

# Horizons

## JOURNEY BELL RINGS IN THE NEW

Seeking a  
Holistic Peace

Festival Pilgrims  
Called to Listen to  
the Spirit

History Lives On

#57  
MAR20

FREE Publication  
of the Catholic  
Diocese of  
Toowoomba



## FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

**What we say and how we say it is fascinating.** It's something I've taken for granted for a long time, however over the past few years working on "Horizons" I've come to appreciate the nuance of the written word in particular. Sadly I'm still no expert.

While how we communicate has changed dramatically over time, building layered meaning into our words has always been there, I would think. All sorts of verbal and nonverbal context can give words a variety of connotations. There can be a richness in meaning and interpretation.

Sensitive topics and hot button issues often require careful consideration of what is said and how it is said. Also, what might seem like the banalest matter can require the use of correct terminology or appropriate context.

I am always appreciative of colleagues who share insight into the language of their ministry. I enjoy the discussion it creates, even if I don't grasp it at that moment. Later reflection on my part at least leads to further investigation or recognition of something to be mindful.

*Horizons is a conduit for news and information, helping to bind the Toowoomba Diocese together. The magazine aims to promote the work of our Diocese's Parishes and Ministries so God's mercy, love and the joy of the Gospel are experienced, celebrated and shared.*

*We wish to acknowledge the Aboriginal people God placed upon this land, the first custodians and caretakers of the land upon which we now build our lives and gather to worship. We also pay respect to Elders past and present.*

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My favourite moments, I acknowledge the receiving end may not reciprocate, are my fact checking and editing requests. Is this right? Sometimes we journey into history, context, terminology; sometimes it's a black and white fact, other times, it can be grey. Often it involves a tangent.

This issue of "Horizons" seemed to have a few more of these discussions than usual, and it has been enlightening. Sometimes in the quest for efficient sentences, the subtleties can be missed. Occasionally the tiniest of details, which most won't notice, need to be considered.

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Front Cover: Prep students, Mia and Billy, ring in the start of their journey at OLOSC College Dalby (photo credit: Sarah Lilburne) Story page 33.  
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Bishop Robert McGuckin with other heads of church for an ecumenical celebration for the World Day of the Sick and commissioning of Pastoral Carers.

**As we move into Lent and race towards Easter, on reflection we can say**

**“What a start to the year!”**. Bushfires, drought, coronavirus and tragedies with families devastated through the actions of others. We give thanks to all who have selflessly assisted others in the unbelievable bushfires. In the midst of our everyday lives, may we continue to be a hope-filled people.

Pope Francis in his message for Lent this year speaks about the urgency of conversion. “In this favourable season, then, may we allow ourselves to be led like Israel into the desert (cf Hos 2:14), so that we can at last hear our Spouse’s voice and allow it to resound ever more deeply within us.”

The Easter message of hope, joy and new life is something rich, to be shared

and not kept for oneself. With great insight, Pope Francis tells us “... putting the paschal mystery at the centre of our lives means feeling compassion towards the wounds of the crucified Christ present in the many innocent victims of wars, in attacks on life, from that of the unborn to that of the elderly, and various forms of violence. They are likewise present in environmental disasters, the unequal distribution of the earth’s goods, human trafficking in all its forms, and the unbridled thirst for profit, which is a form of idolatry.”

Again, Project Compassion is a way we can show our solidarity with those in need. Contact [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) or call 1800 024 413.

During times of disasters, various agencies and funds are set up. To

this end, the Catholic Church has now established Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA), to serve as a coordination point for Catholic agencies responding to a disaster. Donations can be made at [www.cera.catholic.org.au](http://www.cera.catholic.org.au)

We should remember that we are an Easter people. May the light of Christ shine brightly in each of us. May Lent be a time of Grace when once again we move from complacency to action. May our turning away from sin and our fidelity to the Gospel be shown by our actions.

May this be a hope-filled Lent and a joy filled Easter.

**Bishop Robert McGuckin**  
*Bishop of Toowoomba*  
 March 2020



## SINGING THE MAGNIFICAT AS MARY DID: A REFLECTION FOR LENT

DR DAVID TUTTY

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**Lent is upon us again.** For another year, we are called to prepare to relive the momentous events of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. For this year's journey, I suggest we have much to learn by listening to Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat.

People are drawn to the praise Mary sings to God in the Magnificat, but struggle with the latter half. After

praising God, Mary remembers what God has done for her people in past times. She remembers that God is the one who brings freedom to the poor, the hungry and the oppressed. God is the one who breaks the hold of those who use power to crush others. God is the one who pulls down the mighty rulers and sends the rich away empty. To our minds, this is a God taking sides, but this

is the God whom Mary knows.

I sense that Mary is telling us something of the very nature and ways of God. Her words in the Magnificat tell us what God does because this is God's very nature. Mary knows that God is with those who are poor, hungry and made powerless and that God works to end their suffering. She knows this



because God has done this already in the history of her people, and now she can trust that God will do it again.

We need to remember that at the time of Mary and Jesus, Israel was not a peaceful place. The Roman army occupied Israel, and most of the Jews were suffering because of this occupation. Some Jews did benefit from cooperation with the Romans; they were feared and even seen as traitors. At this time, some Jewish people often rebelled against the Romans.

Mary's song helps us understand why Jesus was arrested and violently killed. He also experienced God as the one who stands with those who suffer most because of injustice. Jesus was killed because he was seen as a threat by those who benefited from the oppression of the Romans. He was a threat because he opposed the structures of power. Like his mother, Jesus trusted that God would again pull down the mighty and send the rich away empty so that those who suffered injustice would be free.

We have become distanced from the social context of the crucifixion. We may even think that it is not our world anymore. But today we still live in a world where social, economic and cultural injustice occurs. We still live in a world where people are poor, hungry, powerless and marginalised because of the way we organise

our social structures. There is still a reason to sing with Mary her song of trust in God that poverty, oppression and discrimination will end.

Lent is traditionally a time of spiritual preparation. Mary's Magnificat offers a valuable insight into the nature of God and the spirit out of which we are called to prepare for the events of Easter. Our Lenten journey opens us up in two ways. Firstly, this journey opens us to the God whom Mary praises in the Magnificat. Secondly, and because of this, God calls us to join in the work to end all suffering because of social, economic or cultural injustices.

If we do this, we will experience Lent as a journey of conversion, drawing us closer to the One whom Mary praised and whom Jesus incarnated. We prepare during Lent when we open ourselves to an ever deeper conversion where we are shaped and moulded by our Magnificat God.

Each of us needs to learn to sing the Magnificat as Mary sang it. Then it will become our song of praise this Lent so that Mary's God can lead us to see the rawness and injustice of the world. By singing the Magnificat, we show our trust in God. We trust God will do again what Mary knew God had done for her people in the past. In this way, we will be ready to celebrate Easter Sunday and the promise of the resurrection for us all.



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# SEEKING A HOLISTIC PEACE

DR DAVID TUTTY

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**All of us have some sense of what is peaceful and what is not.** This sense is born from experience of strife among ourselves, within our nation and on the international stage. Most of us do not like conflict. We want to live with as little conflict as possible and to have the opportunity to get on with our own lives.

Whatever is our sense of peace, Pope Francis hopes that we all grow and deepen our understanding of what true peace is about and how we can become more peaceful. In his annual Papal Message for the World Day of Peace (1/1/2020), the pope calls us to a more holistic vision of peace. He does this in the knowledge of our limitations and of our human desires that lead to conflict. He also talks about the quest for true peace as a journey of hope. This journey requires that we be open to dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion.

In his analysis, Pope Francis sees that peace is not possible when we fail to accept and respect others. He says peace will not occur when we attempt to dominate others, where inequality exists and where the earth is abused and exploited. For Pope Francis, true peace is not possible until we establish a more just economic system and learn to care for the earth and share its resources justly.

What Pope Francis offers is a more holistic sense of peace, and he calls us to work towards this peace. Drawing upon centuries of Catholic insights, Pope Francis provides us with a holistic understanding of our interconnections with each other and with the rest of creation. He uses the term 'integral ecology' to describe our interconnected existence.

Significantly, he names that this holistic peace requires ecological conversion. Drawing from his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis understands that unless we are open to ecological conversion, conflict will continue and grow. Not only will areas of the planet become less inhabitable, resulting in more



refugees, but we humans will compete for more for the resources that remain.

Part of ecological conversion is learning to see the wisdom and beauty of the creator in all of creation. Our pope considers this conversion to be leading us to seek a new way of living in our common home. This new way will be one that favours the flourishing of life where resources are shared for the common good.

These are fine words. Yet what do they mean for living peacefully in our diocese, in Queensland or the rest of Australia? How does Pope Francis' insight into true peace sit alongside our experiences and our cultures?

It can be hard to reflect on our ways of thinking and believing, but this is what is needed. We often want a peace that protects and privileges ourselves. We are happy to be comfortable without a great concern for the costs of that comfort, be it ecological, historical or international.

We are called to ask ourselves questions like: How can there ever be peace when we exploit the earth and continue to put so much carbon dioxide into the air? Or while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not have an effective

choice over their own lives? How can there ever be peace while we live comfortably and billions live in immense poverty? Or while we support and enjoy an economic system that creates great inequality? How can there ever be peace while resources are being put into weapons production and not into those activities that build true peace?

To address these big questions, we need to work together. Pope Francis affirms that true peace requires an enduring commitment grounded in seeking justice. Climate change, ongoing colonisation, comfortable lifestyles, economic systems and weapons production are all equally peace issues that we are called to work on together.

Learning to listen to others and especially to those weak and marginalised is a significant first step. Pope Francis calls us to be compassionate, to learn to be creative in the ways we listen and to be in solidarity with those who most experience injustice. He asks us to let go of fear and to seek a holistic peace.

Read the full message for World Day of Peace 2020 at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

# A CHURCH THAT LISTENS AND DISCERNS

MARY OTTO

**On Pentecost Sunday 2019, we took the next step towards the Plenary Council 2020.** Everyone has been invited to respond to the themes which emerged from the 222,000 or more voices in the Listening and Dialogue phase. Through listening again to each other, this time, in the context of prayer and reflection and deep discernment, we are called to discover in our hearts, what it is that God is calling us through action, how to be a the Christ-centred Church.

Right from the start of the preparation for the upcoming Plenary Council, members of the Facilitation Team, the Executive Committee and the Bishops have spoken often of the importance of discernment and of the need to be synodal. What does this mean for us as a people of God? Interestingly, one of the six themes includes the word synodal – a church that is “Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal”. This theme calls us to be a church that listens and discerns.

Many of us have experienced, rightly or wrongly, the Church as a hierarchal church, where the power is held by the few at the top, with power and authority seemingly decreasing in descending order. In his address on eve of the 2015 Bishops’ Synod, Pope Francis spoke of

the need to tip the hierarchal pyramid on its point and consider a church where all are servant and where all must practice what he described as “mutual listening”. In that same address to his Bishops, Pope Francis reminded the Bishops of the need to “listen to God’s people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us.” (Francis, “Address at the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops”, 17 October 2015, [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151017\\_50-anniversario-sinodo.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html))

Those who have participated in the Listening and Discernment phase of the Plenary in recent months, through prayer, reflection, contemplation and mutual listening have experienced what it means to be synodal. Through their experience of hearing deeply the voices around them, even when they might be contradictory to their own, they have heard the voice of God

calling them to action. Rev Dr Ormond Rush speaks of a synodal church succinctly when he speaks of a church that “listens to the Spirit when all listen to one another”. Rush, O. “Plenary Council Participation and Reception: Synodality and Discerning the Sensus Fidelium.” <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/read>

Through prayer, reflection and contemplation one takes time to deeply discern what is being heard. One cannot hurry this process. Twenty-first century living imposes on us all a sense that we must fill our lives to the brim with noise, movement and material things leaving little space to truly listen to others. Yet through discernment we are called to be still, to listen to the voice of others, to pray and to reflect on what we hear. By enabling ourselves to be deeply present to the other we can come to hear the voice of God calling us to be all that we should be as a Christ-centred Church – in short, to genuinely hear the voices of all.



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# PROTECTION OF THE VULNERABLE AT THE HEART OF SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY

FR PETER DORFIELD

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## The Royal Commission: Calling us to Account

**The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse held its first formal hearing in 2013 and on 15 December 2017, it provided its Final Report.** Through these five years, the Royal Commission provided a safe and respectful listening ear to those who had been abused. It encouraged people to come forward, especially those not treated fairly or justly in the past. Seven thousand people shared their story in a private session. Almost forty thousand people

contacted the Commission in some way.

The Royal Commission examined how institutions in the Australian community, including faith-based institutions, had responded to those who had been abused. Public hearings and case studies gave a sharp and insightful edge to this examination. Extensive research by recognized experts in matters related to sexual abuse supported the work of the Royal Commission. No person or institution was allowed to deny or disguise failures in responsibility and duty of care.

The Royal Commission sought to see

more clearly what had happened in these criminal actions of personal abuse. Why were institutions, made up of well-intentioned and well-trained people, blind to or in denial about abuse? The Royal Commission was searching for systemic reasons for this institutional malfunction and failure, causing detriment to children and young people.

In December 2017, the Royal Commission provided its final report in seventeen volumes. Four hundred and nine recommendations focused on three key areas: prevention and early detection; improving survivors' access to justice and



ongoing support; and improving how perpetrators are investigated, prosecuted and sentenced.

Developed with expert advice and research, the Royal Commission's ten Child Safe Standards ripple through all seventeen volumes of the final report. They set out ways that communities, institutions, governments and individuals can make institutions safer for children. They focus on ways that institutions can better prevent, identify, respond to and report child sexual abuse, ensuring that children's best interests come first.

These Child Safe Standards were endorsed by all Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in February 2019 as the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. They were also the foundation of the ten National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) published in May 2019.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards provide the framework for building a child-safe culture in every community and ministry in our diocese. They call us to be effective, accountable and transparent in our efforts to ensure the safety of children and young people in our midst. In principle, they also guide our safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

During the five years of the Royal Commission, the Catholic Church was represented by a body appointed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia: the Truth Justice and Healing Council. This Council worked as the interface between the Royal Commission and the Catholic Church and provided enormous assistance to communities and people who were required to appear before the Commission in Public Hearings. The Council became a staunch advocate for those who had been abused and gave voice to an urgent need for systemic change within Catholic institutions.

The Council enriched the thoughtful and positive contribution of the Catholic Church to the work of the Commission through research, analysis and expert submissions.

Post Royal Commission, the Bishops and Religious Leaders established a new body, Catholic

Professional Standards Limited (CPSL), to support and guide the Catholic Church in addressing the findings and recommendations of the Commission. While established by Church Leaders, CPSL operates independently. CPSL Board Directors are lay people with professional expertise in law, education, human services, safeguarding and regulation.

During 2018 CPSL developed, through extensive consultation, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, published in May 2019. CPSL continues to provide education, training and support to church bodies throughout Australia, facilitating the shared work of building a culture of safety for everyone. In addition, CPSL audits compliance with the Safeguarding Standards in all dioceses, religious orders and church organisations, publicly reporting the findings of audits. Our diocesan audit is expected to take place in the latter half of 2021.

## A History of Safeguarding in our Diocese

**In mid-February 2014 our diocese was the subject of Case Study 6 of the Royal Commission.** The focus of the public hearing involved in this case study was the response of a primary school and the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office to the conduct of Gerard Byrnes. Thirteen children were sexually abused. The official report published in January 2015 had fifteen findings. This was a time of reckoning for our schools and our diocese.

While approved Child Protection Processes had been in place in schools for many years, they and their implementation were found inadequate under the intense scrutiny of the Royal Commission. The Diocesan Catholic Education Office (now the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office) moved quickly and effectively in response.

New Student Protection Processes and Guidelines were developed. Professional development sessions for school staffs and administration were intensified. External expert personnel were employed to increase accountability and transparency.

Appropriate education, training and support were provided for parents. Awareness programs for students were enhanced. Personal safety and well-being of students came to the fore in the life of each school community.

In the course of the public hearing, it became evident that the diocese, as well as the diocesan school system, had significant matters to address. In its pastoral life, the diocese had always embraced families and children in developing parish communities. Pastoral initiatives focused on children ranged from children's liturgy of a Sunday through to youth groups, sacramental programs and many and various organized activities. Since the 1990s parishes have celebrated Child Protection Sunday each September using resources provided by the National Catholic Committee for Professional Standards. Over the years, many people have been generously involved, but often this engagement lacked transparency and accountability.

Significant developments took place in 2006. In response to direction from the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, each parish with comprehensive diocesan support developed a Child Safety Risk Management Strategy. This Strategy was revised in January 2013 and provided as before to each parish with additional resource material. In the same year, a Diocesan Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office was set up with George Keryk as the Executive Officer.

In December 2014, a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, including a Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers, was approved for use throughout the diocese. Not long after, each parish was asked to appoint a Parish Safeguarding Representative (or Contact). Training sessions were then provided for Parish Safeguarding Representatives, supplemented by online resources. Parish councils were asked to include child and vulnerable adult protection as a standing item in parish council meetings. Once again, many people have been actively involved.



While all these initiatives have been both welcome and worthwhile, the Final Report of the Royal Commission in December 2017 continues to challenge us to strengthen our commitment to child safety and to do so in more open, effective and accountable ways. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (May 2019) will be both the guide and the measure of our commitment.

## Moving forward: A Focus on Responsibility

**The diocesan office is now situated in the original Bishop's House, 73 Margaret Street.** There are three of us in the office: myself, Peter Albion part-time colleague, and Theresa Harvey invaluable part-time admin and secretarial colleague. The Safeguarding Ministry is supported and guided by a Diocesan Committee: Bishop Robert, Majella Albion, Peter Albion, Kate Venables, Tanya Machin, Pat

Nunan, Pat Coughlan, Fr John Quinlan and myself. The committee provides professional expertise in human services and counselling, education, school-based student protection, civil and canon law, psychology and pastoral experience. A primary responsibility of the committee is to prepare the diocese for the CPSL Audit, expected to take place in the latter part of 2021. We meet four times each year.

The Safeguarding and Standards Ministry places the child or vulnerable adult who has been or is being abused at the centre of its operation. At the next level, there are three areas of commitment:

- a) RESPONSE to complaints or allegations: criminal, civil, Redress, Towards Healing, or private meeting;
- b) PREVENTION through awareness, education, training, monitoring and risk management; and
- c) EXTERNAL REVIEW through the expertise and experience of external bodies: CPSL, Royal Commission,

Legislation, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, mind of the Church in Vatican II through to Francis. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are the guide and measure of our pastoral work.

Between February and June of this year, our plan is to visit each parish and each diocesan ministry, meeting with priests, parish leaders, pastoral associates, safeguarding representatives or contacts, parish council chairs and when possible attending a parish council meeting in each community. We look forward to sharing this important ministry of making all our communities not only safe for children and vulnerable adults but communities in which they may flourish.

As a diocesan ministry, we value and need your support in your local community or diocesan agency. We are all responsible for the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our diocese.

# THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS (MAY 2019):

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1.

## **Committed leadership, governance and culture:**

Child safeguarding is embedded in diocesan leadership, governance and culture

2.

## **Children are safe, informed and participate:**

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

3.

## **Partnering with families, carers and communities:**

Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safeguarding

4.

## **Equity is promoted and diversity is respected:**

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected on policy and practice

5.

## **Robust human resource management:**

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice

6.

## **Effective complaints management:**

Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, families, carers, communities and personnel

7.

## **Ongoing education and training:**

Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through information, ongoing education and training

8.

## **Safe physical and online environments:**

Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimize the opportunity for children to be harmed

9.

## **Continuous improvement:**

The Diocese regularly reviews and improves implementation of systems for keeping children safe

10.

## **Policies and procedures support child safety:**

Policies and procedures document how the Diocese is safe for children





St Vincent's Health Australia Modern Slavery Advocates for Change gather for training in Sydney.

## PARTNERSHIP CREATES ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE

ROSIE HOBAN, ACRATH

**St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) is the first healthcare organisation in Australia to embark on a training program to help key staff identify and support victims of human trafficking who present to its hospitals.** The Advocates for Change initiative is part of a wider anti-trafficking project that SVHA began in 2017 in partnership with Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH).

SVHA has recruited its first team of eight advocates from some of its 32 locations around Australia, including St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba. The advocates will also create awareness and opportunities for education among their colleagues at their sites.

Dr Mark Copland, Mission Executive at St Vincent's Private Hospital

Toowoomba, has worked for many years to combat human trafficking. Mark was inspired to become an Advocate for Change because trafficked people are "often overlooked".

"This is a practical way to support someone who has been trafficked by knowing the best support processes and correct referral pathways. An important aspect of this project is creating awareness of the issues and the understanding that human trafficking happens in regional Australia, not just in our capital cities." Mark said.

"I think a lot of us at the hospital when we look back with the knowledge we now have, recall someone who might have triggered some concerns. For example, health workers regularly assess and screen clients for family violence. People who are trafficked endure similar problems such as coercion, threats and fear of reprisals if they disclose their situation."

Ms Samantha Corrie, who is coordinating the training across SVHA, said justice was a core value for the organisation. Working to eradicate human trafficking was something staff were keen to understand and combat.

"The advocates are very proud that our organisation is working to eradicate human trafficking, particularly in the area of procurement of goods and services. But this is an opportunity for them to work at a more clinical level to influence change," Sam said.

"It's so encouraging to be working with these people who are passionate about eradicating human trafficking and who have support from the organisation and the encouragement of their colleagues."

ACRATH's Liz Payne said SVHA was spearheading anti-trafficking work in the health sector and she was confident other health providers would follow. She said SVHA embarked on the anti-trafficking project, including examining supply chains, before the Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2018 because they want to help eradicate slavery.

"It's a real privilege working with this incredibly committed team of advocates who come from a range of clinical, management and administration backgrounds. They are passionate about making life better for people who have been trafficked or who are at risk of being trafficked." Liz said.



Shirley (centre) poses for a picture with members of her Manide community outside their Tribal Hall in Camarines Norte, Philippines. Photo credit: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia

# CARITAS HIGHLIGHTS INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN

CATHERINE MCALEER

**Particularly in developing countries, women face systematic discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, control of assets and participation.**

Yet, economically empowering women often results in the benefits flowing throughout the whole community. Research has shown that women are more likely to spend their earnings on the health and wellbeing of their family by providing food, medicine and education than men are. Linked to increased female education levels are improvements in maternal and child

health, as well as infant survival rates. (Caritas . "Women and Development". Retrieved 3 February 2020. <https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/global-poverty-issues/women-and-development>)

With these statistics in mind, Caritas Australia invites us to celebrate and honour women around the world, their hopes, dreams and achievements.

Project Compassion this year highlights four women, whose stories are remarkable examples of how lives have changed through education.

Shirley is a 36 year-old Manide woman living in a remote province in the Philippines, who has overcome many challenges to become a trained health worker in her community.

Twenty-seven-year-old Phany was a struggling farmer forced to leave her daughter to take up construction work in the city. Her life has been transformed since joining a Caritas supported program, learning crop-

growing skills and better water management, to combat drought.

As an unmarried woman with a disability, Sakun was isolated and unable to earn a living until she was helped to set up a thriving kiosk. Now involved in village decision-making, Sakun's income is growing, along with her confidence.

Tawonga is a ten year-old girl living with a disability and struggling with food insecurity and discrimination in Malawi. Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed.

We encourage you to participate in International Women's Day celebrations on 8 March, as we stand in solidarity with Shirley, Phany, Sakun, Tawonga and the women and girls who have supported others on their journey. A prayer reflection for International Women's Day is also available on the Caritas website ([caritas.org.au](https://www.caritas.org.au)).



# SR MONICA CAVANAGH AWARDED MEDAL OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

KATHLEEN NORMAN,  
SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH

**Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, Sr Monica Cavanagh, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day Honours 2020 for Service to the Catholic Church of Australia.**

Sr Monica has been part of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph for nearly 50 years, having joined in 1970. Trained in education and working as a primary school teacher, Sr Monica has a natural passion for learning.

Sr Monica went on to continue her work in education across a variety of parishes and dioceses in Australia, including the Toowoomba Diocese, working with adults in the fields of faith formation and lay leadership. She is widely recognised as having changed many peoples' lives through

her teaching endeavours, her pastoral commitment and guiding people in the spiritual development of their lives. Sr Monica worked tirelessly at the time of Mary MacKillop's canonisation in preparing Australians for this important moment in our history.

"I am humbled and honoured to receive the Medal of the Order of Australia," said Sr Monica. "I look to the many women who have shown leadership in the Church and in our Congregation over the years, and in receiving this award I want to acknowledge them and the Sisters of Saint Joseph."

"I have always wanted to be of service to the wider community and draw

inspiration from my mother, who had a deep sense of leadership and community-mindedness, and my father, who always encouraged us to think about the missions. I was also inspired by Mary MacKillop and her contribution to Australia – I admire her courage, her tenacity, her resilience and her deep respect for the dignity of each person."



Sr Monica Cavanagh



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# TAKE A BREAK WITH MARY AND JULIAN

KATHLEEN NORMAN,  
SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH

Mary MacKillop Place Café and St Paul's Publications are proud to offer the latest work from Sue and Leo Kane, "A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian". Inspired by the legacies of St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, this new book invites the reader to take a moment and pause throughout the day.

The book contains a series of meditations, which can be followed according to the calendar or dipped into at random as the reader pleases. Each meditation draws insight from the wisdom from the co-founders of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, whose writings and teachings continue to resonate in the hearts of people today.

After extensive careers in Catholic education and inspired by the spiritual legacy of St Mary and Fr Julian, Sue and Leo Kane have long been inspired by the spiritual legacy of St Mary and Fr Julian, and more recently by the experience of helping raise their four grandchildren. "A Daily Cuppa with



Authors Leo and Sue Kane at the launch of "A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian".

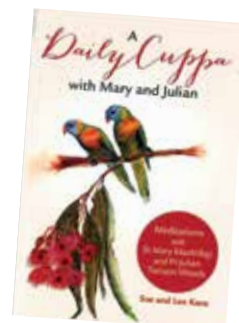
"Mary and Julian" reminds readers to remain grounded in the everyday, there is always room in our lives for a cup of tea and a moment of reflection.

"It has taken us almost three years to be able to launch this book, gathering insights to help our readers take a moment to pause, reflect and re-energise throughout the day," said Sue. "Everything within it is very close to my heart, inspired by two extraordinary spiritual leaders, and I wanted to share it with others."

In addition to reflection, the book

contains a foreword by Sr Monica Cavanagh, Leader of the Congregational Leadership Team for the Sisters of St Joseph, beautiful sketches by Judy Mitchell, and vibrant cover art by Br John Mahon FMS.

"A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian" was launched in the Tenison Room at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney in November. Copies can be purchased through the Sisters of St Joseph website [www.sosj.org.au](http://www.sosj.org.au)



## CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL UPDATE

MICHAEL PYKE

**Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) Toowoomba will be hosting a Youth Seminar on 29 August 2020.** The theme of the seminar is What is the Spirit Saying to You, based on Luke 7:14. The planning team, which includes some of our younger diocesan members, some CCR members and Fr Tom Duncan, is currently working on the many organisational requirements to get the

seminar up and going. We hope that the seminar will help our young people grow more deeply in their spiritual journey and help them identify where they can use their skills and talents in building up our church in the Toowoomba Diocese. If you would like to hear more, please contact Kim Watts on 0431 377 406

Late last year CCR Toowoomba launched a Healing Ministry. Originally meant to be a seminar it grew into a ministry offered to anyone in the diocese. The ministry was requested four times last year, catering to diverse groups from 2 to 14 people.

The ministry provides Praise and Worship of our God, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, a talk on the Healing Power of Jesus and personal Healing Prayer. It does not matter where

you live in the diocese. All you need to do is gather anyone interested in receiving healing prayer. The ministry team will come to you.

## CONTACTS

1. To know more about CCR  
**Michael Pyke** 0458 300 880  
[cctrtoowoombadiocese@outlook.com](mailto:cctrtoowoombadiocese@outlook.com)
2. Wings of Freedom Prayer Group (Sacred Heart Toowoomba)  
**Lisa Minz** (07) 4615 5218
3. Sacred Heart Prayer Group (Warwick)  
**Trish Seaby** (07) 4661 3133
4. Emmaus Prayer Group  
**Kay Hohn** 0400 436 498



Fr Rob Galea performs at the 2019 Australian Catholic Youth Festival. Photo credit: Iceberg Media

## FESTIVAL PILGRIMS CALLED TO LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT

ACBC MEDIA

**Thousands of young people from across the country converged on Perth for the 2019 Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF).**

Around 5,500 attendees spent three days in December reflecting on the biblical exhortation to “Listen to what the Spirit is saying”. The festival combines traditional and innovative approaches to help young people better understand the Catholic faith.

“The Church in the West has a long and rich history, but never before have we had the chance to celebrate the Catholic Faith with such a large

number of people,” said Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB.

Archbishop Costelloe was one of more than 30 Australian bishops, including our own Bishop Robert McGuckin, who attended ACYF. Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE, the Delegate for Youth for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said he and his brother bishops look forward to ACYF every two years.

“One of the great innovations of the festival is the Bishops’ X-Change, when we get a chance to converse

with young people on a range of important topics – building on the conversations we have locally through our schools and parishes,” he said.

During his welcome to pilgrims, Archbishop Costelloe encouraged them to bring every part of themselves to the gathering. “You are welcome here with your questions, with your hopes, with your dreams. You are welcome here with your doubts and with your fears. You are welcome here with your hesitations, and you’re welcome here with all your enthusiasms,” Archbishop Costelloe said.





Toowoomba pilgrims with Bishop Robert McGuckin visiting the Encounter Expo at ACYF

**Fr Rob Galea, a priest of the Sandhurst Diocese and a renowned singer-songwriter, used the festival's opening session to invite delegates to be open to the voice of God in their lives.** "I pray that throughout this time, as we gather here as a family, as we gather here as your people, that you give us the grace to hear you speak," Fr Galea said. "Lord, we give you the permission to mess up our plans. We want you, Jesus. We want your guidance, Holy Spirit. You can take the world; you can take everything. Give us you. Come, Holy Spirit."

In the evening plenary session, pilgrims heard humorous and faith-filled insights from Missionary of God's Love Sisters Therese Mills and Judy Bowe, who recently appeared on "The Amazing Race".

Sr Therese said they were given the opportunity to bring the Gospel message to people's lounge rooms through actions like praying at the demilitarized zone on the border of North and South Korea. That allowed them to speak with their fellow contestants, crew and the audience about their vocation and how God can work in people's lives. "If you know that you're listening to the Holy

Spirit, you can do anything with great courage that it will go well," Sr Judy said.

On day two, American speaker, evangelist and author Katie Prejean McGrady told the assembled young people, "You are truly made for not only something great, you're not only made to make an impact in this world, but ultimately you are made to have a seat in the heavenly kingdom, you are made to worship God for eternity," she said. "You, as a young person in Australia in 2019, are uniquely suited to be a witness and a voice to the goodness of God and the joy of the Gospel. You are the ones – I'm convinced of this deeply – you are the ones that can change the world."

During the morning plenary session, Fr Chris Ryan and Sr Bernadette Toohey from the Missionaries of God's Love spoke about how people can listen and be responsive to the Spirit.

Sr Bernadette spoke of the challenge of hearing the voice of the Spirit in what can be a noisy world. "There might even be a little voice in your head saying 'you can't do that', 'you're not good enough to do that'," she explained. "But I want to encourage you to ignore

that voice because that's not the voice of the Holy Spirit. The voice of the Holy Spirit is the one that says 'you can do this', 'you need to do this'."

Fr Ryan said he would never have become a priest if he hadn't chosen to surrender to the will of God. "Our plans and our agendas can sometimes get in the way of really saying 'yes' to what God wants for us. To be able to say 'yes God, I want to do whatever you want'," he said.

An open-air Mass at Trinity College in East Perth brought ACYF to a close. In his homily, Archbishop Costelloe reflected on the number of questions Jesus asks and is asked in the Gospels.

At the end of the closing Mass, Archbishop Costelloe announced that the next festival would take place in December 2021, with the bishops planning to host the event in regional Australia. "Having been to four of our five major capital cities, next time we're going to try and host ACYF in one of our rural centres," he said. "All I can say is stay tuned and start preparing already and look forward to the announcement hopefully early in the new year on where the next ACYF will be held."





Toowoomba pilgrims heading off to Perth from Brisbane Airport.

## LOCAL EXPERIENCE OF ACYF: COMING TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE FAITH

TAYLAH HOFFMAN,  
WARWICK PARISH

**During the December holidays, I was privileged to attend ACYF in Perth.** Along with 20 other eager members of the Toowoomba Diocese, we sought to grow in faith and to develop a fulfilling relationship with Christ. ACYF drew together a network of youth from diverse backgrounds, from all corners of Australia in unity to learn about and share our love for Jesus and the Catholic Church of Australia.

We began our pilgrimage to Perth a group of misfits; reserved, relatively unfamiliar with each other and entrenched with both feelings of nervousness and anticipation regarding the week ahead. However, upon

settling into our accommodation and beginning to get to know one another, it was clear that our group shared a common bond. Despite our varying levels of faith, we became united by a shared love of Christ, a passion for asking questions, seek meaningful answers and to find a sense of belonging within the church.

As the young church, we acknowledged that being Catholic youth within our modern secular society is often accompanied by its challenges. Fear of judgement, a sense of isolation in our beliefs or most notably, not connecting to the traditional tenets of Catholicism and being able to see its relevance in a modern context. However, throughout the festival, we participated in engaging workshops, reflection, reconciliation, worship and listened to keynote speakers to connect with the Catholic faith in a way that related to us. Upon walking into the festival doors for the first time, we realised that we were not alone. We shared a common faith with thousands of other like-minded youth from across Australia.

ACYF not only gave us the platform to gain a greater knowledge and understanding surrounding our faith but also gave us the courage to express our beliefs and to use our fresh

perspective to shape the future of the church. All in all, it was an eye-opening experience that made us realise that we were not isolated in our beliefs. As the young church, we have the capacity to make a difference and the power to tackle the social issues that are prominent within modern-day Australia.



Nathaniel Ryan and Bishop Robert McGuckin after the ACYF closing Mass.

# SEEDS OF CONNECTION SPROUT IN ROMA

LIZ MCALOON, HIGHWAYS  
AND BYWAYS

**A new program of activities and support to plug the gaps for those struggling will be launched in Roma during March.** “Seeds of Connection” is the inspiration of charitable foundation Highways and Byways - A Community of Service, in partnership with Megan Brown of Chandra Yoga and Wellbeing, a local business in Roma.

This initiative has its roots in 75 plus years of work supporting those who are marginalised and vulnerable, by the Missionary Sisters of Service. Highways and Byways – A Community of Service is the Sisters mission organisation charged with carrying on their impact into the future, responding to the needs of now.

“After a number of years of giving small grants into rural communities, this is

our first longer term project partnering with a local organisation, and we are delighted to be working with Megan Brown” said Liz McAloon the Executive Officer of Highways and Byways. “Megan’s centre Chandra Yoga and Wellbeing is already a welcoming and inclusive environment. This partnership will address areas such as the social isolation of older people, young people’s disengagement in the community, and those who are vulnerable through mental health challenges.”

“It is great to be a part of this project,” said Megan Brown of Chandra Yoga and Wellbeing. “I really resonate with the Sisters and Highways and Byways a lot. I feel like I hold a lot of the same values and am invested in my community as well.”

Megan’s business started as a pure yoga enterprise. Through her grassroots and welcoming approach, Megan has transformed Chandra Yoga and Wellbeing into a community centre. She is running all sorts of activities, including women’s groups, low-cost yoga sessions for older community members, youth groups and community garden activity. Megan will be mentored throughout the program by Injune community member Jenny Coggan who has a long association with the Missionary Sisters of Service.

Bishop Emeritus Bill Morris will officially launch the “Seeds of Connection” program at Chandra Yoga and Wellbeing, Roma on 20 March.



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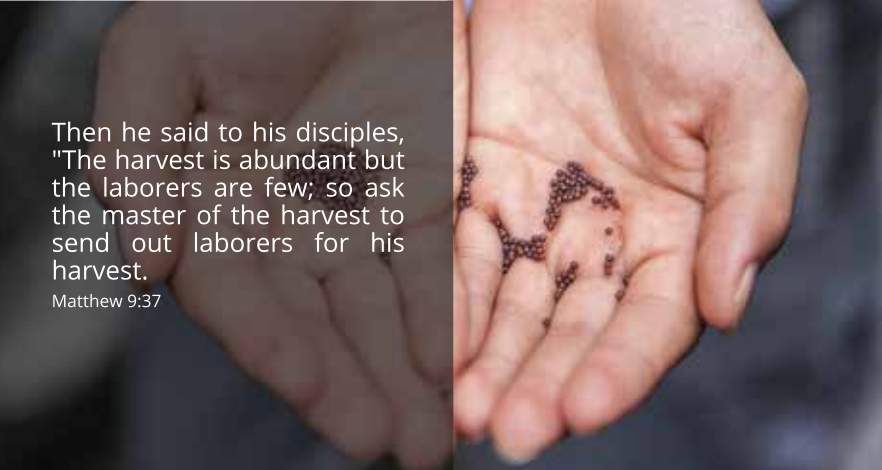
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Then he said to his disciples,  
"The harvest is abundant but  
the laborers are few; so ask  
the master of the harvest to  
send out laborers for his  
harvest."  
Matthew 9:37





# COLLABORATION WILL ENHANCE CHURCH'S DISASTER RESPONSE

ACBC MEDIA

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**A new initiative to help people and communities recover from the current bushfire crisis will set the blueprint for how the Catholic Church responds to domestic natural disasters in the future.**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and other national organisations have encouraged Catholics to donate to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal. The appeal is supporting people who have lost loved ones, homes, property and animals. Those national organisations, representing parishes, religious orders, social service agencies, schools, hospitals and aged and community care providers, have spent several weeks working collaboratively in response to the deadly bushfire season.

"Our response to the bushfires, and the drought that has exacerbated the fires, has demonstrated once again the collective power of the Catholic Church to respond to disasters in all sorts of ways," ACBC president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said. "At its core, the Catholic Church is about people, about families, about parishes, about school communities, about ministries that proclaim and live out the Gospel of Jesus. Most of those ministries are local, but there is a national – and universal – dimension of the church

that can sometimes be under-utilised."

The new national collaboration is called Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA) and will serve as a coordination point for Catholic agencies responding to natural disasters.

"We are establishing the appropriate governance, accountability and transparency measures to ensure that those who see the Church as a key responder to national emergencies know financial and practical support is going to those who need it," Dr Ursula Stephens, the CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia, said. "CERA will allow us to help people on the long road to recovery from this ongoing bushfire crisis and to mobilise as soon as our country is struck by another natural disaster – mindful that it's sadly a matter of 'when', not 'if'."

A key feature of the CERA website is the volunteer management portal. It will allow organisations to list volunteer opportunities for people looking to provide practical, material and financial support in the journey of recovery.

CERA's focus will be on domestic natural disasters, noting that Caritas Australia is the church's agency tasked with responding to emergencies overseas. Visit the CERA website at [www.cera.catholic.org.au](http://www.cera.catholic.org.au)







Fond farewell. L to R: Tom Jolley, Kathy Herden, Kathy Bizzell and Bishop Robert McGuckin.

## GIVING THANKS FOR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION

INGRID MCTAGGART

**In late December, the Diocesan Finance Office and wider diocesan staff community said thank you and farewell to a longtime staff member, Mrs Kathy Herden. Staff gathered**

for afternoon tea to celebrate Kathy's contribution to the life of the diocese for over 13 years. As Diocesan Accountant, her work was often behind the scenes, but parishes and the diocese at large have experienced the positive effects.

During the farewell, Financial Administrator, Mr Tom Jolley echoed the thanks of those gathered and paid tribute to Kathy's work. "It is with sadness that we send you on your way to the next big adventure in life, but also with gratitude that you have been a part of our daily lives for all of these years," he said. "You have been a wonderful workmate for us all, bringing a confident self-assurance to every issue that we have had to deal

with. You have given excellent service to the diocese as you helped us meet the challenges of our work. The quality of your work is clear, and your expert hand is visible wherever we look."

Kathy will be enjoying some much-deserved downtime with husband, Roger. A parting gift of a crystal vase was given to Kathy with Tom quipping that it will be Roger's responsibility to keep it stocked with her favourite flowers.

As part of the celebration, Mrs Sonya Lynch was welcomed into the role of Diocesan Accountant. Sonya will be a familiar face to many as she continues her long, positive and competent service to the diocese in a variety of roles.



Betty

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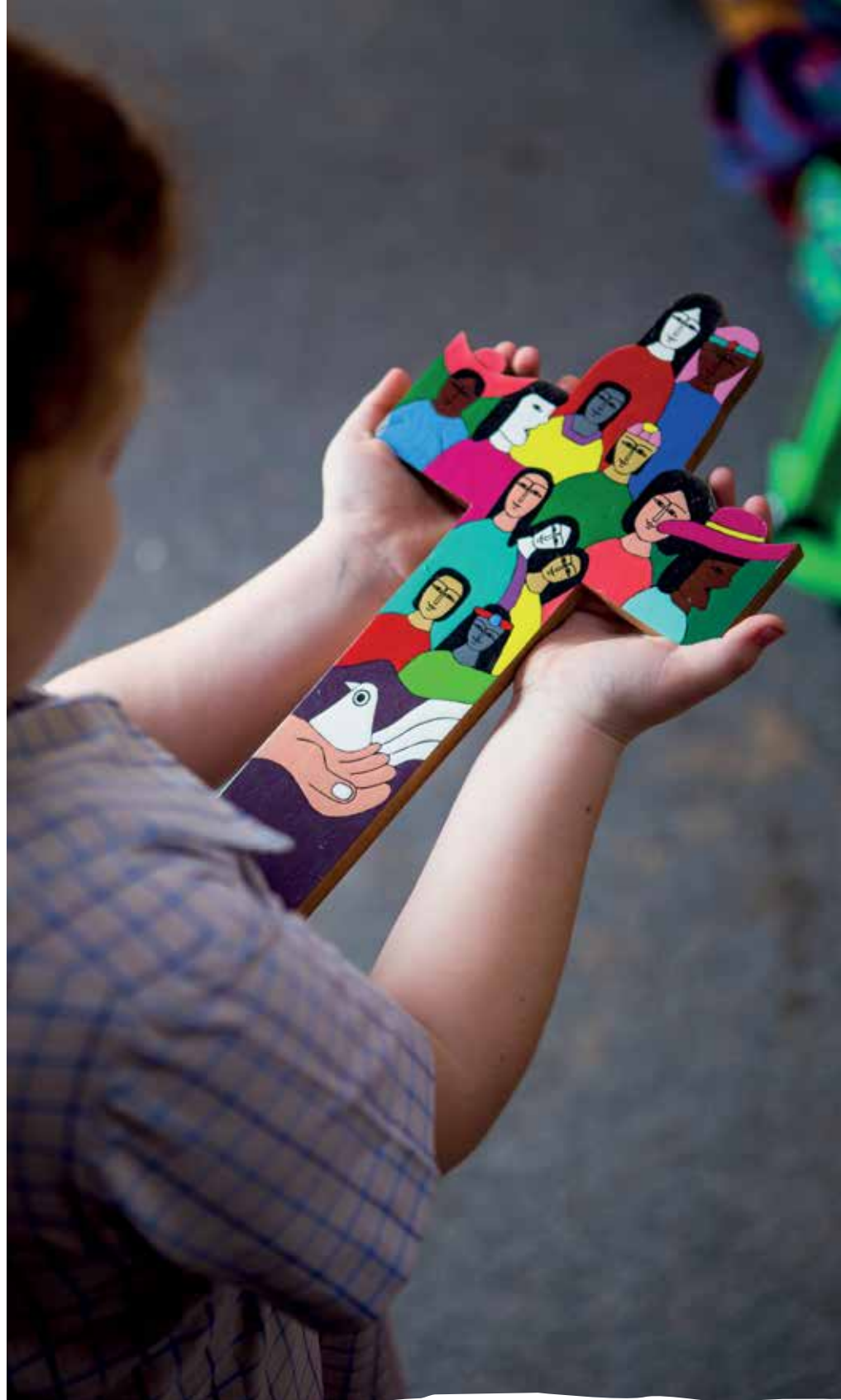
# WHAT DO “SCHOOLS THAT DELIVER” DELIVER?

DR PAT COUGHLAN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**This question was posed in a book I read recently entitled “Schools that Deliver”.** It is worth thinking about because the answer to that question is at the core of all successful and effective schools. All schools function, not all deliver. Parents look for schools that can deliver and the most important deliverable consistently cited by parents since 2006 is “preparation of students to fulfil their potential in later life”. (What Parents Want, 2019)

Parents have a strong desire to entrust their child’s education to a community which is securely based on explicit, lifegiving values and practices and can deliver a world-class education which nurtures and stretches their child’s unlimited potential. Catholic schools are well placed to meet both of these requirements, providing a world-class education within a distinctly Catholic environment. As a system of schools, we are becoming better at articulating and incorporating relevant and practical rituals, programs and practices which speak confidently to the current generation of students about Christian beliefs and values. Students are able to see and experience the connection and relevance of these beliefs and values to their life experiences and prevailing culture. We are also seeing enhanced student learning resulting from agreed and explicit school and system-wide pedagogical approaches evident in every school. Schools that deliver these outcomes are highly sought after by families.

In the Toowoomba Diocese, the general decline in regional and remote communities due to prolonged drought is being felt acutely within many of our communities. In spite of the hardship which this causes to families, there remains strong confidence in Catholic schools to deliver a world-class education for all students. Principals,



St Patrick’s School, Allora

leadership teams and staff in Catholic schools share a strong commitment to high standards of learning, behaviour, attendance, dress and care, all of which come together in the preparation of students to lead lives of distinction and contribute meaningfully to their world. The commitment of all Catholic schools to be exemplary in these areas is our mission and the foundation to enrolment sustainability and growth.

I extend a warm welcome to all new and continuing families who have chosen a Catholic education for their child/ren, and new and continuing staff who have chosen a career with Catholic education. I trust that this new year lives up to your highest expectations and through the inevitable challenges and triumphs you experience the advantages and sense of joy that receiving or delivering a world-class Catholic education brings.



Celebrating change of name and change of direction. GSC staff and students with Dr Pat Coughlan (centre, left) and Bishop Robert McGuckin (centre, right).

## CHANGE OF DIRECTION FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING CENTRE

**The Good Samaritan College was opened and blessed by Bishop Robert McGuckin, Bishop of Toowoomba with Dr Patrick Coughlan, Executive Director: Catholic Schools on 14 February.** The college was formerly known as the Youth and Community Learning Centre (YCLC).

YCLC began in 2001 as a social justice initiative of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, with a focus to educate young people who were not attending

mainstream schooling. The centre ran buses to transport high school aged people, from around Toowoomba to the campus to be fed, clothed and educated.

Since 2001 the centre has undergone several improvements and developments. A significant change has been moving from experiential learning opportunities to more formalised and personalised learning journeys for each person.

The centre has been re-branded as the Good Samaritan College (GSC). GSC thrives within its contemporary vision of individualised learning pathways, utilising the strengths of its young people to ensure their success. The college applies the lens of compassion to each interaction with young people and their families, and the wider community, to achieve well-being goals.

The name Good Samaritan was chosen to acknowledge the Good Samaritan

Sisters who founded a school, Our Lady Help of Christians in 1957, on the grounds where the college is now located. The school was run to ensure that the children of Toowoomba, and Harlaxton in particular, were provided with an education that catered for their spiritual, emotional, physical, psychological and social needs.

“As we look to the future, we enliven and carry forward their message, ‘Go and do likewise!’. We recognise those in need as the Good Samaritan did and strive to grow together with our core values of community, curiosity, courage and above all, compassion. Our tagline ‘success through industry’ describes what the college community is all about - success through hard work and perseverance, craftsmanship, academic achievement and application, traineeships and apprenticeships and connections with the local community,” said Liisa Hammond, college principal.

“The Seminary that educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate in the sensitivity of being a shepherd.”



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# AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS RECOGNISE GOOD DEEDS ACROSS THE DIOCESE

## Macie and Will McNulty - St Mary's School, Goondiwindi

Macie and Will McNulty were recently recognised as Young Citizens of the Year at Goondiwindi Regional Council's Australia Day Ceremony. Macie and Will are two students from St Mary's School, Goondiwindi who are in Year 5 and 3 respectively. Macie (Mooch) and Will (Wombat) came up with the idea to bottle some of the dirt from their property and sell it to raise money for bush kids.

The Mooch and Wombat Dustillery raised money to buy Christmas presents for children in areas affected by the drought. The dirt was presented in beer bottles with a handmade

label, "Once in a lifetime millennial drought bulldust - SuperDry".

In 14 days, Will and Macie sold around 1,500 bottles with 1,310 donated back for resale. They have raised \$8,000 and still going. They purchased 307 presents for bush kids and travelled 1,640km to deliver them. With leftover funds they were able to buy back to school stationery for bush kids.

What started as a fundraiser with family and friends during the school holidays, has resulted in an incredible journey.

## Darryl Betzein - St Patrick's School, Mitchell

Mr Darryl Betzein's years of service to the community earned him the prestigious title of Citizen of the Year, at Mitchell's Australia Day awards.

"To say I feel humble is probably the easiest way to put it because there is no other word," Darryl said. "You do what you're doing for the community because you enjoy it, and that is why I get involved."

During 14 years of living in Mitchell, Darryl has focused on his community. He has

used his formidable camp oven cooking skills for countless fundraisers and kept the grounds looking immaculate at St Patrick's School. Darryl has also been a driving force on the school's P&C and run ANZAC Day services in Mitchell, Mungallala and Amby through the RSL, of which he is currently president.

In between part-time work at St Patrick's School, where the kids know him as Mr Darryl, he has expanded his volunteer role to do something very special for the kids. "Last year I started the recycling scheme "The Containers for Change", and we have put over \$4,000 in cans through that," he said. "That money will be going back through the school, to help build a playground which they would like. So far, the recycling scheme has been a great financial boost to the school, but at the end of the day, I do it for the kids."

## Emma Kingdom - Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields

Emma Kingdom is a teacher at Mary MacKillop Catholic College who was recently named the Highfields Young Citizen of the Year. Emma was recognised for her strong sense of responsibility, incredible work ethic and humility.

Emma's support for young people goes beyond the requirements of her role, and the relationships she has fostered with her colleagues and parents is nothing short of incredible.

In her spare time, Emma regularly attends Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish, Highfields and plays hockey. Last year she coached the junior girls' division 2 hockey team, where her love of the sport and mentorship was valued and appreciated by club members and her team.

A talented sportswoman, Emma was captain of the Newtown A2 women's team and was voted Best and Fairest in 2019. She also received the Newtown Hockey Club's award for most consistent female player. Her peers have described Emma as a remarkable young woman.



Macie and Will McNulty receiving their Young Citizens of the Year Award in Goondiwindi.



New leaders 2020. L to R: Simon Fleming, Jim Brennan, Casey Sly, Dr Pat Coughlan, Emily Perry, Paul Herbert and Martyn Savage.

## NEW LEADERS FOR 2020

In addition to 52 new teaching staff for 2020, Toowoomba Catholic Schools has six new leaders. The office welcomes four new principals and two new Senior Education Leaders.

Ms Casey Sly is already well known to the St Maria Goretti School, Inglewood community as a valued colleague and classroom teacher. Casey's teaching skill was acknowledged as the 2018 recipient of an "Excellence in Teaching Award for Early Career Teachers" award. She was also nominated for the 2018 Queensland College of Teachers "Excellence in Beginning to Teach" Award.

Casey began her teaching career at St Mary's School, Goondiwindi and in 2017 moved to St Maria Goretti School, Inglewood. Casey recently enjoyed successful Acting Principal experience while her predecessor was on leave last year. Casey impressed the interview panel with her passion for the community of Inglewood and her leadership of teaching and learning. "This year, I strive to cultivate a climate of trust and respect at St Maria Goretti by building on positive relationships with my staff, students, parents, parish and school community." Said Casey.

Ms Emily Perry has several years teaching experience in our diocesan schools at Cunnamulla, Clifton and

Mitchell. Emily has completed a Master's Degree in Education (Leadership and Management) and a Bachelor of Education (Primary) with First Class Honours, both from the Queensland University of Technology. Emily also has a Graduate Certificate in Religious Education from the Australian Catholic University and was the recipient of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools "Excellence in Leadership — Middle Leadership" award in 2018.

Emily is looking forward to continuing the excellent school improvement work at St Patrick's School, Mitchell as principal.

"The aim is to boost our students' achievements in mathematics," Emily said. "It is teaching students maths in a way that is appropriate for the 21st century: moving away from the traditional memorisation approach to maths, getting the students to relate mathematical concepts to what they already know, and find different ways of solving a single problem."

Mr Simon Flemming had previously been appointed as Deputy Principal of Assumption College, Warwick beginning January 2020. However, Simon will now fill the role of Acting Principal following the appointment of principal, Mr Kort Goodman, to the position of Principal at St Joseph's College, Toowoomba.

Simon was Acting Principal at St Joseph's School, Barraba last year on secondment from O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale where he had been on staff since 1986. In that time, he

has held a variety of roles including his most recent as Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator. Simon's teaching areas are History, Geography, Legal Studies and Religious Education.

The process of recruitment of a new Principal for Assumption College will begin shortly. In the interim, Simon is supported by the College's leadership team.

Mr Jim Brennan has 28 years' experience in a variety of educational settings including Glendon, Emerald, Roma, Oakey and Toowoomba. Jim was most recently the Senior Deputy Principal at Centenary Heights State High School, Toowoomba. Here he played a significant and integral role in its development into one of the top-performing schools in the state. Throughout his career, he has been highly regarded as a passionate and exceptional teacher.

Jim's vision for his principalship at St John's School, Roma is "to continue the well-established culture that exists and to lead an engaging school community working collaboratively with key stakeholders to achieve continuous improvement for students, staff and the community."

Jim and his family are looking forward to re-establishing their connections with Roma.

Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office also welcomes Mr Martyn Savage as Senior Education Leader and Mr Paul Herbert as Acting Senior Education Leader.



# EDUCATION IN BRIEF



As the new school year begins, teachers and students have returned to St Mary's School, Charleville. This year we have welcomed Ms Kate Box as our prep teacher and Ms Jemma Carlyon as our year one teacher. Life has returned to the school grounds, not just with the children, but also with the rain. The grounds now a pleasant shade of green. As a parish, we welcomed the teachers back at our Sunday Mass blessing the teachers. Joining teachers from St Mary's were also two teachers from Charleville State High School. We wish them all well for the coming year.



The students of Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba started the school year by celebrating the induction of new school leaders in the opening Mass on 7 February. Year six students received their leadership badges and announced their

commitment to the Holy Name community with a promise statement. There is much that they will learn and contribute to the school during the year in their leadership roles. Thank you to Fr Darrell Irvine for celebrating the Mass and also parents

and parishioners for supporting the students as they take on the additional responsibility of leadership this year. Year six students with their teacher Mr David Anderson, Parish Priest Fr Darrell Irvine and Principal Mrs Kathy Bliss.



# GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY STEM CUP WIN FOR ST MARY'S

TYHLA LARKIN

**St Mary's College, Toowoomba has been named the STEM state champions after winning Griffith University's first-ever STEM Cup Super-Final in November 2019.**

Congratulations to the students who worked incredibly hard to take out the prize after heated rounds of competition between 200 teams from 71 South East Queensland schools.

Griffith Sciences' STEM Cup was a long-running competition for school students in years 5 to 8. Students competed in weekly challenges each term to solve science, technology, engineering and mathematics problems.

The top three teams from each age division in the regional grand finals competed in the STEM Cup Super-Final at Griffith's Nathan Campus. State Minister for Environment, the Honourable Leanne Enoch MP, presented the awards to the winners.



L to R: Dr Wayne Williams, Nathanael Jorgenson, Yanojan Navaneethan, Tayt Qualischefski and Mr Peter Horton.

Before the awards presentation, the grand final teams competed in STEM challenges including designing an automated farm gate and drone rock collecting. St Mary's College's team, named "Joergen Smoergen", performed exceptionally well securing first place over St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace's team by over 200 points.

STEM is about engaging children's passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics by taking what they learn at school and putting it into real-life scenarios.

College principal, Mr Michael Newman said the competition encourages the boys to develop collaboration, higher order thinking and problem-solving skills by exploring challenges for

themselves and being creative. "We look forward to another successful year for the students at St Mary's College in the field of STEM," he said.

St Mary's College is always looking for opportunities to integrate STEM learning. In June 2020, they will host the Youth, Entrepreneurs and STEM Conference. Michael further commented that the goal of this conference is to inspire, empower and ignite students and their teachers to be innovative, creative and entrepreneurial using the thinking involved in STEM. Mr Newman said that the goal of this conference is to inspire, empower and ignite students and their teachers to be innovative, creative and entrepreneurial using the thinking involved in STEM.



Years 5 - 12



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## BUDGETING LESSON FILLED WITH LOVE

SUELLEN DENNIS

**Year 4 students from St Stephen's School, Pittsworth participated in a Moneysmart unit entitled "How Much Love can fit into a Shoebox?".**

Students learned about money management, saving and budgeting. Over weeks, they earned money at home doing odd jobs and kept a record of their earnings. With this money, they teamed up with a friend to create a Shoeboxes of Love. Teams were paired with a child, who with the help of St Vincent de Paul Toowoomba, had been identified as being part of a family in need of assistance at Christmas-time.

After planning and researching ideas for their shoeboxes, students, their teacher Mrs Suellen Dennis and some



Money management lesson fills shoeboxes with love for Pittsworth students.

willing parent helpers, set off to the local Pittsworth shops to buy their items. Each box had a budget of \$30 and had to include something from the following categories: clothing, toys, personal hygiene, school materials, something special and something to love. The local vendors were very supportive of the whole process, willingly helping the children with their purchases.

After an hour's shopping, with items secured, the excited children headed back to school

to show off their purchases.

Students placed all their items in their boxes. Year 5 students helped to wrap the boxes and write cards for the recipients.

Everyone agreed that the whole process was a worthwhile exercise and they had learnt so much along the way about money and budgeting while doing something special for another family at Christmas.





Lighting the College candles: Tom Field (Year 12), Oliver Lloyd-Jones (Year 7), Jewel Bedford (Year 12) and Lettie Costigan (Year 4). Photo credit: Ian Spence

## INVESTITURE MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ANNE MCATOMNEY

**The Downlands College, Toowoomba community came together in joyful celebration during our Investiture Mass of the Holy Spirit on 31 January.**

At the commencement of the Mass, two Year 12 students entered the liturgy space accompanied by a Year 4 and Year 7 student, and together they lit

the College candle as well as candles for the beginning cohorts of Year 4 and Year 7. In keeping with College tradition, all elected College student leaders and all senior students were presented with their badges on this occasion.

In an act symbolising the call of leaders to humble service, and in the presence of invited guests, staff, students and their families, College Principal Mr Stephen Koch washed the feet of the student leaders, while all staff gathered to sing "The Servant Song". During the homily which followed, Fr Bob Irwin MSC, Head of MSC Education, thanked the student leaders for having the courage to step forward in readiness to show the way in serving others,

and encouraged all students and staff to develop the necessary self-awareness to know what one needs to make the year fruitful and fulfilling.

The 2020 student leadership team hopes to build on the legacy of those who have gone before them as they uphold the strong sense of family and community spirit at the College.

Each and every student was encouraged to draw strength and inspiration from the College community and to embrace the 2020 College theme "Flourish in Gifts and Grace" as they develop a sense of truth, goodness and beauty, and so be ready to go out and make a difference in the world.





St Joseph's School Stanthorpe's current class of year 12s with "The Last Supper" sculpture.

## SCULPTURE CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION

ANDREW KENDALL

**Late last year St Joseph's School Stanthorpe completed work on "The Last Supper", an outdoor reflective and learning space on the school grounds.**

This area is a teaching space, a quiet spiritual space, a space to bring students and adults to sit, reflect and wonder, and hopefully connect with God and the world around them. It is a space that highlights our Catholic identity.

"The Last Supper" is a sculpture of Jesus, sitting at the table breaking bread and sharing wine. It symbolises community, all are welcome at the table, and reminds all of the important Gospel values.

The sculpture is by world-renowned Canadian sculptor Timothy P Schmalz. His works focus on religious figures, and he is devoted to creating artwork that glorifies Christ, describing his sculptures as being visual prayers. Timothy has presented his works to the Pope, with many of his sculptures on display around the world.

Being part of the Granite Belt, granite was selected for the table and chairs which were professionally constructed by JH Wagner & Sons in Toowoomba.

"The Last Supper" is meant to be a space shared by all. In this respect, St Joseph's School Stanthorpe acknowledges the

multi-denominational support of the leaders of the local churches in helping to get the project completed. The school is looking forward to inviting Bishop McGuckin and Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director of Toowoomba Catholic Schools, to the blessing of work.

Since its completion "The Last Supper" has become a local attraction in the Stanthorpe community with local and out of town visitors admiring this beautiful setting. The graduating Seniors of 2019 were certainly very excited to get their photos taken around the setting and teachers enjoy holding classes in the space.



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St Joseph's School Stanthorpe's preppies all smiles with Sgt Daniel O'Dea.

## PREPPIES WELCOMED AT STANTHORPE

STACEY COLTHUP

**On 29 January, St Joseph's School Stanthorpe welcomed 27 prep students as they commenced their journey into their formal schooling in a Christian-based learning environment.**

There were big smiles, and a few nervous tears as the students farewelled their families and commenced their first day with play, songs and get-to-know-you games. As the day progressed, the classroom became a hive of activity, with students very curious to explore their new environment. A particular highlight

of the day was when the students received their new yellow prep hats at a special assembly. The bright caps are given to prep students, so all students and staff can easily identify who they are and know to look out for them.

Sgt Daniel O'Dea, the school's Adopt-a-Cop, also paid a visit to the students. Sgt O'Dea helped present the prep students with their caps and introduced himself.

The teachers and staff at St Joseph's have shared time getting to know

each one of our newest students and their families. We have been very proud of their progress and enthusiastic participation during their first weeks of prep, with all students taking it in their stride.

We look forward to inspiring life-long learners and hope that the prep students enjoy a sense of belonging to the church, parish and wider community throughout their journey at Joey's.





L to R: Ms Emma Timmins, Dr Judy Smeed, Mr Brett Pollard, Ms Sharon Collins, Hon. Enterprise Professor Maxine McKew, Dr Pat Coughlan and Ms Emily Perry

## SCHOOLS SHARE MERCY STORY

LINDA CREEDON

**On 24 January St Saviour's College Toowoomba hosted a Mercy Day, a spiritual formation day where schools come together for learning and prayer.** This Mercy Day is the second the College has hosted, now marked in our calendar as an annual event.

This year the theme was "The World of Mercy... Exploring Catherine's Global

Impact". To share the experience, we welcomed five schools: St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba; St Mary's School, Warwick; St Mary's School, Goondiwindi; St Patrick's School, Mitchell and Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba.

Guest speakers included the Honourable Enterprise Professor Maxine McKew, Dr Judy Smeed, Chair of SSC Parent Engagement Network, and Dr Kate Hall, Year Level Coordinator, Loreto College, Brisbane. Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office and St Saviour's College Principal, Ms Sharon Collins welcomed our visitors from across the diocese.

Our assembled guests were treated to a

video on the life of Catherine McAuley, "Catherine's Life - In God Alone" released in 2019. Via video link we heard from Mary McAleese, the former President of the Republic of Ireland, and Mercy Sister, Sr Angela Reed who is currently based at the UN in New York.

The afternoon sessions consisted of workshop choices, and at the end of the day, we assembled as the Principals from our guest schools drew together the threads of the day.

It was a great opportunity to connect with our fellow Mercy educators. It was also an opportunity to unpack the influence Catherine McAuley has on each of us as we live our Mercy story.

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The prep classes at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby line up to ring the Journey Bell.

## JOURNEY BELL RINGS IN THE NEW FOR DALBY

SARAH LILBURNE

**The Journey Bell, so named because of the school's motto 'Journey in Faith and Knowledge', was left as a legacy by the 2019 senior cohort at the graduation Mass at the end of last year.** These seniors were the first to ring the bell, marking the end of their journey at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby.

College Captain, Laura May was instrumental in bringing together classmates to discuss how they could leave their mark at the college. She recalls how they all agreed their gift needed to be useful and memorable, not something that didn't add to the school or that people would walk by without giving a second thought.

The cohort had plenty of ideas, including a mural for the prep building. This creation was put together by year 12 with prep students, now visible from Nicholson Street for all to enjoy. Laura couldn't recall who's idea the Journey Bell was, but as soon as it was mentioned, the whole group agreed it was a perfect idea, something that would become a tradition for years to come.

Mr Peter Cuskelly, Principal, and Mr Matt Hodge, Assistant Principal Senior Years, began the search for the perfect bell. It was discovered that church buildings no longer in use will sometimes sell or get rid of their bell. Each student in the 15 strong cohort pitched in, and the Journey Bell purchase was made.

"Despite it being a simple process, the message and tradition is super meaningful. I hope that other students look forward to starting their journey with the ringing of the bell and then celebrating their achievements and the end of their journey at the

college with our legacy," Laura said.

We heard the bell ring many times in Week 1 as new students began their journey in faith and knowledge as a student at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College. Both prep classes visited the plaza and lined up to ring the bell, and other groups and individuals stepped forward for their turn. It is now a unique and special ritual at our college. The tolling of the bell, although not always seen, can be heard around the campus, letting people know that someone new has joined our community.



Harrison Quinlan starts year 12 this year



# BRIEF PARISH NEWS

St Mary's Parish, Charleville celebrated a Family Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve, led by Fr Warren Padilla. Mrs Kirsty Lines from St Mary's School said that the mass was well attended. Fr Warren's message for the children was "Jesus is more important than Santa Claus", what a fantastic message! Kirsty also taught the children some Christmas Carols to perform. St Mary's dedicated Vietnamese community organised this year's beautiful nativity setting.



Six students from St John's School, Roma graduated after a six-session training period as novice altar servers. The graduation came just before the school's end of year Mass. Each server was presented with a new Cross made by the Roma Community Men's Shed and blessed by Fr Jamie Collins. The training co-ordinator was David Bowden, a member of the Parish Liturgy Group.

To reach out into the digital world and evangelise through more current mediums of communication, Sacred Heart Parish, Toowoomba launched a new website and social media. The site, [sacredheartparish.com.au](http://sacredheartparish.com.au), features Mass times, important dates (including this year's Sacramental Program dates), weekly bulletins, parish ministries/groups, contacts and more. Development of the website began in September 2019 and went live in November. The parish also joined Facebook and Instagram, like and follow @SacredHeart.Tba. The website and social media pages are regularly administrated, updated and monitored by the parish's Website & Social Media Team. (Photo credit: James Webb)







Eulo parishioners gather after a Sunday Mass.



Liliana Pike (centre) with her brothers during her baptism at Thargomindah.

Family and friends gathered near Thallon to celebrate the baptism of Ollie Peter Hill in November 2019.



Our God is not a God of the dead but the living! The parishioners of St George-Dirranbandi parish, covering the communities of St George, Dirranbandi, Hebel, Bollon and Thallon, gather each year in November at their local cemeteries for the Mass of the faithful departed.







Launching "Davadi: Fruit, Wine and Religion" (L to R): Fr Chris Hanlon, Ian and Josie Bonaccorso and their daughter Anne, Bishop Bill Morris and Fr Brian Connolly.

## HISTORY LIVES ON

SELINA VENIER

**He'd returned to his birthplace for a unique weekend.** It wasn't to mark Australia Day the usual way but to celebrate more than five years of research into a man who'd become a kin to pastor and friend even though they'd never met.

Ian Bonaccorso, born and bred in Stanthorpe Parish, first travelled in 2014 to the Italian town of Montecarotto to the birthplace of Fr Jerome Davadi to delicately add truth and meaning to the book, "Davadi: Fruit, Wine and Religion".

His travel from Brisbane to Stanthorpe for the Australia Day long weekend with wife Josie, daughter Anne and a host of other visitors was to officially launch the book and mark the 120th anniversary of the death of Fr Davadi on 22 January

1900, the first priest-in-charge of the parish from 1874.

Ian, Stanthorpe Parish Priest Fr Brian Connolly and Brisbane historical expert Fr Chris Hanlon all commented on "the bridge" that exists between the two parishes. A congratulatory video from the pastor and parishioners of Montecarotto aired during the launch.

"The day was an absolute success," Ian said over a cuppa on the Monday public holiday, the day after the launch. The event included Mass, an abundant morning tea, book signing and pilgrimage to the local cemetery to pray at Fr Davadi's grave and that of Sister of Mercy, Mary Muredach Ford who died in 1875. Several Sisters of Mercy were present.

"There's still a strong feeling for Fr Davadi," Ian said, adding that the project was "germinated by the Holy Spirit".

Fr Hanlon and Ian had developed a special bond in the book's planning, compilation and publishing with camaraderie and a shared interest in history evident as the cuppa continued.

Fr Connolly described the book as "meticulously researched" and a reminder of the debt of gratitude "to pioneer priests, Sisters of Mercy and the loyal, generous and faithful parishioners who established the parish and the parish school".

"It is our role and responsibility, in very different times and with different challenges, to continue to live and





Author Ian Bonaccorso signs books after Mass.

proclaim the Good News today," Fr Connolly said. "From today, a new bridge has been built that connects our communities, as we strive to ensure that Fr Davadi's life and deeds live on."

Many interested in the life, death and ministry of Fr Davadi, registered as Davado in historical records, believe there is a cause for his canonisation. "There was something truly heroic about Fr Davadi's death," Fr Hanlon said of the brain tumour that took his life.

When he first mentioned the idea of sainthood to those in Montecarotto, Ian said they were "already talking about it", adding, "Fr Davadi was a man before his time. He was evangelical. Fr Brian and the parish need to start looking at cause for canonisation."

Heather Danaher (Vichie) travelled from Ipswich to be at the launch.

Her family were closely linked with Fr Davadi as her grandfather bought the convent built by the pastor, moving it to the base of Mt Marlay.

"That became the family home, and it was handed down to my father (Frank Vichie) to become my family home," Heather said.

On 26 January at the book launch, Heather said she had plans to visit the home, now partly rebuilt on nearby Sugarloaf Road "and painted pink".

"It's so nostalgic to think that it is still maintained and loved," she said.

To contact Ian or order the book "Davadi: Fruit, Wine and Religion" (\$35), email [bonastar@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bonastar@bigpond.net.au)

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Current altar servers L to R: Jack Bidgood, Will and Henry Cleary and Jorja Caldwell.

## ALTAR SERVERS QUIET ACHIEVERS FOR HIGHFIELDS PARISH

PATTI MCNAUGHT

**In every parish, some wonderful people come forward to be part of our church ministries.** These people are vital and often have recognition at a special time each year. Still, there is one particular group of little people who are always there every Sunday at Mass. These young boys and girls are our quiet achievers, part of our altar server ministry.

Mary of the Southern Cross Parish, Highfields has involved young people as altar servers for many years. At the James Byrne Centre Chapel Fr Terry Hickling supported the participation of young people as servers. Around 2004, there were some 20 children aged from six

to twelve years who were actively involved in Masses as servers. At that time we were a Mass Centre for the Crow's Nest Parish celebrating Mass each Saturday evening.

When Fr Jack Peard arrived, he also encouraged young people to be servers. We did, however, go through a period where there was a lull in the number of children available. With the establishment of the Mary MacKillop School in Highfields, there was a further call for young people to take a more active role in the Mass.

Fr Brian Noonan, our current priest, encourages the altar servers with his excellent natural way of dealing with all the young ones of our parish.

Recruits have been trained by Tony Worner, who took up the task five years ago when he and his family arrived in Highfields. The intention is that each year as children make their First Communion, they are encouraged to enlist in the altar server ministry. With Tony and his family returning to Port Macquarie, there has not been a replacement for him at this stage. However, the present altar servers are well trained and are competent enough to take up their role with ease. To all our quiet achievers, thank you for contributing to making our Mass something special and thanks to their parents who allow them to do so.

# FAREWELL FOR WELL LOVED FAMILY

PATTI MCNAUGHT

It was with much sadness that our parish bid farewell to the **Worner Family; Tony, Justine, Gretel, Elliott and George.** Their last Mass celebrated with us was on 12 January, with the whole family involved in their various ministries. The family have moved back to Port Macquarie. Tony, Justine and the children have all contributed to Mary of the Southern Cross Parish, Highfields in some way over the past five years. It has been a pleasure to have them as a part of our community.

It was fitting that we celebrate our time with this family and say



Fr Brian Noonan blesses the Worner family as they farewell Highfields

goodbye officially. During Mass, Fr Noonan gave the family a special blessing. After Mass, the parish organised a morning tea picnic at Peacehaven Park where each person brought some goodies to share with tea and coffee.

We thank the Worner family for their invaluable contributions to our parish, especially the input to the liturgy, cooking for the homeless and to the children as altar servers. Every good wish for your future happiness together.

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Attendees at this year's Immaculata Mission School.

## MISSION SCHOOL FOCUSSES ON FAITH FELLOWSHIP AND LOVE OF GOD

CHRISTINA DORE

**The Immaculata Mission School is a 10-day retreat for young people and families seeking to grow in their faith, love of God and fellowship with like-minded people.** Started by the Sisters of the Immaculata, from Tasmania, the Mission School, has been held in Toowoomba for the past two years.

Held from 1-10 January at the Glennie School, the Immaculata Mission School accepts people from all walks of life. Some have had radical conversions from attending the Mission School; others have been practising Catholics for a long time. Many young people's lives have been deeply changed by attending this retreat by truly encountering the

love of God. For myself, I participated at the Immaculata Mission School in 2019 and encountered God through Mass and Eucharistic adoration. I felt like my eyes were opened to how much God really loved me and wanted a relationship with me.

The Mission School includes talks by incredible speakers, including Dr Ralph Martin, James Parker, Paul Elarde and Jess Leach. The speakers all have broad experiences and cover a lot of ground with topics such as the meaning of life, evangelisation, spiritual life, theology of the body, the Eucharist, Marian devotion and life in the Holy Spirit, all grounded in Scripture and Church teaching.

Every day began with a time of prayer and adoration, which many agreed was a highlight, spending time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. There were also regular share groups, where people would talk to each other and a group leader about questions, experiences or anything, which was a great bonding experience. It was a great place to learn to grow in charity, as everyone is called to love one another, and many friendships have come from this experience.

The Immaculata Mission School is a life-changing experience, and I recommend it to anyone who is seeking to grow in their relationship with God and go deeper with Him.

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The baptism of twin sisters, Amana and Valentina, was another opportunity to reflect on exuberance of children.

## ALL FOR THE CHILDREN

SR MAUREEN ANDREWS

**Under the watchful eye of The Cunnamulla Fella at the shire hall, we gathered for the community event of the year.** The annual Christmas draw attracted families hoping to win sizable vouchers which would be helpful over the holiday period. There was great excitement. Children were running around with retractable plastic swords which lit up, and I could only marvel at their exuberance. A couple of little girls kept rolling down the gentle slope of the lawn. "Ah, what the heck", said their parents. Such freedom!

There were many events during the final weeks of school where the children's enthusiasm again touched us. The whole school was involved in the play "The Pirates of the Curry Bean" which was directed by Ms Emily Conlin, a teacher of the upper classes. Parents made an effort to come for their children with laughter and a sense of pride filling the school hall. It was quite noticeable when all the school assembled on stage and sang the songs.

The second time was when the school gathered to sing Christmas

carols. Such a simple service as we sat on the lawn or folding chairs and sang the old familiar songs and learnt some new ones. The little girl standing in front of me in her dress of many colours danced as she sang. Ms Carla Mills, Tuckshop Co-ordinator extraordinaire, organised cheese platters and I guarantee it would be hard to find any better.

A nine-year-old boy from Morayfield visited the school. He was raising money through a Facebook page to assist people in need. Money raised came from collecting bottles. The school was donated a garden bed and bags of soil, and there were games for the children, books and many more. When asked whether he would continue with this project, he answered that it was worth seeing the smile on people's faces when they received their gifts. This project began after asking his parents for a new bike, and his mother insisted that he raise the money. So, after purchasing his bike, he decided to help others. What dedication as his parents became involved through driving

him around to collect the bottles.

The baptism of twins on a property situated along the Burke road was another opportunity to learn from children. The twin's two cousins were present and eager to assist. The seven-year-old boy read the prayers of the intercession and even added one in which he prayed for rain.

The final event that was very touching was at a funeral. The eleven-year-old boy lived in Sydney and could not be with his grandfather as he lay dying in hospital. Talking on the phone was difficult, and so he sent a text which his mother read to the grandfather. The boy with his family standing to support him, read the message at the funeral. He thanked his grandfather for the time they spent together and told him that he loved him. There were not too many dry eyes around.

No wonder Jesus said, "Let the children come to me". He was teaching us a lesson to value children and appreciate their joy, laughter and be surprised by their thoughtfulness, care, dedication, gratitude and compassion.





In a sea of charred trees, nature returns and regenerates near Cressbrook Dam (February 2020).

## COMMUNITY REGENERATES AFTER BRUTAL BUSHFIRE SEASON

INGRID MCTAGGART

**In what could only be described as a wild season, the summer of 2019/2020 has been a roller coaster of weather not just for our diocese, but the whole of Australia.** From crippling drought to destructive fires and ending with flooding rain, Dorothea Mackellar's poem "My Country" is apt in describing "her beauty and her terror".

While not on the scale of other bushfires across the country, areas within our diocese did not escape devastating fires. Since the previous issue of "Horizons" (November 2019), which featured a story about the Stanthorpe fire, fires at Peachy/Ravensbourne and another fire near Millmerran caused widespread damage along with other spot fires.

On 16 November, alerts and stay informed notices from the Queensland Rural Fire Service changed to

evacuation notices for people in the densely forested area, which also includes the Peachy State Forest. The community of Crows Nest found themselves in the warpath of the Peachy/Ravensbourne fire. On 18 November a town meeting was called with some residents put on notice to evacuate.

Crows Nest parishioner, Margaret Fowler was one of those residents who evacuated as a precaution. Most people in her street stayed with family elsewhere or left for the showgrounds. Describing the precarious situation she faced, Margaret said, "While the wind was coming from the west, we were reasonably safe but had it changed direction it may have been a different story."

The Peachy/Ravensbourne fire burnt through over 20,000 hectares over several days and destroyed six houses. No fatalities were recorded. During containment efforts, a water-bombing helicopter crashed. While the aircraft was destroyed, the pilot escaped with minor injuries.

"As usual people rallied round to do what was possible for those who had lost their houses and possessions," said Margaret of the community support after the fire. The community also hosted a Thank You afternoon for the emergency services who attended the blaze.

Since November, the area has been blessed with some decent rainfall and the fire effected areas have started to come back to life. However, the damage is still very much visible with many trees burnt beyond resprouting and extensive loss of undergrowth.





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