

# Horizons

**2018:  
YEAR OF  
YOUTH**

**10 Years  
on from the  
Apology**

**Catholic Schools  
Welcomes New Staff**



**Western Christmas  
Mass Run**

**#49  
FEB 18**

FREE Publication  
of the Catholic  
Diocese of  
Toowoomba





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## FROM THE EDITOR INGRID MCTAGGART

***I have been privileged to be a part of strategy/planning process that CatholicCare is currently undertaking (much like the Diocese's own journey towards a Pastoral Plan).*** The last meeting was so productive and inspiring in such a significant way that I think I've got a new mantra – does it pass the pub test?

The group, all very smart very caring people who are passionate about their work, was stuck on what seemed like a very simple task - how to describe their work to the wider community in one concise sentence. The snag was language and perhaps the over use of it! Too many descriptors, too many caveats, too much lingo and high concept ideas. So they took a different approach – say you're at your local pub and you're talking to someone you don't know, how would you describe your work?

"Pub" is just a substitute for, how do you convey what your work is in a way that's plain speaking? Cut through the fancy talk and get to the heart of it. It was like a lightbulb went off and a consensus was achieved so quickly, a barrier had been removed.

Sometimes we get caught up in the lingo of our faith. Sure there is definitely a time and place to get down to the nitty gritty and be precise, no doubt, but sometimes it makes us less eloquent expressing it, even to ourselves. It might be time to run faith through "the pub test" (or "the shopping centre test" or "the social gathering test").

Young people are so good at being concise when they want to! Just look at their phone for a minute and see they can have a full, quick conversation with mates consisting of just emojis and memes.

Maybe this is where we meet young people (or anyone really) in the faith and spirituality conversation, with some plain speaking. Drop the fancy and just start at the beginning.

I wonder how I would do this? The other day I struggled to explain the function of power lines to a 4 year old who has no concept of what electricity is other than it makes the TV/fridge/mummy's iPad work. I might find this hard...

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# LENT 2018: LIVE A LIFE THAT TRULY GIVES WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL

Priests' Annual Retreat, James Byrne Centre



*The year 2018 is well and truly underway.* January flew by and February is racing away. February 14 put us into the Season of Lent and Easter Sunday will be celebrated very early on 1 April. The Supermarkets have been anticipating Easter where Hot Cross Buns have been on display for quite some time.

May we remember that Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and conversion when we perform acts of charity in preparation for the great feast of Easter. Yes a time of Penance but one when we can give practical witness as we turn away from sin and seek to be faithful to the Gospel.

In the liturgy we notice some changes: purple vestments are worn, the Gloria which we joyfully sung at Christmas is omitted at Mass, as is the Alleluia verse. Some of the Gospel readings will deal with the Temptations of Jesus, the Transfiguration, Jesus as God's only Son sent into the world. May we enter into the Sunday celebrations of the liturgy in this special season as the Lord calls us back to Him.

On Ash Wednesday when ashes were placed on our foreheads, the following words were said "Repent and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

Pope Francis in his homily last Ash Wednesday said:

*Lent is the time to start breathing again. It is the time to open our hearts to the breath of the One capable of turning our dust into humanity. It is not the time to rend our garments before the evil all around us, but instead to make room in our life for all the good we are able to do. It is a time to set aside everything that isolates us, encloses us and paralyzes us. Lent is a time of compassion, when, with the Psalmist, we can say: "Restore to us the joy of*

*your salvation, sustain in us a willing spirit", so that by our lives we may declare your praise (cf. Ps 51:12.15), and our dust – by the power of your breath of life – may become a "dust of love".*

As we reflect on what the Lord has done for us and his mercy to us, may we grasp those opportunities to live a life that truly gives witness to the Gospel.

Prayer, fasting, some self-denial and works of charity are ways in which we enter into the spirit of Lent. Pope Francis is setting a wonderful example for us in thinking firstly of the poor and those who are disadvantaged.

In the areas of fasting and self-denial Project Compassion is a wonderful and practical way that will also show that our concern is not directed towards ourselves but gives prior consideration to the other. Caritas Australia wisely handles the projects that will benefit from our contributions. Each week in Lent Caritas will show the worthwhile projects being sponsored here in Australia and overseas. [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion)

Setting aside some special time for quiet prayer is a wonderful way to do this. It may also be possible for each parish church to arrange an hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament each week. Join in one of the Lenten Programs that may be running in your parish.

I pray for those who have been victims of sexual abuse and for those who have come forward and spoken. I would ask you to pray for those in Queensland who still struggle with drought. We also pray for peace in the many troubled parts of the world. Please also pray for vocations to the priesthood and other religious vocations.

May we be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we make this Lenten journey thoughtfully and together so as to joyfully celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord.

**Bishop Robert McGuckin**  
**Bishop of Toowoomba**  
**February 2018**



# STUDENTS CHALLENGED TO SEE JUDGE ACT

CATHERINE MCALEER



*At Sacred Heart Primary School on Thursday 8th February 110 students gathered from twelve primary schools throughout the diocese to attend Caritas' Just Action Day.* The following day St Saviour's College hosted a similar number of students from nine secondary schools for their Just Action Day. Following the See Judge Act model, students spent time learning about the way in which a majority of our world live, with some startling statistics and confronting images of poverty and inequality.

## DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

- 836 million people live in extreme poverty. That means they live on less than \$1.25US per day (that's about \$1.50AUS).
- 795 million people around the world are malnourished.
- 57 million primary school aged children do not go to school.
- 663 million people do not have access to safe drinking water.
- 2.4 billion people around the world do not have access to sanitation.

To give some context, Australia's population as of February 2018 is just under 25 Million.

Students were then able to see ways in which the lives of people around the world have been assisted by Caritas Australia's programs to help in some of these areas. The final part of their day was spent planning initiatives to raise awareness, funds and ways in which they can walk in solidarity with the most vulnerable in our world. Students came up with some wonderful ideas and were bursting to share their ideas and implement them as their respective days drew to a close.



Project Compassion Launch for the Toowoomba Diocese

Keep your eyes on school newsletters and Facebook pages to see what they have been up to and are able to achieve.

School and parish visits continue throughout Lent, where stories will be shared of our six faces of Project Compassion this year. This year in the Year of the Youth, Caritas introduces three new young faces; Janaki from Nepal, Rattanak from Cambodia and Bayan from Jordan. We also revisit three faces from previous years to return to their stories and to see how their lives have been changed; Evangeline from our Indigenous Community in Central Australia, whose story was shared in 2016, Ditosa from Mozambique in 2013 and Psyche Mae from the Philippines in 2008. Please be sure to keep up-to-date with all Project Compassion news on the Caritas website [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) and like us on Facebook.

If you would like me to visit your school or parish please do not hesitate to contact me on [caritas@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:caritas@twb.catholic.org.au) or phone 4638 7977.

# CARITAS VISITOR A TESTAMENT TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF PROJECT COMPASSION

CATHERINE MCALEER



*"When I was nine years old the Faithful Companion of Jesus Sisters began a program, with the help of Caritas Australia, in our community on the garbage dump site," Psyche Mae Asencio explained.* For those who might have only been half listening to Caritas Australia's quietly spoken visitor in Toowoomba recently, they suddenly began to pay more attention. Yes, Psyche Mae did grow up on a garbage dump site and in the early days her family, including herself, gathered plastic bottles and other plastic materials from the rubbish, washed them in the nearby river and sold them to the junk shop. In our beautiful city with access to social services, clean drinking water and a number of nearby schools, it is hard to imagine or fathom such a thing. However for Psyche Mae and her family it was reality. So was walking to school two hours each way and not having clean water to drink.

Thankfully for Psyche Mae and her family these experiences are memories. With the assistance of Caritas Australia and the Faithful Companion of Jesus Sisters, Psyche Mae and her family were given access to basic social services, learnt new skills to earn a living away from the rubbish dump and she was granted a scholarship to attend school and then university. Today this inspirational young woman is a social worker, paying back as she would say, to the community in which she lives and beyond.

This was the story Psyche Mae shared with the staff and students at St Anthony's Primary School, St Saviour's Primary School, St Saviour's College, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, St Ursula's College and St Monica's at Oakey during her brief stay. The students and teachers were fascinated with her life story thus far and had many questions for her about her life. Over the weekend her story brought tears to the eyes of parishioners of St Theresa's, Highfields and Our Lady of Lourdes Parishes. She deeply touched the hearts of many and her words will continue to echo throughout the Lenten season.

In her very quiet and unassuming way Psyche Mae sincerely thanked the Toowoomba Diocese for their continued support of Caritas Australia, particularly during Project Compassion each year. Her story is testament to the ways in which our gifts can touch the lives of many so profoundly. Caritas Australia sincerely thanks you also for your generosity, your donations truly make a difference. Donations can be made through Project Compassion collection boxes, specially marked Project Compassion envelopes placed in your weekly collections, by phoning Caritas Australia on 1800 024 413 or online at [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

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year<sub>of</sub> youth

OPEN NEW HORIZONS FOR SPREADING JOY

# CHRIST OUR JOY

Painted by Amunda Gorey. Copyright: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference



*The official image for the Year of Youth was unveiled at the final Mass at Australian Catholic Youth Festival.* The image is titled Christ our Joy and was painted by artist, Amunda Gorey in Alice Springs.

"The image tells the story of young people in the current landscape of our Australian Church as they journey toward Christ. It is a story of rich diversity and great joy," said Malcolm Hart, Director of the Australian Catholic Bishop Conference's Office for Youth.

Ms Gorey was identified by the Australian Catholic Youth Council for her use of vibrant colour which depicts youthfulness and the joy that is central to the spiritual focus of the Year of Youth. Her previous work has also shown a depth of spirituality that is authentic to our Australian tradition.

Christ our Joy is rich in symbolism, tradition and meaning. It depicts the diversity of young people through the use of varied colour, shaped and sized dots. Some are gathered in communities, others more isolated. Some are closer to God or the cross, others further away. The central figures are Jesus and Mary against a cross. They point to the Resurrection as the source of our Joy. Jesus extends a hand toward his mother Mary, and with her to the Church; with his other hand he points them all to his Father-God.

"Everyone will see, feel and sense the painting differently. Each is valued as our stories and experiences are different," Ms Gorey said.

It is hoped that all communities of faith will find inspiration in this image as they respond to the invitation to a Year of Youth.

A detailed interpretation of Christ our Joy is available from [youth.catholic.org.au](http://youth.catholic.org.au).





Secondary schools come together to celebrate Year of Youth.

# MASS CELEBRATES YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR DIOCESE

*The Toowoomba Diocese has officially launched the Australian Church Year of Youth.* Secondary students from St Mary’s College Toowoomba, St Saviour’s College Toowoomba, Downlands College, St Ursula’s College, St Joseph’s College Toowoomba, Assumption College Warwick, and Mary MacKillop College Highfields, came together with Bishop Robert McGuckin, Frs Ray Crowley, Peter Dorfield, Hal Ranger, Jamie Collins, Gonzalo Garcia, Michael McClure, Hermi Rafada and Franco Filipetto Duran for a special Mass to mark the beginning of 2018, which Australian Bishops have declared as a year to focus on the importance and life-giving presence of young people in the Church.

In his homily, Bishop McGuckin unpacked the theme,

Open new horizons for spreading joy and reminded young people that they are valuable members of the church community and are ‘anointed and sent’ to live their faith.

A key theme of the day was young people’s action for social justice, which resonated with a number of the students who had taken time out from a Caritas Just Leadership workshop held at St Saviour’s College that day to attend the Mass.

The Caritas workshop, led by Caritas’ Kerry Drysdale, supported by Catherine McAleer, covered key topics around justice, leadership and how to be a just leader.

Earlier in that week, primary school students gathered at Sacred Heart in Toowoomba for an equivalent workshop for younger students.



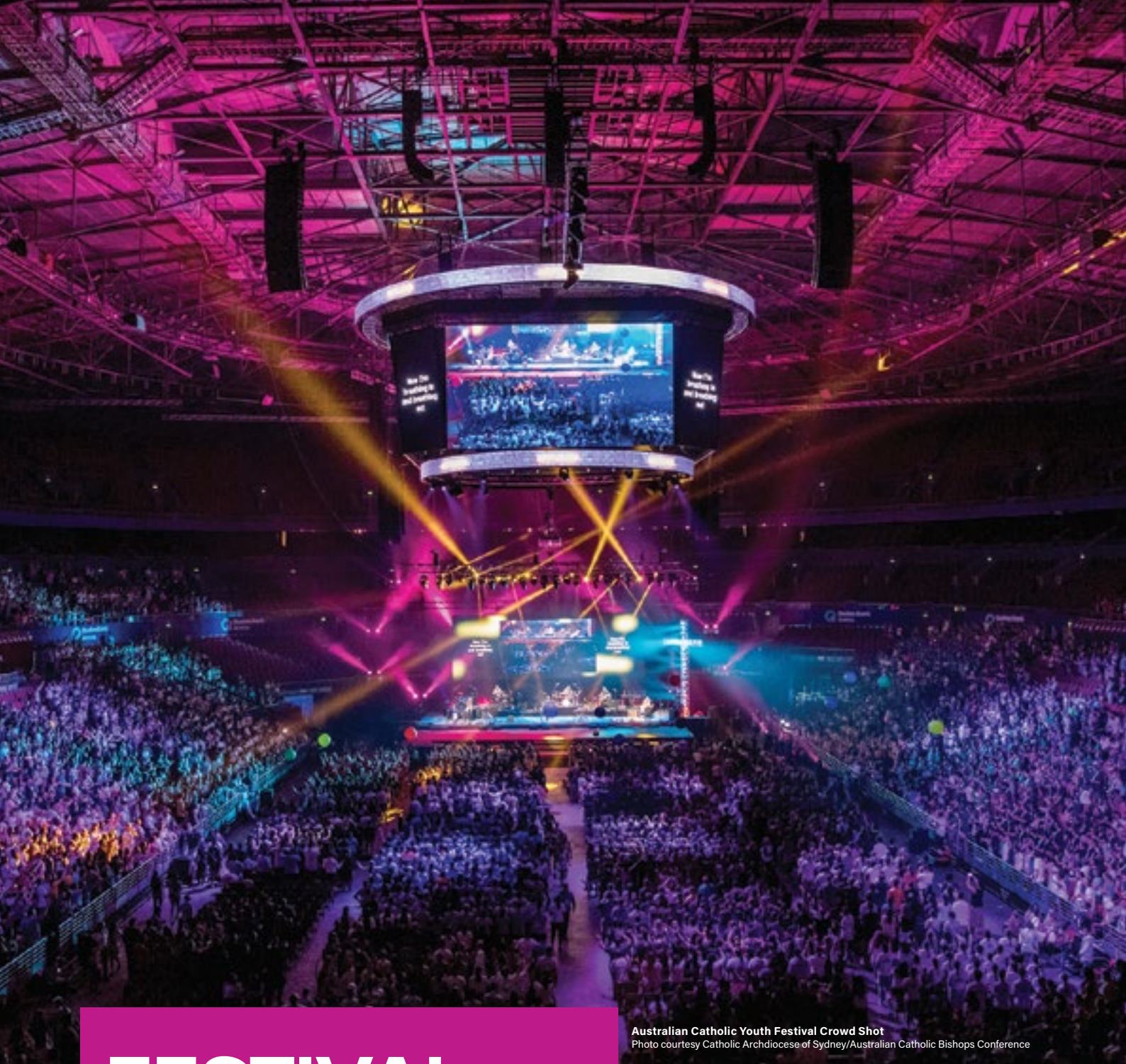
**“DO NOT FORGET THAT WHEN THE LORD CALLS, HE ALSO PROVIDES THE NECESSARY STRENGTH AND GRACE TO ANSWER HIS CALL”**

BLESSED POPE JOHN PAUL II

▲ **Two future bishops meet:** Seminarian Robert McGuckin (who would become the 6th Bishop of Toowoomba) receives Tonsure from Bishop Edward Kelly (who would become the 4th Bishop of Toowoomba), November 1969.

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**Australian Catholic Youth Festival Crowd Shot**  
Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney/Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

# FESTIVAL OPENS NEW HORIZONS FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS

## **DAY 1: “SAY YES” TO GOD**

*Almost 20,000 young people were encouraged to set the world on fire with their faith as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) began at Sydney Olympic Park early December last year.*

The Festival kicked off with a Welcome to Country, followed by Canadian Catholic music star Matt Maher blasting the stage in praise of Jesus and Archbishop Anthony Fisher's opening address. Archbishop Fisher, Archbishop of Sydney and Bishops' Delegate for Youth, challenged the young people present to follow the example of Mary and “Say Yes” to the plans



God has for their lives and he reminded them of Pope Francis' call for young people not to live as couch potatoes.

"Get up off the couch and you'll be able to see further as well as do more," he said. "And that new horizon that is opened up will be a source of joy for you and for others. Say a Marian YES, an in-God-I-trust YES, a with-all-my-heart YES, a for-today-and-always YES to God and see what He can do with you."

ACYF marked Matt Maher's third visit to Australia. Playing at similar youth festivals around the world, Matt commented that he believes such gatherings help young people to meet their struggle for a sense of identity and belonging. "All it takes is a few people exhibiting the joy of Jesus and that joy is infectious and gives that sense of belonging and being part of a narrative that's bigger than ourselves." He said.

Speaking at a press conference afterwards, Archbishop Fisher said he was enlivened by the faith of the young people on display during the Festival opening. "It was just wonderful," he said. "The young people were on fire with faith from the very beginning. Right from the start, you sensed the Holy Spirit among them, their love for the Church, and their hopes." Archbishop Fisher said his hope for the Festival is that the young pilgrims will have an encounter with Jesus and a conversion of heart that will impact their lives.

ACYF Youth Ambassador Melinda Kousoukas, a veteran of previous ACYFs and World Youth Day Madrid, said that festivals such as this gave young people an opportunity to hear from role models in faith and to develop leadership skills. "It's also about the relationships, and feeling connected and the friendships you make," she said.

**"The young people were on fire with faith from the very beginning. Right from the start, you sensed the Holy Spirit among them, their love for the Church, and their hopes... an encounter with Jesus and a conversion of heart that will impact their lives."**



The crowd gets moving to the music at ACYF  
Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney/Australian Catholic Bishops Conference





Fr Rob Galea sets the stage for the opening plenary session  
Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney/Australian Catholic Bishops Conference



Matt Maher  
Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney/Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

## DAY 2: STAY CLOSE TO GOD AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

*Young people can make a difference in the world by dreaming big and staying close to God was the message for day two of ACYF.* The opening plenary session for the second day featured keynote presentations from young speakers sharing their faith and their actions.

Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett, founders of Orange Sky Laundry, told their story of seeing a need and acting on a dream, creating the world's first free mobile laundry service for people experiencing homelessness. Their service, now in its third year, has cleaned some 500,000 kg of free laundry for the homeless.

But Nic and Lucas say much of the life-changing for them happens on six chairs set up beside the laundry van. "The important thing is the hour-long chat on six orange chairs while the people wait," Nic said. "Conversations change our lives."

Los Angeles based speaker and musician Emily Wilson told the crowd they shouldn't be anxious about discovering their vocation, but stay close to God. "Our foundational vocation is to be the love of Jesus, to be his hands and feet," she said.

"From there, working out whether you have a vocation to married life, priesthood, religious life or single life is a process of discernment. One of the first key components of

discernment is openness – being open to God," she said. "The second component is prayer. We must talk to God in order for him to help discover our vocation is, asking him to conform our will to His."

Fr Rob Galea topped the morning session off, bringing everyone to their feet to join in singing praise and reminding them that God is greater than any of their problems, concerns, and anxieties.

Festival-goers then attended a variety of talks and activities scattered around the site followed by the evening plenary session, in which young people's thoughts and conversations from the Bishops' Exchange were shared.

Turning the tables, the young people in attendance issued a challenge to their Bishops. Listed by Catholic youth as their number one concern in the lead up to the festival, young people told the Bishops at a Bishops' Exchange on mental health issues, that more needed to be done by the church to educate people about mental health and ways to give and receive help.

"We should have support groups for not only the youth that are suffering mental illness but also for the parents and carers of those who are suffering mental illness," a young participant said.





“Our foundational vocation is to be the love of Jesus, to be his hands and feet”







Faith and Friendship on show at ACYF

Photo courtesy Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney/Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

## DAY 3: BE SPIRITUAL HEROES

*The three day festival concluded with a jubilant outdoor Mass at The Domain in front of a 15,000-strong congregation, the largest Catholic event in Australia since World Youth Day 2008.*

The Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Anthony Fisher and concelebrated by 30 Bishops, also served to launch the Year of Youth, which was called by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to mark 10 years since World Youth Day 2008.

As the sunset on a warm summer's evening, Archbishop Fisher said, "This is a year for the whole Church to hear, reflect with and draw inspiration from our young people, to renew our service to them, and to draw them ever more closely into the life and outreach of the Church."

The Domain started to fill from 3pm with people following pilgrimages from points across Sydney, including the shrine to St Mary of the Cross Mackillop. While waiting for the Mass to begin, the crowd were treated to a final concert featuring Steve Angrisano, Emily Wilson, Matt Maher and Fr Rob Galea.

Director of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for Youth, Malcolm Hart, said the final Mass, shared

with the people of Sydney, was a beautiful way to end a hugely successful ACYF. "Tens of thousands of young Australians came to ACYF with open hearts and a love for Jesus and the Church and by bringing their enthusiasm, their faith, and their witness they made the Festival the success that it has been," he said.

**"there has never  
been a greater time  
to call on young  
Catholics to be  
spiritual heroes  
of their faith."**

In his homily, Archbishop Fisher, told the young people that they were at the beginning, not the end, of the faith experience inspired by ACYF. He remarked, there had never been a greater time to call on young Catholics to be spiritual heroes of their faith.

At the conclusion of the Mass, it was announced that the next ACYF would be held across the Nullarbor in Perth. Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe welcomed the announcement and said the people of the Archdiocese will be greatly

blessed by the experience of hosting the next ACYF. "The Perth Catholic community will be keen to see all young Catholics make the pilgrimage across our Great Southern Land for the next ACYF in 2019," he said.

The conclusion of the Mass and Festival was marked by a spectacular fireworks display.





# TOOWOOMBA PILGRIMS REACT TO ACYF

INGRID MCTAGGART

*Friends, fun and faith were the top take away experiences for the Toowoomba Diocese pilgrims at ACYF.* A group of 25, plus Bishop Robert McGuckin, made the journey to Sydney, making it the largest group from this diocese to attend an ACYF so far.

With three ACYFs under her belt, Alice Galea wasn't disappointed. "There is so much packed into the three days, it is impossible to see it all, so the best thing to do is to just go back next time!"

Alice took the festival as an opportunity to learn, "As I embark on the beginning of my career as a teacher, it was particularly special to have the opportunity to converse with and gain support and guidance from religious such as Sr Anne Gardiner, Sr Mel Dwyer and Bishop Mark Edwards who have been teachers as part of their vocations."

Warwick parish were a strong presence in the diocese's group with Parish Priest, Fr Franco Filipetto and Parish Pastoral Associate, Patrice Riordan accompanying 6 young parishioners to ACYF. Nathaniel embraced everything that the festival had

to offer commenting, "The ACYF experience was life changing in the way it allowed me to realise that I am not alone in my generation to express the faith. Going in with a closed mind set and allowing God to open my heart and soul, gave me a growth mind set to look at the world differently, open myself up to people and make new life-long friends."

Oliva was enthusiastic too about her experience, "I had a great time. The trip was a lot of fun meeting new people and making new friends. All the speakers I had the pleasure of listening to were very inspiring."

Recently pilgrims came together to relive their experiences and reconnect with the Missionary Sisters of Service and John Wallis Foundation. At the gathering Yentle Rangiira reflected that ACYF was an opportunity to see the love of God through the young people of Australia. "The great joy of all the young people will continue to inspire me on my faith journey," she said.

Many of our pilgrims were keen to go again, naming ACYF 2019 as something they were looking forward to.

## LOCAL TEACHER HAPPY TO SHOW "GOD DOES NOT MAKE JUNK"

*Anna Chandler, St Mary's College teacher, is a member of the Australian Catholic Disability Council and was honoured to be a part of ACYF workshop God Does Not Make Junk.* This workshop was presented by young people living with disability with the theme linked to Fr Rob Galea's song, God Does Not Make Rubbish.

"We shared stories of our experiences in faith communities,

including work and school, and also raised important points around access and inclusion," Said Anna.

The panel were able to interact with festival participants and also taught attendees some very useful Auslan signs - "Hello, how are you?" and "Peace be with you".

Like many in attendance, Anna is very much looking forward to ACYF 2019, "Bring it on!"





Bishop Robert McGuckin and Clare Smith at the JWF Stall



Toowoomba Pilgrims at the JWF Stall

# JWF SUPPORTS OUR YOUNG PILGRIMS

## CLARE SMITH

*Vibrant, joy-filled, energizing, passionate: that is what I experienced in the young people attending ACYF.* I was invited to attend the Festival as Chair of the Toowoomba branch of the John Wallis Foundation (JWF) which continues the mission of the Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS).

JWF was pleased to provide a grant that went towards helping some of the young people from our Diocese attend the festival. In preparation for ACYF, Toowoomba MSS, JWF Toowoomba branch members and Sarah de Byl conducted orientation sessions.

The Missionary Sisters of Service had a space at the festival's Encounter Dome, an exhibition hall where a great variety of religious and lay organisations represented many aspects of the Church's life and mission.

Our space at the Festival included a retro caravan with tables and chairs. These items reflected the work of the Sisters who, 'in their hey day' travelled the highways and byways of areas like our Diocese, and sat around the kitchen table supporting families in remote areas. A number of black and white photos drew attention to the Sisters in bygone days. Maps of Australia showing where the Sisters lived and worked and where the John Wallis Foundation is supporting people through our Small Grants Program, also drew much interest.

## THE HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS MOVEMENT

The main purpose of our exhibition was not so much the past, but to launch a new vision: the possibility of a

movement – the Highways and Byways Movement. This movement would be open to people of any age and all walks of life, with the mission to live the Gospel, like Jesus in his time, walking with people in whatever was happening for them, building communities of meaning and belonging, and doing this wherever they are and in whatever they do.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOPES AND DREAMS

The energy and enthusiasm of our youth was inspiring. On the second and third day of the festival, we invited our young visitors to write their hopes, dreams and aspirations on a plastic tablecloth. By the end, the tablecloth was covered with their responses.

I dream for people to know and understand God's love!

To see God through everything I do!

To be happy and love myself as God does!

Many responded by quoting scripture like Luke 6:27 (Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you) or John 10:10 (I have come that they may have life and have it to the full).

It was our pleasure to meet the young people from our Diocese who attended the festival along with Sarah de Byl and Catherine McAleer who guided them through the experience. The John Wallis Foundation and the Missionary Sisters of Service have enjoyed the opportunity to engaged our young people.

I share a prayer written by one of the many who visited us.

"I'm not perfect. I don't always listen, pray, or go to Church. I'm not always the best kid.....I pray that I'm forgiven. I'm sorry. Thank you God."



# MY FIRST YEAR AT CONCANNON COLLEGE

SOPHIE SHADOW



***Hi, my name is Sophie Shadow and I'm a Residential Advisor (RA) and more importantly, a resident student of Concannon College!***

When I unlocked my college bedroom door in February 2017, I had no idea the amount of opportunities and experiences that would be given to me. From the jammed packed Orientation Week, to the quiet of exam blocks, it's safe to say that my first year at Concannon was incredible.

Being the first born in the family and the first in my family to go to University, the last year has been a learning curve for both my family and myself. The college community is close, like a family, welcoming all students with open arms and creating a home away from home. The support and help provided by the other residents with University studies or with general life ups and downs, made the transition from teenage years to adulthood easier.

With so many unique events offered throughout the year, it was easy to get involved. As I'm studying HPE teaching, I was excited to participate in the yearlong tri-college competition - Residential Shield, which Concannon College was victorious in 2017 and also Interfaith Soccer. All College residents had the opportunity to play in an Interfaith Soccer tournament with student members of the Islamic Interfaith and Multicultural Association of Toowoomba Inc. After the matches we had dinner together where the students shared their homemade traditional foods with the college residents.

Even though there are many other social events held throughout the year, another memorable event is the Bishop's Dinner where past Concannon alumni attend the dinner and talk to the students about the ups and downs of life after University.



The year also provided numerous adventures with newfound friends to get to know the local area. For budget conscious students, the hot tip to get the most out of your experience in Toowoomba is to scope out the free local events, like wondering the back streets of the CBD to view the amazing wall art.

I look forward to welcoming the first year students in February. I encourage their participation in the full calendar of events for 2018 to enable everyone to strive towards trying new experiences, nourishing their passions and to give back to the community. Fortunately I was lucky enough to have received the 'Residential Life Award' at the 2017 end of year Formal. After receiving the award, it encouraged me to give back to this community that supported me so much through my first year of University. This gave me the courage to apply for the RA position for 2018 and with some luck, I was successful - I hope I can provide the same support and advice to students that was given to me.





## RCIA RITE OF ELECTION CELEBRATED

MARY OTTO

Bishop Robert McGuckin leads the congregation in congratulating Rebecca Booth (centre)

*On the First Sunday in Lent at St Patrick's Cathedral, Bishop Robert McGuckin celebrated the Rite of Election, with Rebecca Booth as the newly elect.* Along with a team lead by Erin Kempton at St Monica's Oakey, over recent months, Rebecca has been preparing to be fully initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Rebecca was supported on the day with her catechists, Erin Kempton and Roslyn Phillips and sponsor Geraldine

Hore. Other candidates undertaking the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) journey, Pieta Muller and Cheryl Anderson, attending the Mass in support. Frs Peter Dorfield and Mick Carroll concelebrated the Mass with Bishop Robert.

RCIA is a formal program of catechetical instruction where adults are formally admitted into the Church and receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

## ART COMPETITION FOLLOW UP

*Again, a big thank you and well done to all the students who took part in our Art Competition last year.* Also thanks goes to the teachers who were able to give their students time and space to be creative with this activity. Keep an eye out for future chances to be creative.

The winning entry for the Horizons cover was Aryanna Davie, a student at St Joseph's School Stanthorpe. Bishop Robert's Christmas Card featured a watercolour painting by Katelyn Duggan, a student from Assumption College Warwick.



Aryanna Davie with her winning entry



Winning Bishop's Christmas Card entry from Katelyn Duggan

# Want to Become a Catholic?

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Contact your local parish or Mary Otto, Diocesan RCIA Coordinator  
**Mobile:** 0447 074 807 **Email:** [rica@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:rica@twb.catholic.org.au)



# PASTORAL CARE UNVEILS REFURBISHED SPACE

NICOLE RANGIIRA



L to R: Toowoomba Regional Councillor Megan O'Hara Sullivan, Nicole Rangiira and Alison Kennedy, Hospital Foundation CEO

***Pastoral Carers at Toowoomba Hospital have welcomed the New Year in with thanksgiving given the completion of our new refurbished Pastoral Care rooms and Place of Prayer.*** After being relocated on the fourth floor of the hospital for a year whilst construction was underway, it is truly a blessing to now be enjoying our new facilities. The meaningful service our Pastoral Care team provides is enhanced by this new space. Hospitality, stillness, prayer and a listening presence are some of the many ways we seek to offer care to all the patients, their loved ones and medical staff on the journey. This new space brings with it the space to create such opportunities.

On 30 January both the Toowoomba Hospital's new kitchen and Place of Prayer were officially opened and blessed. Michael Horan Chairman of the Hospital Board spoke glowingly of the service Pastoral Care provided, expressing the necessity of spiritual care in the recovery and wellbeing of those who are sick and or grieving. Each member of our Pastoral Care team appreciates the affirmation and support we receive from members of the Hospital Board, the Hospital Executive, and the Hospital Foundation. Mayor Paul Antonio and many of the Toowoomba's Regional Councillors were also present to offer their support. We were particularly grateful for the presence of our Heads of Churches.

I would like to acknowledge the many years of hard work and faithfulness of all those in our Pastoral Care team. To all the past and present members who give generously in a variety of ways, I thank you. I especially thank Lyn Cash whose dedication and vision for Pastoral Care enabled her to lead us into the privileged opportunity we now experience not just as Pastoral Carers in Toowoomba Hospital but throughout the region. Our service has a reputation that not only reflects its professional integrity but also shines forth the hope God has for all people to experience dignity, respect and compassion particularly in times of trauma, illness and grief.

We are blessed to have the God given opportunities to share God's unconditional love and compassion with all those we meet on our journey of Pastoral Care. Sharon Kirk our Pastoral Care Coordinator included the scripture reading Matthew

25: 35-40 when blessing both the new kitchen and the Place of Prayer. "For when I was hungry and you gave me something to eat..." All the times we are led by God through the power of Jesus' Holy Spirit to meet a need in another we are honouring the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are responding to our baptismal call to love God and to love others.

Each of you who may have cause to be at Toowoomba Hospital for whatever reason are very welcome to come to our Place of Prayer.

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# NEW YEAR, NEW FACES FOR SPRED

LORETTA COMAN

Some of the new SPRED volunteers, L to R Angela Scott, Paul and Anne Rowan, Jan Rowland, Lyn Lee, Veronica Barker, Glyn Ferguson



***On 4 February 52 volunteers and representatives from the Advisory Board gathered at the James Byrne Centre for the commencement of the Special Religious Development (SPRED) year.*** We began in the chapel with a celebration of the Eucharist led by Fr Ray Crowley. During the celebration ten of our newest recruits were officially welcomed with a prayer of blessing and presented with their SPRED Badge.

After Mass the volunteers gathered at Kelly House for a formation session which kicked off with some light-hearted fun, giving everyone an opportunity to meet others and hopefully get to know each other a little better.

The heart of SPRED, and why it continues to thrive, is the conscious commitment to developing a sense of belonging by the building up of community, where the bonds of friendship, love and mutual respect are nurtured. Our presence within a small community of faith when we join a SPRED group, our participation in the activities of the total SPRED community, when staff, volunteers and Friends, with families and carers, gather for both liturgical and social events, and finally our Vision which focusses our attention on our primary goal, the integration of people with intellectual disability into parish worship – these

key elements are based on the premise that no one believes alone. To be a community in the best and truest sense we must be 'in relationship' with one another. If we are to form communities into which we welcome and include people with disability we too must be prepared to be vulnerable, to touch and be touched by the lives of others.

This year with changes to the composition of most of the nine groups, our formation session led by Fr Ray, allowed us to reflect on and develop a better understanding of the dynamics within a group and what each of us may consciously or unconsciously bring to that group that will contribute to its growth and development, and ultimately to our sense of trust and connection with each other. In our community of faith we meet together regularly, getting to know each other, sharing our story and our experiences.

According to the work of McMillan & Chavis (1986) there are four elements that contribute to a "sense of community", with the most definitive element being 'shared emotional connection', this includes 'shared history and 'shared participation'. On Sunday when we gathered as community we shared something of ourselves and together contributed to the story of us – SPRED Toowoomba in 2018.

## DIOCESE SET TO TAKE ON VALUABLE SAFEGUARDING LESSONS

INGRID MCTAGGART

***Are we safeguarding the vulnerable in our community?***

That's the question the Toowoomba Diocese will be asking for the upcoming Diocesan Inservice Conference in March. To be held 20 and 21 March at the tranquil James Byrne Centre, Highfields, the Inservice comes on the heels of the final sitting of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse late last year. As the church continues to come to grips with the findings of the Royal Commission, the Toowoomba Diocese looks ahead to what can be done now by clergy, religious and lay leadership to protect the vulnerable in our communities and parishes.

A selection of guest speakers have been lined up to stimulate discussion on various topics and issues surrounding safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Keynote speakers

such as Ms Kathleen McCormack, Fr Frank Brennan and Ms Sheree Limbrick, will delve into specific areas covering Pope Francis' and the Church's message and teaching on safeguarding the vulnerable, moving beyond the Royal Commission, safety online and Professional Standards into the future.

There will also be opportunities to hear from agencies and parishes within the Toowoomba Diocese about what is being done on a practical and local level to address this hot button issue.

"We must provide a safe and supportive environment at all times for children and the vulnerable in our society." Said George Keryk, Professional Standards and Safeguards Office. "We emphasise a safe environment and the importance of maintaining human dignity and respect. This Inservice Conference will reinforce our Diocese's commitment to this."



# ABUSE SURVIVORS' BOOK A MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIA

INGRID MCTAGGART



Director-General of the National Library of Australia, Marie-Louise Ayres, reading the book *Message to Australia*, presented to the Library for safe-keeping. Photo Credit: Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia

*There is a book in the National Library of Australia which is arguably one of the most important books produced in Australian history.* Simply titled *Message to Australia*, it has been described as both physically and emotionally heavy. The book contains the thoughts, feelings and reflections of survivors of institutional child sexual abuse who shared their story with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse during over 6,000 private sessions. Many of these abuse survivors suffering while in the care of Catholic institutions.

At the conclusion of the Royal Commission in mid-December 2017, the book was presented by The Hon. Justice Peter McClellan AM, the Chair of the Royal Commission, to the National Library of Australia.

Containing around 1,000 messages written by survivors, this book has afforded them an opportunity to share a message with the Australian community about their experience and also serves as a reminder of a dark past where

government, religious and community institutions failed the children in their care. Many abuse survivors also shared their hopes for creating a safer future for children.

Messages can be viewed on the Royal Commission website [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au), while *Messages to Australia* is on display at the National Library of Australia and in all state and territory libraries.

The Final Report, released 15 December last year, brings together what the Royal Commission has learned during its 5 year investigation. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and other Catholic organisations have welcomed the release of the report, praising the Commissioners for their hard work and recognising the most important element of this work has been the opportunity for those who were abused to be heard and action to be taken. The Catholic Church has, with great sadness and shame, recognised the failures of the past and going forward has committed to doing better in the future.

## Toowoomba Diocesan INSERVICE CONFERENCE

20-21 March 2018

James Byrne Centre,  
Highfields



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THE VULNERABLE IN  
OUR COMMUNITY?



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# REMEMBERING THE APOLOGY

Josh Brown playing the didgeridoo with his family at the Standing Together Healing Together event Queens Park, Toowoomba. Photo Credit: Simon Hamlet.

## MARK COPLAND

*This year marks a decade since the formal apology by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to the Stolen Generations on 13 February 2008.* I wasn't in Toowoomba that day but I understand a good sized crowd gathered at the Empire Church Theatre to view a public screening of the proceedings in Canberra. I've seen many of the photos and spoken to those who were there and it seems to have been a very powerful moment in our nation's history. There was a lightness and a real sense of healing for those gathered.

The 13th February has become a powerful date in Australia as it is now the time when our Federal government hands down the annual Closing the Gap Report Card. This act of accountability makes hard reading and reminds us of how far we still have to go as a nation.

DeMolay House in Margaret Street was once the site of the Toowoomba Reformatory or Industrial School for Girls. Under the 1865 Industrial Schools Act a child could be deemed neglected and removed to such an institution if he or she had an Aboriginal or "half-caste" mother. Aboriginal girls were removed from throughout our Diocese and held in the Toowoomba Reformatory between 1883 and 1895. These are all on the public record in letters written to the Colonial Secretary. Horton Village in Curtis Street, East Toowoomba was another site of removal as a Salvation Army Industrial School for Girls. There are members of the Stolen Generation living in our

towns. Elders who can never forget the pain of the past.

In January Pope Francis made some powerful statements about the rights and importance of Indigenous people. Visiting South America he said, 'The recognition of these people – who can never be considered a minority, but rather authentic dialogue partners – as of all the native peoples, reminds us that we are not the absolute owners of creation. We need urgently to appreciate the essential contribution that they bring to society as a whole ...'

This year we have an opportunity to think about the legacy of that history in our own nation. As we reflect, we can take inspiration not only from the words of Pope Francis but also from the words spoken in our Parliament ten years earlier:

"For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written. We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians ...

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."





# NEW SERVICE AN INNOVATION FOR CATHOLICCARE

*Using practical, accessible, and innovative methods, CatholicCare Social Services Toowoomba's newly launched Future Families program will engage with Indigenous and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities to identify their needs and support their families through relationship breakdown or separation.* Future Families will provide additional and specialist support to families from CALD and Indigenous communities by working collaboratively with Indigenous services, migrant services and interpreters. The program is available at CatholicCare's main hub at 502 Ruthven Street Toowoomba and in Roma at 36 McDowell Street.

Future Families workers Robyn Silcox, Tony Collins, Aluel Akoch and Maluel Mawien bring to this service their community connections, skills and knowledge to journey with families through relationship breakdown and separation process.

"I am pleased to see Future Families up and running," said CatholicCare Director, Kate Venables, "Our staff have worked tirelessly on developing this service. Family and relationship breakdown can be difficult at the best of times, but for those facing additional barriers like language, culture and isolation, it can be especially trying. We hope to reduce their distress by bringing sensitivity and care to these families, by being the face of Christ through our actions."



## Future Families

*Working together*

We engage with indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to **support their families through relationship breakdown and separation**. We are able to provide additional and specialist support. Mal, Robyn, Aluel and Tony can help families through these difficult times.

**TOOWOOMBA**  
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**ROMA**  
36 McDowell Street



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Philip and Margaret Maloney at the Toowoomba Diocese 50th Year Celebration for CCR

# VISION FOR CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL QUEENSLAND

MICHAEL PYKE

**WHEN THEY HAD FINISHED BREAKFAST, JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, "SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?" HE SAID TO HIM, "YES, LORD; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU." JESUS SAID TO HIM, "FEED MY LAMBS."**

**A SECOND TIME HE SAID TO HIM, "SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?" HE SAID TO HIM, "YES, LORD; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU." JESUS SAID TO HIM, "TEND MY SHEEP."**

**HE SAID TO HIM A THIRD TIME, "SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?" PETER FELT HURT BECAUSE HE SAID TO HIM THE THIRD TIME, "DO YOU LOVE ME?" AND HE SAID TO HIM, "LORD, YOU KNOW EVERYTHING; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU." JESUS SAID TO HIM, "FEED MY SHEEP." JOHN 21:15-17**

***The Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Toowoomba Diocese has adopted John 21:15-17 as its Mission or manner in which it will implement the Queensland vision.***

It can be summarised in the three statements that Jesus addressed to Peter:

- FEED MY LAMBS
- LOOK AFTER MY SHEEP
- FEED MY SHEEP

## **CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL (CCR) HOPES AND PLANS FOR 2018**

- A Prayer Group is planned for Holy Name Parish Toowoomba. Following a talk at the Sunday Masses late

last year, several people expressed their interest in CCR. A meeting will be held in February to explain more about CCR and help in the setting up of the Prayer Group.

- Discussions will be held with several other groups/Parishes who have expressed interest in CCR.
- 2018 will see the development of a leadership training package and the encouragement of local speakers.
- Philip and Margaret Maloney (International Lay Catholic Missionaries) were guest speakers at the Toowoomba Diocese 50th Year Celebration for CCR in November 2017. We hope to have a return visit in 2018.

Toowoomba CCR was also visited by Ann Brereton (Chairperson Australian CCR National Service Committee), Anne-Marie Gatenby (Intercession co-ordinator for the Australia-Asia-Oceania regions) and Jenny McCormack (Chairperson - Queensland CCR State Service Committee) in October. They provided powerful talks on Charismatic Gifts of the Spirit, Intercession and Evangelisation.

## **CONTACTS**

- To know more about CCR contact Michael Pyke 0458 300 880 or michael.pyke56@bigpond.com
- Wings of Freedom Prayer Group, Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba: Lisa Minz (07) 4615 5218
- Sacred Heart Prayer Group, Warwick Parish: Trish Seaby (07) 4661 3133
- St Anthony's Parish Toowoomba Night Prayer Group: Colleen Schicker (07) 4659 8094
- Emmaus Daytime Prayer Group, St Anthony's Parish Toowoomba: Kay Hohn 0400 436 498



# DIOCESE THANKFUL FOR DEDICATION TO YOUTH MINISTRY

INGRID MCTAGGART



Sarah (6th from the left) farewelled by Diocesan Staff

***After 5 years at the helm of Youth Ministry as Diocesan Coordinator, Sarah de Byl has bid farewell to Toowoomba.***

Diocesan staff gathered for a special afternoon tea in December last year to farewell Sarah and thank her for her contribution to the life of the Diocese.

During her time in the Youth Ministry office Sarah has been responsible for providing support to parishes and driving initiatives that engage and help young people in the Toowoomba Diocese grow in their faith. Some highlights that Sarah has instrumental in organising have been the Steve Angrisano visit, coordinating diocesan groups to World Youth Days and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, chaplaincy work with the University of Southern Queensland and the Diocese's college, Concannon College, Movers and Shakers and

the recent Diocesan Inservice focused on Anointed and Sent.

At the farewell gathering, Bishop Robert McGuckin remarked that Sarah's position was one of the first appointments he made as Bishop of Toowoomba. Recalling one of their first interactions, Bishop Robert said, "Sarah was a stand out applicant for the position, so bright and bubbly." Noting the challenging nature of the ministry, Bishop Robert thanked Sarah for her dedication to and passion for ministry with young people in the Toowoomba Diocese.

Sarah joined the Toowoomba group at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival as her last outing with the diocese. While sad to be leaving a ministry she enjoys, Sarah is excited to be taking up a new position with Catholic Education in Lismore Diocese.



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# COMBATTING BAD BEHAVIOUR ONLINE:

## CREATE, CONNECT AND SHARE RESPECT

*The high profile story of Amy “Dolly” Everett, a young cyberbully victim who took her life earlier this year, would have no doubt struck a chord with many.* The image of a happy girl in dusty clothes on her family’s cattle farm could have been anyone’s daughter, sister, granddaughter or friend, she would not have looked out of place in our Diocese. That she, as well as many other young people just like her, have been ground down by bullies is upsetting and it’s an issue to be tackled head on.

In this Year of Youth as well as recognising Safer Internet Day (6/2/18), we thought we’d take a look at ways to educate about the issues surrounding bullying online and tools and strategies to overcome it. We asked the Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office to share what is being done in our schools to teach students how to be responsible online and how to have positive experiences.

### WHAT ARE TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DOING WITH TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR CLASSROOMS?

Technology is an essential part of people’s lives, and as such our schools encourage the responsible use of technology and explicitly teach students the skills and knowledge associated with responsible use.

The Australian Curriculum informs this teaching and includes an ICT general capability, which goes across all curriculum areas. This capability includes developing their technical, social and ethical use of technology skills.

Students learn to create videos, documents, multimedia presentations and charts to demonstrate learning, computer coding to solve simple problems, create games and developing new ways of sharing information within a safe environment.

Cybersafety and appropriate use are central to any educational approach to technology. From Prep to Year 12, as students grow and learn, so too does the focus and approach to cybersafety education.

### WHAT TYPES OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ARE BEING USED?

The Toowoomba Catholic Schools Acceptable use of ICT Equipment and Resources Policy is shared with all students, in an age appropriate manner, and makes clear what is expected of students when using technology.

The Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum is used in all Toowoomba Catholic Schools. This comprehensive curriculum includes cybersafety as one of the many important areas to keep our students safe.

Schools also participate in various programs endorsed by the eSafety Commissioner including the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, Internet Education Safety Services (Brett Lee) and Cyber Safety Solutions (Susan McLean). These programs also offer information sessions for parents and teachers.

Staff undertake training and comprehensive processes are in place to ensure that any child protection concern is addressed. Bullying in any form is not tolerated within Toowoomba Catholic Schools, and any concerns are responded to and addressed immediately.

### WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS?

- **Set clear expectations** around online activity, for example, ensure that children use devices in a room with other family members and that parents check in regularly.
- **Talk** to children about what they are seeing and doing - maintain an open dialogue about children’s online experiences.
- **Learn more** about the different tools and websites children are using.
- **Encourage children to use technology in positive ways** and be responsible for their online behaviour.

### TIPS AND ADVICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN AN ONLINE WORLD:

Becoming a better digital citizen:

1. **Know your online world:** be curious, learn new things and but be aware of risks and how to protect yourself.
2. **Choose consciously:** think before you act - the choices you make online can last forever.
3. **Engage positively:** what you say and do online can affect everyone! Avoid bullying, harassment and online abuse and learn how to take positive steps if others don’t.





#### STAYING SAFE ONLINE:

- Don't reply to nasty or rude comments, tell a trusted adult.
- Use your device in areas where your parents are so that they can help you when you need it.
- Never share your passwords.
- Help teach your parents about how to use the internet.
- Share what you learn at school about cybersafety.
- Ensure you follow the age rules for social media and talk to your parents before creating an account.
- Do not accept friend requests from people you do not personally know.

Sources: <https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/classroom-resources/digital-citizenship> and <https://www.danielmorcombe.com.au/dm-child-safety-curriculum.html>

#### FURTHER RESOURCES:

**[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)** - eCommissioner's website

**[bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://bullyingnoway.gov.au)** - A general anti-bullying resource created by The Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (Government)

**Tweet Others as you Wish to be Tweeted** - a scripture based guide on social media use released by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. This resource was released as a book, prayer cards and an 11-part podcast series.

**The Do Life Better Podcast** - A weekly podcast from Project Hatch (a school-based retreat operator in Brisbane) focussing on mindfulness, mental well being and motivation aimed at young people.

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# DISCOVERING NEW HORIZONS

DR PAT COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

***Exploring and discovering uncharted lands or waters remains an appealing but diminishing motivation for modern day intrepid adventurers.*** The challenge of this year's theme for Catholic education and also the Year of Youth is not so much an invitation to search for obscure and uncharted lands, oceans or even parts of the universe, but a summons to undertake a personal journey of discovery to answer the eternal questions of "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?"

These questions are at the foundation of our human story. Speaking from personal experience there are many examples of elaborate strategies employed to sidestep the raw and honest scrutiny which these questions demand of us.

Our work in Catholic education is a journey of uncovering personal horizons, hidden and camouflaged by ego, peer pressure and self-doubt. Assisting each student on their personal journey towards knowledge of self and understanding of purpose requires high quality educational experiences which draw out our inherent unlimited potential and challenge us to step-up to the higher good.

As Catholic educators our inspiration and foundation to self-discovery is the Jesus story. Can we, through personal witness and inspiring pedagogy, bring to life the Jesus story in such a way that it touches the lives of students and becomes a reference point for life's deeper challenges?

All the best for a memorable year of discovery.

## NEW LEADERSHIP FOR A NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

New and recently appointed Principals join Toowoomba Catholic Schools staff at their recent induction



***A number of new principals have joined Catholic schools in our diocese for 2018 and are ready to explore new horizons.*** The Toowoomba Catholic Schools system consists of 31 schools that will educate nearly 9,000 students this year.

Toowoomba Catholic Schools Executive Director, Dr Pat Coughlan said he was delighted to welcome a number of principals who had moved from other schools both within the diocese, and beyond, as well as those beginning their journey as a principal. "Taking on the role of principal of a school is no easy feat, with the raft of responsibilities commanding a person of remarkable stamina both professionally and personally," Dr Coughlan said.

"We are very fortunate to have such strong leaders who want to continue to make an impact on the lives of our students as together we strive for academic success for all and to make the person of Jesus known in our school communities."

"The Catholic school, particularly in a smaller community

is a lively hub and an integral part of the social fabric of the town. Principals, and teachers for that matter, find themselves quickly becoming immersed in community life and there is something very special about that," Dr Coughlan said.

Emerging leader Ms Pollyanna Crawford, is heading back to Sacred Heart Parish School in Cunnamulla as Acting Principal, a school she taught at very early in her career, whilst Andrew Kendall has been appointed the principal of St Joseph's School Stanthorpe following time acting in the role last year.

Mr Michael Ward last year said farewell to St Peter's in Caboolture to take the reins at St Mary's School in Charleville, replacing former Principal Ms Louise Pfingst, who is heading to St Anthony's Primary School in Toowoomba.

Ms Madonna Sleba returns to the Diocese from Brisbane to lead St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba - the school where she was educated. Mr Peter Cuskelly is the new principal at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College in Dalby.



Newly commissioned TCS staff ready for a new year

## STAFF WELCOMED TO TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

**2018 has brought a number of changes to the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office team.** The new staff members include several Education Officers charged with directly supporting schools in the pursuit of academic excellence and making Jesus known to all students, as well as corporate team members to support the systemic and the administrative framework for the Diocese's 31 schools.

The TCSO team gathered for their beginning of the year

Mass and staff meeting at Holy Name Parish and School in Toowoomba on the Feast of the Presentation. Bishop Robert McGuckin, who was joined by Frs Darrell Irvine, Ray Johnson and Thomas Areekuzhy, used the final paragraph of the Gospel reading of the day from Luke 2:40 'The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him' to commission the Catholic Schools Office staff for their work in 2018.



L to R Helena &amp; Georgia Saunders, Graziella &amp; Angelica Augusto, Hugo &amp; Max Brownsdon, Charlotte &amp; Aidan Fitzgibbons

## FOUR SETS OF TWINS SET A NEW RECORD FOR MATER DEI

**The beginning of the new school year saw more than 800 Prep students wave their mums and dads goodbye across Catholic Schools in the Toowoomba Diocese.**

Mater Dei Primary School in Toowoomba welcomed 75 of their youngest students, among them, four sets of twins.

Principal Chris Bartlett says while he's not sure on the

odds of such an occurrence, in 26 years of teaching, he's never known of so many sets in one year level.

"I think the toughest part is for the teachers in working out how to tell the twins apart!" He said. The twins were excited to be starting their school journey together.



# A QUIET MOMENT FOR LITTLE (AND BIG) PEOPLE

*During a silent retreat in Malta in 2015, freelance photographer and writer Fiona Basile describes a late night epiphany as the beginning of her journey to publishing a children's book.* I was fortunate to talk to Fiona about her process of bringing together *Shhh...God is in the Silence*.

## CHILDREN ARE PROBABLY THE LEAST QUIET GROUP! WHY A CHILDREN'S BOOK?

I wrote the book late one night toward the end of the retreat, so it had been cultivated in an attitude of silence and deep listening. The retreat provided an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work through me creatively, providing me with the words, and giving me the inspiration to transform them into a beautiful children's book. So in many ways, I didn't specifically choose to write a children's book—and I certainly didn't enter the retreat with the idea or desire to do so. Rather, I was gifted the words from the Holy Spirit, and worked with the words I received.

## WHAT WAS YOUR WRITING EXPERIENCE LIKE? WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION?

My inspiration was the Holy Spirit, and my deepening relationship with God that had been developing and deepening over the duration of the retreat. So, with the book, I wanted to get to the heart of it—that God loves us and lives in our heart. I imagined a parent, grandparent or teacher reading these beautiful and affirming words over and over to a young child—I love you, you are precious, there is no-one else like you, I created you, you are mine, you are safe. I could imagine the message being reinforced each time they heard the message. Children and adults alike need to hear this message of God's love and presence in our lives.

## HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK WITH AN ILLUSTRATOR? THE IMAGES ARE SO SOFT AND ALMOST DREAMY, WAS THIS A STYLE CHOICE OR JUST HAPPY COINCIDENCE?

The illustrator, Alice Mount, is a friend through the Melbourne Catholic circles. I had previously purchased Christmas cards that Alice had created and sold, which featured her beautiful illustrations on the front. When I wrote the book in Malta I knew that I wanted to ask Alice to be the illustrator. Alice is a religious education and visual communication design teacher at a Melbourne secondary school, who in her words “also happens to love illustrating”.

## WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING WITH ANOTHER ARTIST?

The whole process was one of collaboration, which is a beautiful feature of the book. I had a friend, who is also a professional editor, go over the words. Another friend, who is a graphic designer, was employed to pull the book together. I had many friends, family and colleagues provide feedback to the story along the way. And of course, there are Alice's beautiful illustrations. It was a joy working with Alice, both gently guiding her as to the style or ideas of illustrations to go with the words, but also allowing her the freedom to create illustrations that she thought spoke to the words.



Author Fiona Basile and Illustrator Alice Mount at their book launch. Photo by GERALYN ANDERSON

## WHAT HAS BEEN CHILDREN'S REACTION TO THE BOOK?

I can honestly say, it's a highlight every time I do a book reading. My heart sings with joy every time I read the book to Kinder, Prep, Grade One or Two classes. Something definitely happens from when I start with the first 'shhh'. We usually have question time following the reading, which is always a lot of fun. The questions the children ask never cease to amaze me. They also love asking questions about the pictures. One little boy said, 'when I get home I'm going to write a book,' which is just brilliant!

## WHAT HAS THE GENERAL RECEPTION BEEN LIKE FOR THE BOOK?

I'm deeply moved each time I receive positive feedback, which affirms that the book is touching so many hearts. Parents and grandparents love the closeness and intimacy the book creates in reading it to their children/grandchildren. Primary school teachers use the book as part of their class's daily reflection and meditation. Priests and catechists appreciate the book's ability to help children grow in relationship with God.

## WHAT IS YOUR NEXT PROJECT?

I am currently working full-time freelance, based in Melbourne, which I really enjoy. I am engaged with a number of clients doing ongoing documentary work, and communications-based work.

I had sent Pope Francis a copy of the book soon after it was printed. It was a lovely surprise to receive a letter from the Vatican to say the book was received by Pope Francis and to receive his blessing.

I've also signed a contract with a publishing house in the USA, Loyola Press, which is really exciting!

**Shhh... God is in the Silence costs \$20 and can be purchased online at [www.godisinthesilence.com](http://www.godisinthesilence.com)**



Year 6 students enjoying some muddy fun at the annual leadership camp at Emu Gully

# SACRED HEART LOOKS TO A POSITIVE YEAR

SALLY YIN

***At Sacred Heart Primary School Toowoomba we have hit the ground running in 2018!*** An air of positivity fills the school as we launch into our year of “Believe and Achieve in 2018”.

Our focus is on wellbeing – for our students, our staff, our families and our community. Through our Religious Education program we aim to extend the students’ knowledge of and relationship with God as we “Journey every day with Jesus in our Hearts”. This and our work with the Zones of Regulation program across the school will be directed towards developing a healthy sense of self and personal growth through the extension of self-regulation and resilience building strategies.

Through our Social Justice program the children will learn the value of giving to support others in need.

Academic growth is academic success. Staff are committed to the Diocesan Reading Improvement Strategy and to working towards academic growth for every student in our school, despite the learning challenges they might personally face. We have welcomed new school officers into our school to support our efforts and reduce the need to withdraw students from their classrooms.

Working in partnership with our families, every student will have the best possible opportunity to grow as an individual and in their learning. We are excited about what 2018 holds for the Sacred Heart Primary School Community.

## COMPETITION TIME:

We have two copies of ***Shhh...God is in the Silence*** signed by Fiona Basile to give away (many thanks to Fiona). Fill out your name, postal address, contact number and simply answer the question.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
How has silence been a friend to you? (100 Words or Less) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SEND TO:** Silence Competition C/- Communications Office, PO Box 756 Toowoomba Q 4350

Competition open to everyone in the Toowoomba Diocese. Entries close 20/4/2018. Winners names will be published in the May Issue of Horizons.



## ST MARY'S THINKS BIG ABOUT MEN'S HEALTH FOR MOVEMBER

St Mary's College having a laugh for a serious topic



*If you happened to pass St Mary's College Toowoomba in November last year, you might have been shocked to spotted what looks like a giant handlebar moustache on the front of the Brother's House!* The College has been thinking big about men's health issues for Movember.

Students, teachers and College staff (including the girls) proudly donned fake moustaches for a week in November as a part of the Movember Foundation's annual campaign, which raises awareness about men's health issues.

The Movember Foundation tackles men's health issues on a global scale and is aiming to reduce the number of men dying prematurely by 25% by 2030.

St Mary's College teacher Stephen Sowter led the charge on educating, involving students from years 5 to 12 in the awareness raising initiative, which included a

range of workshops, educational posters, discussions and activates on some of the biggest health issues faced by men: prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health and suicide prevention.

He said it was important to highlight men's health issues for the boys and that the week was more about raising awareness than funds.

"We chose to take part in Movember because the boys really need to have a discussion about their health with their family and their mates," he said.

The College also kicked off their first Movember Move competition, an inter-house touch football competition for all ages, in an effort to shine the spotlight on the importance of exercise.

St Mary's College Principal Michael Newman believes Movember is a fun way to engage the students in a serious conversation.

"As a College we take part in promoting and fundraising for a range of causes throughout the year, including Pink Ribbon for breast cancer, but given we are a boys' college, it's important we take part in Movember," Mr Newman said.

Year 12 student Heath Dean, said he and his fellow students had gained invaluable lessons about men's health by taking part in Movember.

"There were many things I didn't know before having some of those discussions and it's important to be aware that health issues can affect you or your mates even at a young age. It's about raising awareness while having a bit of fun and being proactive. If it means the boys are going home and having a conversation about their health with their brothers, their mates or their dads, then it's really worthwhile."



St Mary's College  
Toowoomba

Years 5-12



[www.stmaryscollege.com](http://www.stmaryscollege.com)



St Mary's School Staff at Maryvale

# WARWICK STARTS YEAR ON A SOCIAL NOTE

SHARON YOUNG

*At St Mary's School we are all called to **RISE UP**.* Our school culture permeates through our classrooms and the playground where we will be Respectful, Inclusive, Safe, Exceptional, Understanding and Prayerful. We work with our students, parents and the wider school community to nurture our student's development and potential and help them to RISE UP.

This year, our school theme will be A Story in the Making. For our school, it will be a year of focusing on the Scriptures and how we can live out the messages in our own lives. The purpose of children undertaking a deeper understanding of the scriptures is the hope that they will become more aware of the story of Jesus and to learn how to apply His messages to their own relationships.

As part of the staff Pupil Free Days, the staff of St Mary's Warwick was blessed to spend the day with Cicada Women

Tours at Maryvale. Surrounded by the beautiful mountains of Maryvale, the Parsons family led us in a day of reflecting on culture and spirituality. We were spoilt with delicious food, including a taste of bush tucker. It was also a wonderful opportunity for the staff to spend quality time getting to know one another better.

As an initiative to continue to strengthen Parish and School relationships, a 'Cuppa and Chat' morning tea is being held every Tuesday morning in the beautifully refurbished Assisi Place. In the first week of school we opened the doors every day and many old friendships were renewed and new friendships made. With our history firmly established in the traditions of the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy, we embrace the words of Catherine McAuley's hospitality, 'Be sure you have a comfortable cup of tea'.



**St Mary's School Warwick**  
At St Mary's we will: **RISE UP!**

163 Palmerin St, Warwick Q 4370 **phone** 07 4661 1872  
**email** smwarwick@twb.catholic.edu.au



[www.smwarwick.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smwarwick.catholic.edu.au)





# INVESTITURE MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lighting the College candle and the Year 6 candle Hayley Dwight (Year 6), Keegan Cobb (Year 12), Seaton Robinson (Year 5), Madeleine Tooley (Year 5), Georgia Lee (Year 12) and Daniel Beirne (Year 6)

## ANNE MCATOMNEY AND CATHERINE MIMS

*As is the tradition, the Downlands College community gathered to mark the start of the academic year with the Investiture Mass of the Holy Spirit on 2 February.*

At the commencement of the Mass, two Year 12 students entered along with two Year 5 students and two representatives of the Primary school 'leaders' in Year 6, and together they lit the College candle and the Year 6 candles. Other highlights of this liturgical celebration included the blessing and presentation of badges to elected student leaders and of Senior badges to all Year 12s, as well as the washing of the feet of the College Leaders by the Principal, Mr Stephen McIlhatton - modelling the servant leadership to which the leaders are called and which is especially emphasised throughout the liturgy in words, symbols and actions. In another moving tradition, all College staff came together to sing "Servant Song" - a gesture intended as a gift from the staff to the student leaders of 2018.

The 2018 Downlands student leadership team is representative of the College - young people from different backgrounds, with different talents and interests, coming together to create an inclusive welcoming environment. The College leaders are keen to maintain the strong sense of acceptance and support which they have experienced themselves throughout the years of their schooling at Downlands - encouraging each and every student to draw strength from the College community and flourish as an individual.

We were blessed to have with us on this occasion, the Deputy Provincial of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in

Australia, the Order which owns and conducts Downlands. Fr Steve Dives msc travelled from Sydney to concelebrate the Mass with Fr Paul McCormack msc. In his homily, Fr Steve spoke about the importance of using and sharing the gifts we have been given - no matter how insignificant they may seem - to make the world a better place, and to especially understand that kindness to others is a gift we can keep on giving away. The Mass was followed by Morning Tea for the many parents and friends who attended. And the much-needed heavy rain that was falling throughout the morning really only added to the sense of joy that was evident amongst the student body overall.



Keegan Cobb (Year 12) enters the Investiture Mass with Seaton Robinson (Year 5)



# OPEN DAY

Sunday 20 May | 10am - 2pm

- Meet the Principal
- Talk to teachers, students and parents
- Tour our 100 acre campus, Rural Centre, Sports Centre, and Dance, Drama and Film Studios
- See why so many families are choosing a Downlands education. Pre-register today!

Where your *heart* finds a home



INDEPENDENT | CATHOLIC | COEDUCATIONAL | YEARS 5-12 | DAY & BOARDING

## CHARLEVILLE WELCOMES NEW PRINCIPAL AND STAFF

### SR ELIZABETH O'KEEFFE

*This year St Mary's School, Charleville has welcomed a new Principal, Michael Ward, who has taken over from Louise Pfingst who has moved to Toowoomba with her family.* Michael and his wife, Madonna, arrived in Charleville in the middle of January to a great welcome. "I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the School and Parish community for the way you have made my wife Madonna and myself feel so welcome since our arrival. We have been overwhelmed by the friendship extended to us." Said Michael

Michael grew up on a farm near Beaudesert and went to a country school, so was really looking forward to coming to Charleville to experience the unique sense of community that towns like Charleville have. He has had a range of working experiences before becoming an educator, and is keen to bring some of those life experiences to the community.

St Mary's is part of the Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools which has two mainstays or pillars. The first is that every student experiences academic success through having expert teachers in classrooms by building teacher capacity. The second is that all students come to know the loving presence of Jesus through our unmistakably Catholic faith and traditions. Michael says he is looking forward to



Charleville School Staff, L to R Front: Georgia Johnston, Emily Wright, Fr Peter Doohan, Molly Brooker, Daniel Clum. L to R Back: Kirsty Lines, Joelynn Smith, Caitlin Seng, Michael Ward

supporting our teachers to reach these goals of enabling the students in our school to be the best they can be, and to know Jesus through the religious dimension of the school.

Michael is not the only new member of staff this year. We also welcomed Caitlin Seng, our Prep teacher, Daniel Clum to Year 3 and Joelyn Smith to year 5/6. During Mass on the Sunday after school commenced the community joined with Fr Peter Doohan in blessing the teachers as they commence the new school year.





Cunnamulla celebrates the start of a new school year

# CUNNAMULLA RECEIVES A GIFT FOR THE FARMERS

SR MAUREEN ANDREWS

*Christmas 2017 was celebrated with the usual service followed by a supper.* Ted and Alex, a Polish couple from Gladstone who come each year at this time to act as caretakers for Bowra, joined us. They brought one of their traditional Polish dishes eaten on Christmas Eve when the custom is to abstain from meat. Our Filipino parishioners brought a huge pot of spaghetti bolognaise. Unfortunately, this couple and their son Liam will have to leave Cunnamulla. They were sponsored by the Churches of Christ where Rex is working as the Manager. Now that the facility is only taking low care patients Rex, a registered nurse must leave and even though he and his family have permanency they must stay with their sponsors for the agreed time. This means moving to another facility.

Sacred Heart School is back and so are the kangaroos! Both school and parish were delighted that Pollyanna Crawford

was appointed Principal and APRE. We have our full complement of staff. On 2 February we celebrated the return to school with an Assembly entitled Building Strong Foundations. The good deeds which build our capacity to build community are honesty, forgiveness, love, tolerance, good deeds and justice. These will be stressed in the school and parish community in Ash Wednesday and continue through Lent.

Our town hasn't had a decent fall of rain in seven years, so we were delighted when the Burrumbuttock Hay Runners and a convoy of 150 trucks arrived at the Cunnamulla Showgrounds around 4pm on Australia Day to give much needed fodder supplies to drought-stricken farmers in the area. They had left Darling Point early that morning. The Hay Runners were started by Brendan Farrell in 2014 as a mission to help farmers facing real hardships during severe drought by providing essential resources. The drivers all donated their time and machines to come to the aid of farmers while a group of Gold Coasters who raised more than \$20,000 for the event also made the trek to the south west.

The response from the town was huge with people lining the streets to welcome them and attending the free concert on Saturday night. There were a lot of grateful farmers and their families. The Hay Runners donated to 160 farmers and are fundraising \$15,000 for a new toilet block at the showgrounds. Farmers spoke of their excitement when they received a call that a truckload of hay was on its way to their property.

The rain has come. At the close of the Assembly there was a huge noise which seemed to be coming down the air conditioner vents which are no longer connected. Imagine this I walked outside and saw the rain. I had forgotten what rain on the roof sounded like!



Photo taken by Vicki Ryan. Vicki and husband Oscie were the truck drivers who delivered to Hazlefield



# LEARNERS AND LEADERS: A BRIGHT START 2018

TYRONNE MAHER

St Patrick's School Allora students keen to start the new year

*In late January the eighty one students of St Patrick's School, Allora were welcomed to another year of learning.* Many family members including parents, uncles, aunties, cousins, grandparents and even great grandparents came along to school to wish the young Prep students well on the first step in their education journey.

The school's year 6 students guided the new students through their first day confidently and enthusiastically. The school community looks forward to what the year holds for these Year 6 students.

In addition to eight new Prep students, six new students and their families have chosen to join the St Patrick's community in 2018. We are positive that these students and their families will be made very welcome in the way that only the St Patrick's community can.

The St Patrick's teaching team has embarked on a three

year journey of educational transformation with 'Visible Learning'. A term coined by internationally renowned educational researcher, Professor John Hattie, 'Visible learning' nurtures the development of effective, research supported, classroom and teaching practices that make learning visible to teachers and students. At its best, visible learning celebrates process over product. It gives students the vocabulary to be able to explain what they have learnt, how they know this and what their next steps are in learning. The approach continues on from what teachers have implemented already and compliments the continued focus of developing proficient readers across the school.

In 2018 the school is focusing students on understanding what makes a good learner. Students, by definition are those that go to school. Students are to be learners, not just students.



# SCHOOL LEADERS SHINE FOR 2018

NICHOLE MCCOSKER

Parish Priest Fr Salvador Fernandes, Principal Mr Brendan Redinger, Teacher Mrs Annette Colley with school leaders

*On Friday the 2nd February the community of St Patrick's school gathered to welcome the school leaders for 2018.* The theme for the opening school Mass and celebration of leaders was "Let Your Light Shine". We wish all the school leaders the best of luck for 2018 and hope that all members of

our school community do indeed let their light shine!

**School Captains:** Annabelle Rogan & Alistair McKay,  
**Gold Sports Captains:** Sharon Pearce & Braydon Bella,  
**Greens Sports Captains:** Rosemary Eley & Jake Twidale,  
**Arts Captains:** Mary Sevil & Lachlan Wilson



# PARISHIONERS ENJOY FULL SOCIAL CALENDAR

JENNY FERGUSON



Wonderful entertainment by the school children

*Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners have enjoyed several opportunities to gather as community over recent months.*

Perfect weather saw a group of 40 travel by bus to enjoy morning tea at Jimbour House and then up to the Bunya Mountains for lunch. The Senior's Christmas Party saw over 70 parishioners delightfully entertained by the school children whilst enjoying morning tea and lunch. Our Carols Night was also a great event with approximately 120 parishioners enjoying a light supper, followed by Christmas Carols played by four of our very talent musicians. The children joined in with cymbals, maracas, drums and triangles. All of these events were really well supported, highlighting the wonderful community we have here at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and indeed the willingness of parishioners to give generously of their time and talent.



Enjoying Christmas Lunch

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initiate the candidate in the  
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Monica Brennan (centre) with her family

# ST THERESA'S PASTORAL ASSOCIATE COMES FULL CIRCLE

MONICA BRENNAN

***My name is Monica Brennan and I am the new Pastoral Associate at St Theresa's.***

I began in this role last year. Although the role is new for me, working with others to deepen and develop their Catholic faith has always been a part of my working life. My family moved to Toowoomba in 1975 and I went to school at Mater Dei and St Saviour's College. I then studied teaching and joined the Catholic Education system teaching at St Finbarr's School Quilpie, also as APRE at St Patrick's School Mitchell and St Joseph's School Chinchilla. Having a teaching and APRE role in our western schools meant a large involvement in parish and sacramental programs and supporting the parish priest in their roles as they ministered to their parishioners who lived many kilometres apart.

After marrying in Chinchilla, I moved to Emerald with my husband Paul and there we started our family of 4 sons. Over the years, no matter where we were, we were always involved in local parish life.

When our 2nd eldest son finished school, we moved

to Highfields. For me I had returned after 30 years. Our youngest two sons started school at Downlands and I worked in a part-time capacity at Mary MacKillop Catholic College in the music department.

I now have one son left at school who I'm proud to say is the Downland's College captain for 2018, another son who has decided to enter Banyo seminary and start his journey towards priesthood and my older two sons who are in their last year of university as a mechanical engineer and a physiotherapist.

Christ's message and actions have always been the example we have tried to live as a family which has led me back to St Theresa's. I find myself again working with Fr Brian Noonan, who I first met in 1990 in Mitchell. Although it is a new role, my surroundings are familiar, many of the parishioners remember me as a teenager and young woman! The life journey I have had so far and the skills I have learnt along the way have enabled me to embrace the position with an eagerness and passion to bring Christ's message to all and invigorate the Spirit's gifts within each one of us.

## PRAYERFUL MEMORIAL HELPS FAMILIES HEAL

TRISH LANGAN

***On a wet and windy day in October last year approximately 30 people came together for a Memorial Service for World Day of Early Pregnancy Loss.*** The gathering consisted of staff from Toowoomba Hospital Pastoral Care, members of the Our Lady of Lourdes Ecumenism Group as well as parishioners and guests. Sharon Kirk, Co-Ordinator of Pastoral Care, lead the prayer service with music provided by Helen Richards also Brett and Nicole Rangiira. A beautiful prayer space was created, depicting a peaceful river.

Those in attendance were encouraged to write a personal message and place ribbons and symbols on the river. There were tears shed as songs, scripture and reflections evoked memories and feelings from past losses. It was acknowledged that those in attendance had taken a brave step and much healing and support

was evident. It was a truly a powerful and unique experience for all.

Later at cuppa time, it seemed everyone stayed joining in the telling of their personal stories. For some it was a first, others from a long time ago, regardless this seeming to provide a much needed safe time and place to voice their individual painful experiences. Sharon herself, during her reflection, spoke of a very early pregnancy loss which had never been spoken about. Her openness enabled others to also speak of their experiences.

A special thanks goes to the various groups and staff at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish that helped make this special occasion possible. The hope is for an annual repeat of this event as it has proven to be a worthwhile opportunity for healing.





# CHRISTMAS TRULY A TIME FOR GIVING FOR ST THOMAS MORE'S

BEVAN DIVINE

## ***Each Advent St Thomas More's Parish places a manger in the centre aisle of the church to receive funds for worthy causes.***

A different beneficiary is chosen each year. In 2017 the manger contribution was given to The Downs and West Community Support (DWCS), a ministry of Sisters of Charity Community Care Limited. DWCS offers practical assistance to our neighbours in rural and remote Queensland, especially those who are affected by unfortunate tribulations such as harsh weather events or family disasters and other matters beyond their control. Sr Christine Henry RSC, the Coordinator for DWCS, spoke to parishioners at mass on the weekend of 10 December. She was accompanied by her toy poodle, Lady Kenya – a very important companion in her ministry.

Our 2017 Advent was also marked by welcoming four new altar servers: Caitlin Bowen, Melinda Wagner, Kalani McKay and Ester-Leigh Watts. Hannah and Annette Grimshaw

prepared them for their ministry.

St Thomas More's Parish has a tradition of presenting a sketch with a Christmas theme by some of its children prior to the Family Mass on Christmas Eve. For 2017 Mary Taylor directed an enthusiastic cast of children, mostly under seven years old, in a sketch based on the song "And That's Why There's a Christmas Day", which was originally written by Eddy Arnold and Jenny Lou Carson and sung by the American singer, Jim Reeves.

In the New Year we welcomed Sr Patsy Grundy, PBVM at the 15 January Mass to celebrate her 50th anniversary as a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sr Patsy was our Parish Pastoral Leader for 12 years up to 2014 and is held in great esteem and affection by all involved in our parish. We enjoyed a morning tea with Sr Patsy and presented her with a huge card signed by many parishioners.

## PARISHIONERS' GOOD WORKS RECOGNISED

### ***Many people from the parishes around Roma in the Mid-West Deanery have been recognised in the Australia Day Awards for generous contributions made to the community.***

Here in Roma we congratulate parishioner Tony Kerr and St John's School students Thomas McNulty and Hannah Hughes on receiving their awards and Annette Mills on being named Citizen of the Year.

Congratulations also to Neville Maunder (Wallumbilla) and

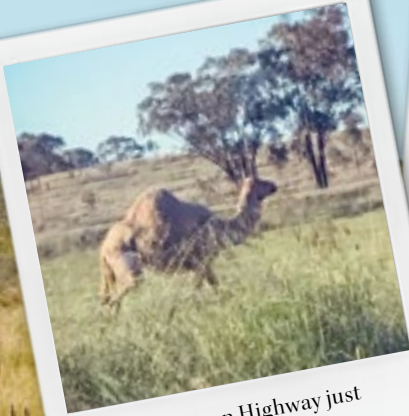
Margaret Gallagher (Surat) on being named the Citizen of the Year for those communities. St John's School students from other parishes recognised include Rileigh Lawson (Mitchell), and Holly and Claudia Thom (Surat). Jackson parishioner Polly Leahy also received an award for her work in the Noonga community.

Injune Churches Together received a Cultural Award in recognition of the Churches working together and refurbishing the Church in Injune.

JACKSON:	Polly Leahy	Member Contribution Award
WALLUMBILLA:	Neville Maunder	Citizen of the Year
SURAT:	Margaret Gallagher Holly and Claudia Thom	Citizen of the Year Young Citizens of the Year
MITCHELL:	Rileigh Lawson	Junior Sports Award
INJUNE:	Injune Churches Together	Cultural Award
ROMA:	Tony Kerr Thomas McNulty Hannah Hughes	Young Citizen of the Year Sports Award Junior Sports Award



# WESTERN CHRISTMAS MASS JOURNEY BY FR JAMIE COLLINS



Carnarvon Highway just  
outside of Injune



Wallumbilla



Surat



Yuelba



Tinsel Run. Surat/Roma



Surat



Wallumbilla



Jackson



Mitchell



Tinsel Run, Surat/Roma



Mungallala



Wallumbilla



Roma



Roma





Baby Ava Grace's Baptism at St Matthew's Church Crows Nest

## CROWS NEST A HIVE OF ACTIVITY FOR CHRISTMAS SEASON

MARGARET FOWLER

**October saw two Baptisms in Crows Nest Parish.** Family, friends and Parishioners witnessed the Baptisms of Ethan, son of Gemma and Lee Haskings, and Ava Grace, daughter of Bek and Matt Woodhead in St Matthew's Church. Fr Dave O'Connor officiated at both ceremonies. A busy couple of months for Mary June Littleton who had prepared the families prior to the Sacrament.

A Retreat Day, which was organized by Bob Wallace, the RI Coordinator for the Parish, was held in the Parish Hall and was led by Carole Danby from the Archdiocese. There was an open invitation to parishioners and other RI teachers to attend what proved to be an inspiring day.

Once again the Parish Council asked parishioners to support the residents of Crows Lodge with individual gifts at Christmas.

Information pertinent to a resident is gathered and put on a card that people can choose and then make a suitable purchase. The gifts are much appreciated and are a gesture from our parish to some who are less fortunate in our community.

The RI Team and the school children created a beautiful Jesse Tree and prayer cards which were displayed in the church entrance prior to Christmas. The Team takes every opportunity to involve their classes in parish activities and the seasons of the church year.

There were two Masses in the parish for Christmas. Many gathered at St Leo's in Haden for a Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve. An 8am Mass was held at St Matthew's in Crows Nest on Christmas morning. After Mass toffees were offered to all for a bit of Christmas cheer.

## A FOND FAREWELL TO VISITING SEMINARIAN

PATTI MCNAUGHT

**At our Christmas Morning Mass, we bid farewell to Seminarian Tom Duncan who has been part of our Parish and St Theresa's Parish in Toowoomba for the past twelve months.** Tom arrived in late January last year to begin his Pastoral placement. Tom has been a much loved part of the Community who included himself in various aspects of parish life getting involved in different groups and ministries. He also involved himself with the schools, hospital visits to the sick and

also visiting people in their homes. Our priest Fr Brian Noonan has been his mentor. We will miss his wonderful regular Gospel reflections written so well with articulate wording.

Tom was presented with a gift from the Parish which he received gratefully.

Whilst it is sad to see Tom leave us, it is also very exciting that not so long into the future he will be Fr Tom Duncan, posted to some very lucky Parish.



Dennis Tildesley receives a blessing from Fr Noonan

## SPECIAL MASS OFFERS PARISHIONER A CHANCE TO HEAL

PATTI MCNAUGHT

***On 28 November, Mary of the Southern Cross Parish Highfields, held a special Mass of the Sick at the Parish Centre in Kleinton.*** This was a marvellous opportunity for the sick and the elderly of the Parish to come together for comfort and prayers. The St Vincent de Paul Society Conference in Highfields offered to provide transport for those who wished to go and had no means of transport. The Parish Centre was

packed to capacity and extra chairs had to be provided for the crowd who had arrived to receive the Holy Oil and a special blessing. Fr Brian Noonan celebrated the very moving Mass.

After Mass, everyone remained for a cuppa and a chat. St. Vincent de Paul Society Conference kindly provided all the food and refreshments and made sure everyone was catered for by waiting on them throughout the morning.

## BAPTISMS A FAMILY AFFAIR AT HIGHFIELDS

PATTI MCNAUGHT



Theodore Daniells son of Emily and Peter Daniells, with Godparents Nicholas and Hayley Stower.



Quinn Harper Giuliano daughter of Katie and Simon Giuliano being Baptised by Fr Noonan

***There was great joy among parishioners at Mary of the Southern Cross Parish, Highfields when the year started off with two baptisms.*** Peter and Emily Daniells presented Theodore for Baptism during the Mass on 31 December. The following Sunday Katie and Simon Giuliano presented Quinn Harper for Baptism. At both Baptisms, Fr Brian Noonan called the Parents and Godparents forward as an enthralled congregation looked on. It is always a beautiful thing to see the Godparents lighting the Baptism Candle from the Pascal Candle in the church reminding all present of the light of Christ present in the child and the flame being a symbol of the flame of faith in their child.

One of the highlights of both Baptisms was the Parents

and Godparents with their hand on the Baptism Candle, enveloping the child in their arms at the same time, and it was really something special for everybody when Fr. Brian asked the whole Community to renew their Baptismal Vows.

Coincidentally the mothers of both children being Baptised were sisters, the daughters of Parishioners John and Lisa Minz. Both Lisa and John were involved in each Mass, Lisa was a Eucharistic Minister at one and John read the prayers of the faithful at the other. The newly Baptised children were welcomed into the community with acclamation, while their grandparents looked on with pride. A wonderful start to the new year for our congregation. We now pray for them as both Theodore and Quinn continue on their faith journey.



# OUR CHILDREN'S SACRAMENTAL JOURNEYS



First Holy Communion Taroom



First Holy Communion Roma



First Holy Communion and Confirmation Crows Nest

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# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA

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