

# Horizons

**CARE FOR  
THE HUMAN  
FAMILY**

**COVID Countdown:  
Our Diocese's Timeline**

**Clay in the  
Potter's Hands**

**Our Sacramental  
Journeys**

**#59**  
Advent 20

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Toowoomba

# Horizons

## FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

This year feels different; it feels longer. It's a leap year. Really? I'd forgotten about that. This year feels like it's about three years long, not just an extra day.

Sitting down with Jennie Blackley (WHS Coordinator) to do the COVID timeline for this issue of Horizons, we surprised ourselves by how quickly everything escalated, and also how long ago it seemed. We laughed, with a kind of tired wistfulness, trying to remember what life was like in January and February. Jennie has been doing a stellar job keeping on top of all the COVID safety requirements. I can only watch in awe as she patiently guides parishes and ministries (and me) through the maze of government requirements.

Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter "Fratelli Tuti" could not have come at a better time. As Bishop Robert mentioned in his message, this year has forced us to examine what is essential, how do we value our relationships?

My world was shaken at the start of the year. It was unrelated to COVID, and boy lockdown didn't help. As I reflect on 2020 through the lens of relationships, I'm comforted by the listening ears and warm friendships in my life. From the most profound and comforting conversations to dopey banter and silly

*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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jokes, this kindness shared is simply by virtue of the marvellous people they are and the rapport I share with them. These grace-filled moments and people sustain me, sustain my soul and are my bright spots. Undoubtedly this is what is meant when people talk about "The Spirit at work".

I hope I am that bright spot or the Spirit at work for someone else. At a time when the darkness feels ever-present, we need to be kindness and love to each other.

“I have found that it is the small everyday deed of ordinary folks that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.”

*Gandalf (J. R. R. Tolkien - The Hobbit)*

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Anglican – Roman Catholic Reconciliation Prayer Service, L to R: Fr Michael O'Brien, Bishop Robert McGuckin, The Right Rev'd Cameron Venables (Anglican Bishop for the Western Region) and The Rev'd Paul Mitchell (Anglican Parish of St Luke, Toowoomba).

The Queensland State General Election is over, and the end of the year is almost upon us. Many of us might be saying the end of the year can't come soon enough. With COVID-19, life has been very different since the middle of March, and in some ways, life will be different in the future.

Pope Francis, in the introduction to his recent encyclical letter "Fratelli Tutti" on fraternity and social friendship, explains that our false securities have been exposed with the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic:

"..The storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities...Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another." (#32)

I am sure we have all reflected on what we regard as essential. The importance of our relationships with family, friends and the community is most evident when serious illnesses have affected the elderly. For those lacking the support of family and friends, this is a difficult time.

Health requirements have placed certain restrictions on our ability to gather in our homes, our churches and within the community. I hope that we have been able to see these things in the light of the common good; where we are members of a common family, where we are all brothers and sisters.

It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder. During these times, I am sure we have endeavoured to keep in contact with our loved ones as best we could. I trust that we have also maintained and strengthened our relationship with the Lord.

As restrictions are gradually lifted, may we again experience true communion as we gather together to celebrate and participate in the Eucharist. May our fellowship with the Lord and each

other be renewed and strengthened.

Christmas will shortly be upon us. What are your plans? Perhaps with travel restrictions, we may not be able to travel to where we had hoped. May we not forget that this is a very special season. Wherever we might be, may we play our part in creating a welcoming community where people experience God's love, which is something real, bringing joy and hope.

A Christmas gift of financial support to people in need is certainly a meaningful and worthwhile act of charity, something that speaks louder than words. Donations may be made to Caritas Australia [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) or to the St Vincent de Paul Society [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) or to some other charity of your choice.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones now as we move into the future.

**Bishop Robert McGuckin**  
Bishop of Toowoomba  
Advent 2020



Family connection: Five nieces visited Fr Tom Keegan in 1983, pictured here having dinner at Bishop's House hosted by Bishop Edward Kelly. Fr Keegan was delighted to have so many of his family visiting.  
Photo courtesy of Pauline McCullagh

## FR THOMAS KEEGAN

INGRID MCTAGGART

**Fr Thomas Keegan was born at Kilbeggan County Westmeath Ireland on 13 April 1928.** He was one of nine children, Sean (deceased), Br Frank CFC (deceased), Nan Shine (deceased), Sr Gemma RSM, Elizabeth Ward (deceased), Bridie Lynam (deceased), Ita Dunning (deceased) and Sr Theresa SMG, to parents John Keegan and Bridget (Daly). Fr Keegan died peacefully at St Vincent's Care Services (Lourdes Home) Toowoomba on 25 July 2020.

Fr Keegan attended Ballinagore National School Primary School and completed his secondary school studies at St Mary's Christian Brothers School Mullingar and St Theresa's Carmelite College at Castlemartyr County Cork. He entered the seminary in 1948 studying at St Patrick's College in Thurles, Ireland. Fr Keegan attended the seminary on a bursary provided by Bishop James Byrne, the first Bishop of the Toowoomba Diocese. Bishop Byrne had also studied at the seminary at Thurles.

Fr Keegan was ordained to the priesthood on 14 June 1953 by

Archbishop Jeremiah Kinnane at the Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles. On 25 November 1953, he set off by sea to journey to Australia and start his ministry in the Toowoomba Diocese.

During his journey to Australia, Fr Keegan kept a diary from the day he departed Ireland in 1953 to the day he arrived in Toowoomba, 7 January 1954. While he notes his sadness at leaving his beloved family, Fr Keegan also describes the excitement of starting his journey upon his arrival at the docks, stating "I get a wonderful kick out of looking back on it".

Life during his month-long journey seemed pleasant and enjoyable. In his writings, Fr Keegan notes times of Masses and prayer, as well as moments of fun and joyful interaction with other travellers. He filled time by taking in the sights and sounds of the journey, parties and dances and playing various sports on deck, as well as taking the opportunity to offer the sacraments to passengers and crew.

On 26 December 1953, Fr Keegan arrived in Adelaide spending the next two weeks making his way to Queensland. From Brisbane, he took the bus to Toowoomba. Of the bus journey, Fr Keegan wrote, "Enjoyed the 80-mile trip. The scenery was beautiful." Fr Keegan was met at the bus by the Bishop's Secretary, Fr Ralph Underwood, and taken straight away to meet Bishop William Brennan, who was then Bishop of Toowoomba.

Thus began Fr Keegan's time in the Toowoomba Diocese. Fr Keegan was well travelled across the diocese, spending time in the parishes of Warwick, Cathedral, Goondiwindi, St Theresa's Toowoomba, Chinchilla, Dalby, Pittsworth, Cunnamulla, Texas and Killarney. However, Holy Name Parish Toowoomba is where he spent an almost equal amount of time. Fr Keegan spent three years in the Toowoomba parish in the late 1960s, then returned in July 1987 where he remained until June 2016 when he moved to St Vincent's Care Services (Lourdes Home).





Funeral Mass for Fr Thomas Keegan

A Vigil Service was held at St Patrick's Cathedral on 30 July 2020, and the Funeral Mass, also at St Patrick's Cathedral, was held 31 July 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time, attendance at both services was limited, and family from Ireland were unable to attend. However, both services were live streamed for those not able to be present.

At the Vigil Service, long time friend of Fr Keegan, Sr Margaret Norris spoke warmly of the man and priest that many remembered fondly. Sr Margaret remembered meeting Fr Keegan in 1959 at the Cathedral and talked about how their paths had crossed over the years. In 1993 Fr Keegan was looking for assistance in Holy Name Parish, and Sr Margaret was a great help in the parish.

Despite his time spent in Australia, Fr Keegan always celebrated being Irish and kept a strong connection with his family at home in Ireland. Fr Keegan was remembered for his hospitality, love of his parishioners and strength of faith. "In all of my associations with Fr Keegan, I was in total awe of his tremendous faith in God, his zeal for the spread of the Gospel," said Sr Margaret.

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# NEW ENCYCLICAL A FOCUS ON CARE FOR THE HUMAN FAMILY

ACBC MEDIA

A world that looks beyond a global pandemic with no roadmap can find one in Pope Francis' new encyclical, which Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President Archbishop Mark Coleridge says "is not just for believers but for the entire human family".

Published on 3 October, the Pope's third encyclical is entitled "Fratelli Tutti (Brothers and Sisters All)" – words taken from St Francis of Assisi, who the Pope says has inspired what he writes.

"It is a vision of the dignity of every human being from which flows the call to build a new culture of fraternity and dialogue," said Archbishop

Coleridge. "In his previous encyclical 'Laudato Si' (Praise Be to You)', Pope Francis spoke of care for our common home. Here he speaks of care for each other, the family that dwells together in the common home."

Pope Francis writes early in the encyclical: "It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity."

"Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common

home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all."

The Pope started work on the encyclical before COVID-19 struck. But he says that the need for local, national and international solidarity has become even more important now. The pandemic has created in many people a sense of the interdependence of communities and the fragility of human beings left to themselves.

Read "Fratelli Tutti" and access other resources at [www.catholic.org.au/fratellitutti](http://www.catholic.org.au/fratellitutti)

## St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba's new emergency department is **NOW OPEN**

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# ST VINCENT'S GETS A DOSE OF DOGNESS

MARK COPLAND

**"I so needed that today – a decent dose of dogness," he says from his hospital bed.** A family member's health and wellbeing is brittle. They are hospitalised, and it's hard to find a way of comforting them or lifting spirits. We try nature with the beauty of flowers, a pastoral care visit, Communion, and we try music and books, even chocolate and lollies. A cup of tea, a phone call from a distant relative - every bit of thoughtfulness we summon but still sometimes we come up short.

In my first week of employment as Mission Executive at St Vincent's private Hospital, Toowoomba I was delighted to find that one of my responsibilities involved bringing a therapy dog to the hospital. After 18 months of searching the district far and wide for a suitable dog and volunteer, in desperation, I enrolled my fourth son, Jasper the Wheaten Border Collie in the Delta Dogs Assessment day.

And he passed! In fifteen glorious minutes, he was assessed as worthy. It took me the whole of the next day to be trained, and I am still learning, all of the time. In the comprehensive training package put together by Delta Therapy Dogs, I continually found this wet stuff coming out of my eyes. I learnt of aged care residents whose only connection was a furry friend. I heard incredible stories of therapy dogs attending

funerals and residents who feared and loathed dogs counting down the days till the next visit.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Jasper has not had as many hospital visits in 2020 as we would have liked. But each one of them has made an enormous impact. From the moment he enters the hospital doors, he receives and gives love. A number of staff sincerely believe he is their very special friend. And you know what? He is. He has gone into competition with our cardiologists performing a miracle on a patient a few months back.

They're still in business for now. To be in the room as those brown doggy eyes lock-in with a person nearing the end of their life is an unbelievable privilege. He is paid above award wages with a number of his favourites across the hospital regularly topping up a treat container.



Fr Michael Cooney blesses Jasper for the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi.

The visit may be brief, or it may be long – but he leaves more than his hair behind. As a way of celebrating the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi our hospital Chaplain recently blessed Jasper with a Franciscan blessing. We all need that dose of dogness!

## Planting the SEED

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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



# THE LORD BE WITH YOU... THE LORD BE WITH WHOM?

FR GONZALO  
GARCIA DURAN



Photo credit: James Webb

"The Lord be with you..." and the only response that he hears is the echo of his voice. Fr Charles prepared to celebrate Mass as usual. He prepared host, wine, chalice, etcetera. Everything ready to proceed with the proper rubrics and solemnity of every liturgical celebration. He prepared himself with the appropriate attire and paused for a moment in prayer before the procession. He proceeds to the altar, kiss it and starts with the proper greeting after the sign of the cross just realising empty pews at an empty church.

Those lines might have been from a fictional novel, but for many Catholics today a priest celebrating Mass in front of a camera became familiar during this pandemic. This unfortunate global event has been a learning curve for everyone in terms of public gatherings, and Christians attending weekly services are no exception. We cannot deny that one way or another, normal has changed.

Such a precarious situation moved priests, religious brothers and sisters, and diverse congregations from different communities, to take the internet by storm and open the church's doors in a new way. It will be impossible to deny the challenge due to our way of understanding our liturgical celebrations and the way of being a community, both of which are intrinsically intertwined.

At this extraordinary time, looking at this experience from the point of view of ministry, my concern went immediately to find ways to continue supporting the communities

entrusted to me. From the moment of isolation, people experienced the absence of an important part of their life and faith, creating a void that few had experienced before.

Everything changed, what had been the norm for all transformed rapidly with no opportunity to assimilate as individuals and as a community. With this, I witnessed peoples' hunger for God. Still, at the same time, it allowed me to meditate on similar such drastic moments in the history of humankind.

This feeling of desolation, despair and emptiness reminded me about Psalm 137 when a portion of the people of Israel was living in exile in Babylon. "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept at the memory of Zion." The reason for them to weep was connected not only in missing their land, their country, their people left behind, but the temple and, by default, their relationship with God. I can assure you that God

always listens to the cry of his people and will help them prevail during this difficult time. ("They cry in anguish, and Yahweh hears, and rescues them from all their troubles." Psalm 34:17)

I believe I shared this in one of our Masses during Holy Week; my heart was moved to see all those empty pews. Yes, I believe that every priest was experiencing his own isolation holding every heart in every Eucharist.

Along with these voices, I found other fatalistic ones pronouncing that such circumstances were the last push that the church needed to change, a clear call to renew or die. From the moment that I understood my faith as a personal response to God's invitation to choose the way of life, I also understood that I cannot predict the future of the church under these or other similar situations. What I consider and underline as important is that everyone counts in the active participation of God's Kingdom.

We need to proclaim and promote the Good News in the middle of this pandemic using, perhaps to our advantage, new instruments and tools to do so.

It is important to come together in our place of worship and encounter. Still, this moment had shown us that we have the capacity to reach out to others to close distances. The capacity to open a temple in every one holding a mobile phone, tablet or computer, knowing that behind every screen you will be able to hear a reply, "And with your spirit."

*I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.*

*If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.*

*I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete.*

*This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.*

*No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.*

*(John 15:9-13)*





Caritas Lebanon on the ground following devastating explosions in Beirut, Photo Credit: Caritas Lebanon

# SOCIAL JUSTICE IN FOCUS FOR CARITAS

CATHERINE MCALEER

**#EndCOVIDForAll: The COVID Crisis is not going to end for anyone, until it ends for everyone**

**Communities who were already facing poor sanitation, overcrowding and limited access to healthcare, are experiencing some of the worst impacts of COVID-19.** Overcrowding makes social distancing almost impossible. The lack of running water, soap and face masks means that communities cannot contain the spread of the virus.

Many of our closest neighbours lack the necessary resources to keep their citizens safe. In Indonesia, there are only four doctors and twelve hospital beds for every 10,000 people. In Bangladesh, the 1.3 million Rohingya refugees are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis with the combined threats of poor living conditions and COVID-19.

Caritas Australia has banded together with over 200 other organisations and over twenty thousand Australians to sign the pledge to **#End COVID For**

**All.** You can pledge your support at [www.caritas.org.au/end-covid-for-all/](http://www.caritas.org.au/end-covid-for-all/).

## Social Justice Animators

Recent changes at Caritas have seen the organisation engage Social and Ecological Justice Animators. Animators will engage with parishioners, teachers and students around the country with more of an online focus.

Their sessions enable participants to:

**LEARN** more about Caritas Australia's work by talking to local and international staff about programs,

**DEEPEN** Catholic identity by giving prominence to the Gospels and person of Jesus Christ,

**CHALLENGE** participants to understand and make sense of the world we live in,

**ENABLE AND EMPOWER** participants to take action for a more just and fair world.

Sessions are tailored to suit the Social Justice Calendar and for schools, sessions can align with the school curriculum.

## New Resources

The Justice Resources Team at Caritas continues to produce resources for schools and parishes. Some recent additions include:

**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL** - A range of Prayers of the Faithful that align with various social justice

days throughout the year.

**IMMERSION INCURSION RESOURCES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS** - A resource for teachers looking to create immersion/service-learning style experiences at school or online when unable to travel. It includes links to Caritas prayers, learning resources, videos and simulation activities.

**MIDDLE EAST APPEAL POWERPOINT** - Our Middle East Regional Appeal PowerPoint has been updated. It provides an overview of the situation in the Middle East, including Beirut, and what Caritas is doing to help the millions affected.

**FACEBOOK** - Please invite all teachers to join our Justice Education Facebook Group. Simply search for Caritas Australia Justice Education and ask to join.

**7 QUESTIONS TO ASK MEASURING INTEGRAL ECOLOGY IN OUR LIVES** and **REFLECTION CARDS** - A reflection guide designed for individuals and groups to ensure they are considering all aspects of the environment when it comes to planning and organising a range of events. The Reflection Cards are an invitation to pray with the seven areas outlined in the reflection tool.

All resources are on the Caritas Australia website [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

*For further information on any Caritas matter please phone 07 4638 7977 or email [caritas@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:caritas@twb.catholic.org.au)*



*Bishop Robert McGuckin presented each of the jubilarians a Papal Blessing at the conclusion of Mass. Fr Brian Sparksman's cousin, John Sparksman, received the blessing on Fr Sparksman's behalf.*

## CHRISM MASS AND JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF ORDINATIONS

**In another first for 2020, the presence of the coronavirus meant that this year's Chrism Mass was celebrated outside of Holy Week for the first time in living memory.**

The celebration is a pastoral highpoint in the life of the Diocese. The Mass normally brings together representatives from many parishes, as the faithful participates in this special Mass during which the Sacred Oils are blessed and consecrated.

The Chrism Mass is also notable in

that it provides witness and support to the Clergy as they renew their Priestly Promises. The delay in holding the Mass until after lockdowns and attendance restrictions had eased, allowed for a full contingent of Clergy from the Diocese to concelebrate this year.

While adhering to social distancing rules, 38 priests were strategically placed within the sanctuary of St Patrick's Cathedral. This gathering also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the special jubilees of ordination of Frs Don Murray and Brian Sparksman.



*Renewal of Priestly Vows*



*Presentation of the Chrism*





Bishop Robert McGuckin breathes over the Chrism prior to Consecration.



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# PASTORAL CARE – COMFORT AND COMPASSION AMIDST TRAUMA

NICOLE RANGIIRA  
WITH LYN CASH



Trish Langan (centre)

## God's generosity is evident through acts of compassionate kindness.

We see this particularly during recent times when families have faced the challenges of drought, fires, floods, and the impact of COVID, including social isolation, unemployment, and financial hardship. A meal is prepared to support a grieving family. A message of love arrives at the right time, bringing much-needed reassurance. Through these acts of kindness, God's love in our lives brings hope to others, brings comfort and justice to those around us, amidst experiences of trauma, grief and hardship.

Our ministry of pastoral care for patients and residents, their loved ones and staff caring for them, also offers countless opportunities every day to extend kindness to others. This kindness arises from the compassion that honours and gives witness to the heart of Jesus.

The current COVID pandemic has placed many restrictions on families who wish to visit their loved ones in hospital and aged care settings. At this time, pastoral carers who can work have brought comfort, sacrament, practical support, and have supported families to connect with their loved ones safely.

One major challenge for our pastoral care ministry during the pandemic is limiting of in-person contact. Our dedicated and faithful volunteers have not been able to be physically present, nor to gather together in prayer and fellowship, given the restrictions. Always felt is their prayerful support. One main thing missing in our life as a pastoral care community is the rich time of fellowship and the inspiration that comes from the journey

that is shared through wisdom and ministry together. I have missed the companionship and understanding that comes from being in the presence of these inspirational people.

One of these people, and an inspiration for me in my ministry, is Trish Langan. She is a symbol of the work of all pastoral carers ministering to the vulnerable. Trish has generously given time, wisdom and compassionate care for twenty years, and our faith-filled community celebrates with Trish this awe-inspiring milestone. We acknowledge God's goodness that shines through Trish's heart, leading her to extend care to so many patients, loved ones of patients, staff and others, for these many years.

It is a privilege for all the members of our pastoral care community and me to have Trish share so openly from her journey of faith. This sharing nourishes our spirituality and inspires the encounters we experience with others in our ministry of care. Trish is a mentor to many, given her breadth of knowledge, experience, passion for ecumenism and her willingness to be open to God's spirit guiding her in her ministry. For Trish, a critical aspect of her ministry is to be compassionate, and such compassion must be universal and not selective. Trish leaves no one outside the boundaries of her care.

Trish comes alongside families experiencing the joy and blessings of new birth as a pastoral carer in the maternity ward. One of the many gifts Trish takes into the ward is her own experiences of motherhood having reared six healthy children and a grandmother to many more. Trish sensitively encounters young women and their families when they are at their most vulnerable.

When ministering to young women who have miscarried, Trish draws on personal experience. She acknowledges their pain and sorrow having herself endured and worked through the heartache of several miscarriages.

Trish contributes to our Pastoral Care community in many ways, including:

- \* Naming and Claiming Ceremonies to honour the lives of babies who have sadly died, bringing peace and comfort to families grieving.

- \* Rock of Remembrance Services: Trish was a founding member in facilitating these services to support families experiencing pregnancy loss in Toowoomba and region.

- \* Ecumenical Service for International Pregnancy Loss Day: initiated and coordinated by Trish for the past three years. These prayerful gatherings have brought healing and nourished the faith of all those who have attended.

Whilst grounded in her Catholic faith, Trish appreciates the strength of the team comes from the various Christian faiths who first created the Ecumenical Pastoral Care Service. These pioneers and all those of us who have been privileged to come after them, offer God's love and hope. They are serving the patients, their loved ones and staff who are caring for them more meaningfully when collaborating as one united community.

Trish fills us with gratitude for the gift that she is to each of us who belong to the pastoral care community. We thank God for Trish's 20 years of service but most especially for the compassionate kindness that Trish has shared with so many during these years.



# TRUTH TELLING ABOUT FIRST NATIONS' MENTAL HEALTH: OUR CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

DR DAVID TUTTY

On August 28 this year, Bishop Robert led the Toowoomba Diocesan launch of the 2020 Social Justice Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops. Called "To Live Life to the Full: Mental Health in Australia Today", this statement offers us insights into the health, social and faith concerns that surround this challenging issue. Our Bishops want us to deepen our awareness of the reality of mental ill-health in Australia and to learn to respond to those struggling with this health issue with compassion and justice.

Of special interest to me is the insightful words that the Bishops offer concerning First Nations' mental health issues. Our Bishops remind us that the context of these issues is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are "over-represented in key measures of disadvantage" (p14), and that they have a long history of dispossession. They acknowledge that this "history of dispossession ... is the cause of intergenerational trauma". As a way forward, the Bishops see the need for more culturally appropriate mental health services. They recognise that the "Uluru Statement from the Heart" offers a very real possibility of "bringing the values of fairness, truth and justice to Australia's relationship with First Nations people and communities" (p15).

Recognition of trauma in this context is a more recent insight. Psychologists began wondering how to label a range of symptoms when working with Jewish Holocaust survivors and they deepened their insights into historical trauma, collective trauma and intergenerational trauma with further research into survivors of domestic violence, war, genocide, colonisation, rape and sexual abuse.

For First Nations peoples, a significant

contributor to their disproportionate levels of overall ill-health, including mental ill-health, is the "huge flow on effect from things that happened 200 years ago" (Joe Williams, quoted on p14). Yet this was not a once and for all event as First Nations peoples continue to experience ongoing colonisation and are left powerless to manage and determine their own lives.

Children continue to be taken from First Nations families in disproportionate numbers a decade after Kevin Rudd's Stolen Generations apology. Governments continue to not fully address the findings of the 1987-91 Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody with a further 437 unnecessary Indigenous deaths since then. Sacred sites continue to be desecrated with the recent destruction of the Juukan Gorge Caves by Rio Tinto. Governments continue to micro-manage Indigenous communities and their finances. We need to acknowledge that all of these ongoing actions continue to produce trauma and powerlessness.

This year's Social Justice Statement recognises this powerlessness and calls us to step up to the "unfinished business of our past" (p15). It is in the context of facing our past that the Bishops refer to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. They see value, significance and truth in this 2017 statement. After a long process of Indigenous consultation around Australia, 250 key elders and leaders gathered to formulate, and attach their signatures to, this call for a constitutionally enshrined voice to Parliament, a treaty and a process of truth telling.

Many might see the Uluru Statement from the Heart as purely a political issue. Yet in the context of Catholic Social Teaching, support of this

statement is an important way we can live out our call to act justly in this land of Australia. The Bishops recognise that First Nations peoples, who have governed themselves and managed this land for millennia, have been made powerless in their own country. We, who are non-Indigenous, need to face this ongoing history with honesty and humility and support First Nations' initiatives for much greater decision making over their own lives and over what is sacred to them.

By supporting the "Uluru Statement from the Heart", the Australian Catholic Bishops are saying that colonisation and dispossession significantly impact on First Nations people's mental well-being. Australian First Nations peoples are always going to experience disproportionately greater mental ill-health until we have the courage to confront and address the injustices of the past. The "Uluru Statement from the Heart" is about recovering a level of self-determination so that trauma is addressed through a holistic recovery of personal and collective power. The call for a voice, treaty and for truth-telling is about ensuring that First Nations peoples can stand respected on country and be actively part of all decisions that impact their lives.

Catholic Social Teaching asks of us to be alongside in support of those who struggle. First Nations' mental ill-health requires action that is more than just culturally appropriate health services. It requires we attentively hear First Nations' experiences of ongoing colonisation and take seriously First Nations' initiatives for a holistic way forward. In this way, we hear the truth about First Nations' mental ill-health and act in ways that will contribute to their "right to flourish and live life to the full" (p15).



# COVID COUNTDOWN: HOW HAS THE CORONAVIRUS AFFECTED US?

BY INGRID MCTAGGART  
WITH JENNIE BLACKLEY



**There is no denying that the coronavirus, COVID-19, will be the dominant story of 2020.** Unfortunately, it is likely to continue to be a part of our lives in the future. However, like everyone, our diocese has had to adapt to “the new normal”. Who at the start of the year had even heard of social distancing?

While Australia has fared comparatively well compared to other parts of the world, the numbers are still quite frightening. As of 26 October, there have been 27,520 cases countrywide, of this 25,032 recovered and 905 have died. Within Queensland and the boundaries of our diocese, we have been very fortunate to have largely escaped uncontained outbreaks. The hidden danger now is that we become complacent and let our guard down.

It is important to remember that within our Catholic community, there are many who are considered vulnerable to COVID – including groups like our

clergy, older parishioners and Friends and volunteers at SPRED. It is also important to remember that we are part of the broader community, so how we manage hygiene when we gather for prayer, meetings or socializing matters.

The challenge on a diocesan level has been to manage so many different activities, services and places. “Abiding by the one person per four square meter rule has been key for our diocese.” Explains Toowoomba Diocese WHS Coordinator, Jennie Blackley. “Other personal responsibilities like social distancing, hand washing and staying away when sick are universal. COVID safety measures and regulations for churches are very different compared to James Byrne Centre, for example.” The James Byrne Centre’s complexity comes from the mixture of all the services they provide - covering everything from accommodation for adult groups or school-based groups through to foodservice.

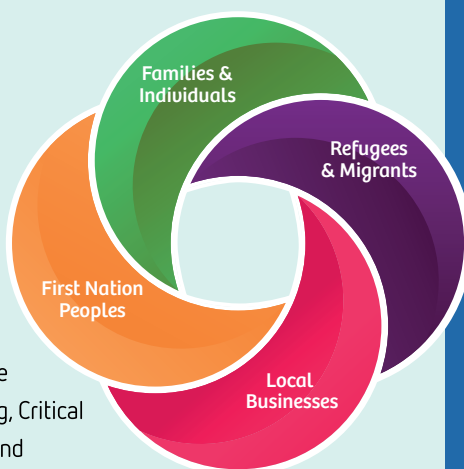
In addition to working with the managers at the James Byrne Centre and parishes, Jennie has also been working with diocesan offices, Sr Elaine Morzone at Sychar and Loretta Coman at SPRED. “Each building, office, and gathering is different, but it is essential to refer back to the government and industry-specific regulations and follow it to the letter. This compliance ensures we can continue to operate safely now and in the instance where we have a second wave and forced into tighter restrictions.” Said Jennie. “It’s been a long and hard process, but people’s health is at risk, so it’s a priority to get it right.”

Bishop Robert McGuckin has been very keen to see the diocese compliant with COVID health and safety regulations. Not only to keep churches and offices open but to also protect clergy, staff and parishioners. “This has been a trying time for everyone. I am thankful for Jennie Blackley’s hard work, as well as everyone in ministries and parishes across the diocese.”

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# OUR DIOCESE'S COVID TIMELINE

## OUR DIOCESE'S COVID TIMELINE

**Wednesday 4th**

Bishop Robert issues his first message.

This includes some changes to Mass such as removal of holy water from church entrances, no contact during sign of peace, use of hand sanitiser.

**Monday 16th**

Diocesan staff meeting regarding COVID and first WHS Advice issued to parishes (stage 1 – COVID in Australia)

**Thursday 19th**

Bishop Robert issues his second message. This includes the suspension of all Masses from 12:00am Friday 20/3/20 and restrictions on weddings and funerals. Churches can remain open for private prayer.

**Sunday 5th**

Palm Sunday – First Mass is live streamed from the Cathedral to Facebook and YouTube.

**Thursday 9th – Sunday 12th**

Easter Triduum is celebrated with empty churches but streamed live in accordance with directions received from the Vatican. Other parishes within the Toowoomba Diocese have taken up the option to live stream.

**Friday 15th**

First level of government restrictions eased, however the size of gatherings is limited to 10 people and deemed not practical to reopen churches.

**Tuesday 8th**

Sychar reopens to the public.

**MARCH**

**APRIL**

**MAY**

**JULY**

**AUGUST**

**SEPTEMBER**

**OCTOBER**

**Monday 23rd**

Second WHS Advice issued to parishes (stage 2 – COVID in boundary of the diocese)

**Wednesday 25th**

Bishop Robert issues his third message and third WHS Advice issued to parishes (stage 3 – COVID in Toowoomba).

This includes the closure of churches and further restrictions on weddings and funerals. It is also advised that all baptisms be cancelled except in the most urgent of circumstances. This comes into effect from 12:00am Thursday 26/3/20.

**Thursday 26th**

The Toowoomba Diocese is closed to members of the public. This includes parishes, diocesan offices and ministries, James Byrne Centre, SPRED and Sychar; this is the beginning of the “new norm” in how the Diocese continued to operate during lockdown, learning new skills e.g. communicating via MS Teams and Zoom meetings. All events are cancelled and staff/ministries begin to work from home where possible.

**Friday 3rd**

Further government restrictions eased, and churches finally reopen after 3 months of closure. Every church must implement a COVIDSafe plan approved by Bishop.

**Saturday 5th**

James Byrne Centre reopens in compliance with a COVID Health Management Plan, welcoming seminarians and staff from Holy Spirit Seminary (Banyo) for a retreat.

**Monday 24th**

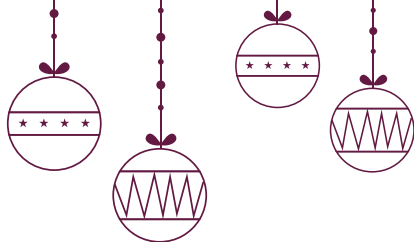
Diocese adopts Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland in order to keep churches open in the wake of new government restrictions implemented in response to the “Wacol cluster”.

**Monday 13th**

Diocesan staff/ministries who were working from home return to their offices.

**Tuesday 20th**

While most groups continued to operate remotely via Zoom and phone calls, SPRED holds their first face-to-face interaction with friends and volunteers onsite at the Diocesan SPRED Centre since lockdown.



## HOW WILL COVID EFFECT CHRISTMAS?

With Advent around the corner, the diocese as a whole has been preparing for a Christmas like no other. The Queensland government has announced the further lifting of restrictions which will impact how we as a community celebrate. Parishes will continue to adhere to the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship.

To help manage contact tracing requirements for the bigger crowds at Christmas, parishes have been encouraged to utilise TryBooking. We will be gathering information regarding Christmas Mass times and information on how to book in one place. All parishioners and visitors are encouraged to secure their spot early at Mass for Christmas.

### *Please visit*

*[twb.catholic.org.au/christmas2020/](http://twb.catholic.org.au/christmas2020/) from the beginning of Advent to check how you can attend celebrations at your local church this Christmas.*



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St Thomas More's students ready for a game with their sockballs.

## CATHOLIC MISSION

EMILY CONNORS

### Toowoomba Schools 'sock it to poverty'

**Socktober, Catholic Mission's fun and exciting schools engagement program is well underway for 2020.** Catholic schools in the Toowoomba Diocese are joining with over 350 schools across Australia to 'sock it to poverty' this October during World Mission Month.

Socktober uses the world game of soccer to encourage students to learn about mission and social justice, core parts of the Catholic curriculum. "Soccer is played in every corner of the world and is one of the few things that truly unify people of all backgrounds," says Matt Poynting, Catholic Mission's National Community Engagement Officer. "One of the most important things to do when we look to support people in need around the world is to first learn their reality. Socktober helps students and their families to do that while having fun and making a difference." The initiative is divided into two key parts: the Socktober Challenge—a six-week program of mission and social justice resources and activities to do in class or at

home; and the Socktober Shootout—a penalty shootout activity to be held as part of each school's Mission Day.

Toowoomba schools have been getting creative with their Socktober event days in recent weeks, wearing crazy socks and testing out their newly created sockballs with the Socktober Shootout.

*For more information about Socktober, visit [www.socktober.org.au](http://www.socktober.org.au)*

### For the Joy of the Lord is Your Strength – World Mission Month 2020

October is the time when Catholics all over the world join together to support and celebrate the global missionary work of the church. Catholic Mission, as the Australian arm of the Pontifical Mission Societies, plays a vital role in this. "October is an opportunity for us to give particular attention to the work of mission," says Catholic Mission National Director Fr Brian Lucas.

This year World Mission Month focuses on the essential work of priests, religious and lay missionaries in Cambodia, supporting people with disability and their families. For over 20 years, Bishop Enrique 'Kike' Figaredo Alvargonzalez and his team in the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang have been working to

advocate for people with disability. The Arrupe Centre and Outreach Program started in 2001 by Bishop Kike, provides education, healthcare and support for children and young adults with disability due to landmine incidents or other illnesses such as polio or cancer. Bishop Kike's approach to the vital work carried out at the Arrupe Centre is guided by his clear sense of mission. "We are here for the common good... and to bring the joy of life everywhere... with hope and joy and happiness," he says. "We are giving back dignity to these children".

Still today, landmines accidents are prevalent in Cambodia, a cruel reminder of the country's troubled past, even for those who were not yet born during the tumultuous years of the Khmer Rouge regime. Chen was just 16 years old when he lost both of his legs in a landmine accident near his home. "Fearing that he would not be able to continue his education or help his family, Chen was grateful that Bishop Kike reached out to him in his time of need," says Fr Brian. With the help of the Arrupe Centre, Chen not only finished high school but continued into university study and gainful employment. Chen gives testament to the work carried out by the Arrupe Centre and sums it up perfectly; "It is like I have a new life."

*You can help Catholic Mission support people with disability and their families. Visit [www.catholicmission/cambodia](http://www.catholicmission/cambodia) for more information.*







## BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE CATHEDRAL PIPE ORGAN

INGRID MCTAGGART

**“On entering St Patrick’s Cathedral last evening on the occasion of a sacred concert one was filled with reverence and admiration at the great improvements which have added so much to the stateliness and beauty of the Cathedral.”**

*The Chronicle, Organ Recital, St Patrick’s Cathedral: Beautiful Instrument, 18/12/1934*

**Over 80 years later, the same organ again fills the Cathedral with stateliness and beauty after a modern makeover to restore its voice and extend its life.**

### History:

After the transformation of St Patrick’s Church to a Cathedral, which included significant extensions to the building, moves were made to furnish the seat of the diocese with a suitably grand instrument. In mid-1934, well-known Brisbane organ builders, Whitehouse Brothers, were charged with the installation of a pipe organ. The organ itself was a gift to the diocese by Mrs P Gavin, costing over £1600 pounds (roughly \$160,000 today adjusted for inflation).

For the time this organ was considered top of the line and very modern with an electric pneumatic system. The dual banks of pipes were an impressive sight in its original home in the choir loft over the James Street entrance to the Cathedral.

In the 1970s the Cathedral was

showing signs of needing extensive work to protect and restore the building. Another driver of some of this work was a response to Vatican II. The Cathedral Administrator at the time, Fr (later Monsignor) Patrick Doyle, under the direction of then-Bishop William Brennan, oversaw the project as a whole. No corner of the Cathedral building escaped repair or change; from electrical rewiring to the renewal of the Sanctuary; from replacing the rusted galvanised iron roof to repairs on church furniture.

The entrance to the Cathedral was also considered in the scope of work, namely tidying the choir loft area and cleaning the pipe organ. Ultimately the decision was made to remove the choir loft, and the organ and choir moved to the western transept. Emerson Organ Builders in Toowoomba were responsible for rebuilding the organ in its current location in 1974.



Behind the scenes: The picture on the left shows what is directly behind the organ pipes shown on the right.

## 2020 Restoration:

Those tuning into live stream Mass during COVID lockdown might have noticed the absence of the Cathedral pipe organ. While the organ restoration has been years in the planning, the lockdown provided something of a silver lining bringing forward work scheduled for the instrument. However, it also presented challenges, especially when it came to shipping of parts from overseas.

Pierce Pipe Organs of Hemmant (Brisbane), have been responsible for the latest restoration effort. The scope of work carried out is extensive, but as Pierce Pipe Organs owner, Simon Pierce explains, the work carried out should last for some time. "It's not the biggest pipe organ, it's actually quite small for this size building, but it works really well. And I think it has something to say! This [work] will certainly give us another 50 years," said Simon, laughing he adds, "I do not plan to be doing the next [restoration]."

The complete overhaul of the pipe organ was broken down into two major components, work on electrical parts and repairs to the pipework. Electrical work included replacing

wiring, electronic relays have replaced mechanical relays, and refurbishing the console and pedalboard. All the pipes were removed, repaired where needed and cleaned. Every component used to turn air into sound in the pipes was disassembled, cleaned or replaced. Simon and staff, which includes his son and daughter, have been fine-tuning the organ since they completed physical work on the organ. It is fascinating to watch as they listen for small imperfections that only an expert ear can detect.

A significant change for the organ is the replacement of the mechanical relays with electronic ones. Simon explains that while the organ hasn't been converted into a state-of-the-art computerised system, it is reliable and easily repaired if needed. "I'm actually using this more and more, because they are bulletproof, computers play up from time to time," he says, referring to the newly installed diode logic switching system made in South Australia. "This technology has been around since the 1980s, it can be repaired, and it's much better than repairing the old mechanical system."

The refurbished console (keyboard component of the organ) is a visual

cue that the organ has received some attention. The freshly repaired woodwork is now brightly polished and boasts new keyboards. Of course, the sound of the organ is the most noticeable sign that it has changed.

In the contract for the scope of work to be completed there is the description "it will sound brighter and will have a better tone." Cathedral organist, Vicky Coccozza would agree that the instrument is living up to this promise. "It's a joy to play with so many pipes working that hadn't worked for years," said Vicky. "Guest organists also appreciate the upgrade."

Vicky recorded herself playing the organ just before work commenced on it, and the difference is stark. Sharing the video, Vicky explains, "Playing the organ before was clunky. That's probably the only way to describe it. Now it's so light and sensitive; it's taken some getting used to it being in much better shape!" You can see and hear a comparison of before and after at [youtube.com/CatholicTmba](https://youtube.com/CatholicTmba).

*Research and information provided by the Toowoomba Diocesan Archives. Assistance and fact-checking provided by Gabrielle Saide, Diocesan Archivist, Simon Pierce, Pierce Pipe Organs and Vicky Coccozza, Cathedral Organist.*





L to R: Simon Pierce and Kyle Ledger, of Pierce Pipe Organs, with the new relay wiring.

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When Fr Ted Hanlon shows this picture he often asks the question "What do you see of God here?" *Fr Ted Hanlon*

# CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HANDS: REFLECTIONS ON THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF OUR RETIRED CLERGY

FR MICHAEL O'BRIEN

**Fr Ted Hanlon was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, in 1984 by Bishop Edward Kelly.** The story of his priestly journey and understanding of ministry started sometime before that.

After Cyclone Tracey's devastating effect on Darwin, including the school Fr Ted had been teaching at almost destroyed, he took the opportunity to teach in an orphanage in East Timor. After about seven months, there was massive political upheaval, and the Fretilin National Socialist Party came to power.

On one occasion, when they went to collect a group of children to bring to the orphanage, he came across a trench of bodies. Men, women and children, who had been brutally disposed. "I was so horrified it changed my life," recalls Fr Ted.

Later in the year, they went again to collect a group of children. As they came around a corner, they found a roadblock that the local village had put up, and as they turned the corner, a young 16-year-old boy immediately fired a .303 at them. The bullet went through the windscreen and between himself and the driver, ricocheting off the truck. The first word Fr Ted said I can't mention, but it was followed with the thought "what a waste". "I saw my life to that point had been lived for my own selfish benefit and was largely wasted," explained Fr Ted. "The combination (in

these stories) of life being so fragile and so brutal and the only thing that makes any sense to me is the teachings of Jesus. Especially where Jesus touches the real lives of people and encourages them to look out for each other is a real light in the world."

So began a desire for a deeper understanding of a God who only wants the best for everyone and lets us dare hope for a better future in a fragile world of living. So Fr Ted has a great passion for teaching and exploring that hope for a better future. In his own way, Fr Ted continues to open people's minds and hearts as he presents to a dedicated group the origins of the Bible in a weekly lecture through the University of the Third Age (U3A).

Another passion, not unconnected to his spirituality is photography. Fr Ted connects to nature through the lens, looking for those particular moments that go unnoticed or missed by others, particularly those that emphasise the unusual beauty of everyday events. Nature assures us of the continuation of life. When I asked Ted what advice he would give his younger self, he said, "When things may be tough, always remember that there will be light at the end of the tunnel. Things change continually, and nothing is permanent. You will come to something better."

This connection and appreciation of the cycles of life have left Fr Ted with

a way of praying best described as "sitting in gratitude". "Actually one of the best prayers I say is sitting on the side of my bed with my heart raised to God and watching the antics of my adopted magpies waiting to be fed. After 78 years of life, that I can still have that simple pleasure is a perfect prayer of gratitude for the many blessings of my life."

Which brings us back to the photo at the beginning. For Fr Ted, this photo is the great combination of humanity and God. The presence of God not only in the sunset, but the beauty of another day coming to a close. The people that have celebrated another day with love, fragility, difficulties and joy – all those places of the heart that make us who we are.

Fr Ted continues to enjoy retirement at Vianney Village at St Vincent's Care Services (Lourdes Home), Toowoomba.



Fr Ted and The Rev'd Laurel Raymond (Anglican Church), ecumenical service in Wallangarra 2016.





Diocesan In-service participants gathered at the Cathedral Centre and also joined via Zoom.

# DIOCESAN IN-SERVICE EXAMINES CROSS CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

PATRICE RIORDAN

**On 15 September the Toowoomba Diocese held an in-service for all clergy and pastoral leaders within the diocese at the Cathedral Centre in Toowoomba or online via Zoom.** The topic for this in-service was “Development of Practical Intercultural Skills,” with a focus on “Intercultural Skills & Cultural Competency for Mission.” Over the past 20 years, the cultural composition of our diocese has become much more diverse. Apart from traditional owners, our diocese could be said to have been mono-cultural. This inland part of Australia was not affected by the different waves of migration of the last century. The diocese is now much more culturally diverse, and we need to develop the skills to provide pastoral care. The objectives for the day included establishing a common understanding of and language about culture and its impact in ministry, apply a model of culture to describe and

address cultural issues that impact communication and effectiveness, explore one’s individual cultural profile, develop cultural competency skills to cross gaps and to bridge cultural differences and finally to identify key actions for further development as individuals and pastoral team.

Our presenter for this in-service was Patrick Fox, an educator at Catholic Mission. Patrick uses TMC Cultural Orientations Model to help develop an understanding of cultural differences and developing practical intercultural skills. Before participating in the workshop participants took part in an online cultural self-assessment called your Cultural Orientations Indicator profile or COI on the Cultural Navigator website. This report gave participants a profile of their own in response to a series of questions based on Sense of Self, Interaction Style and

Thinking Style. Individuals were then able to see how they communicate and engage with others in work situations, how they tend to process information in work situations, and finally how they tend to view identity and motivation in work situations.

This information was then compared to other members within our diocese, the wider Australian community and other cultural and ethnic groups from around the globe, comparing similarities and differences. The focus was on how we, as a multi-cultural society, think and interact with others, especially those who are not from the same cultural background. Overall the day went well with an abundance of information for everyone to process. From here, it will be important to elaborate on these results to see how to put this information into practice within our own parish communities.

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## THANK YOU TEACHERS: WORLD TEACHERS' DAY 2020

DR PATRICK COUCHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:  
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### The end of October each year signals the celebration of World Teachers' Day.

This year the theme is The many faces of teaching. In the Toowoomba Diocese this theme recognises and celebrates the diversity and richness of the staff in our 31 school communities who come together each day to educate, care for and nurture the lives of over 9000 students in our schools. Whilst the title of the day refers specifically to teachers, this day is a celebration of the combined efforts of all staff who together make schooling such an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all students.

In what can only be regarded as one

of the most tumultuous years in living memory, particularly for schools, it is fitting to pause briefly and acknowledge the enormous role played by school staff in bringing calm, reassurance and stability to the lives of thousands of students in the midst of widespread upheaval. As someone said to me recently, just when we thought we'd seen and experienced everything possible, along comes COVID.

The generosity and goodwill of staff during this pandemic has been nothing short of remarkable. Our students and communities owe a huge debt of gratitude for the kindness and

professionalism which has maintained continuity of learning for students and reinforced the deep sense of connectedness and belonging to their local school community. This is not a short-term, flash in the pan, display of generosity and goodwill. These qualities are deeply ingrained into the culture of our schools and is a distinctive feature of our system.

If there has been a silver lining to the COVID cloud it has been the renewed appreciation for the work of people who work in schools and a deeper understanding of real value that education adds to a society



which prides itself on values such as kindness, respect and a fair go for all.

In spite of the inevitable challenges which will continue in the foreseeable future, I thank God every day for the true believers, those who truly believe in the worth and value of education. These true believers bring to their work an infectious spirit of hope and confidence for a future full of promise and opportunity, which makes such a positive difference to the attitude and outlook of every student.

The 9,000 plus young people who walk through the gates of our 31 schools for nearly 200 days each year – they are the reason we continue to give ourselves to this most worthy and noble profession.

Consider for a moment the stories behind the faces of those young people: some come ready to change the world; some come anxious and uncertain; some come well-supported from home; some come lost and forgotten; some come well-versed in their faith; some come void of an experience of a loving God. All, however, have one thing in common. They – this day, this week, this year - come to school, to the people they trust and admire, their teacher, teacher assistant, administration officer, grounds person and cleaner.

Pope Francis describes education an act of love. He says that “the staff member in a Catholic school must be, first and foremost, competent and qualified but, at the same time, someone who is rich in humanity, capable of promoting human and spiritual growth.” The staff of Toowoomba Catholic Schools demonstrate these attributes with great distinction, which in turn will be carried forward in the lives of students.

So if the opportunity presents itself, add your thanks to staff in schools. Do so on behalf of the many students who have passed through their classes and are now young men and women living successful lives. And on behalf of colleagues who have the privilege of working with staff in many roles and locations throughout the diocese. Finally, on behalf of all those who continue to believe that the best thing you can do for any child is to educate them well. Thank you again for making this year memorable for all the right reasons.







ACELO Award Winners

## LEADERSHIP AWARD RECOGNITION FOR TCS STAFF

### TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

**The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) honours educational leaders who have made a significant contribution to the teaching profession and educational leadership through its annual awards.**

On 25 August, the ACEL Queensland

Branch recognised and celebrated the 2020 award winners and the following staff from Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) were recognised for their contribution to education. The citations from ACEL for these recipients give an insight into their valuable work in education.

### **Michael Newman: Excellence in Educational Leadership Award**

Michael was the principal of St Mary's College, Toowoomba and has recently been appointed as



principal at Marist College, Ashgrove commencing in 2021. Michael has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in Catholic education having commenced teaching in NSW before spending time in leadership positions at Burdekin Catholic High School and Nudgee College. Michael is recognised throughout Queensland and beyond for his outstanding contribution as an educational leader and has made a significant contribution to educational leadership and staff development.

### Donna Stahlhut: ACEL Queensland Fellowship Award

After a successful career as a principal in schools across Queensland, Donna, in 2018, accepted the challenging role of establishing TCS as an accredited provider of kindergarten and out of school hours care services. Donna brought to the role many commendable personal attributes and professional capabilities to establish a bold vision for early childhood within TCS. After receiving an Honorary ACELQ Fellowship in 2012, Donna has actively promoted the ideals of ACEL in both her role as principal and more recently as the architect of the development of a comprehensive system of Catholic kindergartens, care and outside school hours care.

### Angela Martlew: The Emerging Educational Leadership Award – Pivotal People

Angela started her career as a secondary Health and Physical Education teacher before moving into the primary classroom setting. In 2019 she gained certification as a Lead Teacher, one of only two teachers recognised in Queensland. Angela has played a pivotal role in the introduction of high impact Visible Learning practices at Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba. She has been instrumental in the introduction and embedding of the school's Learning Dispositions and Learning Process. Angela is dedicated to continuous improvement and has worked collaboratively to establish structures that facilitate open sharing of ideas, data and thinking processes among her colleagues. Serving as a role model for other schools, Angela and her team regularly share their journey with a range of educators from all sectors.

### Polly Crawford: The Emerging Educational Leadership Award – School Leader

Polly is an early career principal at Sacred Heart Primary School, Cunnamulla. She is an exceptional educator and leader and has successfully implemented a highly successful improvement agenda that led to substantial academic growth for students. Polly embraces the complexities of a rural, remote, and disadvantaged community. She ensures there is a consistency of vision, ethos and learning for her school community despite a regular turnover of staff. Polly fosters this through a commitment to communication, negotiation, accountability, and collaboration. Polly continually strives to live out the motto of her school: "Become Who You Are" to become the best leader she can be.

### Jennifer Smeed: The Emerging Educational Leadership Award – School Leader

Jennifer's leadership potential was noted early in her career. She has held Middle Leadership roles, firstly, as Director of Senior Pathways, then as the Director of Senior School at St Mary's College. Jennifer's leadership in relation to teaching and learning in the senior school was instrumental in the academic improvement that is now evidenced at both St Mary's College and Assumption College. In 2019, Jennifer was appointed Deputy Principal of St Saviour's College. Since this time, her leadership has solidified a culture of academic growth and improvement at the College. Jennifer has an inherent belief that all young people, irrespective of backgrounds, deserve a liberating education which will ultimately make possible their desired pathway beyond school.

Dr Pat Coughlan in recognising the award recipients said, "There are many reasons why students flourish in our schools, but the most important of these is our staff. Our ACELQ award recipients are just a small sample of the many fine educators within our system of schools. Their work and perseverance have built an engaging and personalised approach to learning which challenges students to think deeply about the world and their place in it. I congratulate the 2020 award recipients."

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Teachers and mentors with Dr Pat Coughlan for the first EEPP

## NEW EXTERNAL EXAM PREPARATION PROGRAM POPULAR

### TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**A new program developed by Toowoomba Catholic Schools to assist Year 12 students in preparing for external ATAR assessments proved to be a popular holiday pursuit for over 100 students from Catholic schools and colleges around the Toowoomba diocese. Students from**

Toowoomba, Stanthorpe, Warwick, Dalby and Roma participated in the program which was hosted by St Saviour's College, Toowoomba.

"This is the first year we have run the EEPP, and we were delighted with the participation numbers. Principals from the diocese decided to launch the program as a result of COVID-19 as a way of assisting students with additional exam preparation, including tuition but other skills needed to get them through exam blocks," said Sharon Collins, Principal at St Saviour's College.

#### The EEPP covered the following general subjects:

- English
- General Mathematics
- Mathematics Methods
- Specialist Mathematics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Experienced teachers acted as mentors to students and...
- developed and led sessions on specific subject exams,
- guided the planning and writing of responses to practice questions,
- provided specific examples

of cognitive verb use in exam questions and how to 'break down' what is expected in the answer,

- gave clear guidance on what the examiners are looking for,
- supported the completion of mock exams,
- provided written and verbal feedback to enable students to grow their knowledge and skills,
- provided additional resources for use after the program.

"The External Examination Preparation Program was a wonderful opportunity available to students to help achieve their best ATAR. The program was an opportunity for Year 12 students to refine their considerable skills and talents in preparation for ATAR external assessments," said Dr Pat Coughlan.

"Across the week 117 students received high-level feedback and advice from an expert group of teacher mentors and tutors to assist them in their chosen subjects. Some of our best teachers made themselves available for the week of intensive preparation with students. The secondary principals' group was also instrumental in promoting the program and encouraging students to get involved. Both groups should be applauded for this timely opportunity for students."



Assumption College, Warwick students participate in the EEPP



# TCS STAFF MEMBER MAKES THE HOT LIST

## TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**Rebecca Brownhall, Education Officer:** Lighthouse Schools Numeracy has been recognised in “The Educator’s” annual Hot List. This prestigious list recognises and celebrates professionals who represent the cutting edge of educational excellence in Australia.

The winners have made invaluable contributions to the K-12 education sector over the past 12 months, demonstrating excellence in linking theory and practice, and designing and implementing innovations that provide students with high-quality educational experiences, during these unprecedented times.

Rebecca’s qualifications include a Masters of Education: Leading Innovation and Change, Certified Practitioner: Cultures of Thinking and Making Thinking Visible - Harvard Graduate School of Education, Certified Leadership Facilitator and Coach: The Leadership Circle Profile - Taking Leadership Teams from Reactive Tendencies to Creative tendencies, Queensland University of Technology: Graduate Certificate in Leadership - Coaching.

Some of the conferences that Rebecca has recently presented at include ACEL Vision and Voice Conference, National Summit for Education- Innovation, Harvard Education - Making Thinking

Visible: Leading Improvement and Change International Conference and Queensland Association of Mathematics Teachers.

Whilst working for Toowoomba Catholic Schools, Rebecca has led the action research agenda for numeracy and has collaboratively written the system-wide Inspire Mathematics Strategy.

21st Century learning in mathematics needs renewal from traditional forms of teaching to ignite curiosity and inspire learning connecting to mathematics in the real world. Toowoomba Catholic Education has developed its Inspire Mathematics Strategy to engage learners and evoke thinking and collaborative inquiry, aimed at authentically implementing the Australian Curriculum. Specifically designing learning which explores the Mindset, Skillset and Toolset of Mathematical learning, participants will engage in a number of Design Thinking routines to explore this way of working for their context.

“Collaboratively building contextual



Rebecca Brownhall

improvement through supporting teacher dispositional change is my daily work. My passion is for enabling thinking in learners and culminates through my expertise in Design Thinking and Transformational Dialogues. Having been a ‘change agent’ in education for 20 years, my enthusiasm for the practitioners’ perspective in modelling and coaching for improvement through distributed leadership, collaborative partnerships and a courage culture approach are trademark to the work I lead,” said Rebecca.



On 10 September Toowoomba Catholic Schools celebrated our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduation Ceremony for the diocese at St Patrick’s Cathedral. Although we had many changes this year to comply with the COVID restrictions it was still a lovely opportunity for the students to come together and celebrate their milestone.

The Mass was live streamed and can still be seen at the following link. <https://youtu.be/Ucfbfj0z2xE>



L to R: Bill Thomson (Australian Catholic Superannuation Retirement Fund), Chris Bartlett and Dr Pat Coughlan.

## TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### On 21 October the annual Toowoomba Catholic Schools Excellence Awards presentation evening was held.

The awards recognise those who consistently demonstrate best practice in their respective roles – members of Toowoomba Catholic Schools whose outstanding contribution has assisted staff, students and their families to experience exemplary places of learning and academic success within a distinctly Catholic environment. As is often the case with award programs, one high performing recipient is selected from a list of many worthy, high performing nominees. This year over 140 nominations from across the Diocese were received.

“In what has been a tumultuous year it is fitting that we have the opportunity now, as the year draws to a close, to

gather and honour the abundant talent, generosity and professionalism of staff that has been on display so publicly this year,” said Dr Patrick Coughlan, Executive Director: Toowoomba Catholic Schools. “The Excellence Awards provide the organisation with the opportunity to identify and showcase those staff who model, demonstrate and live excellence in their roles all day, every day. No system can rise above the capacity of its staff. Without these efforts and influence, exemplary practice remains hidden in pockets and goes largely unrecognised. We thank all of our finalists and recognise the invaluable contribution to moving our system of schools from great to excellent.”

Congratulations to all nominees and recipients of these awards.



L to R: Samuel Heinke (Salary Packaging Australia), Rebecca Smith and Dr Pat Coughlan.



Belinda Saal, Dr Pat Coughlan



# TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020 WINNERS

CATEGORY	RECIPIENT	SCHOOL
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SUPPORT		
Teaching and learning support	Anne Woodcroft-Brown	Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba
Administration, finance and facilities support	Belinda Hayward	St John's School, Roma
Volunteer support	Belinda Saal	St Stephen's School, Pittsworth
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING		
Early career teacher (less than 3 years of teaching experience)	Rebecca Smith	St Patrick's School, Mitchell
Primary expert teacher	Amanda Thompson	St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe
Secondary expert teacher	Amanda Wighton	St Joseph's College, Toowoomba
Professional Learning Community (PLC)		St Joseph's School, Chinchilla
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP		
Emerging leader	Eleighta Hannam	St Mary's College, Toowoomba
Middle leadership	Kerri-Ann Manthey	Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba
School leadership	Chris Bartlett	Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba



Anthony Weller (Data#3), Amanda Thompson, Dr Pat Coughlan



Belinda Hayward, Dr Pat Coughlan



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Students gathered around the finished tank mural on the last morning of camp.

## TREE CHANGE A WELCOME BREAK FOR STUDENTS

SARAH LILBURNE

**After a difficult few terms at school, including six weeks of remote learning, the Year 9 students at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby tackled a whole new challenge attending the survivor camp at Queensland Conference and Camping Centres' (QCCC) newest location in Tewantin.**

It was the first time a group from the college attended this campsite, and the experience of camping in tents and earning food rewards was very new and exciting for the students. All food was prepared and cooked by the students around the campfire. Despite the tiny tents and very thin mattresses, the students thoroughly embraced the opportunity to learn new survival skills and step away outside their comfort zones.

QCCC camp leaders guided students to discover a range of skills including

lighting fires with flints, building shelters and rafts, filtering water and solving problems as a team to earn their rewards of hot chocolate and Tim Tams.

After two days of learning how to survive, leaders from Triballink then stepped in to lead the students and teach them about indigenous culture, particularly from around the Sunshine Coast region. Each group was taken on a bush tucker walk through stunning bushland and experienced a taste of Bunya nuts and emu roasted on the campfire. Groups also learned about Indigenous hunting and building shelter using paperbark from the surrounding bush.

Being one of the first school groups to engage with Triballink at this campsite, the students were given the unique opportunity to create amazing artwork on two rainwater tanks. These beautiful murals are

there for future groups to enjoy. The students were immensely proud to have left their mark at the campgrounds, which they enjoyed for four days.

On the last morning, students woke very early to gather around the beautiful lagoon for a prayer gathering. Students reflected on their four days of camp. They gave thanks for the lessons learned and the people who guided them through the journey of survival and Indigenous culture.

The QCCC Tewantin camp is now firmly fixed on the agenda for Year 9 students into the future as the experience gained will prove invaluable for years to come. Learning about and understanding Indigenous culture and bush survival skills came as a refreshing break from the usual routine of school and the distractions of technology and daily life.





L to R: Mark Lindenberg, Hugo & Telia Simpson, Fiona Drew, Jacinta, Hollie & Brax Follington, Sally Croft and Janine Butlin.

## BILLBOARD A SIGN OF COMMUNITY GENEROSITY

### TELIA SIMPSON

**After witnessing the tireless amount of hours many parents donate to P&F associations, Telia Simpson was inspired to create a more passive form of income for her children's school.**

Whilst busy with the birth of her fourth child, the St Stephen's School, Pittsworth parent set out to find a piece of land to rent to ultimately house an advertising billboard. After almost two years, she was pleasantly surprised when Berry and Kay Dieckmann generously allowed the billboard to stand on their land.

With the false assurance that the hard part had been done, Telia slowly discovered the intricate details of legalities associated with such structures and humbled by the generosity of the community. Although the billboard itself stands a mighty structure, the process

of standing it was epic. A soil test was required, followed by both structural and foundational engineering. Next step was council approval which was complicated by a Main Roads sign also being installed during this time.

Following approval, the St Stephen's community rallied together with their varied skills and built the structure. Mr Steel, owned by Scott and Telia Simpson supplied well-priced steel whilst Matthew Fitzpatrick generously welded the structure. The sign was then sent to Brisbane by AG Rigging and Steel to be galvanised. Upon its return home, Moore Trailers took it upon themselves to complete the job.

Shayne and Leah Moore's team assembled and installed the sign with no cost to the school, also including the donation of over \$4,000 worth of labour, marking, digging and providing the cement for the footings. They also supplied the use of any necessary machinery including a Manitou for installation.

Following council approval, Fiona Drew (Acting Principal) and Janine Butlin (St Stephen's Principal) worked with the Catholic Schools Office to create

a lease with the landowner and the school. James and Sally Croft from Ray White Rural were then able to draw up a contract with prospective business owners wishing to lease the sign. Scott Simpson installed the final stamp of ownership with the St Stephen's School plaque beneath the billboard.

The school has obtained a 12-month lease from Lindenberg & Co for the Eastern side of the sign. After speaking to Mark Lindenberg, he revealed that a big part of the reason for leasing the sign was because the funds were being returned to the community. Parent Mel Smith and the P&F association were proactive in achieving this lease.

The sign is engineered to be compatible with other commercial billboards to attract potential customers. The six by three metre, double-sided billboard is on property adjacent to the Gore Highway at Southbrook just west of the service station. Leasing the sign costs \$9,000 a year or from \$750 a month, which is very reasonable in comparison to the better-known companies. Funds from the billboard will go towards improving the resources and facilities at St Stephen's School.



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Jules Chevalier



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## LIGHT OF LEADERSHIP WISDOM STILL SHINING

ANNE MCATOMNEY

### **Term 4 in the school year is always a time of endings for Year 12 students.**

While this year has been no exception, it is the case that the advent of external exams has meant that some endings rituals have occurred earlier than in the past. For Downlands Year 11 and 12 students, one of these rituals is the Lumière Mass. Bearing a name that links us to the French origins of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the Lumière Mass is the setting for the ritual passing of the light of leadership wisdom from Year 12 to Year 11, inclusive of the naming of the College Leaders for 2021.

For us at Downlands, this leadership wisdom is characterised by the ways of living found in MSC

Constitution #32 – a spirit of family, true friendship, humility, kindness, understanding mutual forgiveness, compassion, simplicity, hospitality, gentleness and a sense of humour.

This Mass also included a moment for students and staff to recognise and honour 40 years devoted service to the MSC and Downlands by Bernadette Lynch, Curriculum Secretary. A tribute to her was delivered by Lindsay Mason, himself honoured for 40 years service on the occasion of our Founder's/ Chevalier Day Eucharist in August.

Also this term, in something of a special event, we were proud to be represented by Year 11 student, Mia

Bennetts, in a webinar hosted by the Chevalier Institute and designed to draw attention to the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' exhortation, *Laudato Si*. Entitled *Care for our Common Home* – a conversation about how we can participate in shaping the future of the planet, the webinar included key speakers as well as students from the MSC schools who addressed the question "How does *Laudato Si* deepen and add to our understanding of ecological issues and our capacity to live our spirituality more faithfully?". The webinar is available on YouTube, as are the other two Chevalier Institute webinars from April and June this year.





Stanthorpe students collected over 800 canned food items for this year's winter appeal.

## TINNIES FOR VINNIES WINTER APPEAL SUCCESS

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

For this year's St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe Winter Appeal, a range of fundraising events were held to assist the St Vincent De Paul Society.

This year, in conjunction with Teen Vinnies, Tinnies for Vinnies was created. Students were encouraged to donate cans for the St Vincent De Paul Society to help those who are less fortunate around our district, especially during winter. Teen Vinnies conducted a very successful Lip Sync Battle, with students from both the primary and secondary school very excited to participate.

Everyone who came to support the event and cheer along their classmates was required to donate a can for the appeal.

Secondary students also ran a guess

the jellybean competition. For a gold coin or can donation, students could guess how many jellybeans were in the jar for a chance to win.

Primary students held an inter-class competition, where the class that donated the largest number of cans won a pizza lunch.

In total, in conjunction with the Lip Sync Battle, over 800 cans were donated across both campuses to the St Vincent De Paul Society, a fantastic outcome for the 2020 Winter Appeal.

## STANTHORPE EMBRACES R U OK? DAY MESSAGE

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

As part of students' pastoral care activities, on 10 September, St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe participated in R U OK? Day, the biggest and brightest day of the year. Dedicated to raising awareness for mental health and suicide prevention, R U OK? Day is the national day of action. Participants are encouraged to wear yellow and check in on those around them by asking, "Are you Ok?".

The message this year was, "There's more to say after R U OK?". With 2020 being a challenging year for everyone, it has become vital for us all to stay connected.

Each year our school participates in the nationwide event, aiming to inspire our students to be the generation that transforms the way we look out for anyone struggling with everyday life.

A sea of yellow illuminated St Joseph's School as students and staff banded together in support of R U OK? Day. Students also participated in a range of classroom activities



St Joseph's School Staff get into the R U OK? spirit.

aimed to educate and assist students in the very real and challenging topic of suicide prevention.

Students and staff then enjoyed a free sausage sizzle to finish a great day.

# A REFLECTION OF SERVICE & DEDICATION

## ST URSULA'S COLLEGE, TOOWOOMBA

Millicent Power is a current Year 12 student and the 2020 Faith and Service Captain at St Ursula's College. In recent weeks, Millicent has had her commitment to both her studies and dedication to living the values of Serviam recognised with receiving two major scholarship awards.

The Helen Handbury Leadership Award acknowledges Year 12 students in rural and regional Australia who have shown outstanding community leadership. As an award winner, Millicent will receive funding towards an international trip to experience community development in another culture. An opportunity that Millicent is excited to undertake once international travel is again available for such endeavours.

The Sir Samuel Griffith Scholarship is a prestigious award offered at Griffith University for academically gifted students who demonstrate leadership, civic responsibility and social awareness. Millicent intends to use this scholarship to help fund her time at university, as well as dedicating a portion of the funds to help make a difference in others' lives through a small initiative yet to be determined.

St Ursula's College is extremely proud of Millicent and has strongly supported her applications for these



Millicent Power

significant scholarships. While Millicent herself feels very humbled by the descriptions of these prestigious awards, within the College community, Millicent is widely respected for all the attributes highlighted of outstanding leadership, civic responsibility and social awareness. Attributes of which

Millicent is planning to apply to a career in Law, following commencing her University studies in 2021.

Congratulations to Millicent in this achievement, we look forward to watching her success grow in years to come.

## Handy Hendo



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# A CALL TO LEADERSHIP

SHARON COLLINS

Throughout Term 3 at St Saviour's College, Toowoomba, there was a particular focus centred around leadership. Our Year 11 students and some Year 10 students were engaged in the Student Elected Leadership process. The process involved written applications, staff-written references, face-to-face interviews, voting across all year levels and staff voting, as well as deliberation and discernment from the College Executive Leadership Team. While not all applicants were successful in their quest, a key learning from all these processes, is that leadership must begin from within. The minute we assume a leadership role, we are at the mercy of those we lead. Our actions are directed towards the betterment of the lives of the people around us. Sometimes, this requires us to put our own needs right out of focus.

James Strock (2020) writes, "The highest level of leadership is service. The highest level of service is leadership. At the highest level, service and leadership become one. Serve to lead."

All of us have or will have the opportunity to lead at varying points in our lives. The way that we endure our responsibilities and persist, even on the days when we simply don't feel like it; the way we are questioned by feelings of self-doubt when we go against the grain, affirm that any challenge that we undertake, while



Principal, Sharon Collins with St Saviour's College 2021 Student Elected Leaders.



St Saviour's College 2020 Student Elected Leaders.

difficult, is possible with God.

We have every faith in our 2021 Student Elected Leaders and know that they will bring much energy and positivity to the College community. We thank our outgoing Student Leaders of 2020. We thank them for the many

contributions they made to the College in what has been a difficult year.

Our leaders, both outgoing and incoming, were celebrated at our annual Leadership Breakfast. Congratulations to our 2020 outgoing leaders, and our Student Leaders for 2021.



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College Captains Dhairy Shah and Alastair Doljanin presenting Michael Newman with his farewell gift

## ST MARY'S FAREWELLS PRINCIPAL AFTER DECADE OF SERVICE

ST MARY'S COLLEGE,  
TOOWOOMBA

**After a decade spent imparting wisdom on the many students of St Mary's College, Toowoomba, Principal Michael Newman has decided to move onto new pastures.**

Michael was treated to a surprise farewell on his last day, at the conclusion

of term three, where the community thanked him for his ten years of service with the college, and for his tireless work improving the lives of both staff and students who have walked through the gates of St Mary's.

Guest speakers included the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Executive Director Dr Pat Coughlan, College Board Member Matt Boyd, P & F Committee Member Katrina Thom, Assistant Principal Samantha Parle, College Captains Alastair Doljanin and Dhairy Shah and Bishop Robert McGuckin.

Dr Coughlan said the contribution Mr Newman had made to Catholic education was unmatched and invaluable. "After 17 years in the diocese, including seven as Principal of St John's College, Roma, Michael leaves with a

reputation as an outstanding leader and educator," he said. "His sphere of influence extends well beyond his local community to colleagues within the systems and across the State. Michael, his wife Lauren and their children have been wonderful ambassadors for Catholic education and faith leaders within the diocese. We will miss them very much and wish them well in the next chapter about to unfold."

During the ceremony, the college presented Michael with a painting of the College Brothers' House.

Michael will be taking on his new role as headmaster at Marist College, Ashgrove in 2021. We thank Stephen Monk, who has taken the reins as Acting Principal for Term 4, before handing over to Brendon Stewart in January 2021.

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# EDUCATION IN BRIEF

On 17 September St Patrick's School, St George, held a Fun Run and Sports Day. Fr Salvador Fernandes joined teachers and students cheering for both teams.



EDUCATION



Fr Salvadore Fernandes recently spent some time with the students at St Patrick's School, St George for their RE lessons.





# OUR SACRAMENTAL JOURNEYS

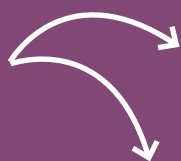
*After months of preparation for sacraments in schools and parishes, many across our diocese have been celebrating the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. This year has had the additional complication of postponement and adaptation to applicable COVID-19 restrictions.*

*Thank you to parents, teachers and parishioners who have helped guide the children through these important milestones in their faith journey in the Catholic Church.*

25 Confirmation candidates from Highfields Parish (2 groups), prepared for the sacrament by the parish Sacramental Team. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Bill Morris with Fr Brian Noonan.



23 First Communion candidates from Pittsworth (2 groups), the children attended after school preparation lessons enthusiastically in the lead up. First Communion celebrated by Frs Thomas Areekuzhy with Tony Schipp.





23 Confirmation candidates from Pittsworth Parish (2 groups). Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Robert McGuckin with Fr Thomas Areekuzhy.



19 Confirmation candidates from St George Parish (2 groups). Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Robert McGuckin with Fr Salvador Fernandes.



Sophia with her brother, Jason.



*Dear God,  
Thank you for the beautiful sky,  
So blue, so dark, so very high.  
Thank you for the living plants,  
They look so cute just like ants.  
Thank you for all the animals,  
What's your favourite group,  
because mine are mammals.  
Sometimes at night when I look  
up in the sky, sometimes I wish...  
I could give you a high five.  
Amen.*

Prayer written by Sophia Tolete. Sophia is currently preparing for Holy Communion at Sacred Heart School, Cunnamulla.

Following a time of preparation, Leanne Draper, currently a teacher at St Patrick's School, St George, was received into full communion with the Church through the celebration of Confirmation on 13 September and First Holy Communion on 27 September. Leanne was supported on her journey by members of the St Patrick's community.





# ST THOMAS MORE'S CELEBRATES PRECIOUS MILESTONE

MICHAEL BERMINGHAM

**St Thomas More's Parish, South Toowoomba marked 60 years since the formal establishment of the parish on 4 September.** The parish honoured this milestone at both Masses on the weekend of 5 and 6 September, a life-giving event in the midst of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Fr Michael O'Brien and Fr Jamie Collins led us in the celebration of the Eucharist in vestments made and donated by the Boulus family to honour the occasion. Special guests included Sr Di Phillips and Sr Joan Finucane representing the Sisters of St Joseph who were part of the school and parish for 58 of the 60 years. The significance of the occasion for the community is well summed up in this reflection from Margaret Devine, Parish Liturgy Committee Chair:

"When one talks of a 60th anniversary, or jubilee, one usually attaches the word Diamond to the celebration. How does this word fit with the celebration of 60 years as a parish for St Thomas More's? A diamond is a precious gem which comes from very humble beginnings. At one point in history a piece of molten rock emerged from a volcano. Over a very long period this rock was subjected to very high heat and intense pressure. This piece of rock finally emerged as diamond, a much sought-after gem.

St Thomas More's came from very humble beginnings. In 1960 it began as a farmhouse which served as both a school and a church. Although of humble origin, it was a much-prized possession for those early Catholics who nurtured the burgeoning parish with great love and pride. Over time the parish has undergone the usual heat and pressure associated with a new parish to become the vibrant, welcoming parish which is the 2020 St Thomas More's.

When a diamond is mined, it is not a thing of beauty in and of itself. Like our original parish it needed to be fashioned

and formed over a long period and with the guidance of experts. We are very grateful to have had Parish Priests, Priest Directors and Assistant Priests along with Parish Leaders who have worked diligently, cheerfully and competently in the running of our parish and for the secretarial teams who have assisted them. Over this period our parish has developed as a faith-filled and welcoming one. Cutting the stone to shape is no easy task because of its hardness and strength. To become even more precious, the stone needs to be cut until it becomes a multi-faceted gem. Each facet of the stone provides light and colour to enhance the whole. There is beauty in every face, and every face is necessary. So it is with our parish. It is multi-faceted.

St Thomas More's offers groups to cater for most interests and talents - Spiritual, Social and Practical. Each member of each of these teams brings light and colour to the overall gem of our parish. Through them, we exhibit the characteristics associated with diamonds: light, life, brilliance.

We experience the emblems of commitment, faithfulness and promise; hardness, strength and beauty.

Some diamonds are used as beautiful gems to adorn and to add value. There are also those diamonds whose hardness makes them invaluable as diamond bits and diamond saws which are essential in so many modern industries. Through its members, our gem of a parish contains both the beauty and the strength of a diamond. To quote Thomas Merton, our parish is 'like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it, we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely.'

The name diamond is from the ancient Greek: *adamas* 'unbreakable'. We thank God for the development and blessings of our parish over the past sixty years and pray that St Thomas More's remains unbreakable and blessed."



*Frs Michael O'Brien and Jamie Collins in vestments prepared for St Thomas More's Parish 60th anniversary, with a display prepared by the Parish Liturgy Committee.*



# MARKING A MILESTONE

MARY ONDRUS

We all love a surprise, don't we? At Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Newtown, all parishioners were surprised with a gift to celebrate Fr John Quinlan's 80th birthday in early October.

No big party, COVID made sure of that. A group of 'conspirators' schemed together to publish a book entitled "80 of the Best – A Selection of Homilies to Commemorate Fr Quinlan's 80th Birthday". The behind-the-scenes work, and indeed the behind-his-back work, must have been exciting as well as challenging to select 80 of Fr Quinlan's homilies as the content of this book.

Topics that touch milestones in our lives include First Holy Communion/ Confirmation, marriage, family and vocations. On our spiritual journey through life, there are so many topics: the message of Jesus; life and religion; what do I believe; using your talents, to name but a few.

The homily from Fr Quinlan's Golden Jubilee Mass in 2016 is a fitting opening to the collection. It is a synopsis of life events which led Fr. Quinlan to this point in time, and he presents a vivid word-picture of the Church – an active entity. It is a great book of treasures, to be treasured.

Happy reading, parishioners and happy birthday to Fr Quinlan, God bless you.

The book is available for purchase for \$15.00. Please contact Our Lady of Lourdes Parish on 07 4634 1453.



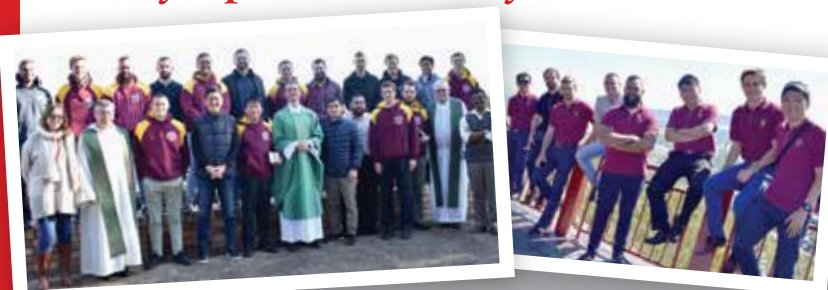
Fr John Quinlan celebrates his 80th birthday.

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# LITTLE MIRACLES GROWN UP

NICOLE EDMONDSON

**The first-ever students of Little Miracles Community Kindergarten recently got together for a reunion.**

Little Miracles opened in 2007 in response to the closure of the kindy at Our Lady of Lourdes, Toowoomba. Fr John Quinlan and Paul Murphy had a vision for a new kindy to service the community. This vision was brought to life by a dedicated team of volunteer parents. Thirteen years later, the first students of the kindy are set to graduate,

so the staff of Little Miracles invited all the students back for a visit. The graduates had a great time reliving their kindy years, looking at photos, talking about their memories, and checking out how the kindy has changed.

Over the 13 years, Little Miracles Staff, Committee, and families have established a well-resourced kindergarten with an outstanding reputation in the community. Families

come from all over town and the surrounding areas to join the Little Miracles Community and take part in the exceeding educational program for children aged 3 – 5 years.

Little Miracles is grateful to the original families that put their trust in the kindy back in 2007 and enrolled their children. Little Miracles wishes the graduating students all the best for their futures.



*Kindy* 2007



*Year 12* 2020





## FARWELL TO FR PETER DOOHAN

When Fr Peter arrived in Charleville sixteen years ago, he made the town his home. He has become a well-respected and much-loved part of the wider Charleville community. Due to the COVID restrictions, Fr Peter's farewell had to take many and varied forms. Between four parishes, three schools, nursing home, the Vietnamese community and various other church and community organisations, not to mention individuals, his last few weeks in Charleville left him not only exhausted but well fed.



Gathered parishioners and members of the Charleville community join with Fr Warren Padilla to offer Fr Peter Doohan a special farewell blessing.



L to R: Fr Warren Padilla, Shaun Radnedge (Mayor, Murweh Shire), Fr Peter Doohan and Kerry Radnedge at the Charleville community farewell.



St Mary's School, Charleville says thank you and farewell to Fr Peter Doohan.

## FARWELL TO FR JAMIE COLLINS

In late July St Columba's Parish, Mitchell celebrated a special Mass and evening to thank Fr Jamie Collins for his contribution to the community over the past nine years.

Fr Jamie spent some time in St Columba's Parish when he was first ordained when he lived in Roma with Fr Peter Doohan. I recall we had a wonderful celebration in Mitchell to mark his ordination. Sr Amy Caldwell organised the event with great detail to make it something special.

Fr Jamie gave generously of his time. He was here to guide and support



Fr Jamie Collins with Mitchell Parishioners.

us in our faith journey; he made our community a better place and pastored to his sheep here in the West. We thank Fr Jamie for his love, kindness and

friendship and his Christian example. We express our heartfelt thanks to him. May the Lord walk gently with him as he enters this new phase of his life.



# PARISH IN BRIEF

Due to ongoing restrictions, it has been hard for the parishioners of Millmerran to stay connected, as with many rural communities. Fr Thomas Areekuzhy has celebrated home Mass for people of the outlying areas to come together.



L to R Fr Jamie Collins with Judy McGuire, Kevin McGuire, Patrick Grehan and Josephine Grehan. The couples received a special blessing on the occasion of their respective 50th Wedding Anniversaries.

Highfields Parish held their annual Swap Your Crop morning. Winston and Loretta Apel were hosts for the enjoyable morning.

In August the St Vincent De Paul Conference in Highfields hosted a farewell for Sr Kay McGrath. Kevin McCormick, Highfields Conference President, along with other members, spoke expressing their appreciation and gratitude of Sr Kay's contribution to the conference.





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