

Horizons

The background image is a photograph of the interior of a Gothic church. The view is from the back of the sanctuary looking down a red-carpeted aisle towards the altar. The architecture features high, vaulted ceilings with ribbed arches. Stained glass windows are visible along the side walls. A camera on a tripod is positioned in the middle of the aisle, pointing towards the altar. The lighting is warm, with some red light reflecting off the ceiling.

ONLINE LIFELINE DURING LOCKDOWN

**Milestones Cause for
Celebration for Clergy**

Catholic Education Week

**Seminarians'
Mission Week Shares
Vocation Message**

#58
AUG20

FREE Publication
of the Catholic
Diocese of
Toowoomba

Horizons

FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

It's good to be back! In trying times, we look for the comfort of "normal". COVID-19 has presented the strange and somewhat unwarranted opportunity to reflect on the nature of drastic change, adaptability and what we take for granted.

When collating stories for this Horizons, I was presented with a choice: avoid COVID talk, or embrace it? At this point, COVID is not the elephant in the room, it's the big beefy security guard at the door who won't let you out of the room. In this issue, there are thoughtful reflections on what this pandemic means for us spiritually and for our mental wellness, also balanced with stories of life and positivity.

Horizons is a big part of my routine. I look forward to it with a sense of eagerness tinged with elevated stress. In April, it became clear that the May issue of Horizons was not going to happen. I won't say I missed the pressure, but I did mourn the loss of this anchor point in my work life.

A different anchor did appear in mid-March, live stream Mass. After four months of participating in the live stream (from Easter to now), it became my new normal. Most of that was without a congregation, only in the company of the same handful of people.

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, present and emerging.

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A silver lining is that I have learnt so much after getting a crash course in streaming from the COVID school of lockdown. I've strangely managed to meet new people and make friends in lockdown even though for a time, I was the sole occupant of the body of the Cathedral during each Mass.

Despite the positives, it was really lonely in those dusty pews. The church should have been full of people. There should have been people hurrying about organising, arranging and chatting. Even the connection of receiving Communion was gone for a time. I can empathise

with those in parishes who lost their own anchor point of participating in the Mass.

I'm still processing how I feel about it. That empty church was a necessity, no denying, it is none the less a curious experience to attend Mass and yet feel so far away from it.

We're getting back to something close to what it used to be. Mind you, we're not out of the woods yet, we are still trapped in that room by the COVID security guard. But my anchor points have switched back, and Horizons dominates my time.

Horizons is a quarterly magazine produced by the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. The Diocese acknowledges with gratitude the contribution made by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office to production costs, as well as the support by our advertisers. Horizons is a member of the Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA). Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily held by the editor. Enquiries: Ingrid McTaggart, Communications Office, PO Box 756, Toowoomba QLD 4350. Phone: 07 4632 4277. Email: horizons@twb.catholic.org.au
Front Cover: Easter Vigil at St Patrick's Cathedral
Graphic Design: Greenridge Group 07 4659 1444. Deadlines: Editions will be quarterly. Content for November Edition 2020 is due 14th October 2020.



Pentecost 2020 at St Patrick's Cathedral. L to R: Frs Tom Duncan, Mick Carrol, Bishop Robert McGuckin, Frs Nandana Saparmadu and Michael O'Brien.

No one can say 2020 has been like every other year. We live in very strange times. This was most noticeable when everything was shut down around Holy Week and Easter. Despite the locked doors, we were able to live stream the ceremonies from the Cathedral. Even with live streaming, we have missed greeting people face-to-face and sharing our stories. With the closure of churches and schools earlier in the year due to the coronavirus pandemic, the autumn edition of Horizons wasn't published.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation was suspended in April. This has meant I haven't been able to visit many parishes and meet you. Confirmations have now been rescheduled, but with a limitation on numbers. In contrast, a parish may have had required only one or two celebrations for Confirmation; they will now require two or even four celebrations.

I know it has been very hard for those who've had loved ones die during this period with funerals being conducted very differently. On the last day of July, we had the funeral

of Fr Thomas Keegan, former Parish Priest of Holy Name. Fr Tom was aged 92 years and had been a priest for 67 years. Not everyone who wanted to attend could be accommodated, and those who attended had to observe socially distancing.

Before we could reopen our churches and take advantage of the easing of restrictions, every church in the Diocese needed to prepare a CovidSafe Plan. This required a lot of extra work for people at the local level, and I thank you for your patience and hard work. With the limitation on numbers permitted in our churches, it means that not everyone who wants to attend can do so. I thank everyone who has stepped up to the mark with extra work required both before and after the celebration of Mass.

I think we have all seen what happens when regulations are ignored with COVID-19 rapidly spreading again and lives sadly lost. We have witnessed that in Victoria, New South Wales and even in Queensland. We are all called to be good citizens. Certainly, we have rights, but we must always be respectful of the rights of other people and indeed the common good.

Some find the idea of the common good bemusing, but it's critically important because it obliges us to look beyond our own needs and our own desires to consider the interests of the broader community. It's at the heart of what we mean by solidarity.

In June I sent out a questionnaire to parishes asking what their learnings may have been as a result of the present pandemic. There has been a great response to that questionnaire with wonderful suggestions about how we may positively move forward. The replies received have been discussed at the recent meetings of the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. A small sub-committee will now explore how your suggestions may be activated.

In October we will have our State Elections. Our democracy needs the active participation of all its citizens – Catholic or not, religious or not. It's our responsibility as citizens to advocate for the good of the whole community.

Bishop Robert McGuckin
Bishop of Toowoomba
August 2020



RESPONDING TO OUR BAPTISMAL CALL IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

MARY OTTO



Over the last two years, many of us in this diocese have participated in conversation in the ongoing process of the Plenary Council, originally scheduled to hold its first assembly in October of this year. Now that this has been postponed a year due to the coronavirus pandemic, we can take time to take stock. We can evaluate where we are in our faith communities and reconsider how we carry out our baptismal call to proclaim the love of God to all.

The first of the recently published Discernment papers addresses the theme of "How is God calling us to be a Christ-Centred Church in Australia that is Missionary and Evangelising?". I invite you to reflect on how we can continue to nourish the Body of Christ through outreach to all, considering the current circumstances of social distancing and safe practices.

So many aspects of parish life have felt the impact of the pandemic. At the heart of our faith, the celebration of the Sacraments has had to be approached differently. As a faith community, the chance to gather for worship and

prayer in celebration of the Eucharist is restricted, supplemented with live streaming of the Mass. The Rite of Reconciliation has had to be personally arranged in advance to prevent people from gathering within a confined space. The preparation of children for their celebration of Confirmation and First Eucharist has either been interrupted or approached differently. Funerals have been celebrated with limited numbers often leaving the families and friends of those who have died, to grieve alone without the physical presence of a loving community. Many families have held off having their child baptised until family and friends can attend the celebration.

The pastoral and spiritual aspects of our faith communities continue despite the difficulties. Gatherings such as Parish Pastoral Councils, regular prayer or spirituality groups, Care and Concern teams, Lenten groups, RCIA groups and SPRED groups, instead of being put on hold, have continued to be active in new and creative ways. Thanks to the wonders of technology such as Zoom, meetings have been able to be held. Using technology, phone calls, the post, and even personal delivery

have ensured that members of our faith communities continue to live their baptismal call. The vulnerable in our midst can know they are not forgotten.

Our Diocesan Pastoral Plan calls us to be a Missionary and Evangelising Church. At its launch in 2018, none of us would have imagined implementing its proposals within the experience of a pandemic. As members of the Body of Christ let us respond to the current challenges in new and creative ways. With renewed energy and vision, continue to advance family engagement in our faith communities, encourage spiritual development through prayer and reflection, develop relevant parish leadership, experience meaningful liturgy, create a safe and welcoming church and reach out to the vulnerable in our world. In doing so, we can be the Christ-Centred Church that is Missionary and Evangelising.

You will find the Discernment papers on each of the 6 themes on The Plenary Council website at plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment. Mary Otto is the Toowoomba Diocesan Coordinator for the Plenary Council.



Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton presented this year's John Wallis Memorial Lecture in Toowoomba.

LINDY CHAMBERLAIN-CREIGHTON'S PERSONAL FAITH JOURNEY INSPIRES

INGRID MCTAGGART

Many will know Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton's story as that of the tragic death of her infant daughter, Azaria. Her wrongful conviction for Azaria's murder and botched police investigation dominate the sad tale. It is perhaps under-appreciated the role Lindy's faith played giving her solace at some of the darkest times.

Impressed by her appearance on the ABC program, "Anh Do's Brush with Fame", the Missionary Sisters of Service and their mission organisation, Highways and Byways – a Community of Service, were inspired to ask Lindy to share her story for the John Wallis Memorial Lecture.

The lecture series benefits the work of Highways and Byways, as well as raising awareness for the organisation's work.

This year in early March, well over 300 people attended St Theresa's

Church, Toowoomba to listen to Lindy's presentation "A Personal Journey of Faith". Her talk was down to earth and full of emotion. She spoke of the dark moments in her life, the death of her daughter by a dingo in 1980, being wrongly accused of her daughter's murder, and time in prison. Through it all, Lindy held on to her belief in God, Christ and took solace in prayer and the Bible. She shared a very touching story of a Catholic Sister who would visit her in prison and with whom she developed a strong friendship.

"I felt very touched by Lindy's talk and her willingness to share her journey of faith," said Mary-Anne Driver, who travelled from Warwick for the lecture. "She inspired me with her thoughts on forgiveness and rewards for believing with an open heart. She spoke from the heart when she told us that God has a plan for each of us."

Lindy also spoke about the advocacy and justice reform work she has been a part of since her acquittal and subsequent Royal Commissions held into the handling of the investigation.

"Lindy's presentation was perfectly pitched – the audience hanging on every word. Powerful stuff," said audience member, Morley Grainger. The audience was captivated by Lindy's story, barely noticing the event going over time and eager to engage with her more personally during the Q and A session at the end.

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ONLINE LIFELINE DURING LOCKDOWN

INGRID MCTAGGART

The swift change to how Catholics gather during the coronavirus pandemic has meant parishes within the Diocese of Toowoomba have begun to connect with their communities online. From an embrace of social media to producing videos, many parishes have started or increased their online presence.

One such embrace of technology has been the live streaming of Masses across the diocese. Chinchilla, Roma, Sacred Heart Toowoomba, St Theresa's Toowoomba, St Anthony's Toowoomba and St Patrick's Cathedral have all tried their hand at Mass broadcasting during the lockdown.

With the challenge of connecting parishioners from across the far-flung parishes in his care, Fr Jamie Collins at Roma chose to take the weekly broadcast of Mass on the road with a small crew of helpers. Starting in Roma, Fr Jamie has been to Wallumbilla, Mitchell and Surat.

"Celebrating Mass in the neighbouring centres around Roma shows that we care for and value each other, even if it is by way of social media," Fr Jamie said. Fr Gerardo Tubis has also been part of the Roma Mass live stream and will continue to do so as he takes on the role of Parish Priest and the church remains closed for repairs due to last year's fire.

Fr Gonzalo Duran and seminarian Nathan Webb have been utilizing YouTube and Facebook to engage with their community. The Chinchilla based duo celebrated daily Mass and have been sharing reflections in a series titled "Drops of Mercy".

The videos have not been about getting likes and generating views; rather, there is a broader community that has engaged with the witness the videos provide. They have heard from families, and those in the same household have gathered to watch Chinchilla's online offerings together.

When asked what it's like to be in front of a camera for a Mass live stream,

Nathan describes the experience as different. "Even simple things like not having fellow parishioners joining in the responses gives a different perspective and intentionality to them," said Nathan. While the future is uncertain and churches are now reopened, Fr Gonzalo and Nathan plan to keep producing videos like "Drops of Mercy".

Something of a blessing in disguise, the sudden church closures came as St Patrick's Cathedral was in the process of upgrading their sound system. Completing the sound system install, Vince Donovan and Brycen Rawlins from Veetone have also been behind the scenes at every live stream. They have joined with Diocesan Communications Officer, Ingrid McTaggart, to broadcast Masses from the Cathedral to the diocese's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Also behind the scenes has been a small group of dedicated people who bring the Mass itself together. John Briffa, Diocesan Liturgy Officer, has also been on hand to assist with liturgy preparation and reading, along with Cathedral musicians Vicky Cocozza and Aylish Ryan. As restrictions eased, the small group welcomed others to take on reading and musical duties. Masses at the Cathedral have been celebrated by Bishop Robert McGuckin and Frs Michael O'Brien, Nandana Saparamandu and Tom Duncan.

Despite the empty pews during the lockdown, there was still a lot of activity going on behind the scenes. "Being a live feed the viewers need to be able to see and hear the people speaking and singing," explains Vince of the multi-camera set up in the Cathedral. "Concentration is of the utmost importance to continue the live feed, which creates an intense environment. However, we enjoy what we do as we know many people are watching the live stream."

Building on the technology and



Fr Jamie Collins celebrated ANZAC Day Mass via live stream at Roma

AV equipment installed during the lockdown means that any service can now be live streamed from the Cathedral in future. "It's been an important step in bringing not just Cathedral parishioners together, but people across our diocese," explains Fr Michael O'Brien, Administrator at the Cathedral. "Distance has always been a challenge for our diocese. By live streaming, not only can we share Sunday Mass, but other important celebrations like jubilees, the Chrism Mass and funerals. Parishioners in the far corners of our diocese are as much a part of these celebrations as those present. It's a worthwhile investment."

At the diocesan offices, located at the Bishop's House precinct, connecting with parishes has also received a digital upgrade. New video conferencing equipment will allow Bishop Robert and diocesan staff to connect with clergy, parish leadership and parish contacts easily via Zoom. The equipment has already been utilised for a handful of parish catch-ups and interstate meetings, which have not been possible to attend in person.



Pan-tilt-zoom camera installation at the Cathedral. L to R: Ingrid McTaggart, Vince Donovan, Fr Michael O'Brien and Brycen Rawlins.



The Webb Family watched Chinchilla's Easter Mass from their home in Toowoomba.



Music at the Cathedral L to R: Vicky Coccozza, Aylish Ryan and John Briffa.



Supporting parishes remotely through a Zoom catch up. L to R: Jennie Blackley, Bishop Robert McGuckin, Tom Jolley and Colleen Way.

SEVEN STEPS TO BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES.

CATHOLICCARE SOCIAL SERVICES



Crippling drought, bush fires and coronavirus are just some of the major challenges many of us have experienced in the past few months alone. Social distancing has in many cases, led to social isolation and the general disruption to everyday life has resulted in people feeling constantly worried, anxious, uncertain and/or overwhelmed.

As the saying goes, “You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf”. The team at CatholicCare have put together some practical steps to help you strengthen your resilience and ability to cope in these challenging times.

Step 1 - Remain open to new ideas and be willing to adapt to change.

We don’t always know how to handle challenging & stressful situations effectively and that is OK. Focus on adapting a willingness to learn, an openness to new ideas and an adaptability to change. Aim to strengthen your ability to be perceptive, insightful and considered in your approach.

Step 2 - Look for opportunities to connect with others.

Having a deep and enduring connection with family, community, culture, and country is fundamental to our identity. Reciprocal and respectful relationships with one another and the land provide us with a sense of purpose and belonging, all assisting to build our resilience when challenging times arise.

Be creative and think about ways you can utilise technology to stay in

touch with loved ones while observing government directives and social distancing measures. Perhaps consider a family lunch via video link. Remember, where there is a will, there is a way!

Step 3 - Believe in your own ability.

The enemy of overwhelm is confidence. Confident people display an enviable fearlessness, are optimistic and are goal and future focused.

Build your confidence by choosing an attitude of optimism, setting realistic goals, monitoring progress and taking the time to celebrate the ‘wins’ in life. Give yourself permission to believe in your own ability to do things and be successful in those endeavours.

Step 4 - Choose kindness.

People possessing great strength of character are not motivated by personal gain. They act with honesty, loyalty and compassion and display tenacity and selflessness. Kindness is a powerful force for both the giver and the receiver.

Continue to treat others as you would like to be treated and, if ever you are in doubt, choose kindness.

Step 5 - You get what you give.

Contribution to others can bring meaning and purpose into our lives and therefore improve our resilience. This could include listening to a friend, being creative, paying for someone’s coffee or meal, volunteering, smiling at others, paying someone a compliment, or giving to a charity.

Step 6 - Check in with yourself.

How well you are coping is defined by how well you are managing a circumstance or a set of circumstances without becoming overwhelmed by it.

What does healthy coping look like? It looks like: self-care, challenging your thinking, prioritising your health and finding ways to stay focused and strong.

Step 7 - Stay in control.

Our ability to choose our day to day activities, make ourselves happy and experience life in a way of our choosing, all create feelings of personal control, instill confidence and empowerment in our thinking.

Support is Available.

If you would like some support to strengthen your ability to cope in these challenging times please phone 1300 477 433 or email hello@catholiccare.services.

About CatholicCare

CatholicCare is a Not for Profit organisation and vital service in the Toowoomba diocese. Our mission is to empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships.

CatholicCare have been working across the Darling Downs and Western Queensland regions since 1983 and are best known for the extensive work we do to support families through counselling and mediation services, as well as the work we do with First Peoples and the refugee and migrant communities.

(Based on the teachings of Dr Ginsburg, a renowned paediatrician and human development expert.)



CARITAS CONTINUES TO CARE FOR CREATION

CATHERINE MCALEER

COVID-19 has altered the world and continues to change it daily. What hasn't changed is the generous support for Caritas. Thank you hardly seems enough when in times of difficulty in our own country, people have still dug deep and donated generously to Project Compassion this year.

Thank you for the creative ways you have continued to fundraise and bring funds in for us to be able to assist those who are vulnerable and in need throughout the world.

The work of Caritas continues to be paramount at this time with people around the world continuing to suffer from inadequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Our frontline

partners and staff are working to implement our current programs while delivering critical education and supplies to fight the coronavirus pandemic. We are bringing sanitation, food kits and sharing information about how to stop the spread of the virus so that we can save as many lives as possible.

Laudato Si'

As you may be aware Pope Francis declared from 24th May 2020 – 24th May 2021 the Special Anniversary Year for "Laudato Si'". As part of this anniversary year, he has committed to Multi-Year Laudato Si' Roll-Out Plan to Make Communities Totally Sustainable in The Spirit of The Integral Ecology of Laudato Si'. To read more about this plan, please visit: <http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/laudato-si-special-anniversary-year-plan.html>

We continue to commit ourselves to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (Laudato Si' #49) in all that we do. From 1st September – 4th October we celebrate Season of Creation. Resources for schools and parishes around Season of Creation and "Laudato Si'" can be found on our website, www.caritas.org.au

Najiba, 7, washes her hands in Ored Orgod village, Bamyar, Afghanistan. Photo Credit: Stefanie Glinski for Catholic Relief Services/Caritas Internationalis

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COVID MISSION: COVERT SPIRITUALITY

FR GONZALO GARCIA DURAN

This pandemic will have a place in history books and our memories. My intention is to provide a reflection using some of the provisions in place to see what we learned from this experience and what kind of resilience we cultivate knowing that at all times and in all places, Christians are people of hope, living our lives in the light of the Risen Lord.

Isolation

Having plenty of free time at home can be a challenge for all, especially when our social life keeps our calendar full of appointments. But experiencing isolation can bring an opportunity to have quiet time and not only to listen to our thoughts but to listen to God as well.

It is a common practice in Christianity to separate ourselves from the rest of the society with the main purpose of embarking on a spiritual journey or interior discovery of ourselves. One of these groups was the called “Desert Fathers”. Their practice influenced the development of the monastic life in the West, inviting people to imitate two central events: the people of Israel wandering for 40 years in the desert (Numbers 13:1-33), and Jesus’ 40 days in the desert (Mark 1:12-13, Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). Both events implied the discernment of God’s will and proved obediences to God. The word “quarantine”, with roots in Italian and Latin, literally means “forty”. It is a term used to describe an imposed isolation in someone to contain or prevent the spread of diseases or pests.

Yes, in a certain way this was our quarantine, a moment of isolation wondering in our house and discerning, trying to make sense of the present events. It was a moment to go into our own room so that we can talk to our Heavenly Father: “But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:6). Ultimately, prayer becomes

the way to discover how to become disciples and missionaries today.

Social Distancing

Being cautious is part of our survival skills. It helps us to take distance to observe and study situations that would, in certain cases, harm us in a particular way.

I believe that it is important to take some measures to avoid any source of contamination if such exposure leads to a detriment in our health. The same principle applies to our spiritual well being. We need to use our survival skills to prevent any situation that might result in an unpleasant condition that can become chronic or difficult to treat.

More than once, we have seen the negative effect of such situations when we are not able to take distance from it. Hear me; it is not a complete denial of reality; it is simply to recognise that we can act and proceed differently if we think about the consequences. Taking distance is not a kind of puritanism, denying that I am different (more Holy) than anyone else. Still, we need to be able to recognise such situations and act according to the values that form us as people of faith.

Hand Sanitiser

The use of hand sanitiser can help us to remember that we need to be on guard. This prevention goes in two directions: prevention for us and prevention for others.

Of course, we miss the opportunity to shake hands and embrace one another. But it is important to sanitise ourselves before we can reach to others. In this case, it will be for us to recognise that before an encounter with others becomes a reality, it is necessary to get the best version of ourselves. In other words, sanitising from the spiritual point of view, represents taking away everything that estranges us from each other. It is, at the same time, a moment to heal properly what is out-of-order in terms of our relational

experiences between God and us, between us and one another. And of course, it will help us to strengthen our resilience through every adversity.

Mask

The use of the mask reminded me of a phrase attributed to St Francis of Assisi: “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words.” The saying is often used as a recommendation for how we should primarily or even exclusively evangelise. Of course, the use of a mask prevents us in a certain way to express with clarity the Good News. Still, at the same time, it prevents us from spreading bitterness, apathy, disenchantment, hate, and the simple and subtle daily bread, gossip. We need to refrain from those elements and situations contrary to the path of life.

There is no doubt that in our daily life, we should proclaim the Gospel. But, we should also be able to articulate, by word and example, the Gospel to others. As Pope Benedict says in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* (2010), “It is not a matter of preaching a word of consolation, but rather a word which disrupts, which calls to conversion and which opens the way to an encounter with the one through whom a new humanity flowers” (no. 93).

Be safe everyone, keep practising social distancing and may God continue blessing you all.



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Staff from St Damian's Ward and St Vincent's Eco Aid group L to R: Roselyn Franke, Catherine Kleidon, Chloe Latcham, Mark Copland and Iran Reich

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL WAGING WAR ON WASTE

DR MARK COPLAND

Waste is not something that immediately springs to mind when we think about hospitals. Healthcare in Australia represents 7 per cent of our national carbon footprint. More than half of that comes from hospitals alone (September 2019, Health Care's Climate Footprint – how the health sector contributes to the global climate crisis and opportunities for action, Health Care Without Harm/ARUP). St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba is working hard to reduce its environmental impact.

In May this year, the hospital marked the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis'

encyclical, "Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home". Drawing inspiration from the ABC's series "War on Waste", especially an episode focussing on the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, a group of staff have formed the St Vincent's Eco Aid group.

"I have been blown away at the tenacity and passion of these staff members," said Mission Executive, Dr Mark Copland.

The initiatives implemented by the hospital so far have produced surprising results. The kitchen has saved over \$30,000 worth of food wastage through implementing a room service style menu. Installation of solar panels on many parts of the hospital roof By 2025 the solar panels are estimated to have saved the same amount of energy to drive 25,452 cars for an entire year. St Vincent's operating theatre staff have been recycling PVC plastic from tubing and saline bags for close to a year now, the equivalent of 2 km of garden hose.

"The most exciting part for me has been a focus on PVC recycling in our clinical areas for June," said Mark. "Each ward was given a small bin to kick the month off. There was a weekly weigh-in, and a friendly pizza challenge took place between each of the areas." The winner of the PVC recycling challenge was St Damian's Ward with a total of 44kg recycled. It's hoped that the habits formed during the challenge period will continue.

One of the key drivers of the project is a theatre nurse and former St Ursula's College student inspired by the theme, "Be the Change you want to see in the world" from her college days. Most of all the Eco Aid group has taken steps which move the hospital away from what Pope Francis has termed, "a culture of waste". "I would like us all to make a serious commitment to respect and protect creation, to be attentive to every person, to counter the culture of waste and disposable, to promote a culture of solidarity and of encounter." Pope Francis, General Audience (5 June 2013).



L to R: Frs Roque Maguinsay, Warren Padilla, Gerardo Tubis and Hermi Rafada.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF...

FR WARREN PADILLA

I am Fr Warren Padilla, a priest from the Philippines. I am the fourth son of eight siblings.

It never entered my mind to enter the seminary, until such time when I was staying with my grandparents on my mother's side. One day I joined the other churchgoers attending church a service, where my grandparents went. As there was no priest available, my grandfather was the one who led the liturgy, distributed Holy Communion and gave a reflection to the people. That was the start of my vocation. At that time, I said to myself, "I want to become a priest someday."

I studied and finished my degree a Bachelor of Science in Commerce. I landed work for a while and was involved in the church as a youth leader. In the year 2000, I entered the seminary through the kindness of Fr Roque, who invited me to PACEM Missionaries. After finishing my studies in philosophy and theology, I was ordained 8 April 2010.

In October 2018 the PACEM Missionaries Council sent me to the Diocese of Toowoomba. Bishop Robert McGuckin has appointed me to St Mary's Parish, Charleville.

I have learned about many things - different lifestyles, different cultures, and how things are done in the West. I am grateful to Fr Peter Doohan for his assistance in helping me to settle in. He is always there to talk to, encourage me and to share experiences with. Aside from that, life in the west is so lonely, alone and isolated. But Fr Peter tells me "This is the life of a priest" as he shares with me about the importance of being a "presence" to all peoples, regardless of who they are and meeting them, just where they are.

In February this year, I had an unforgettable trip experience. I had visited Fr Hermi Rafada in Goondiwindi together with Frs Gerardo Tubis and Roque Maguinsay, for Fr Hermi's 20th anniversary of ordination as a priest. We shared many experiences and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

After lunch the following day Fr Gerry and I went in convoy from Goondiwindi to St George (207 kms). We parted ways and I headed for Cunnamulla via Bollon, whilst Fr Gerry headed to Roma via Surat.

From St George, the clouds were full of ash. About 60 kms, before I got to Bollon, I was hit by a big dust-storm. I slowed down and prayed for God's help. After the dust-storm, came a heavy downpour of rain. I further slowed down. There was flooded water everywhere. When I arrived at Bollon, the rain had stopped.

After driving from Bollon, the rain was once again very heavy with lightning and thunder. I began praying the Rosary, whilst thinking that I should return to Bollon and stay overnight in a pub there.

Feeling anxious, I returned to Bollon, where it was still raining heavily. The pub staff advised me that they were sorry, but they were fully booked. They told me the road to Cunnamulla was passable in spite of the heavy rain.

So, I headed back to Cunnamulla (178 kms). Shortly after, I saw the most beautiful sunset. What a blessing, after a terrifying driving experience, that there is this beautiful sunset. But I then had to drive slowly, because I could hardly see the road.

When I finally got back to Cunnamulla, I found that there was no electricity, so I got candles from the sacristy. Carolyn, the secretary of the school, told me that kids had stolen Sr Maureen's car key from inside the convent, then drove the car to Roma, and the car had been found by Police.

By candle-light I had my dinner - an apple and a banana. Due to the heat and humidity the flies were wanting to settle on me.

I finally ended my journey with these 3 big opportunities to praise; thank and pray, for my journey with the Lord.

I have to say, that I was relieved, when that afternoon and evening ended, and a lovely morning greeted me.

FR DON MURRAY: REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY OF PRIESTHOOD

FR MICHAEL O'BRIEN

Rome must have seemed a long way from the little town of Eromanga for a young man working after finishing school. After a number of years at Pius XII Seminary, Banyo and at the request of Bishop William Brennan, Rome is where Fr Don Murray completed his seminary training, some 60 years ago this year. Fr Don approached it with his usual vigour and energy ready to encounter Christ in another place.

Ordained 21 December 1960, Fr Don has spent his entire life in a rural setting, having never been appointed to any parish in Toowoomba itself. Fr Mick Cronin first seeded the idea of Priesthood, Parish Priest of Quilpie at the time, when Fr Don was simply asked to "consider" the possibility. Fr Don's experience of studying at the Propaganda Fide College, Rome invoked the comment that it was much easier than Banyo, the seminary was much stricter!

Fr Don has loved the earthiness and realities of living many years with people of the bush. Always finding a welcoming friend in the community where everyone knows everyone. Where most didn't worry what religion you are, just being part of a community was the important aspect.

"The better roads have been a great bonus, but also the death of some small towns, as people don't bother to stop anymore. Someone once said to me, 'You priests are lucky, you've got a café every 50 or 60 miles'. We'd stop at almost all the places, and we would often call in to see fellow priests. If I didn't call in on the way out, I'd call in on the way home. In the days gone by, there may have been a stronger sense of fraternity with priests calling in to see each other. Some priests didn't have time together until the annual retreat; not



Fr Don Murray celebrating his first Mass after ordination.

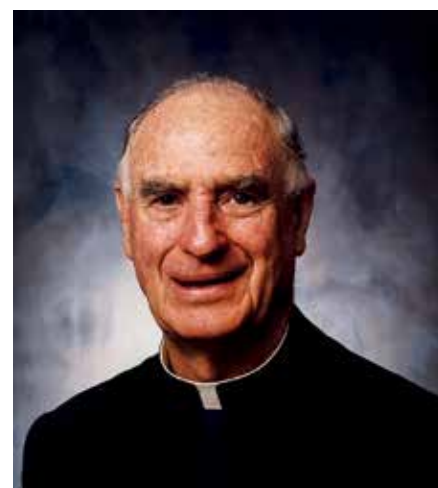
only a retreat but a fraternal gathering."

What would the older Fr Don say to his younger self? "If I was just starting now, I think I pushed myself too much when I was younger. I would be much more circumspect in doing things. I'd take more time and not be so anxious to do everything at once. I probably would have had a much easier existence and accomplished more."

Today Fr Don is enjoying his time with his fellow retired priests at Vianney Village located at St Vincent's Care Services (Lourdes). Over the years, his prayer life hasn't changed. "I have always tried to do meditation and spiritual reading. As I got a bit older in my ministry, I concentrated more on biblical things, moving from philosophy to scripture, striving to apply it to daily life. I particularly enjoy John of the Cross, which helps in my meditation. I find meditation gives me a spiritual foundation which helps me put my life in

God's hands – whatever will be, will be."

After 60 years of a ministry touching many lives, Fr Don humbly comments, "There is nothing particularly remarkable about my priesthood, just a fairly ordinary life." To many, Fr Don has been friend, companion and Christ, and continues to be for those he meets in this time of his journey of ministry and faith.



Fr Don Murray



L to R: Fr Brian Sparksman and Bishop Brian Finnigan

FR BRIAN SPARKSMAN: 50 YEARS OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

INGRID MCTAGGART

On 6 August 2020, Fr Brian Sparksman will celebrate his Golden Jubilee of ordination. Fr Brian was ordained by Bishop William Brennan at St Mary's Church, Warwick. The event attracted much attention as five young men from the parish were ordained to their priestly ministry on the day. In his 2005 memoir "Ballinclay Lane: Patters of Polio and Priesthood", Fr Brian recalled the joy and celebration surrounding the event.

"The Warwick Parish then put on a party, with lots of food and dancing. Once dance I had was with an elderly Mrs Sterne who had been the caterer for my 21st birthday parish. The bush telegraph worked well and Bishop Brennan knew by morning that we had all danced that night and like Queen Victoria, he was 'not amused'. On the Saturday night we had a party at home at Mount Marshall. People still say it was one of the best parties they had ever been to. The caterer Mrs Mathison said she was thrilled that she had accepted the job. She said

that if she were not there herself no one could have convinced her that an ordination party could be such fun.

The party was only the beginning."

We asked friend of Fr Brian Sparksman, Bishop Brian Finnigan, to share some thoughts and memories of Fr Brian for this special occasion:

Whenever the name of Brian was mentioned in any circle, a flood of memories would surface and be shared. Recently I heard stories about him as a primary school student at Warwick. Brian moved onto Downlands College, where he was struck with polio on 3 March 1951. Despite this disability, he lived life to the full. He was always supportive of fellow sufferers and would recount many stories of his involvement with the famous Sr Elizabeth Kenny, who had then a revolutionary method of treatment, which was scorned by many medicos. Brian was always involved in helping fellow sufferers even when post-polio syndrome took centre stage.

I first met Brian in September 1977 in Washington DC, USA, where both of us were studying Canon Law. He arrived a little later than the others, so the Dean arranged for a group of Aussies and other students to travel to the airport to meet Brian. He arrived from Germany minus one piece of luggage, which never appeared.

He was great company. We had to

walk in all forms of weather, battling ice and snow at times, to eat meals at the cafeteria within the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Brian made many friends among the staff and fellow students. Fortunately Caldwell Hall where we resided developed a dining hall for the other years Brian was studying. He gained his Doctorate in 1980.

He had a love for Glengallan Homestead and the heritage centre attached. At one stage he was a Director and Archivist for the site, organising some celebrations there. I was invited to a few. Brian was in his element, with bow tie and waistcoat, and always ready to sing a song. On one occasion, a speaker regarded him as an opera director!

Another keen interest of Brian's was ecumenism. He was the backbone of Toowoomba Churches Together and later moved into the Inter-Faith area. He was well respected by all involved.

It is very sad now when one visits Brian in his present illness. At times there are still signs of his whimsical sense of humour. On one occasion, I walked in and said I was happy to see him. He said my name and exclaimed, "I know who you are!"

His friendship and gifts of personality have enriched us. It is to be hoped that he realises he has been such a gift to countless people. May he experience deep peace in the depths of his heart.

FR THOMAS AREEKUZHY: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN THE TOOWOOMBA DIOCESE

MICHELLE ARNOLD

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Fr Thomas Areekuzhy's arrival in the Toowoomba Diocese. Fr Thomas is a member of Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS).

On 16 June 1995, Fr Thomas Areekuzhy arrived to begin his mission in Australia. His first appointment was to St Theresa's Parish, Toowoomba in September of that year, where he remained until he took up the position of Associate Pastor at St Patrick's Cathedral in February 1997 also acting as relief chaplain at the Toowoomba Hospital.

Two years later Fr Thomas was appointed as Priest Director for Sacred Heart Parish, Cambooya with the addition of Sts' James and John Parish, Clifton in February 2000 and St Patrick's Parish, Allora in 2010.



Fr Thomas Areekuzhy (centre) celebrating Mass with St Stephen's School, Pittsworth Staff at the end of Term 2.

On 30 April 2011, Fr Thomas was appointed Parish Priest to St Monica's, Oakey and also Priest Director of St Stephen's Parish, Pittsworth and St Francis De Sales Parish, Millmerran. Fr Thomas took up residence at St Stephen's Presbytery Pittsworth after some time living in Oakey as he found it to be more central for travelling across such a wide area and covering so many kilometres in short periods. He currently ministers to three parishes, seven churches, three schools and three nursing homes as well as an extensive Indian community.

Fr Thomas is grateful to Bishop William Morris and Bishop Robert McGuckin for their support, for years of care and support of the priests, parishioners and

friends during his ministry in different parishes. He has fond memories of Fr Pat Doyle and the parishioners of St Theresa's who cared for him when he first arrived from India.

A highlight of Fr Thomas' career was in 2019 when he was given the opportunity during his holidays to concelebrate Mass with Pope Francis when he was visiting Abu Dhabi on 5 February. After the Mass, the Pope met all the priests who concelebrated with him and gave a papal blessing.

Parishioners in Pittsworth, Millmerran and Oakey congratulate and thank Fr Thomas for his ministry over 25 years and wish him good health and many more years in God's service.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOP'S CONFERENCE ELECTIONS

ACBC MEDIA

The almost 40 members of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference participated in their biannual plenary meeting using

videoconferencing in May this year.

At this meeting, the bishops elected Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane to a second two-year term as president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. He was elected president of the Conference at its plenary meeting in May 2018 after previously serving as its vice-president for two years.

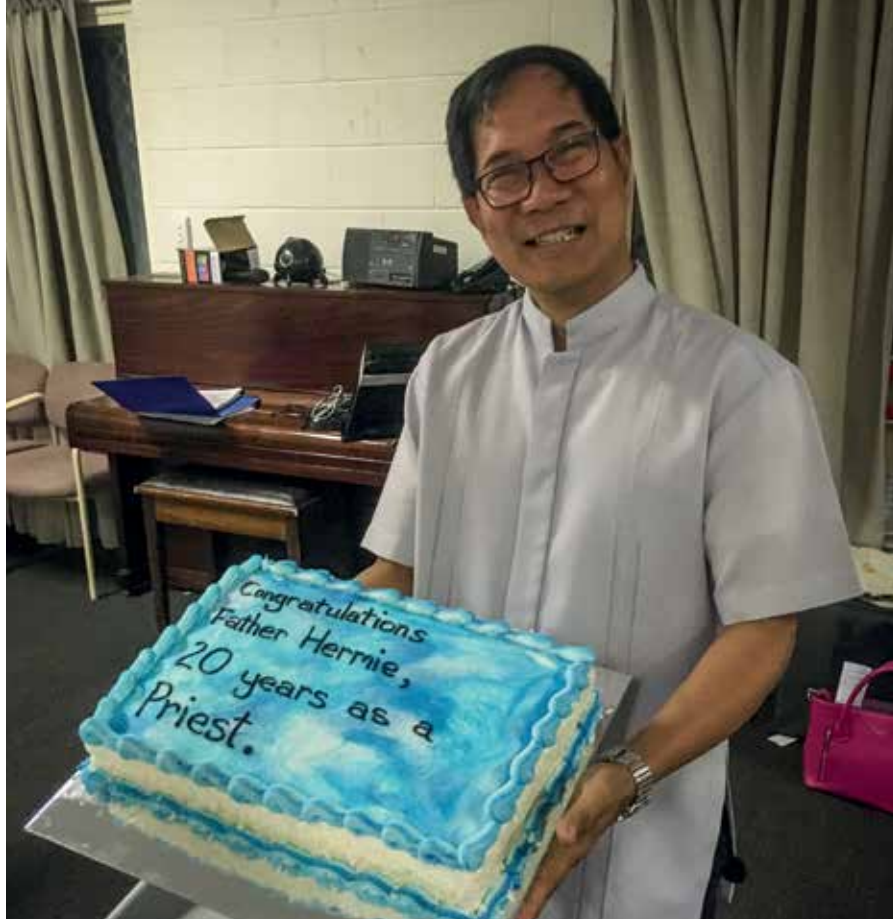
Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP was re-elected Conference vice-president, a role he also took on in May 2018.

"Archbishop Fisher and I have worked very closely over the past two years and I'm grateful that the bishops have

backed our ongoing partnership," Archbishop Coleridge said.

Four members of the Permanent Committee of the Bishops Conference were also elected: Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB; Toowoomba Bishop Robert McGuckin; Adelaide Archbishop-Designate Patrick O'Regan; and Maronite Bishop of Australia Antoine-Charbel Tarabay.

Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli of Melbourne and Port Pirie Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, elected in May 2019, are continuing members of the Permanent Committee.



JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS IN BRIEF

St Mary's Parish Goondiwindi celebrated a Youth Mass earlier in the year accompanied by the beautiful voices of the school choir. After Mass the community came together to celebrate with Fr Hermi Rafada his 20th anniversary of ordination. Parishioners a great musical night in the parish centre. Fr Hermi was surprised with a huge cake which didn't last for long.

Fr Hermi Rafada

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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



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RETHINKING THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM

DR DAVID TUTTY

We all dream of a better life; we feel that a better life will bring happiness, well-being and peace of mind. This is a very human desire.

Here, in Australia, a collective dream has evolved. The “Great Australian Dream” has come to focus on a desire for homeownership, a comfortable lifestyle and better opportunities for our children and grandchildren. This dream is understood to be achieved through a good education, hard work, wise investments, accumulating assets and making the best of opportunities.

This Australian dream is similar to the dreams of many people around the world. Those of us who have been formed by Western cultures have inherited a dream of progress and getting ahead that shapes how we see happiness and what we need to live a good life. In varying degrees, we have been shaped by the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the European “Enlightenment”, the colonial expansion and the rise of modern capitalism.

Because of these influences, the Great Australian Dream relies on unquestioned assumptions around happiness for the individual and their nuclear family. These assumptions are built on a strong sense of autonomy, self-reliance, private property and the right to choose freely.

Yet we realise that this dream is not sustainable. The heightened risk of bush fires, our struggles with water, our growing awareness of climate change and our continual exposure to local and international poverty and injustice all lead to our need to rethink the Australian dream.

Clinical psychologists tell us that happiness, like all emotions, is evoked by “trigger thoughts”. These thoughts are deeply embedded in our subconscious to the extent that we are largely unaware of them. They arise from our assumptions and understandings of what is good, what is better and who or what is “god” for us. They are seen as part of the culture and part of the way our group interacts with the world.

In order to rethink the Great Australian Dream, we need to address these trigger thoughts and deliberately seek alternative ways of defining happiness.

Since he was elected, Pope Francis has provided us with many valuable insights that can help us in this task.

In his encyclical, “Laudato Si’: Care of our Common Home”, Pope Francis recovers the sense of interconnectedness largely lost by those of us shaped by Western cultures. Pope Francis calls us to live this interconnectedness with each other in solidarity so that we better hear and respond to the cry of those who are poor. He also calls us to see that we need to be interconnected with the rest of creation. We are part of all God has created, and our truest selves experience meaning and fullness when we live sustainably and respectfully as part of creation.

Pope Francis has also called us to holiness. This is not an easy notion for most of us. In his exhortation, “Gaudete et Exsultate”, Pope Francis reflects on the Beatitudes. He notes that two different words, “happy” and “blessed”, are often used in translations. He sees both words help us to understand how to live holiness in today’s world.

One Beatitude, “Happy are those who hunger and thirst for justice”, helps us particularly in our growing awareness that the Australian dream needs to embrace justice and sustainability better. This Beatitude provides a way of questioning our existing assumptions, trigger thoughts and is a yardstick for assessing what a better life is. This Beatitude also helps us to understand what will genuinely contribute to being happy and holy.

Pope Francis uses the word ‘dream’ in his response to the Synod for the Amazon, “Querida Amazonia”. Here he outlines an interconnected dream that includes social, cultural, ecological and ecclesial aspects. He addresses this dream to the people of God and all of goodwill. The dream for the Amazon region is addressed to us, and it provides us with many insights of how we can rethink the Great Australian Dream.

We want to be happy, but we are in need of rethinking what we see is the basis for this happiness.

The Great Australian Dream needs to change so that different values, priorities, and trigger thoughts become the basis for determining a happy life. If we do this, we also learn how to be holy and blessed at the same time.





Mission partners around the world working together during the Covid-19 crisis

CATHOLIC MISSION: #wearestillhere

EMILY CONNORS

Just four simple words are comforting some of the world's most vulnerable communities facing the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. It's a simple message with great impact.

The global awareness campaign launched by Catholic Mission in Australia, ensured that those most in need are still being given the best practical and pastoral support during the global pandemic.

Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission says missionaries around the world remain dedicated to serving their communities despite the COVID-19 impact. "They are there, supporting with solidarity and compassion, saying we are still here, doing our best to keep vital, life-changing projects running through COVID-19 restrictions".

With the lockdown in India, Fr Raymond De Souza and Fr Rajesh Lobo, who run the Eden Gardens Children's Home in north-east India, have been forced to send all the students back to their families – however 17 of these children do not have a home or family to go to. "For those children who have nowhere to go, Eden Garden

Children's Home remains open all day, every day. Our mission is to help the kids, whoever is here, under any circumstances," reported Fr Rajesh.

There have been few times in recent history where we have been so widely and urgently called to solidarity, kindness and steadfast faith. The Church, through its vast missionary network, is working around the clock to rally behind the communities it serves continuing its life-giving work.

As we are seeing COVID-19 restrictions evolve at home in Australia, it is estimated that in Africa, the effects will be ongoing for the next few years. Catholic Mission will not abandon the thousands of children, communities and church leaders who are sustained by our prayerful and financial support across Africa and other parts of the world. #WeAreStillHere.

If you would like to support Catholic Mission financially, please visit www.catholicmission.org.au/ways-to-donate or if you would like to find out more about the work of Catholic Mission please email Emily at econnors@catholicmission.org.au or call 0467 191 065

ST VINCENT DE PAUL RECOGNISES LONG TIME SERVICE

Vic and Noela Paynter:

Earlier this year two of Charleville's long-standing St Vincent de Paul Society members were awarded lifetime membership rewarding their longstanding and faithful service. Vic and Noela have been the face of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Charleville for many people who have sought help.



Vic and Noela Paynter.



Alf Garrone.

Alf Garrone:

Alf Garrone first joined the St Vincent de Paul Society as a young school teacher in Caboolture where he became a member of St Peter's Conference. Over the following 58 years his commitment to helping people saw him serve on the St Gerard Magella Conference, Brisbane; St Mary's Conference, Goondiwindi; St John's Conference, Roma; Good Shepherd Conference, Mt Isa; and finally St Thomas More's Conference, Toowoomba, where

he has just stepped down from the position of Secretary in 2020.

Over this time Alf has held a variety of roles including Diocesan President, Conference President, Secretary and Treasurer. In Alf's words, the part he finds most rewarding about being a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society is visitation to the needy.

The St Vincent de Paul Society sincerely thanks Vic, Noela and Alf for the outstanding commitment in the giving of their gifts to help people in need.

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Sr Patricia MacGinley (3rd from left) with her brothers and sisters in 2017 for the occasion of Fr Jack MacGinley's Golden Jubilee.

IN MEMORIAM: SR PATRICIA MACGINLEY RSM

SISTERS OF MERCY BRISBANE

Mary Patricia MacGinley was born to Thelma and Roger MacGinley on 9 December 1934 in Toowoomba.

She grew up surrounded by her brothers and sisters: (Fr) Roderick, Kathleen (O'Rourke), (Fr) Kevin, David, (Sr) Joan, Neil, and Vincent.

Patricia entered the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane on 2 February 1953 and made her perpetual profession on 6 January 1959. In 1959, Sr Patricia began her teaching career in Charleville before moving to the motor mission in Wallangarra in 1960. Through the 1960's and mid-1970's she taught at many different schools, including Roma, Stanthorpe, a return to Charleville, New Farm, Ipswich, Goodna, All Hallows' and Bundaberg.

In June 1976, Sr Patricia commenced a new ministry in Pastoral Care at the Mater Misericordiae Hospitals. During 1979, after completing a Diploma in Theology from Banyo Seminary, she spent time in professional development at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney before returning to the Mater Pastoral Care Team until 1984. Keen to keep up-to-date, Sr Patricia completed a Certificate in Counselling (IPC) in 1980 and 1981 she was awarded a Diploma in Pastoral Care Theology (IFE) as well as a Certificate CPE (QICPE).

For three months during 1984, Sr Patricia was a student at the Pacific Mission Institute. Upon returning to Brisbane, she accepted a position in the Pastoral Care department at the Princess Alexandra Hospital where she ministered until the end of 1986.

In 1987, Sr Patricia moved to Ipswich, where she continued her work in pastoral care until 1990. In 1991 she moved to Stanthorpe as a Pastoral Associate for two years. During 1992, she was able to visit her brother, Fr Rod, in Chile. In 1994, Patricia moved to Mackay where she joined the Pastoral Care Team at the Mater Hospital.

1995 saw her return to Woolloowin where she continued her work in pastoral care until 1997. In 1998, she participated in a pilgrimage to Israel, Italy and Ireland before returning to Toowoomba. For the next seven years, her pastoral care role extended to working with refugees.

When Sr Patricia retired from formal ministry, she continued her active interest in the plight of refugees and working and praying for "care of our common home". Sr Patricia remained in Toowoomba until 2016 when she moved to Brisbane. Sr Patricia died at the Mary Damian Centre, Brisbane on 11 June 2020.

Sr Patricia wrote of herself, "My ministry is...to be a Sister of Mercy in the local community...finding works of Mercy...living a merciful life." She lived her baptismal and religious commitment deeply, faithfully and practically across the many decades and seasons of life, placing her trust in God's providential care.

Some thoughts from Fr Rod MacGinley

Patricia, our sister, was buried on 18 June 2020, in a graveside service

at the Nudgee Cemetery. She was placed alongside our other sister, Joan. Together, they had been part of the Mercy Sisters for over 130 years.

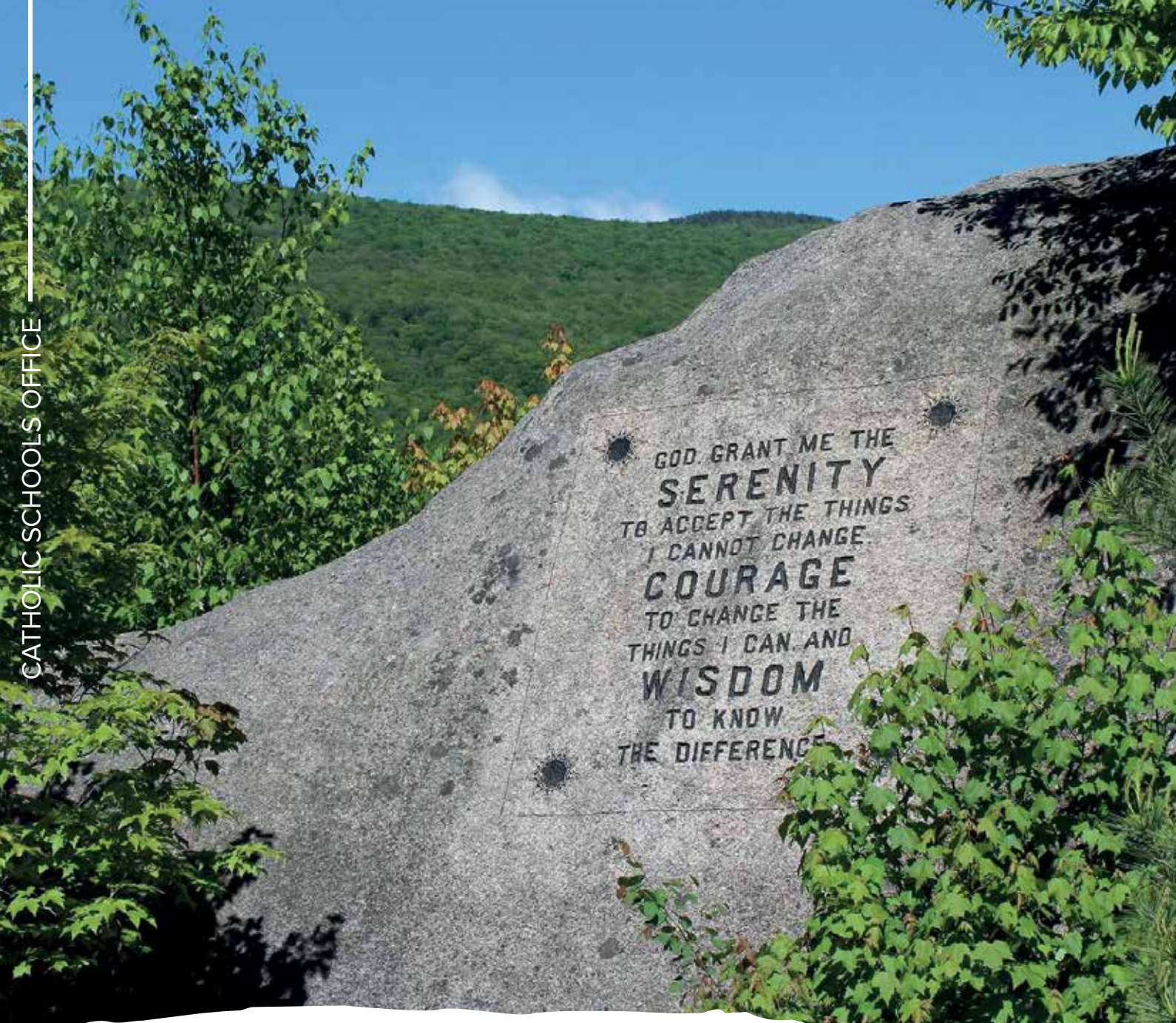
Patty, as we called her, was the second eldest in our family of 8. She nursed us, played with us, taught us our catechism, made sure our shoes were clean for Mass; she showed us how to dance. With my other siblings, she prayed the Rosary twice each day and wondered what vocation we would have in life. Four of us chose the beautiful vocation of marriage, we others, a different path.

Patty's vocation was born in the hills of West Haldon not far from Steele Rudd's corner. Grandfather and Grandma had bought the property in the 1880s. They called it "Aileach". Dad was born in 1900, the youngest of 13 children. Mum, Thelma Lipp, was born in 1908. Married in 1932, "Aileach" was their home until 1958 when Dad died.

Patty always maintained a love of children, their education and care of the family unit. Her final years saw her have an active interest in the plight of refugees and social justice issues.

On one of our final visits to see her and say good-bye, she gave us all a letter and some to post to say thanks to the [Toowoomba] Diocese for allowing her to work in the Lord's Vineyard. Finally, she gave my sister Kathleen, a plastic bank bag with some coins (perhaps worth \$12). "Take this," she said "I don't want to arrive in heaven with money on me." Deep down, she knew, that money should never be more important than people.

I am forever grateful that God chose me to be her brother. Until we meet again – save me a seat, Patty.



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – BEACONS FOR A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE AND PROMISE

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

COVID-19 has certainly impacted all walks of life, work, recreation, family, faith and education. Our taken for granted assumptions and reliable certainties have been somewhat shaken and, in some cases, shattered. It is a rather extreme example of how quickly life changes and we are left with no option but to adapt to a new roadmap.

The impact on Catholic education has been no less disruptive. The move to online learning and communication is a timely reminder that our lives, particularly young people's lives, are being shaped and influenced by a considerably different set of forces and circumstances than ever experienced before. It makes sense then not to expect that the same approaches,

standards and expectations of 50, even 20 years ago would still be appropriate.

So what implications might all this have for Catholic educators, people who believe that a spiritual dimension and understanding to life is essential to long-lasting meaning and fulfilment. Does our Catholic narrative have anything of relevance to say to young people today?

The Toowoomba Catholic Schools mission of academic success for all students within a distinctively Catholic environment depends on a confident and resounding yes to this question. So what is the Catholic narrative which permeates our schools and curriculum?

Recently I read a thought-provoking article by Sr Patty Fawkner, Congregational leader of the Good Samaritan Sisters, about this very question.

She started by saying that 200 years ago, Benjamin Franklin said that nothing is certain in life except death and taxes. This is true however, we know from experience that there are other certainties in life which we have all become more acutely aware of during this recent pandemic and events which have followed.

Some of life's certainties that Fawkner is referring to are explored in a book by psychotherapist David Richo entitled "Five True Things: A Little Guide to Embracing Life's Big Challenges".

The certainties, or givens, as Richo calls them are these:

- Everything changes and ends
- Things do not always go according to plan
- Life is not always fair
- Pain is a part of life
- People are not loving and loyal all the time

These certainties are only too familiar to us. But rather than feeling threatened by these givens, Richo believes we must accept these as true things in life, and a fundamental reality of the enduring shadow to the human condition.

Richo's five givens are real, they are part and parcel of everyone's life, not only in a time of the pandemic. In a crisis or tragedy, all five of these givens can be experienced simultaneously with excruciating intensity. And we don't have to venture too far to be reminded of a number of recent tragedies. The deaths of Hannah Clarke and her three children, of George Floyd in Minneapolis, recent bushfires and drought all

tragically validate each of these givens.

But in his book, Richo contends, rather counter-intuitively, that we find meaning and fulfilment in embracing the five givens not retreating from or attempting to avoid them. Might it though be rather naïve and insensitive to expect Hannah Clarke's family or George Floyd's family to embrace these givens as part of life?

According to Fawkner, embracing the givens of life is what Jesus meant with his uncompromising call for us to take up our cross and follow him. But here's the difference. It's in the "how" of the embrace and the "how" of the taking up and following where life and wisdom lie, where possibility and hope lie, which is at the heart of the Christian message.

George and Hannah's life and death have meaning when we rightfully grieve and lament and call for an alternative response and do things a different way.

Fawkner contends that in the face of searing unfairness and injustice, we set ourselves up for misery and frustration if our response is merely to condemn, rant or hunt for a scapegoat. We embrace injustice by working for justice.

We embrace the painful realities of life by digging deeper for hope. A genuine human caring response to the painful givens of life – drought, bushfire, pandemic, murder – is an act of hope.

The realities of life are given, they are gifts, they are actually graces, if we embrace them, by responding in a different way – a Christian way, not by revenge or reprisal but with solidarity and compassion.

The difference between hope and despair hangs on a different way of telling contrasting stories from the same set of facts.

Perhaps Pope Francis had a similar message in mind when he delivered an extraordinary homily on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the founders of the Church in Rome, on June 29 this year.

"It is pointless, even tedious," he

said, "for Christians to waste their time complaining about the world, about society, about everything that is not right. Complaints change nothing".

He went on to say "that complaining is the second door that closes us off from the Holy Spirit who brings the strength and wisdom for a Christian life. The first door, he says, is narcissism, the second discouragement, the third pessimism."

"Narcissism makes you look at yourself constantly in a mirror and become obsessed with only your own feelings and needs; discouragement, when things don't turn out as planned, leads to endless complaining, and pessimism when I realise I am no longer in control, to thinking everything is dark and bleak. These three attitudes close the door to the Holy Spirit," he explained.

As Catholic educators, our message has to be: There is a better way, not an easier way, but a different way to respond to life's challenges, the good and bad, the sad and the joyful and the uncertainty of daily living. That's why we value community not narcissism, and our schools are places where students learn how to give of themselves as members of a community, not take for themselves to the detriment of others.

We value compassion and humility, a desire to walk with rather than walk over others, particularly those at their most vulnerable times, rather than seeking revenge and reprisal. And above all, our message is one of hope over despair, based on the fundamental belief that we are born in the image and likeness of God which gives each one of us an inherent God-given dignity, unlimited potential and an entitlement to a full and flourishing life.

Reinhold Niebuhr, an American Protestant theologian, composed a prayer in 1943 that has become a bit of an anthem in times of uncertainty: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." This is a profound aspiration, and I can think of no better message to pass on to the young people in our schools today.



Mary MacKillop Catholic College Year 10 students enjoyed a career retreat at the Micah Centre.

STUDENTS DISCERN FUTURE PATH AT CAREERS RETREAT

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

At the end of last term Mary MacKillop Catholic College's Year 10 cohort completed a two-day careers retreat at the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Micah Centre.

The goal was to support the Year 10 students intentionally and methodically as they start the

process of subject selection for Year 11. There was a deeper mission too. One in which the college staff try to link the students' own experiences, their sense of self-worth and self-actualisation, an analysis of character strengths and, importantly, a strong comprehension of what a vocation is.

Chris Gabbett, Principal of Mary MacKillop, reflected on the experience.

"The Year 10 students and staff stood on the small lawn outside of the Micah Centre for prayer at the start of Wednesday. The weather was not yet at full strength, but it certainly was a crisp day. In leading the reflection, I told the students the experience of my father and his twin brother, who came home from St Joseph's College one February day at the age of 14 to be told that they were starting work the next day. One was to be a butcher and the other a barber. Just like that,

their childhood was over. We are in a different world now and my goal is that all our students feel a strong investment in their discernment and an opportunity to strive towards a vocation.

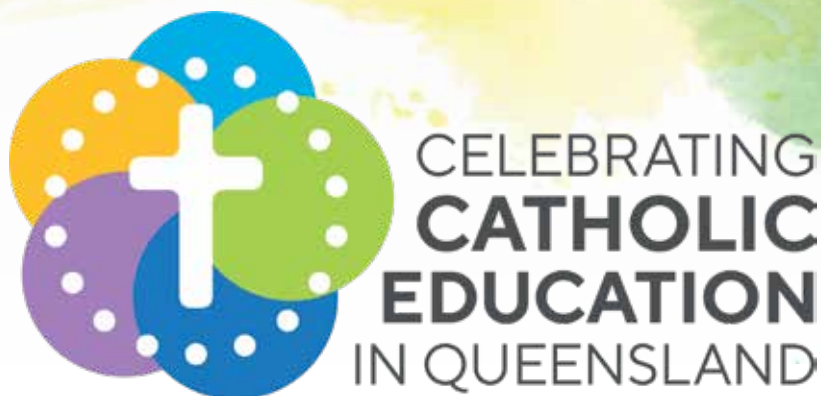
We want to give our students a deep comprehension of what a vocation is, a calling out of gifts, an exciting and fulfilling application of a sense of mission and personal strength.

In the reflection, we also focussed on the words of St Catherine of Siena. She wrote consistently of a closer relationship with God. One of her most famous lines is, 'Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire'. It is this opportunity to make the ordinary become extraordinary that I want our students to grasp. We all have to work, but I want our young people to have the skills and knowledge to find work that is fulfilling, engaging and enables their gifts to be called out."

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SCHOOL COUNSELLOR EMBODIES SPIRIT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Congratulations to all the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards (SOCE) nominees for 2020. There was a record number of nominations this year, 214 in Queensland with a total of 48 in our Diocese.

These awards are presented annually in conjunction with Catholic Education Week to recognise individuals or teams making an outstanding contribution to Catholic education in Queensland. This year's recipient was Jacinta Jensen, a school counsellor at Good Samaritan College, Toowoomba.

"Jacinta's focus on each young person's development and growth from when they enter the College to the moment they transition and beyond is untiring," said her nominator for this year's award, Liisa Hammond, Principal of Good Samaritan College.

"She designs and delivers social and emotional developmental programs that are effective in growing these

skills in our young people and is highly responsive to their needs working with numerous outside agencies to ensure that the services required by each student and their families are met. She coordinates everything from health to accommodation, financial and educational services. She advises the students and their families of the support available to them and empowers them to gain the skills and knowledge required to thrive."

Jacinta also spends her own time creating and delivering food hampers, clothing and furnishings to those in need.

"Good Samaritan College would not be the success it is, without Jacinta's support, insight and willingness to always do more for those in the community," said Liisa. "Jacinta is a great example of the spirit of Catholic education in our College."

Dr Patrick Coughlan, Executive Director: Catholic Schools announced Jacinta as the award recipient at the College's Catholic Education Week celebrations. Jacinta will attend the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Excellence Awards dinner later this year where she will be officially presented with her award.



L to R: Dr Pat Coughlan and Jacinta Jensen.



COUPLE'S 40 YEAR SERVICE TO DIOCESE'S SCHOOLS RECOGNISED

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Toowoomba Catholic Schools recognised those staff throughout the diocese who have achieved a significant tenure within the organisation. "Each year during Catholic Education Week we acknowledge those who have given 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service; whether this has been in the Toowoomba Diocese or across other Catholic dioceses within Australia. The awards are presented throughout the week at each school's Catholic Education Week celebrations," said Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director: Catholic Schools.

This year eight of our staff are celebrating 40 years of service. Two of those staff members are a married couple, Jan and Paul Watkins, both have worked in the Toowoomba Diocese, often at the same school for 40 years.

Jan and Paul moved from the United Kingdom in January 1980 to join family living in Australia. Paul's father was principal of the Catholic school in Monto, his mother was also a staff member at the school, with two brothers living in Australia. Paul and Jan had just finished their education degrees in Birmingham before they embarked on their Australian adventure.

Work was scarce at the time, but after a few months, Paul received a phone call telling him there was a teaching position available at St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe.

"I remember packing everything we had in the car and driving from Monto to Stanthorpe, it was the coldest place I had ever been in my life," said Paul. Shortly after Jan began teaching at the school too and they stayed for three and a half years.

Following Stanthorpe, Jan was transferred to St Mary's School, Warwick, and Paul to St Patrick's School, Allora. Paul then became the first lay principal at St Maria Goretti School, Inglewood and Jan a teacher.

"We had a great time in Inglewood; our son was born there. Back in those days, we didn't have a lot of choice about where and when you were transferred; we spent a lot of time in small western schools. They were great towns, the schools had good staff and teachers who supported each other, and there were very few issues with the students," said Paul.

After that Paul was principal at St Joseph's School, Millmerran and finally principal at St Mary's School, Goondiwindi where their children grew

up. Jan also taught at both schools.

"I have fond memories of when we first joined Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools, back then it was relatively small and like a family and our children also grew up within this family," said Jan.

"We always depended on each other as we had no family close by, we appreciated the support of our local school communities," said Paul.

In 1999 Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) was starting to grow and train staff in information technology (IT). They built a facility in Dalby where all staff from around the diocese received training in IT skills. Paul was moved here. "After that jobs kept morphing at TCSO," said Paul. He has been the Information Services Operations Manager for the last five years.

"It's great to see the infrastructure now in schools in terms of IT. We employed our first tech in 2004. Now we have 14 techs in schools and five techs that travel to various schools. The new TCSO building was a challenge for



Jan and Paul Watkins, Stanthorpe 1982.



Jan Watkins with students from Sacred Heart School, Toowoomba.

our IT services; we had the opportunity to build the infrastructure and associated services from scratch, something that rarely happens in any organisation.”

Jan has been working as a Teacher Librarian at Sacred Heart Primary School, Toowoomba and St Anthony’s Primary School, Toowoomba since 2015. She began working as a Teacher Librarian in the year 2000. A big challenge at first as Jan was visiting seven schools. “I always loved my work as a classroom teacher and initially missed having my own class however, I soon realised that I could have an impact on every child in every class.” Jan hopes to continue in her current position until she decides to retire.

“Catholic Education Week aims to raise awareness and celebrate the strengths and distinctiveness of Catholic schools. It provides an opportunity for us to celebrate our Catholic identity, the fundamental role we play within local communities across the diocese, and the many positive learning experiences that take place every day.

“It seems fitting that we should acknowledge our staff members who have provided such long service and been integral to student’s success during this week,” said Dr Coughlan.



Paul Watkins



CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

CHANGE OF FORMAT FOR THIS YEAR'S BID

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The annual Bishop's Inservice Days (BID) are held during Catholic Education Week. There are approximately 1,700 staff that participate in these events which are delivered in three different locations across the Diocese – far west, mid-west and in Toowoomba.

The days provide an opportunity for the Bishop of the Toowoomba Diocese to engage with staff of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO). Reminding everyone that while they are part of a Catholic school community, they are also part of the local Catholic Church.

While TCSO staff were unable to gather

together in the usual large groups this year, everyone still participated in a day of spiritual formation at their local site or in smaller gatherings.

Keynote addresses from Bishop Robert McGuckin and Dr Pat Coughlan were delivered by video, with their audiences reflecting on the key points they identified. The days also included opportunities to share experiences and thoughts, participate in reflection and prayer around a chosen theme.

School leadership teams then selected a topic from materials developed by the TCSO Formation and Identity Directorate to inspire and engage their school community. The five topics focussed on Catholic identity:

- Made in the image of God
- Seeing God in all things
- Faith seeking understanding
- Living within the Catholic story
- Community made for each other

For the smaller schools of Charleville, Quilpie and Cunnamulla, a gathering on the riverbank in Cunnamulla, enabled them to focus on their stories and build community.

St Mary's College, Toowoomba gathered at the James Byrne Centre with Br Graham Neist fms as their guest speaker. Br Graham explored several themes, including the truest image of being Catholic. He also delved into Christology, theology, and ecclesiology.

St Thomas More's Primary School, Toowoomba was excited to share BID with their broader school community. This year the school launched a staff Social Justice Committee in response to an overwhelming call for further social justice activities by the school community. At the start of the year, they explored what social justice meant for each of them and worked on creating their definition. From there, they examined how they could drive change and awareness of social justice in the community. BID provided an opportunity to explore the idea of social justice through song, story, digital technology, individual reflection, group work, prayer and what it might mean to students in their year level group.

Despite the changes to BID 2020, the days allowed all participants to network and dialogue around the key teachings of the Catholic Church and their importance in the contemporary world.



St Patrick's School, Allora experiences a different BID 2020.



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Brand new entrance for Assumption College, Warwick.

NEW ENTRANCE FOR COLLEGE MAKES A STATEMENT

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE, WARWICK

Assumption College, Warwick is proud to unveil their long anticipated Front Entry Statement, which is now open to students and visitors to the College.

The Front Entry Statement has been designed to improve the street appeal of Assumption College and together with the proposed signage, the new entrance will clearly identify the college as a Catholic educational facility.

Construction commenced in January 2020 as part of the Assumption College Master Plan. The completion of the front entrance now finalizes three stages of the current master plan projects which included:

- The refurbishment of the Southern courtyard and construction of shade areas
- The conversion of Home Economics to an industry standard hospitality centre
- The construction of the College Front Entry Statement

These three stages of the Master Plan were self funded by Assumption College Warwick, with assistance from the local Catholic Community.

The Assumption College Master Plan now continues on from these completed stages and includes the proposed

construction of a new Information and Learning Centre (Library) which is the subject of a current grant application through the Australian Government Block Grant Authority and the QLD Government Capital Assistance Authorities, via the QLD Catholic Education Commission.

Assumption College warmly welcomes all members of the community to come and view their new facilities and tours can be booked at any time through the college.

SACRED SPACE TELLS LOCAL STORIES

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

In early March a new Sacred Space at St Mary's School, Warwick was opened and blessed by Warwick Parish Priest, Fr Franco.

This unique space is located on the upper campus of St Mary's. It is an area for students to sit and read, talk to friends, take time out or just enjoy the surroundings of this meaningful area.

The Sacred Space features significant contributions by artists and the students themselves. Aboriginal artist, Pete Mulcahy painted four story poles about the Warwick area. Pete worked with parents and students from the school to make these stories.

The four story poles represent:

- The bird's song which sings out and visualises the most ancient of song lines (green pole)
- Acknowledgement and celebration of Warwick's connection to the world's ancient gathering, the Bunya Festival (yellow pole)

- The Condamine River, which gave life to the region, the scene depicts hunters, and shown at the centre is a representation of the ancient scare tree dotted along the bank of the Condamine (blue pole)
- The plant world of Australia, the bottlebrush, native gum, flowering wattle, eucalypt leaves and blade grass (red pole). This was the domain of women, these and thousands of other plants were prepared as medicines, food, poisons and as fibres in handcrafted creations. This pole celebrates the feminine in people and nature.

Another aspect of the Sacred Space are eleven intricate mosaics that were created by local artists Nathan Charles, Dylan Charles and Brenda Parsons. The mosaics depict aspects of Aboriginal life before and after colonisation by Europeans.

Finally, there is also a contribution to the space by St Mary's students. Those who were present last year for NAIDOC celebrations painted a river rock, and these make up the rocks in the river in the Sacred Space.

St Mary's School thanks the artists involved as well as Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, St Mary's P&F, Dayne Barrett from Green Homes and Bunnings for their various contributions to making this project possible.



Brenda Parsons, a local artist involved in the creation of the new Sacred Space at St Mary's School, Warwick.



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MACKILLOP CLUB MINDFUL OF OTHERS

FIONA DREW

Students in the MacKillop Club have been busy following in the spirit of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop at St Stephen's School, Pittsworth.

The club organised a Pyjama Day to raise funds for our St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal. Students and families were asked to bring in winter clothing and blankets to donate to those less fortunate. They also collected lots of non-perishable food items. The Year 6 MacKillop Club students sold popcorn and hot chocolates on Pyjama Day as well. St Stephen's raised \$326 to also donate to St Vincent de Paul.

A representative of St Vincent de Paul came to accept the donations. She was very appreciative of the



Year 6 MacKillop Club students.

students' generosity and explained how their donations of clothing, blankets, food and money would go a long way to help those less fortunate during these winter months.

Members of MacKillop Club wrote letters to the residents of the local aged care home while we are unable to

visit. Students would typically visit the residents and attend Mass with them throughout the term. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the students are unable to do this, so they instead wrote letters to the residents during their lunchtimes. The residents enjoyed receiving these letters and writing back to the students.



Downlands Principal, Stephen Koch and Fr Vince Carroll msc with the flourishing young artists.

STUDENTS RESPOND TO THE CALL TO “FLOURISH IN GIFTS AND GRACE”

ANNE M^CATOMNEY

Recent times have presented particular challenges for school communities.

Despite this, there are extraordinary examples of Downlands students responding to our 2020 theme to “Flourish in Gifts and Grace”. One such example is an artwork, created by a group of Year 12 boys, presented to the College on Sacred Heart Day.

The boys began the artwork during a period when most students were offsite. The original idea was to create something that represented the importance of meaningful relationships, with this understanding arising from an awareness of the sense of emptiness that can result when face to face contact is replaced by technology. As the artwork concept developed, the boys became acutely aware of the way culture shapes relationships. With

the support of Downlands teacher Mrs Katie Wright, each of the boys worked to incorporate something of his own cultural background, values and beliefs into the artwork. Drawing from Aboriginal, Cook Island, Maori, Papua New Guinean and Samoan influences, the completed work is truly magnificent and something of beauty that will hang in pride of place in the college.

In the words of the artists, “We created this piece of art in recognition of some of the different cultures within the school. This work represents who we are, our values and our faith. We wanted to gift this to the school as a ‘thank you’ for all that Downlands has brought into our lives. To be a Downlander means everything; it’s not just a school - it’s a family, and together we stand as one. The artwork also represents the spirit

of welcome and acceptance of all cultures in the Downlands Community.”

Another example of students flourishing has been that of the Year 10 students learning to knit under the expert tutelage of Mrs Patrina Jahnke and Downlands teacher Mr Ben Wright. Students have been using their newfound skills to knit beanies for those needing an extra layer during Toowoomba’s winter months.

In this way, students were able to live out the Jules Chevalier’s call to “be attentive ... to those who suffer and are in need”. Personal Development lessons have provided the time and space for students to identify needs in the community, the causes of those needs and to find ways they might be able to make a positive contribution to help alleviate the suffering that results.



St Saviour's Youth Ministry Team

YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM HEEDS CALL OF COMPASSION

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

St Saviour's College Youth Ministry Team, made up of girls from all year levels, are doing some great work aligned with mission and wellbeing initiatives.

The team currently works with Rosies. Providing personal care items, non-perishable food, and regularly assisting with the preparation of a BBQ dinner, sharing stories and positive conversation with the people

they meet. The team have also partnered with Tony's Kitchen and are assigned to their meal preparation cooking roster once a month.

As an outreach program, the college's "Calls of Compassion" has the girls making a phone or video call on a fortnightly basis to elderly or isolated family members, members of the college community and fellow parishioners.

Additionally, St Saviour's College Youth Ministry Team has been busily networking with the Youth Ministry Teams from other schools in the Toowoomba Diocese including Mary MacKillop Catholic College at Highfields and St Joseph's College, St Mary's College and Good Samaritan College in Toowoomba. Together they are collaborating on social justice initiatives in response to our ever changing world.



Years 5 - 12



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Base Services staff with College Captain, Alastair Doljanin and Prefect, Darcy Graham

OFFERING A HELPING HAND IN A TIME OF NEED

ST MARY'S COLLEGE, TOOWOOMBA

Sadly, the world is facing an unprecedented challenge with communities and economies everywhere affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To lend a helping hand in a time of need, St Mary's College, Toowoomba students have come up with several initiatives to support the broader community through this difficult time.

Before the Easter school holiday break, the Student Leadership Team asked staff and students to collect non-perishable items. Inundated with

donations, the boys packaged baskets of food, cans, toilet paper, milk and more and delivered them to those most vulnerable in our community.

Following on from this, College Captain, Alastair Doljanin offered to deliver more than 70 pumpkins grown on his uncle's farm near Inglewood to local organisations in need. Alastair says in the spirit of Edmund Rice education, and as an Old Boy of St Mary's brother school, Nudgee College, his uncle has been looking for ways to give thanks by giving back after the support he received during the drought.

"We delivered the pumpkins to the St Mary's College tuckshop, who are currently cooking meals for families, experiencing difficulty within the Toowoomba Catholic Schools community," Alastair said. "The College tuckshop made 45 litres of pumpkin soup and together, we decided to share the love and give the rest to Tony's Kitchen, Emerge and The Basement Soup Kitchen."

Pumpkin soup was not the only meal prepared by the College tuckshop at this time. While the boys were online learning, the ladies were busy cooking a variety of healthy, convenient, and cost-effective meals for individuals and families to share. The delicious dishes were then sold to families within the Toowoomba Catholic Schools community and donated to those doing it tough, through a "pay it forward program".

St Mary's College donated a 'pay it forward' meal after every third purchase, and many members of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools community generously contributed to this program. After just a couple of weeks, more than 80 meals were donated to people experiencing difficulty due to COVID-19.

Principal, Mr Michael Newman said, "The St Mary's College family is aware of all the students and families who demonstrated the true Edmund Rice spirit of giving to those in need during the crisis."

ST URSULA'S IN THE RUNNING FOR BOARDING SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

TANYA APPLEBY

Proud to be a regional school located in Toowoomba, St Ursula's College offers an exciting and cutting-edge education that is receptive to the progressive needs of girls being shaped for the changing world.

College Principal, Tanya Appleby, is passionate about building the capacity of educators and ensuring that regional schools offer quality and forward-thinking education that is agile enough to support and extend 21st-century learning skills. "Regional Independent schooling is better than it has ever been with the employment of

technology in the curriculum. Distance, access to knowledge and expertise are no longer barriers to offering a comprehensive curriculum for girls residing outside of an urban context."

St Ursula's College leads the way in harnessing the power of resilience in learning through a progressive entrepreneurial blended learning model. Tanya said, "teaching girls to be resilient leaders and learners is critical to nurturing their ability to recover from setbacks which are inevitable in the learning process. Entrepreneurial skills give our girls the skills that they need to develop, design, create and model effective practices that are sustainable and transferable anywhere in the world."

St Ursula's College was recently announced as a Boarding School of the Year Finalist in the Australian Education Awards, alongside a shortlist of 9 schools across Australia including larger interstate schools. Celebrating outstanding achievements of the country's top-performing schools, the Australian Education Awards accolade



Tanya Appleby, Principal St Ursula's College, Toowoomba

is a reflection of the high calibre of St Ursula's boarding offering as one of Australia's best! This nomination is a great recognition for St Ursula's College and the quality of independent schools in the Toowoomba Region. An acknowledgement that families seeking quality and affordable education for their children, don't need to send them off to major city boarding schools.

STAFF TAKE THE LEAD FROM STUDENTS TO VOLUNTEER

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

With the many restrictions put in place around excursions and remote learning due to COVID-19, students were not able to take part in their regular Service Learning Program. Normally this would involve students assisting with the weekly delivery of Meals and Wheels to members of the Stanthorpe community.

With the students unable to help out, the staff at St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe staff stepped up, volunteering to deliver meals throughout the week commencing 4 May.

"It was a great opportunity for our staff to live the Mercy values and be a role model for our students in

the community," said Assistant to the Principal Formation & Identity, Megan Mahoney. "I enjoyed seeing and experiencing what the kids do each term when they participate. I now know why so many of them want to do it again and are keen to step up if we are short of numbers." Megan also helped coordinate the volunteers from the school.

"As a teacher, it was a privilege to be able to step into the shoes of some of our secondary students and participate in the Meals on Wheels program," said Year 6 teacher, Amanda Thompson.

"Our students are, usually the ones contributing to this worthwhile service. Meeting members of our Stanthorpe community was a bonus, and we made many new links to our school as we encountered grandparents and family friends along the way."

These special community members enjoyed nutritious meals and a friendly visit. It was a great opportunity for the volunteers and the people they visited, as well as also a great reflection of the school's Mercy values.



St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe staff happy to step in for Meals on Wheels deliveries when COVID restrictions meant students couldn't.



Team effort: Roma welcomes new Prefects Madison Thomas, Nina Johnstone, Tristan Lorenz, Charly Anderson, Bryde Reis, Malcolm Anderson, Brooke Boland, Emily McNulty, and Jasmine Moore.

NEW SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR ROMA

DANIEL TUCKER
(YEAR 6, ST JOHN'S SCHOOL)

The time arrived for the St John's School, Roma student prefects to hang up their coats for the last time. On 15 July 2020, St John's School celebrated Mass to welcome the new prefects, and to thank the outgoing students for their service.

The Mass to welcome prefects would usually be held at All Saint's Church. However, it was not possible to enter the Church due to renovations currently being undertaken as a result of the fire in the sacristy last year. Therefore, the Mass was held at St John's School.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions prevented all students from attending the school Mass in person. The Mass was live streamed so all students were able to view the Mass and participate in spirit.

Roma Parish Priest, Fr Jamie Collins celebrated the school Mass to welcome the new prefects. It was especially significant because it was Fr Jamie's final

Mass to welcome St John's prefects, before taking up his new role as Parish Priest at St Anthony's in Toowoomba.

We wish the new St John's prefects well in their role and upholding the school's values of compassion, excellence, respect and justice.

We thank the outgoing prefects for their service to the school and the community. We wish them the best in their future endeavours, and trust they will continue to uphold the school's values.

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Riley Woitowitz participates in the Year 11 Prayer Celebration

STUDENTS TURN LOCKDOWN INTO LESSONS FOR PRAXIS

SARAH LILBURNE

At Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby, all students from Prep to Year 12 have an opportunity to engage in faith-based learning actively. Praxis which is one of the four key elements of the College's unique Living Your Faith (LYF) program. The practical application of Praxis encompasses the five Catholic Social Teachings of human dignity, stewardship of creation, community and the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

For Prep to Year 6 students, teachers gradually transition Praxis into their daily lessons, but for students in Year 8 to 12, there is a double lesson each Wednesday dedicated to Praxis. During the recent COVID-19 lockdown and period of remote learning, many students missed out on Praxis. The return to school in week 6 of term 2 saw them adapt their Praxis to meet the needs of the school community on a scale that restrictions allowed.

In deciding what projects students could focus on during their Praxis lessons, they considered what they had missed the most during the lockdown, in particular, being outdoors. They missed the appreciation of their school grounds while learning from home, so many Praxis classes decided to carry out some beautification of gardens and outdoor spaces. This activity particularly meets the Catholic Social Teaching of stewardship of the earth and care

of our common home. Another class made chocolate chip biscuits to give to students in the Early Years with a prayer attached to show their care of the community and the common good.

At the end of the five weeks of Praxis, each class held a prayer gathering. Many choose to remain outdoors in the gardens and sporting ovals to recognise and celebrate what they had missed during the lockdown.



Chloe Donaldson and Bonnie McKay make biscuits to share with Early Years students

NEWS IN BRIEF

St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe were once again strong supporters of Project Compassion. In Term 2, students were invited to participate in a free dress day and also created a coin line with silver coins which all went to Project Compassion. It was a great effort by all students and classes.



Recently Charleville received a visit from His Excellency the Honourable Paul De Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland. The student leadership from the local schools were invited to farewell him at the airport. The Governor enjoyed his time in the town, and remarked to the local newspaper that he was impressed by the students, saying "they are a great credit to your town".



Fr Jamie Collins inspecting the new paint on the interior of All Saints Church, Roma. Renovations and painting was necessary after a fierce fire in the sacristy damaged the church in 2019.



After lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the Charleville Rumble and Tumble Playgroup is back in action again much to the relief of the parents and to the enjoyment of the children. On their first day back, the children left no part of the school yard unexplored.



Story time at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School with Francis Fernandes.

SEMINARIANS' MISSION WEEK SHARES VOCATION MESSAGE

INGRID MCTAGGART

One of the activities which seminarians from Holy Spirit Seminary, Banyo participate in each year is Mission Week. Seminarians are placed in teams of two or three (reminiscent of Luke 10:1), the groups visit schools and parishes in one of the dioceses in Queensland.

Mission Week is an excellent opportunity for the men to learn about the diverse people and places in Queensland. It's also a chance to further develop practical skills for future ministry.

In the last week of July, seminarians spent time in our dioceses based in Roma, Charleville, Warwick, Stanthorpe, Dalby, Goondiwindi, Highfields, St Patrick's Cathedral and Our Lady of Lourdes, Toowoomba.

Sang Duc Bui and Ashwin Jayasuriya: Charleville

Sang and Ashwin arrived in Charleville greeted by Frs Peter Doohan and Warren Padilla, and a freshly baked batch of cupcakes. The excellent food and hospitality continued throughout the week for the pair as they travelled to Cunnamulla, Quilpie, and Augathella. They took great pleasure in the hospitality of the small Vietnamese community in Charleville, who have a strong faith in God and a deep love the Church. Openness and care between the pastors and the whole community help to advance the faith life for these faithful in a new cultural and linguistic environment, enriching whole Parish community. The long drives between communities in the Far West of the Diocese created

spaces for deep reflection on the spiritual and pastoral life. On one trip, Fr Peter commented on the mulga trees which, despite being in a dry area of the country, have grown. The trees put down their roots deep into the earth and draw their sustenance from there. Landowners periodically push over these trees to feed their livestock in dry times. Fr Peter said that the pastoral minister must imitate this: he must cultivate a deep relationship with Jesus, and "push himself over", laying himself down to give life to the communities he seeks to serve, especially in these dry times.

Brian Redondo and Isaac Falzon: Roma

Brian and Isaac spent time in the Roma community under the guidance of Frs



L to R: Ashwin Jayasuriya, Fr Peter Doohan, Sr Maureen Andrews, Sr Elizabeth O'Keefe, Sang Duc Bui and Fr Warren Padilla.



Holy Spirit Seminarian Isaac Falzon thanked by St John's School Roma Student Daniel Tucker.

Jamie Collins and Gerardo Tubis. Both seminarians spoke at an assembly at St John's School, the first time the school had gathered since easing of COVID-19 restrictions. They talked about their experiences and life at the seminary with the student body.

Afterwards, Brian and Isaac spent further time with some of the students. The Year 6 class is currently learning about the structure and leadership in the Catholic Church, so the visit from the seminarians was timely. Isaac shared with the students that he found it uplifting to go into the parishes and meet new people.

Michael Tran and Bradley Davies: Stanthorpe

Michael and Bradley shared their faith and vocations journey with many students and parishioners in Stanthorpe. Both enjoyed their time getting to know people in conversation and over home-cooked meals. Fr Brian Connolly warmly welcomed them to the community, despite the low temperatures that Stanthorpe is renowned.

In between their time at St Joseph's School and meeting parishioners, Michael and Bradley also experienced the natural beauty of the area. The pair experienced a bushwalk through the giant rocks at Girraween National Park and toured a local apple orchard.

Gerard Lai and Thomas Popovic: Dalby

After a three hour drive from Brisbane, Gerard and Thomas spent time taking in the sights of Dalby. Welcomed by Fr

Jim Cronin, the pair were taken on a tour "dainty and delightful Dalby", walking along Myall Creek and the main street.

They have enjoyed participating in Masses at Dalby and Jandowae and also spent time sharing their story with the students at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College. Gerard and Thomas shared their insights on topics such as meditative and contemplative prayer, and the Sacraments of Initiation.

Another highlight was playing in the college's teachers versus students touch footy match and countless games of handball with the students.

It wasn't all work. The pair enjoyed a bushwalk at the Bunya Mountains and a trip to the church at Bell, which is famous for its murals and biblical gardens.

BJ Perrett and William Aupito Iuliano: Goondiwindi

BJ and William found great vibrancy and faith in Goondiwindi. Fr Hermi Rafada's infectious laugh and gentle manner made for a warm presbytery despite the cold winter nights. As a side project during their stay, the seminarians helped Fr Hermi with his gardening. It was a fun project to share.

St Mary's School was supportive and welcoming of BJ and William's visit, with the pair aiming to reach as many students as possible. There were some funny, interesting and tough questions of the seminarians. "But being with the students made all those sticky situations worthwhile," said William. "Our week here in Gundy

has been a humbling experience as we've witnessed an authenticity and generosity unlike any other."

David Nightingale and Minje Kim: St Patrick's Cathedral

David and Minje felt a great connection to people of God during their week at the Cathedral. The parish also includes St Mary's College, St Saviour's College and St Saviour's Primary School.

Frs Michael O'Brien, Tom Duncan, Nandana Saparmadu and Hal Ranger were on hand to ensure the two seminarians experienced a range of pastoral insights. David and Minje started the week attending Sunday Masses and sharing their thoughts on the Sunday Gospel with several parishioners over dinner.

During the week, David and Minje visited the three schools above. They facilitated class discussion around important Church topics in some religion classes. They touched on a variety of issues, including human rights, symbols and rituals in the church, and the meaning of one's life in Christ. Additionally, they took the opportunity to share their vocation stories with staff and students.

Jack Ho and Will Brennan: Warwick

Jack and Will were warmly received by Fr Franco Filipetto the parish priest, the parish team, parishioners and staff and students of the St Mary's Primary School and Assumption College in Warwick.

During the week, Will and Jack attended



Practicing good COVID safe measures at St Mary's School Goondiwindi

parish Masses and had two days to visit the schools. They talked with parishioners, students and teachers, sharing their life journeys as well as getting to know the local people.

Jack and Will visited each of the schools as well as the Kindergarten. They attended classes sharing some of their life stories and having fun during lunch break, sharing a great rapport with the students.

The seminarians noted how country life is very different from a metropolitan city, and both are very appreciative of the experiences in Warwick.

Dominic Jayasuriya and Francis Fernandes: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Toowoomba

Dominic and Francis were stationed at Our Lady of Lourdes parish with Fr John Quinlan for their mission week. Fr John was very hospitable and extremely generous in sharing his time with the two men, sharing great conversations. They learned a lot from the stories shared and cherish Fr John's words of wisdom.

As part of the visit, Dominic and Francis took a scenic drive around the city, visiting parks and even visiting the airport development out of town.

Dominic and Francis also St Ursula's College, St Joseph's College and Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. They went from class to class, sharing their vocational and faith stories. They also answered questions from the students. The pair even asked students a few questions of their own to identify what they ought to know as future priests about the concerns of young people.

"It was a humbling experience for us to be surrounded by lovely people, and I am enthusiastic to serve this lovely country diocese once I am ordained as a priest in a few years, God willing," said Dominic.

Peter Doherty, Anthony Gawlu and Matt Popovic: St Theresa's Parish, Toowoomba and Highfields

Peter, Anthony and Matt started the week with Masses at St Theresa's with Fr Brian Noonan. They introduced themselves to the parishioners and shared their

profession journey. Each of the men had a different and interesting story to tell.

On Sunday, the three men shared morning tea at the Chocolate Cottage with some of the Highfields parishioners. Afterwards, they joined some young parishioners from Highfields, Dominic Brennan, Loren and Eloise Apel on a trek up Table Top mountain followed by ice-cream at Picnic Point and dinner with the Brennan family.

The trio spent time with the students of Mary Mackillop Catholic College, Highfields accompanied by Fr Brian. They were very impressed with the work of the social justice group. They also visited Mater Dei Primary School. A visit to Good Samaritan College was a chance to experience an alternative style of Catholic Education, chatting to staff and students over a spaghetti bolognese lunch.

They also enjoyed the hospitality of Bishop Robert McGuckin for dinner one evening.

(Thank you to Holy Spirit Seminary and local contributions for this story)

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L to R: BJ Perrett, Fr Hermi Rafada and William Aupito Iuliano



Mary Mackillop Catholic College, Highfields student Jeremy Skeels with Matt Popovic



Holy Spirit Seminarians visit St Patrick's School, Mitchell



Jack Ho and Will Brennan with Kindergarten children in Warwick



L to R: Michael Newman, David Nightingale and Minje Kim



Seminarians Minje Kim and David Nightingale engage with students at St Saviour's Primary School



Bradley Davies, Michael Tran and Fr Brian Connolly chat with students at St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe



A local Vietnamese family opens their doors to welcome Charleville Parish leadership and visiting seminarians.



Fr Dave O'Connor retrieves the tabernacle from the burnt remains of St Leo's Church, Haden

HEARTBREAK FOR COMMUNITY ON LOSS OF HISTORIC CHURCH

INGRID MCTAGGART

On 7 June 2020, the small community of Haden woke to the news that their beloved church, St Leo's, had been destroyed by fire. Fire crews arrived on the scene just after midnight to find the building already engulfed in flames. Despite all efforts, the building was beyond saving. The church had been closed since March due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Schreibers of Toowoomba built St Leo's Church, Haden. The building was blessed and opened on 19 April 1931 by Bishop James Byrne. As part of the celebration of opening the new church, Bishop Byrne confirmed 39 children, with another three children baptised the same day. According to the history of the area, there was torrential rain that afternoon. It would have been quite a feat for locals to return home as the roads weren't sealed and the area was famous for getting bogged.

The church has been proudly cared for by the local community with various improvements and regular maintenance carried out over the years. Improvements to the entrance of the church, the addition of a ramp and amenities ensured the building was a place of welcome. In 2006

the 75th anniversary of the building was celebrated. In a message to the community on the occasion of the anniversary, then parish priest Fr Terry Hickling wrote, "I have found the people who worship at St Leo's to be a warm and friendly congregation who care for their ground and building very well and celebrate our Masses with good music and joyful singing."

The church also has a diocesan connection. In September 2007, Bishop Bill Morris blessed a new tabernacle and processional cross for the church. The tabernacle was from the Bishop's House chapel; it had been removed to the Diocesan Archives in 1997 during renovations for the Catholic Education Office. The processional cross was originally used at The Shrine Church in downtown Toowoomba. The Shrine later become diocesan office space, now houses CatholicCare.

The charred tabernacle was retrieved from the remains of the church by the current resident priest, Fr Dave O'Connor. The metal remains fused shut from the heat of the fire. Parishioners hope to mark the loss of the church with a future gathering and open the tabernacle at this time. Current

COVID-19 restrictions make such an event impossible at this time.

On the morning after the fire, Fr Dave O'Connor told local newspaper, The Chronicle, "There are many local residents affected by this and it's a sad reality for them because I know a number of families where members where baptised here or married here, it's also been a very personal place for their funerals."



Exterior St Leo's Church, Haden



A large crowd gathers from all over southern Queensland for the opening of the third (and present) St Joseph's Church, 1921.

UPCOMING CENTENARY A CHANCE TO LOOK BACK

DAMIEN MORGAN

The centenary of the opening and blessing of St Joseph's Church in Dalby will be December 2021. As part of the celebrations, a parish history will be compiled covering the arrival of Fr Denis Byrne in 1868 through to present day. However, it is known that Masses were conducted by visiting missionary priests as early as 1849 in a small hotel known as the Travellers' Inn.

A Parish Committee is currently working on this history project. The group has already done some excellent research, finding articles, stories and photos of all sorts of events. Some exciting finds so far include a court duel between Dalby's first Catholic school teacher

and Archbishop Quinn in 1873. There are also photos of an extraordinary cortege that moved solemnly down Cunningham Street following Monsignor Nolan's funeral in 1950.

The committee knows former Dalby residents are living all over the place. They are genuinely interested in hearing stories and memories of their time here, and their involvement with the parish or in the many sodalities such as the Legion of Mary, the Knights of the Southern Cross; groups such as the YCW; the St Patrick's Day festivities which were such a big event until the mid 1970s. What happened to the Hibernian Society? Does anyone

recall the parish sporting clubs? References have been found to St Joseph's Tennis Club (Archbishop Duhig came to the opening), an Indoor Bowls Club and a Basketball Club.

Should you have photos that you think might be of interest, please scan them and send digital files, or mark them clearly with a return address.

Written recollections can be sent to the Parish Office, PO Box 32, Dalby, 4405; or email dalbyparish@twb.catholic.edu.au Alternatively, you can contact Damien Morgan on 0439 714 351 or email dmorgan4405@gmail.com

SEED SOWING IN THE FAR WEST

SR MAUREEN ANDREWS

The Gospel for the Fifteenth Sunday of the year was for the parable of the Sower.

I read a reflection on it by Fr Brendan Byrne SJ. In his reflection, Fr Brendan asked, "Does this Gospel have anything to say to us regarding our present situation?" He spoke of Jesus, who as usual took an image of ordinary life to make his point. This parable, Fr Brendan says, is about the "generosity" and "prodigality" of God. This was magic to my ears, and I began to reflect on how the sowers in our small remote community are sowing the seed that God is present, and he calls us into his kingdom.

Let us begin with the small community of Sacred Heart Parish. Because of the death of a special friend, I was away for just over three weeks. Many of the parishioners phoned to see how I was coping, not once but many times. Then best of all someone said that there was no need to hurry home as Carolyn and Paul had it all in hand. Carolyn organised the reopening of the church, and Paul was able to conduct a graveside service. In fact, he had to dig the hole as the Council had forgotten to complete this task.

Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health surprised the pensioners of the town with a grant for food, a lovely soft blanket and a heater. This was certainly a blessing in the colder weather. They also organised shopping trips for pensioners. Meals on Wheels made sure that the tasty meals cooked by the hospital were delivered. Ashley Sports and All found that there were numerous calls for games and jigsaws.

While the library was closed, the elderly and those in the hospital did not miss out on books. People delivered them each week. Now the library has organised books for children to be read by various community members and the video sent through the Paroo Shire Council Facebook page.

People are adapting to their current situation and taking more time to be with each other. Many learning that relationships are so important in our daily lives.

It is for sure that seed has found a home in many people of the town as they have responded with joy and generosity and the yield is great.

As a community, we farewelled our Priest Director, Fr Peter Doohan. Paul spoke in glowing terms about Fr Peter's commitment to our parish. He will be greatly missed for his loyalty, devotion to prayer and people and the good humour he brought each time he came.



Cunnamulla Parishioners thank Fr Peter Doohan for his support of their community

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Toowoomba Qld 4350
Tel: (07) 4632 4277 Fax: (07) 4639 2251

SECRETARY TO BISHOP

Colleen Way Tel: (07) 4632 4277
bishsec@twb.catholic.org.au

VICAR GENERAL

Fr John Quinlan Tel: (07) 4634 1453

ABORIGINAL APOSTOLATE

Fr Peter Dorfield
Mobile: 0408 459 045
peter@stpats.org.au

ARCHIVES

Archivist: Gabrielle Saide
Tel: (07) 4632 7484
dioarch@twb.catholic.org.au

CARITAS

Diocesan Director: Catherine McAleer
Tel: (07) 4638 7977
caritas@twb.catholic.org.au

CATHOLIC MISSION

Diocesan Director: Emily Connors
Mobile: 0467 191 065
econnors@catholicmission.org.au

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Executive Director: Pat Coughlan
Tel: (07) 4637 1400
enquiries@twb.catholic.edu.au

CATHOLICCARE SOCIAL SERVICES

Executive Director: Kate Venables
Tel: 1300 477 433
enquiries@catholiccare.services

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Officer: Ingrid McTaggart
Tel: (07) 4602 7993
communications@twb.catholic.org.au

DIOCESAN FINANCE OFFICE

Inc. Diocesan Development Fund
Financial Administrator: Tom Jolley
Tel: (07) 4632 7589
admin@twb.catholic.org.au

HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

Fr Michael Cooney
Mobile: 0427 138 547

JAMES BYRNE CENTRE

Managers: Paul and Wendy Ladewig
Tel: (07) 4630 8339
JamesByrneCentre@twb.catholic.org.au

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Liturgy Officer: John Briffa
Tel: (07) 4632 0989
jbriffa@twb.catholic.org.au

PASTORAL CARE

Catholic Coordinator: Nicole Rangiira
Tel: (07) 4616 6415
nicole.rangiira@health.qld.gov.au

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARDS OFFICE

Executive Officer: Fr Peter Dorfield
Tel: (07) 4638 1379
profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au

RCIA - RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Coordinator: Mary Otto
Mobile: 0447 047 807
rcia@twb.catholic.org.au

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Executive Officer: David Tutty
Tel: (07) 4613 0895
justice@twb.catholic.org.au

SPRED - SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

Coordinator: Loretta Coman
Tel: (07) 4632 8427
spred@twb.catholic.org.au

SYCHAR: HOUSE OF PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY

Coordinator: Sr Elaine Morzone
Tel: (07) 4613 0933
Mobile: 0458 020 906
emorzone@twb.catholic.org.au

TRIBUNAL

Contact: Theresa Harvey
Tel: (07) 4632 7443
triboff@twb.catholic.org.au

VOCATIONS DIRECTOR

Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran
Tel: (07) 4662 7031
vocations@twb.catholic.org.au

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