not what I originally wanted or expected!



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I would like to make a financial contribution towards the production costs of Horizons.

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Thank You

IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR 2015

Thursday 1

48th World Day of Peace
"Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters"

World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Wednesday 11

23rd World Day of Prayer for the Sick

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 17 - Thursday 18

Diocesan Inservice
"Recasting our Nets: Renewing Parishes, Making Disciples"

Palm Sunday

Chrism Mass

Sunday 5

Easter Sunday

Movers & Shakers

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Sunday 10

Mothers Day

World Communications Day “Family”

Our Lady Help of Christians Patroness of Australia

Friday 5

World Environment Day

World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests

Development Day for Pastoral Councils - "Put Out Into The Deep"

Sunday 5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday

Saturday 15

The Assumption of Our Lady

Tuesday 1

Diocesan Feast Day - Mary Of The Southern Cross

Fathers Day

Child Protection Sunday

International Day of Peace

Social Justice Sunday

Sunday 18

World Mission Sunday

Thursday 3

International Day for People with Disabilities

Australian Catholic Youth Festival

Horizons

Let us know what is
happening in your area!

- Horizons relies upon your stories to make it relevant and meaningful.
- We want to know what is happening in your local area so that we can share that good news with the rest of the diocese. We are looking for local contributors who can write 250 to 350 words about local church projects, initiatives or events. Include a couple of high-resolution photos and your well on your way to being published in Horizons.
- For more information about contributing to Horizons contact Michael Hart at horizons@twb.catholic.org.au or phone **07 4632 4277**

Help make Horizons be the best magazine it can be!