

Horizons

COME AND SEE

**Reflection on Admission as
Candidate for Holy Orders**

**New Cultural Centre
a Contemporary Space**

**Aussie Citizenship
a Proud Moment for Fr Hermi**

**#60
MAR21**

FREE Publication
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Diocese of
Toowoomba

Horizons

FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

This pandemic continues to affect us in profound ways. As with my last "From the Editor", I am still in reflective mode, particularly about my relationships. Over the years, I've joked that I would have no problems packing up and becoming a hermit, "Ugh people, am I right?". But I might be wrong; I've miscalculated how much I might be a people-person or at least a my-people-person.

For the past five years, I've been ordering the Lenten and Advent programs from Wollongong Diocese. I have been in awe of the work and attention to detail in these resources. While I might not follow them from cover to cover, I love to take a quiet minute and randomly open to a page to seek inspiration.

It warms my heart now to read the acknowledgements at the front and think, "Oooh I know these guys!". I get that same feeling looking at publications and resources from across the country, knowing that many of these people are not just colleagues, but there is also camaraderie and friendship.

A big factor in this feeling is being a part of the Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA). While I'm a very small fry compared to many of the members, it has been such a wonderful outlet for making connections outside of my diocese and different Catholic entities.

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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I'm privileged to be on the ACPA Executive at this time as secretary. At the handful of executive meetings since my election, I'm again reminded of how much I value colleagues from across the country. As with everyone in the era of COVID-19, I am heartbroken that we didn't get together face to face last year, and this year is looking like it still won't be business as usual.

Surrounded by grace personally and professionally, the hermit isn't a hermit after all. And true to form

looking for inspiration, I pick up this year's Lenten Program, "Comfort", randomly flicking to a page. I look to the bottom of page 43 and see:

Lord, help me to be nourished by the life of grace you have lavish upon me and bring forth an abundance of good fruit in my life. Amen.

It's suddenly dusty in here, or someone's cutting onions...

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Priests of the Toowoomba Diocese with Bishop Robert McGuckin and Bishop Bill Morris enjoyed their annual retreat at the James Byrne Centre in early January.

By the time this issue of “Horizons” comes out, we will well and truly be into 2021. Schools are back, and in fact, Term 1 is almost over. Lent began on 17th February, and 4th April is Easter Sunday.

During this COVID 19 pandemic, we have been fortunate in our part of the world, especially in our diocese. We may think that some of the restrictions with which we have to abide are somewhat burdensome. We are part of a larger community and need to consider the well-being of everyone. I hope we are 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.

Pope Francis, in his recent encyclical letter “Fratelli Tutti”, on fraternity and social friendship, invites everyone to renewed hope. The Pope quoting from a speech he gave to young people in Cuba in 2015 said, “Hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical condition... Hope is bold, it can look beyond personal convenience, the

petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile” (FT#55)

The Pope, in his message for Lent, continues this theme. He has titled his message “Lent: a Time for Renewing Faith, Hope and Love”.

We might ask ourselves what we should we do during Lent? Perhaps in the past, certain practices were more clearly laid out before us. Lent, as we know, is a time of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. As to how each of us manages, that is left to individual choice.

We mostly live very busy lives, where our every hour in the day is occupied. We need to reflect on and evaluate what we regard as essential. If our value systems are not distorted, I would think we will find that we can make some time for what is important during Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

You may wish to participate in a Lenten program, either “Look to Jesus” from the Archdiocese of

Brisbane (available as a podcast) evangelisationbrisbane.org.au/lenten-program/ or “Comfort” from the Diocese of Wollongong www.dow.org.au/shop/.

Project Compassion is a way where we can reach out and show our solidarity with those in need. Contact www.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

Pope Francis, in his Lenten Message, encourages us:

“Dear brothers and sisters, every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving. The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.”

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

Bishop Robert McGuckin
Bishop of Toowoomba
March 2021



Tom Jolley, Kathy Bizzell and Barbara Nuss in 1996.

LONG SERVICE TO THE DIOCESE RECOGNISED

INGRID MCTAGGART

For the Toowoomba Diocese's Finance and Administration team, information and support are their stock and trade.

The quality of the service they provide comes back to the dedicated staff. The office's through-line has been Tom Jolley and Kathy Bizzell, serving the diocese for 26 and 25 years, respectively.

In 1994 when Tom took over from Margaret Walsh as the diocese's accountant, a staffing agreement change meant that the diocese would no longer have access to the Catholic Education Office finance staff. The Melbourne CDF manager at the time suggested Tom contact someone who had worked for him previously who was now in Toowoomba. That person was Barbara Nuss. Tom located her at a small St George branch and boldly walked in one day to offer her a job.

At the time, Barbara turned down the offer. However, she later changed her mind and made her own bold counter offer, saying that she came

with a workmate with whom she job shared. This workmate was Kathy. Tom welcomed both to the diocese with the ladies commencing work at the end of October 1995.

When Tom, Kathy and Barbara started working for the Toowoomba diocese, they were located in Bishop's House's on Margaret Street. Not long after, The Shrine in Ruthven Street was refurbished to include office space, and the trio moved to a more functional area. With the passage of time and the flux of staff, both Tom and Kathy

have been mainstays. With a sense of coming full circle, 2019 saw them return to almost the same office space they first occupied with the diocesan offices moving to Bishop's House.

Kathy's 25 years of service was recognised by diocesan staff late last year with a morning tea and gifts presentation. At the small gathering, Tom described Kathy as "a loyal, dedicated, hardworking member of this team right from the beginning and the work that you do and the reliability and quality of it is essential to us."



Kathy Bizzell and Tom Jolly back in the same office space in 2020.

SR AMY CALDWELL

SR RUTH DURICK,
PROVINCE LEADER -
AUSTRALIAN URSULINES

Many in the Toowoomba Diocese would know Sr Amy Caldwell from her years spent at Our Lady of Lourdes School Newtown as a young Ursuline teacher (1956) and as principal (1972-1977). Amy also served as an educator in Ursuline schools in Armidale and Brisbane and in the parish school of St Vincent's Aranda in the ACT.

In the 1980's Sr Amy moved more into adult faith formation and pastoral care in Canberra before venturing back to Toowoomba. In 1995 she undertook a completely new ministry with Voluntary Isolated Student Education (VISE) Queensland. She did nine placements over three years in various parts of western Queensland. For someone who grew up in suburban Sydney, this was a great change for Sr Amy. The work involved tutoring children of families on the properties and supporting rural women who were often isolated.

Sr Amy grew to love the life of rural communities. When an opportunity came to serve in the parish of Mitchell, she was ready to go with great eagerness. She wrote, "Being inspired by the needs of rural people,



Sr Amy Caldwell (centre) with some Mitchell parishioners.

I assumed the challenge to go to Mitchell, a remote western town 600 kms from Brisbane, where there was no resident priest."

In February 1998, she was officially commissioned by Bishop Bill Morris in the parish of St Columba's Mitchell as the Pastoral Leader. She was the first woman to be appointed to this role in the diocese and worked closely with a Parish Leadership Team. Sr Amy was an active member of the Mitchell community for twelve years. She led baptismal and funeral liturgies and Liturgy of the Word, always assisted by a small team. Sr Amy spoke of the vitality and teamwork in the parish and the wider Mitchell community, "The people lead the parish in administration, finance, pastoral care of the sick, and the day to day needs. A strong inter-faith spirit joins the churches together, and there is an excellent relationship. Our Parish Director travels from Roma twice a month for Mass, and the remaining weekends we have lay-led liturgies. I give pastoral support to the parish school."

In the years that Sr Amy was at



Sr Amy Caldwell

Mitchell there developed a deep sense of mutuality, of love and support. She was always grateful for the community who supported, affirmed and cared for her and with whom she shared great love and friendship.

Sr Amy never retired. Even when she needed to go into care, she carried out the call of the Gospel among the residents and staff. The readings she chose for her final celebration of life say it all. "Be ambitious for the higher gifts.... these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" 1Cor13:9 and the guiding light of her life's journey, Jesus, who said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Jn.14:6

Sr Amy Caldwell died on 6 February, aged 90 years. Her funeral was held on 10 February, at St Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, in Ashbury, NSW.

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NEW CHURCH PROTOCOL PUBLISHED FOR RESPONDING TO SEXUAL ABUSE

ACBC MEDIA

A new protocol introduced in early February 2021 provides a framework for Catholic entities across Australia to respond consistently to people raising concerns or allegations of child sexual abuse.

The National Response Protocol, which the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference adopted at its November 2020 plenary meeting, is the product of two years of work and widespread consultation within and beyond the Church. That consultation included engagement with victims and survivors and their advocates.

"The Church continues to work hard to strengthen the safeguards that

have been put in place in recent years," Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said. "The adoption and implementation of the National Response Protocol is an important step forward, and we thank those who have brought this thorough process to completion."

The implementation of the National Response Protocol from February 1 will mean that Towards Healing and The Melbourne Response will be phased out. "Pioneering in some ways when set up in the 1990s, the two earlier protocols have been much criticised, in large part because of inconsistent or incomplete application," Archbishop Coleridge explained.

"One of the strengths of the new protocol is that it provides a single national framework, which will ensure a consistent approach to the handling of concerns and allegations."

Towards Healing and The Melbourne Response continue to be valid until the end of 2021 while Church authorities implement the National Response Protocol locally. The National Response Protocol will be monitored regularly to allow for ongoing refinement and improvement. It will be sent to the Holy See for approval.

The National Response Protocol is available at: www.catholic.org.au/nationalresponseprotocol



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IT'S NOT LEFT V RIGHT: COMPASSIONATE CARE AT END OF LIFE

DR MARK COPLAND, MISSION EXECUTIVE, ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL TOOWOOMBA

The establishment of the Toowoomba Hospice was a response to euthanasia legislation introduced into the Northern Territory in 1995. Initially the vision of the late Sr Francis Flint csb OAM, a groundswell of community support for high quality end of life care saw the hospice open its doors 1 July 2003. The Toowoomba Hospice is an independent, non-denominational community facility governed by the Management Committee on behalf of the Toowoomba Hospice Association. The facility provides free palliative and respite care to adults with a terminal illness.

The issue of euthanasia, now more commonly referred to as voluntary assisted dying, is brought to the fore for Queenslanders again. Before the 2020 state election, Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk promised that ALP Members of Parliament would be allowed a conscience vote with legislation brought before the parliament in February 2021. We revisit the same issues around end of life care that we faced back in the late 1990s/early 2000s when Sr Francis lobbied for the Toowoomba Hospice.

The arguments around voluntary assisted dying (VAD) do not fit the old left-right categories. It is not conservative Christians standing against euthanasia versus the godless lefties advocating for it. The Queensland Bioethics Centre closely analysed 1119 submissions made to the 2018 "Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry in Aged Care, End-of-Life and Palliative

Care, and Voluntary Assisted Dying". The analysis makes for interesting reading. "God" was the only religious term used in submissions, only appearing 84 times for the case against VAD and 42 times in the case for VAD. The absence of a religious focus may reflect a growing secularisation in our society.

The Queensland Bioethics Centre describes the division between those for and against VAD follow individual and community lines. The pro submissions emphasised the "rights of the individual". They don't want their loved ones to suffer, and they want to have the power themselves to prevent their own suffering. Anti-VAD submissions tended to view the community as a whole. They highlighted what the intended legislation would mean for the most vulnerable. Those opposed to VAD see the legislation as a failure of the state to protect the common good and the public interest.

One of the dangers of introducing VAD legislation is that it can jeopardise high-quality palliative care provision. Australian ethicist Dr Daniel Fleming cites Palliative Care Victoria highlighting the disparity between those needing and those receiving compassionate care. Of the 40,000 Victorians who die every year close to 10,000 do not have access to universally agreed upon compassionate care methods. The funding required to fill this gap is estimated at \$62 million. In 2018 the Andrews Government committed \$23.4 million towards this but at the

same time announced \$6.5 million for the introduction of VAD. At the time estimates predicted that 150 people would access VAD a year. So in other words, \$23.4 million was directed towards 10,000 people and \$6.5 million for an estimated 150 people.

In September last year, Victoria's Assisted Dying Review Board reported 124 deaths by assisted suicide and euthanasia during its first year of operation. The US state of Oregon has had VAD type legislation for 21 years. Some telling statistics show 29.8% cited pain control as a reason for accessing euthanasia, whereas 51.9% gave, "being a burden on family, friends and caregivers" as a reason. The racial and educational background of those using VAD shows that white people will be 35 times more likely to access this option. This same group will have a high level of education.

Catholic healthcare has a proud tradition of providing compassionate end of life care dating back to 1890 in Australia. The proposed VAD legislation in Queensland will not address the great need for better palliative care services across our state, especially in regional areas and amongst our most vulnerable communities. The late Sr Frances Flint and the Toowoomba Hospice have demonstrated that there is another way.

Statistics source: Fleming, D. (25/3/2019). "The compassionate state? Voluntary Assisted Dying, neoliberalism and the problem of virtue without an anchor" ABC Religion & Ethics Retrieved February 2021 <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/compassionate-state-voluntary-assisted-dying-neoliberalism-and/10937504>

EXPANDED SERVICES SET TO HELP SEPARATING FAMILIES

SHARYN WAGNER

An affordable option for separating couples to resolve their property disputes is now available at the Toowoomba Family Relationship Centre (FRC). Federal Government funding has allowed FRCs across Australia to expand their family law services to include low or no-cost family law property mediation.

The Toowoomba FRC has taken it a step further by bringing local lawyers on board to support clients to make informed decisions about their property division following separation. Clients attending property mediation at the FRC can opt to obtain legal advice and support at the mediation at a significantly discounted rate, thanks to a unique partnership between the Toowoomba FRC and regional law firms.

Toowoomba FRC Team Leader Morgen Grigg said the property mediation service had the potential to save separating families thousands while helping them to reach an early and amicable resolution of their property issues. "The government funding for property mediation was prompted by the Australian Law Reform Commission report into the family law system which found that family dispute resolution (FDR) was an under-used pathway for property issues," Morgen said. "Even among former couples with very modest asset pools—\$40,000 or less—the use of lawyers and courts is more common than the use of FDR. The Toowoomba FRC has created a unique opportunity for clients to obtain good legal advice while going through mediation to reach their own agreement about how they want to divide their

property following separation."

Mediation at the FRC is accessible to all separating couples, regardless of whether they have children and whether they were married or in a de facto relationship. The centre offers additional supports for vulnerable clients and those from Indigenous or culturally diverse backgrounds.

There is no means test to access the FRC, with mediation fees based on each client's income. For people earning less than \$50,000, mediation is free. For those earning over \$50,000, a fee of \$60 applies for the first three-hour mediation session. The FRC has negotiated discounted fixed fees for clients with partner legal firms where clients opt to involve lawyers.



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COME AND SEE

DR DAVID TUTTY

Recently I was invited to join a group visiting the Ration Shed Museum in Cherbourg. The group's purpose was to come and see something of the story of the Cherbourg Reserve and learn of the harsh realities experienced by its Aboriginal inmates. This visit to this museum was in the hope that we who shared the experience will add our voices in telling the truth of this raw and painful history of the First Nations peoples in Queensland.

Cherbourg, like other Aboriginal reserves in Queensland, was created because of the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act in 1897. This Act sought to control the movement, labour, children and personal property of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders. First Nations peoples from all over Queensland were taken by force from their Country and put in reserves while their lands were taken from them. A superintendent had the power to micromanage their lives and could punish at will. The most feared punishment was to be sent to another reserve and never see family and friends again. This happened many times.

Along the wall of the Ration Shed Museum is a timeline with headings like invasion, dispossession, protection, living under the Act, the dormitory system, assimilation and more. Under these headings was a description of what happened and

the impacts upon those residents at Cherbourg. The museum tells the story from their perspective and from their experiences. For this reason, it was important to come and see.

Jesus invited those who wanted to know where he lived to come and see. In a story in the first chapter of John's gospel, Jesus takes the first disciples to the place he was staying, and they stayed with him the rest of the day. Through their choice to come and see, Andrew was able to see Jesus in a new light.

Jesus continues to invite us to come and see. Matthew, at the end of chapter 25, tells a parable about the final judgment. He has followers asking questions. "When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you? And Jesus has the king replying, "in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did it to me". Through the experience of being alongside the least of our sisters and brothers, Jesus calls the disciples to see them in a new light.

The first disciples were invited to come and see Jesus in the flesh. We are invited to come and see Jesus in the places where he can be experienced today. Our Catholic tradition has emphasised prayer, scripture and receiving Eucharist as privileged ways of experiencing Jesus. Alongside these ways, Matthew 25 teaches us that in responding to the needs of the least in our midst, we respond to Jesus.

I responded to an invitation to come and see something of the experiences of First Nations peoples forced to live in Cherbourg. This invitation was not about making me or any of the group feel guilty because of the past. Its hope was that we grow in empathy for those who suffered this injustice. Its hope is that we also grow in courage to share what we have learnt so that a different future is possible.

It is only when we risk responding to the invitation to come and see, do we see that First Nations peoples were treated as less than human and this lessened our humanity as well. To come and see means to come with an openness to grow in empathy and to deepen our sense of what it means to be Christian. To come and see helps us understand the real needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how we can walk alongside them in their seeking justice.

The Queensland Government is beginning a treaty process with First Nations peoples. This will only be successful if we deliberately seek opportunities to come and see the reality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences. We need to understand history better, and we need to be part of the truth-telling that is required so that justice is possible.

To come and see places like the Ration Shed Museum is an opportunity for growth in faith and love. I am grateful that I was invited to come and see, and I am also grateful for the warm welcome of Uncle Eric Law. I encourage you all also to respond to the Ration Shed Museum's invitation to come and see.

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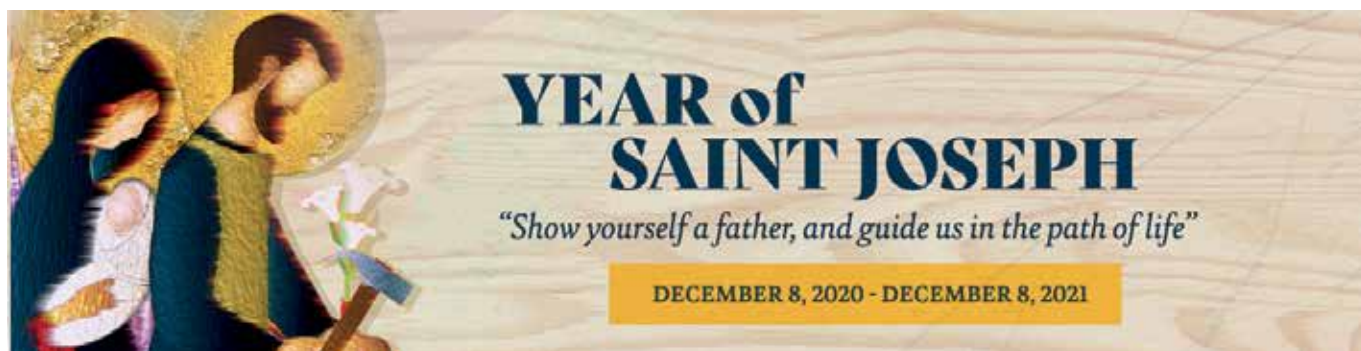
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YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

On December 8 2020, Pope Francis published an Apostolic Letter, “*Patris corde (With a Father’s Heart)*”, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Saint Joseph’s declaration as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a Year of

St Joseph running from December 8 2020 to December 8 2021.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) has set up a web page that will be updated with prayers and other resources. Each month, a reflection on the various aspects

of St Joseph’s life and character will be shared. The first three reflections are now available on the site, written by Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Sr Michele Connolly and Robert Falzon.

Visit catholic.org.au/yearofstjoseph for resources to help celebrate the Year of St Joseph.






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A UNIQUE JOURNEY

MARY OTTO

Driving into Bourke late one afternoon in May 2018, I took a call from a young man living in Birdsville enquiring about the RCIA process. That call was to be the beginning of an enriching journey. Over more than two years, Kevin Scott and I shared stories and reflections around various themes and subjects, leading us to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ.

Each week, late on Monday afternoon, Kevin and I began our communication and sessions with our computer screens open and phones on speaker. Over the months and years, that method transformed into using Messenger, enabling us to see each other as we shared experiences throughout the journey.

Then parish priest of Coober Pedy, Fr Brian Matthews, a friend of Kevin and his wife Jess, remained in contact with us regularly taking an interest in Kevin's progress. During the journey, Kevin and Jess were married in Adelaide just before Easter 2019, with Fr Brian as the celebrant. While honeymooning in Rome, Kevin and Jess felt especially blessed to attend Mass at St Peter's Basilica on Easter Sunday morning with Pope Francis presiding. In the meantime, Fr Brian moved from Coober Pedy to Jamestown as parish priest.

For the rest of 2019, Kevin continued sessions with me over the months



Family and friends gather in Birdsville to see Kevin Scott (centre) complete his RCIA journey.

following his return to Birdsville. As is always the case in Birdsville, we had to wait for either the hot summer months to pass or for floodwaters to recede before the ceremony could occur. We were almost ready to go in the autumn of 2020 when COVID-19 put restrictions on travel. While we waited for borders to open and the seasons to be right, Kevin and I continued with regular sessions.

Finally, on 5 November, in the cool of the late afternoon (the maximum temperature that day was only 29 degrees), we saw years of preparation come to fruition. At the Tourist Information Centre, and with social distancing in mind, about 20 people gathered to celebrate Mass, during which Kevin was received into full communion with the Church. Coming from opposite directions, Fr Brian flew from Jamestown, South Australia, and I flew from Toowoomba. Following Mass, Kevin and Jess celebrated the occasion by hosting dinner with Fr Brian, myself, family and friends at the Birdsville Hotel.

At dawn the following morning, down by the lagoon, Edward and Louis Hussey, children of Karen and David Hussey, and grandchildren of Nell and David Brooks, were baptised by Fr Brian, with close family and friends present. Following the baptism, Kevin and Jess continued with their incredible hospitality with breakfast for my husband and I out on the big red sand dune some 30 kilometres out of town. Standing in the cool sand in the early morning sunlight, encountering only kangaroos and brolgas along the way, and sharing breakfast under a low sky that stretched for seemingly ever, the experience was sublime.

I feel privileged to have come to know Kevin and his family and Fr Brian Matthews through the RCIA journey. Their friendship, the celebration of the relevant rites, the hospitality and the welcome experienced in Birdsville were unique. Uniquely Australian in a way that living in an isolated town brings; a deep connection with people, a sense of timelessness, loving respect for the land and an awareness of the sacred in all.



Symbolic well water feature will be a place of calm at Sychar.

GARDEN OASIS TAKES SHAPE AT SYCHAR

INGRID MCTAGGART

Sychar House of Prayer and Spirituality has been established at 69 Margaret Street in response to the Diocesan Pastoral Plan promulgated in June 2018. Part of the initial idea for a diocesan spirituality centre was to “nurture a contemplative stance to life.” This vision for Sychar continues to unfold. From the outset, Sr Elaine Morzone, Sychar Coordinator, recognised that the programs and interactions within the building need to be complemented by an outdoor environment that creates an atmosphere of peace and contemplative reflection.

A transformation of variety and colour has taken place in the garden area during the past nine months as Krys Keryk has very generously invested herself in the role of gardener extraordinaire.

The spirituality centre is named after the Samaritan town Sychar,

where scripture tells us that Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at the well. It has always been Sr Elaine’s desire to have a symbolic well built in the garden under the palm tree. In January, this dream became a reality. Greg Andersen, a former parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes, was instrumental in enlisting the assistance of John Higgins and his team from Toowoomba Pools and Spas in building a magnificent sandstone construction which is a great tribute to their skill and generosity. Apart from a token contribution, they carried the costs for this project.

Sr. Elaine has indicated how very grateful she is to Greg for his efforts. In her words: “Greg, many thanks for your efforts in moving the project along – it is a worthy testament to your commitment to the Toowoomba diocese. You have left the diocese but your presence remains here

with us. We wish you and Cheryl every blessing in the years ahead.”

The feature consisting of an upturned tree stump holding a sphere made of rusted barbed wire is intended to draw us into solidarity with our suffering world. Paul, Loretta and Will Coman provided us with the essential elements of the sculpture which were then placed by Mitch Hill. Krys Keryk contributed the finishing touch by arranging the border.

Three garden stations will be set up as places of prayer:

1. **The Well of Encounter**
2. **Oneness in the Mystery of Suffering**
3. **Creation: God’s First Incarnation**



"Creation: God's First Incarnation".



Taking shape: mid construction of the well.



Mitch Hill planting the stump.



"Oneness in the Mystery of Suffering"



Back row: Fr Tom Duncan, Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran, Bishop Robert McGukin, Fr John Grace (Seminary Rector), Fr Paul Chandler (Seminary Spiritual Director); Front row: Michael Tran (Seminararian), Louie Jimenez (Seminararian), Nathan Webb (Seminararian), Sean Woods (Seminararian), and Alan Borck (Server) (Photo Credit: Brian Hobson)

REFLECTION ON ADMISSION AS CANDIDATE FOR HOLY ORDERS

NATHAN WEBB

1 Samuel 3 recounts the story of the Lord calling Samuel. The young lad had already been in training in the temple for some years under Eli. After he recognised and responded to the Lord's call, he did not begin his work as a prophet right away. Rather, he continued working with Eli, grew in the ways of the Lord, and was accepted in time by the people among whom he was called to minister.

This is the story of Samuel's call, but it is also the story of God's call to each of us. I realised this in a new

way last year when I was admitted as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

Following what I understand as a call to priesthood, I have spent the last few years pursuing formation for the priesthood. This has taken me through five years at Holy Spirit Seminary, Banyo.

Last year, the Seminary program meant that I was privileged to test my vocation back in the Toowoomba Diocese, working alongside Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran in Chinchilla. It was a great joy to learn from and with the people of the parishes of Chinchilla, Miles and Taroom-Wandoan and the broader communities. I feel that I learnt much and certainly have much on which to reflect.

At the end of this time, after consulting the local feedback team, the seminary invited me to apply to the diocese for Candidacy.

Candidacy is a sign of commitment

on the part of the aspirant (come candidate) and an affirmation on the part of the Church (represented by the bishop with the community present). Up until being admitted as a Candidate, the aspirant has discerned the vocation for himself with the Holy Spirit. Candidacy is the first formal recognition of the vocation in the eyes of the Church. So, standing in front of the Church to make this commitment was quite an experience.

Firstly, it was strange, after five years as a seminararian, to finally make the first formal statement of resolve to prepare for ordination. There have been many little steps along the way, but this was something different. There was a gravity and resonance that was new and fascinating.

Secondly, for me, Candidacy was also an experience of the Church. As I stood in the front pew of a church, the fullest it had been all year, I realised that the people were not there just for me; the



Webb Family with Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran after Mass with the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders. (Photo Credit: Brian Hobson)

congregation was a loud testimony to the support of the faithful to the ministry of Christ through His priests.

I learnt that the acceptance of a candidate for Holy Orders has joyful significance both for the candidate and also the community. For me, it marks a point of transition from the years of training to specific preparation for Orders (like an engagement includes intentional preparation for marriage). For the community, it was a testament to their support of the ministry of Christ in the Church and their assistance of candidates during their

preparation to take up this ministry.

My thanks go out to all those who have prayed for me and supported me in other ways throughout the year: in particular, Fr Gonzalo who supervised and mentored me for the year; Fr Frank Jones, the director of Pastoral Formation in the Seminary Program; the feedback team that represented a variety of my engagements in the parish and offered helpful insights into my engagements in the community; and the wider community in their various and individual ways.

This year I have returned to the seminary with its full regime of prayer, community life, study, and practical training. It is my resolve to make the most of the finite experience that is life at the seminary. By doing so, and with God's grace, I hope to engage fruitfully and wholeheartedly with the opportunities it offers in preparation for the ministry.

I ask for your prayers in this: That I might grow in the likeness of Christ so as to minister faithfully and humbly, in due course, with reverence both at the altar of God and among God's people.

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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



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

FR MICHAEL O'BRIEN

Way back through the corridors of time, an energetic young priest arrived for his first posting as a curate at St Patrick's Cathedral in 1962. He must have been full of energy and zeal for the priesthood after seven years of study. Fr Pat Doyle informed this young priest, "You've got to remember it's not a sprint, but a long-distance race." That young man was Fr Mick Carroll, and he's been running that race faithfully for 60 years.

Thomas Edward "Mick" Carroll, with Derick Furness and Terry Ranger, was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral Toowoomba on 29 June 1961 by Bishop William Brennan DD. The following day in Stanthorpe, John Bathersby and John Rayn were ordained.

Fr Mick's early life memories are of Taroom. He was born at Cracow on 12 September 1936 before moving to Taroom at the age of three. Fr Mick's further schooling was at St Joseph's at Nudgee, and whilst there, he heard a newly ordained priest and old boy, Fr Tom Carroll, return to talk about his vocation. Following the faith exhibited within his family, the seed of priesthood was sown. Fr Mick completed his sub senior and senior at Pius XII Seminary, Banyo.

Throughout the next 60 years, Fr Mick has served the community in many places, St Patrick's Cathedral, Clifton, St Anthony's, Holy Name, Geraldton WA, Warwick, Goondiwindi, Roma, Surat and Miles. He particularly describes his time as a young priest in Western Australia as a gift. "It was a great experience spending four years there, and I saw a fair bit of the



Fr Mick Carroll

country one way or another." Recalls Fr Mick. "I went with Bishop Francis Xavier Thomas on his Episcopal visit in the North West.....up through many of those mining towns, from Port Headland to Geraldton. There were five priests who lived with the Bishop, and it had a great sense of community about it. Bishop Thomas was a very welcoming man; he had to rely on priests from other places a fair bit."

Fr Mick has walked with many people during his ministry. People who have touched his life, encouraged his deep faith and commitment to leading everyone into a stronger understanding of God's presence in daily life.

Fr Mick has a constant and structured prayer life, praying the Breviary daily, meditation exercises and celebration of the Eucharist to centre his daily journey on Christ. When the opportunity arises, he enjoys a good read, including books on history, as they reveal something about the time he has lived. "Currently I'm reading John Wallace's letters, founder of the Missionary Sisters of Service, letters from the seminary to his family. Another book I'm reading is by Christine Jackman, who was a high powered Brisbane professional in the journalism arena. Her book is

titled, "Turning Down the Noise". It's a very interesting read." Reflecting on his latest read, Fr Mick comments, "We have to learn to cultivate silence, observe, open your eyes, open your ears, you'll see things you've never seen before. You'll hear things that you won't if you don't deliberately do it. I observe one gentleman who sits in the morning in his chair outside, and I wonder if he is meditating and not even know he's doing it."

When asked, "What would your older self tell your younger self?" Fr Mick replied, "Well, I've always remembered those words of Fr. Pat Doyle."

"My hope for the church in the future is that it continues to be a place of welcome for all people. To everyone, not wanting to proselytize them or anything like that, but to speak to their hearts, at a community level. To speak a word of hope to the world. Touch the hearts of people no matter what path they follow."

Fr Mick lives in Oakey after retiring from Miles in 2002 and enjoys being actively involved in parishes as needed.

(DIS)PLACEMENT IN THE Paddock

FHEAR BRIAN
REDONDO

Brian is a final year seminarian for the Diocese of Toowoomba. He has completed his studies at the Holy Spirit Seminary Brisbane. Here are some of his thoughts and reflections on his current placement in the diocese.

I am settling in at Cambooya after finishing formation at Holy Spirit Seminary last year. Cambooya is south-west of Toowoomba. It's home to the best, the famous and only pub in town, The Bull and Barley, and is the melting pot of this thriving community located in the town's bustling main street. All the town's main services are located on this street, including the Churches. Sacred Heart Parish Cambooya and St Joseph Church Greenmount form the community, Cambooya-Greenmount Catholic Community.

Fr Rod MacGinley stays at Clifton's presbytery and serves the communities at Clifton, Leyburn, Allora, Deuchar, Cambooya and Greenmount. As a seminarian on placement, I'm staying in the Cambooya presbytery independently under Fr Rod's direct supervision as my pastoral supervisor and Fr Frank Jones, Vice-Rector and Pastoral Director of

Holy Spirit Seminary. I would like to credit Bishop Robert McGuckin for visiting me, calling and having a cuppa as well as Monsignor John Grace, Rector of the Seminary, for catching up. I can say that I'm alone but not lonely. I would like to thank Fr Don Murray for kindly offering me his bicycle; unfortunately, my small legs are short to fit his XL build mountain bike.

Fr Rod is a happy priest and, in his words, "always wanted to be involved in others' lives in a hands-on way". He tells me he grew up on a dairy farm where no one considered manual work to be in some way inferior to white-collar work. Fr Rod does the lawn mowing in the Clifton church, school, and the paddocks of a number of locals in Clifton. In return, some locals give him a free haircut for that favour. He cleans the presbytery, washes his clothes and measures the water in the tank like every farmer who prays for rain. When there is a mice attack in Cambooya, Fr Rod taught me the art of skilfully trapping mice the Australian way using a bottle and peanut butter. (May St. Francis of Assisi forgive me for this.)

Every Thursday, we have the serious matter of making the parish bulletin together, proofreading before printing and having my pastoral meeting afterwards. I shared with him my encounters and experiences. He gives insights that help me in my placement, learning and developing a sense of priesthood, providing care for the community of God by



Fhear Brian Redondo.

going into the peripheries ready to dialogue in unity amidst diversity.

Pastoral care helps people to discern God in their lives. Faithful may well be keen to hear something about how Jesus makes a difference in our lives if we share in a considerate and non-dogmatic way. Part of pastoral care is to share Jesus in our midst. We care for people regarding their social, agricultural, practical, and emotional needs and acknowledge their spiritual needs. I reckon that I'm here on placement to learn from the people and the community, the true gem and treasure of the Church. They teach me how to be a good pastor for the Diocese of Toowoomba, grounded in faith with the right heart for synodality in the mystical body of Christ.

This is a calling of voluntary displacement from my comfort zone in the Philippines, as a Filipino and a Catholic. My pastoral learning in an intercultural church is bridging solidarity of both worlds, fostering a culture of encounter with a deep connection in Jesus, God willing.

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



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LOOKING FORWARD WITH HOPE

MARY OTTO

It has been nearly three years since we began our journey towards the Plenary Council in Australia.

As with everything in our lives, well thought out plans have had to change to meet restrictions we now live with for the safety of all. A significant change for the Plenary Council is how the first Assembly in October will be conducted. Due to the uncertainty of gathering large groups and interstate travel, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference decided the most effective way to continue the journey is to hold the first assembly in a multi-modal format.

Delegates from around the nation will gather in smaller local groups. They will interact with others from around the country via teleconferencing for conversation, prayer and discernment. The Toowoomba Diocese is well represented by Bishop Robert McGuckin, Fr John Quinlan, Fr Franco Fillipetto, Dr Mark Copland and Mrs Patrice Riordan. Combined, they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table and the ability to listen and discern. On Pentecost Sunday 23 May, they will be commissioned at the 9:00 am Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. The ceremony, along with the Mass, will be live-streamed.

In his recent encyclical "Fratelli Tutti", Pope Francis speaks of the need for renewed hope in a world that brings with it struggles of all kinds. Despite the challenges of our times, let us heed Pope Francis and continue to move forward with hope that will "fill our heart and lift our spirit" for our church's future in this nation.

From our delegates:



"I have been nurtured, inspired and loved by the people of God in this diocese. I draw such hope from the fact that in a parish, people from every cultural background, across the ages and varying socioeconomic situations, can gather around one Eucharistic table as a family. My hope for the Plenary Council is that the Australian Catholic Church becomes a place of safety and healing for those who have been hurt over the years. I pray that the Plenary will help our Church emerge as a humble body that walks the talk in terms of placing those at the margins of society at the centre of our Mission."

Mark Copland



"My hope is that the Plenary Council will be an aggiornamento for the Catholic Church in Australia as was the intention of the Second Vatican Council for the universal church. Let us move towards renewal with the Plenary Council."

Fr John Quinlan



"I look forward to participating in an Australia wide event and hopefully experience a different form of governance in line with Pope Francis' teaching of a Synodal Church."

Fr Franco Fillipetto



"I am excited to be part of the upcoming Plenary Council as I believe it will be a wonderful experience. To be part of this momentous time within the Catholic Church of Australia gives me hope for a better future for our youth within our faith community."

Patrice Riordan



THE PLENARY COUNCIL JOURNEY

Preparation and ongoing discernment by the local Church community for the Plenary Council Assemblies.

March
Onward

Feb
2021

Publication of the Plenary Council Instrumentum Laboris (Working Document).

The first Assembly of the Plenary Council is held in Adelaide.

3 - 10
Oct

June
July

Announcement of the Plenary Council Agenda and the final preparation for delegates.

The second Assembly of the Plenary Council is held in Sydney.

4-9
July

Nov
2021
June
2022

Prayerful discernment on the outcomes of the first Assembly. Preparation of papers and proposals for the second Assembly.

Aug
2022

Preparation begins to enact the decisions voted upon at the Plenary Council Assemblies.



Whilst every effort has been made to project accurate dates, changes may arise. Please check the Plenary Council website for the most recent version.

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>

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St Anthony's School Principal, Louise Pfingst, with prep students.

WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS

The school year is off to a flying start, and 2021 promises to be another eventful and potentially turbulent year.

New staff, students and families have been warmly welcomed, and the first few weeks have disappeared quickly.

This year we had the privilege of welcoming 48 new teaching staff to TCS. We are fortunate indeed to have the talent and energy that was present during their orientation days leading student learning in classrooms. Three new principals have been appointed this year. Brendan Stewart (St Mary's College, Toowoomba), Katrina Dunne (St Mary's School, Charleville), and Keith Blaikie (St Patrick's School, Allora). Their fine personal qualities and abundant leadership skills will be well received by their respective communities.

It's probably too early to say whether 2021 will be better than 2020. Nonetheless, we start the new year full of hope and with a positive outlook. There will be the usual, and even unusual challenges and triumphs ahead. Our response to these moments will make all the difference to the

experiences of students and to our own sense of worth and wellbeing.

The difference between hope and despair often hangs on telling a contrasting story from the same set of facts. The Catholic story is an invitation to embrace the contemporary world, with all its flaws and imperfections, with a hope-filled view of each other and the world we live. In the midst of ample uncertainty and disorder is the temptation to self-preservation, looking after one's own interests to the detriment of others. The Catholic story is a commitment to healing and reconciliation and a better future for all. It is an invitation to a different approach and way of thinking, a new and creative response to the current uncertainty and disorder.

As we look forward to the year ahead, an enormous opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of students

awaits. Our mission is academic success for all students within a distinctively Catholic environment. We are determined and unwavering in this endeavour. I wish all staff, students and families well for an exceptional year of teaching and learning ahead.



St Saviour's Primary School prep students with their, Lucy Adams.



L to R-Bishop Robert McGuckin, Katrina Dunne, Kieth Blaikie, Brendan Stewart, Dr Patrick Coughlan

THREE NEW PRINCIPALS FOR TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN 2021

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

As the new school year approaches, parents, staff and students are starting to get excited, and many are ready to return to school for 2021. Toowoomba Catholic Schools has this week welcomed three new principals to the Diocese.

Brendan Stewart is joining the St Mary's College, Toowoomba team. He is excited to be leading another College with an Edmund Rice philosophy. As a former accountant with KPMG, Brendan moved to education in 1993 and is a passionate advocate for boys' education. He is also a music enthusiast, and his teaching specialities include economics and religious education.

"I believe Catholic Education gives all of our students the opportunity to be the best that they can be and be all that God created them to be and that

is why Catholic Education is unique," said Brendan. "I have dedicated myself to helping young men realise their full potential and to set them up for success beyond school. Sometimes they need an extra helping hand, and this is something that I think St Mary's College does really well."

Keith Blaikie returns to Toowoomba Catholic Schools in 2021, to lead St Patrick's School, Allora. Keith was previously the Assistant Principal for Religious Education at St Stephen's School, Pittsworth before his recent role at Downlands College.

"I look forward to returning to a rural community in my first principalship. Having taught in Charters Towers and Pittsworth, I believe that you can get an excellent education in a rural school. St Patrick's offers this to the

students of Allora and surrounds and I am keen to continue to lead the excellent work that the staff of the school have established," said Keith.

St Mary's School, Charleville welcomes acting principal, Katrina Dunne, who is well known to the school community. As a parent and the Deputy Principal of the Charleville School of Distance Education, she is a familiar face.

"I am keen to continue to build the collaborative professional learning community across the schools in Charleville," said Katrina. "With the diocese support, that has already exceeded my expectations just from the induction and orientation we have had this week, I can't wait to get back to Charleville knowing that there is a whole team there to help with every aspect of school life."

HIGH MARKS FOR FIRST GRADUATES UNDER QCE SYSTEM

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Toowoomba Catholic Schools are committed to ensuring all students experience academic success and achieve their best. After a very challenging year for our 2020 Year 12 cohort, the release of the QCE and ATAR results demonstrated the incredible achievements of the Class of 2020 and the dedication and commitment of our staff in supporting them.

The Class of 2020 are the first graduates in a new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system with Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks (ATAR). We are proud to report that more than 99% of students in our secondary colleges attained their QCE. The state average is 89%. Across the Diocese there were some outstanding ATAR rankings achieved in each of our schools with the top ATAR result in Toowoomba of 99.90 achieved by Dhairy Shah from St Mary's College.

We are also proud of the large number of students who obtained Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications and School Based Apprenticeships (SBAs) while also performing well in their QCE subjects. SBAs and VET courses allow students to learn trade skills and develop employability skills on-the-job with a gateway to trades, further vocational and university education, jobs and employment.

Sixty-eight of these students completed a school-based traineeship and have already been offered full-time jobs or university placement. Fifty-four have continued from their school-based apprenticeship to a full time apprenticeship.

The stories below capture the successes of three of our students who are now reaping the rewards of their dedication and hard work. We hope they inspire others.

I thank all students who have shared in this journey with us and wish you all the best for your future endeavours. We are excited to see where your journeys take you.



Zina Alexandra Dorado
St Saviour's College
ATAR of 98.60

Originally from the Philippines, Zina and her family migrated to Australia towards the end of 2012.

Zina said, "St Saviour's was a very appealing school for me because of the vibrant community. It was a place where I knew I could thrive and flourish with the support of the staff and students." And so she did.

In addition to being the College Captain, Interact Club President, Student Representative Council President, member of netball and basketball teams, Zina also received many academic awards - College Board Award, Top of cohort: Mathematical Methods, Chemistry, Physics, English, Study of Religion, Sister Regina Conway Mercy Award, Marilyn Jackson Memorial Award, Interact Student of the Year, Commitment to Study and Service to Sport awards.

Zina plans to study medicine and law. Her ultimate goal is to eventually build a shelter. "I want to put kids who are committed to building a better

future for themselves through school and university because I appreciate the value of education and just how transformative it can be. Not everyone has equal access to this basic right, and I want to play a part in alleviating that issue," Zina said.



Caitlin Lang
Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields
ATAR of 98.35

College principal, Chris Gabbett said, "We are very proud of our Year 12 College Dux, Caitlin Lang. She achieved a 98.35 ATAR and, following more assessments and interviews, has been accepted to the University of Queensland to complete a Doctor of Medicine. Caitlin's continuous hard work makes her incredibly deserving of this.

As a College we are so very proud of our inaugural Year 12. We have focussed over the past two years on creating a focussed academic culture in the senior school, and we have some really outstanding teachers who maintain it. These achievements will provide a really positive example to all of our students as we continue to create a P-12 academic pathway."

Caitlin has always had a love of science. After many discussions with Mr Kris Naiker, Assistant Principal in Teaching and Learning Senior, she realised

her passion was helping people improve their health outcomes and diagnosing disease and illness. “Even though it’s a really long pathway, I’m excited because I’ll be able to help people in an amazing way and do what God put me on earth to do.”



Livi Tennekoon

St John’s Roma

ATAR of 98.20

Originally from Sri Lanka, Livi initially had difficulty using technology at school in Australia. She found teachers and students alike helped with her learning. Livi has displayed outstanding academic performance, receiving the Queensland Minerals and Energy (QMEA) Ambassador award at the end of Year 11 and subject awards in Mathematical Methods, Physics, Biology and Chemistry at the end of Year 12. She also received one of St John’s School’s major awards for excellence.

Livi plans to study medicine.

READING AND SPELLING SUCCESS MAKES TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BEST IN THE COUNTRY

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Catholic school students from across the Toowoomba Diocese are leading the country in reading and spelling due to a three-year focussed strategy led by Education Officers from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

“Across our 31 schools, we have been working to upskill teachers and teacher aids in evidence-based best practice in the teaching of reading and spelling for the past three years. This has included the explicit teaching of phonics to aid spelling and reading,” said Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director: Catholic Schools. “We have been discussing with interest the commentary in our national papers in the past month or so about what works best in the teaching of spelling, the programs that are being trialled in other Dioceses and reflecting on our success and the improved outcomes for students.”

With a goal of ensuring all students experience academic success and an expert teacher in every classroom, it is not surprising that such positive change has come about for staff and students alike.

“The Toowoomba Diocese now has the highest percentage of students in the upper bands and the lowest percentage of students in the lower bands in the

literacy and numeracy domains of NAPLAN across State, Catholic and Independent sector primary schools. We have also become the highest performing diocese in Australia, based on independent research from the Centre for Independent Studies, based on Year 5 NAPLAN data,” explained Dr Coughlan.

The talented Education Officers leading the program have supported nearly 1,800 teachers and school officers through professional development in and out of the classroom.

“We have invested heavily in teacher professional development, including release time, coaching, modelling and feedback for teachers. We are also using additional measures other than NAPLAN to track progress and decide on the best teaching approaches for individual students. This includes the use of teacher assessment and commercial tests such as PAT R and PM,” said Dr Coughlan.

With all schools knowing the required standards for each year level in reading and spelling and an expectation that 90%-95% of students in all year levels reach these benchmarks, all staff are working together towards achieving and exceeding these targets.

“Our improvement trajectory has been and continues to be exceptional, and the targets are being met. We did not wait to see what happens elsewhere; we have confidently implemented our program based on quality research and practice and our staff and students are leading the way,” stated Dr Coughlan.



Toowoomba Catholic Schools Education Officer, Sue Keefer reading to students at Sacred Heart Primary School, Cunnamulla.

CHANGE FOR ANNE ISN'T A CHANGE OF HEART FOR STUDENTS

ALISON MCKENZIE,
CHEVALIER
INSTITUTE SYDNEY

This year, Downlands College farewells Mrs Anne McAtomney, Assistant Principal - Mission. Her tenure spans more than 25 years, throughout which time she has touched many hearts and minds. Anne has woven the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) Ethos through all aspects of college life and has exemplified what it is "to be on Earth the Heart of God".

Anne grew up in Brisbane and was educated by the Dominicans at both primary and secondary school level. She studied at the University of Queensland and became a teacher majoring in History and French. Anne taught for Education Queensland, initially appointed to a school on the Atherton Tableland. Early in her teaching career, Anne applied for and was appointed for a year as an English Language Assistant in a French Lycée (high school) in the south of France.

Anne, and her husband John, started their family while in far north Queensland but determined the need to be closer to family in the south-east. So, they moved to Toowoomba in 1983. In 1984 John was appointed as a teaching staff member at Downlands College, and this began what has been a long association for both with Downlands.

The family moved into the college in 1990 when John was appointed as a Boarding Houseparent. During the early 1990s, Anne undertook relief/supply teaching at Downlands. By the mid-1990s, Anne had been appointed as a full-time teaching staff member at the college. In 2000 she was appointed as a Year 11/12 Year Coordinator. Anne continued teaching and her role as a Senior Year Coordinator and was also appointed as Head of Department - Religious Education in 2009.



Anne McAtomney.

Fr John Mulrooney MSC, College Principal 2006 – 2010, was appointed as Provincial of the MSC Order in Australia in 2010. Before concluding his role as Principal at Downlands, Fr Mulrooney identified the need for a new role within the College Executive team, focusing specifically on maintaining and enhancing the college's MSC charism. Anne was subsequently appointed as AP - Mission at Downlands in 2011, which she undertook for the following ten years.

Anne's love of all things French, her affinity for the MSCs, their charism and spirituality, and the passion and zeal with which she has undertaken her Mission role at Downlands has now led to her appointment as Director of the Chevalier Institute in 2021 by the current MSC Provincial, Fr Chris McPhee.

Anne has excelled in every role she has undertaken. Stephen McIlhatton, past Downlands Principal, described Anne as a "moral compass", pointing out that when decisions had to be made, many would ask "what would Anne say?"

"Your departure from Downlands will have such a profound effect on so

many past and present members of that community. I say this because I would doubt anyone, over so many years, has done more to instill in us at the college the qualities of gentleness, justice and the finer attributes that make us human." Stephen continued.

Anne departs Downlands to take up a new position as Director, Chevalier Institute. The role of the Institute is to facilitate adult faith formation in Spirituality of the Heart. Anne will work with staff in a small group capacity delivering a variety of programmes. She will facilitate retreats, provide spirituality and retreat days to whole staff groups, conduct a pilgrimage and work with professed MSC in various roles.

Anne's appointment was received enthusiastically within the MSC world, where she is known and very well respected. As Anne moves into her new position, Downlands is looking forward to welcoming Ms Andrea Collins, who joins the college from Mount Maria College Brisbane as our new AP Mission. While Andrea's education experiences include the Marist, Edmund Rice, Mercy and Josephite charisms, she is very keen to explore the MSC Spirituality of the Heart.



St Joseph's School Stanthorpe Year 9 students display their Christmas creations.

CHRISTMAS CARDS A MESSAGE OF LOVE

COURTENAY MASON

Last year, students from Year 9 made Christmas cards for abandoned children with disabilities at an orphanage run by International China Concern in Changsha, China. The project was a great exercise in practising our school's Mercy value of Compassion.

Students created the cards with materials such as pom-poms, glitter tape, diamantes, stickers, ribbon and

string. The cards were bright, colourful and tactile for the children to enjoy, especially through the sense of touch.

The children and their carers have had a very challenging year due to COVID-19 and, by the smiles on their faces; it is clear that they greatly appreciated every card and the little bits of love that were generously put into making them. Thank you, students.

It is by the heart that we are something. Fr Jules Chevalier MSC

Image: 2020 College Student Leadership pilgrimage to Kensington, NSW



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L t R: College Captain and Inaugural Dux Caitlin Lang and College Captain Connor McKerrow

UNIVERSITY PLACEMENT SUCCESS FOR INAUGURAL YEAR 12 STUDENTS

CAROLYN RICHARDSON

The long-awaited University offers are in for our inaugural Year 12 graduates.

For College Dux and 2020 Captain Caitlin Lang, the results couldn't be better. Caitlin has been accepted at the University of Queensland to complete a Doctor of Medicine.

The Lang household was full of excitement and tears of joy as Caitlin logged into QTAC to realise her hard work had paid off. She said, "I started at Mary MacKillop in Year 11 with a mantra to say yes to everything, talk to everyone and just go for it because you never know what is going to push you in the right direction."

Caitlin has always had a love of science. After many discussions with Mr Kris

Naiker, Assistant Principal in Teaching & Learning Senior, she realised her passion was to help people extend or better their health outcomes and diagnose disease and illness. "Even though it's a really long pathway, I'm excited because I'll be able to help people in an amazing way and do what God put me on earth to do."

Caitlin will commence her 7-year pathway with an undergraduate Bachelor of Biomedical Science, living on campus at Duchesne College, St Lucia.

College Principal, Mr Chris Gabbett, said, "We are very proud of our foundation College Dux, Caitlin. She achieved a 98.35 ATAR and, following more assessments and interviews, has been accepted to the University of Queensland to complete a Doctor of Medicine. Caitlin's continuous hard work makes her incredibly deserving of this."

Founded in 2003, Mary MacKillop Catholic College Highfields is the youngest Prep to Year 12 College in the diocese. Despite the setbacks of 2020, this foundation cohort has even more to celebrate now. With 100% of this foundation cohort receiving a QCE and 50% achieving an ATAR score above 90, all graduating students have secured a pathway to their future through university entry and the Australian Defence Force.

"As a college, we are so very proud of our inaugural Year 12 class. Our priority over the past two years has been on creating a focused academic culture in the senior school, and we have some really outstanding teachers who maintain it. These achievements will provide a really positive example to all of our students as we continue to create a P-12 academic pathway," says Chris.

Fellow 2020 Captain Connor McKerrow has been accepted into a Bachelor of Engineering Science at the University of Southern Queensland. He has been fortunate enough to be awarded the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship for receiving an ATAR above 88.

Daniel Verches is equally excited about being offered a place to study a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at QUT. "Receiving honours means I now have the opportunity to major in electrical engineering and get one step closer to my dream job as an engineer in Tokyo! I always wanted to experience city life after completing school in Toowoomba," said Daniel.

The majority of students have opted to stay in Toowoomba to continue their studies, with USQ providing first round offers in areas including Bachelor of Science, Diploma of Science and Bachelor of General Studies.

A BIG WELCOME FOR NEW FACES AT STANTHORPE

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

The 2021 school year at St Joseph's School Stanthorpe started with a hive of activity. Some excited (and nervous) students began their first day at a new school and others beginning their first day of Prep or secondary school.

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



St Joseph's School Stanthorpe 2021 Prep students with Sgt Daniel O'Dea.

received their new yellow Prep hats at a special assembly. Sgt Daniel O'Dea, the School's Adopt-A-Cop and President of the P&F Committee, paid a visit to

the students and presented them with their caps and introduced himself.

We also welcomed our new staff: Miss Grace Coxon, Mr Mitchell Hurtz, Mr Damian Petrie, Mrs Karen Petrie, Mr Patrick McCosker, Mr Andrew Robertson,

Mrs Robyn Ryan, Ms Rachel Woods and Miss Lara Beckett.

All of our new staff bring experience, enthusiasm and a passion for teaching to the school. Our community of teachers continues to grow, but our mission remains the same; we are here to serve, teach and help our students grow into "the best they can be".

Our start to the year has been remarkably smooth here at St Joe's and much collaborative planning and hard work has gone into making it an easy and positive transition. We look forward to a busy, productive and fun year ahead here at St Joseph's School.

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L to R: Brendan Stewart, Pat Coughlan and Bishop Robert McGuckin at the opening and blessing of the Edmund Rice Cultural Centre.

NEW CULTURAL CENTRE A CONTEMPORARY SPACE

TYHLA ROPER

St Mary's College recently opened the Edmund Rice Cultural Centre and welcomed a new principal, Mr Brendan Stewart. The multi-million dollar cultural centre was designed by Aspect Architects and Project Managers and built by local construction company FKG Group. Construction commenced in January of 2020, and despite the challenges of COVID-19, the project continued to progress at full steam.

On Tuesday, 2 February, the school community, Executive Director of

Toowoomba Catholic Schools, Dr Pat Coughlan and College Principal, Mr Brendan Stewart and special guests attended the official opening, with a blessing led by Bishop Robert McGuckin. The state-of-the-art cultural centre will offer current and future students with endless opportunities. "Every day I reflect on how grateful I am to be the principal of such a wonderful school and one with such impressive facilities such as this one," Brendan said in his address. "The Edmund Rice Cultural Centre is truly a facility which showcases the best of St Mary's and the wider Darling Downs community."

Hailing from Ignatius Park College Townsville, Brendan said he was looking forward to spending his first 12 months as principal, building and strengthening relationships within the college and Toowoomba community. "My vision for St Mary's is for our college to become the school of choice

for young men in Toowoomba. I see this new building as an extension of the vision and ambition of the school community to improve, grow and offer our students a contemporary, flexible space for St Mary's to deliver it's many impressive programs. These include music and drama performances, school Masses and assemblies, teaching spaces and examination facilities, as well as sport and fitness activities."

The first major event to be held in the cultural centre will be the school musical, "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the end of March.

"The building is supported by cutting edge technology, including a sound system which I have not seen equal of at any school hall," Brendan said. "As someone who is very interested in sound and how we communicate, it is money well spent and I cannot wait for our school musical just before Easter time."

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MacKillop Club members at St Stephen's School Pittsworth

STUDENTS COMMIT TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP

FIONA DREW

The Year 6 leaders of St Stephen's School Pittsworth were presented with their Senior Leader Badges at our opening Mass, celebrated by Fr Thomas Areekuzhy. The theme for the Year 6 students this year is "We are called to shine". They were asked to commit to servant leadership in our school community and live out our mission "To know Jesus, to inspire learning and to respect each other".

The Year 6 students have already enjoyed the Just Leadership Day at school and will be heading to Emu Gully to continue building on their leadership skills.

MacKillop Club leaders were also presented with their badges. These

five students will lead the social justice group throughout the year as they learn more about the values of St Mary MacKillop and organize fundraisers and social awareness days to help those in need. We were very fortunate to have two Sisters of

St Joseph, Sr Di Phillips and Sr Ella Hegarty, to present these badges.

The rest of the school also participated in the Mass. Two class representatives read out their class commitment to the school.



St Stephen's School Pittsworth Year 6 student with teacher name coming and Fr Thomas Areekuzhy.



Holy Name Primary School Toowoomba Year 6 Students

NEW LEADERS COMMISSIONED AT HOLY NAME

KERRI-ANN MANTHEY

The students of Holy Name Primary School Toowoomba welcomed the new school year by celebrating school leaders' induction. The Year 6 students received their leadership badges and announced their commitment to the Holy Name community with a promise statement.

"We promise to work together to achieve the highest standards in all that we do; we will strive always to have respectful relationships with all that we meet, and encourage each other through all aspects of life."

Congratulations and best wishes to

the school leaders. There is much that they will learn and, in turn, contribute back to the school over the year in their roles. Thank you to Fr Darrell Irvine for presiding the opening Mass and also the parents for supporting the Year 6 students as they take on the additional responsibility of leadership this year.

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EDUCATION IN BRIEF

Each year, Year 6 students at St Stephen's School Pittsworth are invited to bring a frying pan and a pancake and compete to see who can toss their pancake the highest, and catch it. It is a fun way for the students to begin to prepare for the season of Lent.



Fr Salvador Fernandes singing Christmas Carols with St Patrick's School St George Prep students.

St Patrick's School St George Year 1 students join Fr Salvador Fernandes in joyful singing to Mary.



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.

10 First Communion candidates from Cunnamulla. First Communion celebrated by Fr Warren Padilla.



Confirmation candidates from St Thomas More's (2 groups). Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Robert McGuckin with Fr Michael O'Brien.



Confirmation candidates from St Patrick's Cathedral (2 groups). Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Robert McGuckin with Fr Michael O'Brien.





Texas children, parishioners, Bishop Robert McGuckin and Fr Sean Lynskey celebrating the end of a slightly longer preparation period for the Sacraments.



Parishioners hard at work in the Texas church grounds.

COVID DELAY BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR SACRAMENTS

MARY SCHWARTZ

In early February 2020, the Sacramental Team set about contacting families in the parish offering First Sacraments for those children eligible.

Six families with seven candidates answered the call to travel this journey of faith. Preparation programmes for Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist were obtained, timetables prepared and celebration dates agreed upon. Then COVID-19 hit.

Disappointment and sadness came from children, families, catechists and parishioners as we assessed and discussed how we could continue the programme. The children were ready for their First Reconciliation, and we celebrated the sacrament just before church doors were closed.

Despite the uncertainty as to when the community would be able to gather and celebrate Eucharist once more, it was decided to continue with the preparation, following social distancing regulations. When restrictions were lifted, the children would be prepared for the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist.

It was a very blessed time of bringing

life to parish grounds and facilities when they would have been closed and devoid of people. It was a time to share the disappointments, heartaches and hardships of some of the families living on farms just across the border in NSW. Mums talked of their struggles with different time zones, border passes, school runs, trying to visit children in boarding schools, grocery shopping and so on.

The children were inspirational. After a long day at school, many travelling in on the school bus, they embraced the preparation sessions with enthusiastic participation and conversation, often taking time at home to finish activities. A little afternoon tea brought smiles and some cheekiness.

COVID-19 settled a little, and we were once again celebrating Mass. The Sacramental Team quickly contacted Bishop Robert McGuckin. Everyone felt very blessed and excited when told he would be available to celebrate with us on the weekend of 8 November.

Parents and parishioners gathered for Mass the weekend prior and as

the children had their final catechesis session, dads and parishioners set about mowing, pruning, trimming and raking. Mums and 'mature' mums washed walls and floors, cleaned windows and cupboards in the Parish Hall, washed and scrubbed outdoor toilets whilst also preparing the presbytery for Bishop Robert.

In keeping with COVID restrictions, attendance numbers for Mass were limited. As parishioners were unable to attend the Mass for the children on Sunday morning, Bishop Robert celebrated Vigil Mass for parishioners on the Saturday evening followed by a COVID friendly meal and great fellowship. The children and their families gathered next morning to celebrate the reception of Confirmation and First Eucharist with Bishop Robert and Fr Sean Lynskey. A delicious morning tea provided by the mums followed.

Thank you to Poppy, India, Sally, Christian, Dan, Oliver and Thomas who shared their sacramental journey with family, friends and parishioners.

AYLISH HITTING ALL THE HIGH NOTES

INGRID MCTAGGART

Parishioners at St Patrick's Cathedral would already recognise Aylish Ryan if not by sight, by sound. Those who tuned in to live-streamed Masses during the lockdown and beyond will recognise her soaring voice.

Aylish has been a part of the music ministry at St Patrick's for some 7 years now; however, it's time to bid farewell as she moves on to the next exciting stage of her life. The recent St Ursula's College Toowoomba graduate is pursuing further studies at the Queensland Conservatorium with dreams of becoming an opera singer.

I sat down with Aylish and her mother, Angela, to talk all things musical after a recent Sunday Mass.

How long have you been singing at the Cathedral?

Aylish: The first time I sang at the Cathedral was with St Saviour's Primary School, with the choir. So I would have been in probably grade five, I would have been ten. I didn't really start solo singing or singing with the main adult choir until I was in grade eight.

Angela (Mum): It just sort of evolved because you kept coming back to help Jo Cosgrove [teacher at St Saviour's Primary School] when you went to high school. You kept coming back to help with the kids' choir. Before COVID, they would sing once a month.

Aylish: So I'd go and lead them and help them out with Miss Cosgrove. After that, I was asked to come and sing with the adult choir on a Saturday night. That's when I met Vicki.

Have you always been interested in music and singing, or is it something you came to by accident?

Aylish: I started on my sort of musical journey with the violin. When I was five, I started violin because I was watching André Rieu concerts on



L to R: Aylish and Angela Ryan

DVDs at home. So I would always watch those when I was like three or something. I asked Mum if I could start playing the violin because I enjoyed watching him. Around the same time I was singing with the school choir I also joined the Toowoomba Choral Society Youth Choir. That's when I started having an interest in singing. When I started high school at St Joseph's College [Toowoomba] you could have lessons at the school. I started my first private singing lessons in grade seven and got into more solo singing.

So now you're off to the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University in Brisbane. What will you study there?

Aylish: I'm studying for a Bachelor of Music in Classical Voice.

Is that like opera?

Aylish: It does include opera, but it also includes different genres as well like art songs. But yes I am looking at the opera side as I'd like to be an opera singer.

So what attracts you to that style instead of modern or something else?

Aylish: I actually started with musical theatre. I did many holiday productions with the Toowoomba Choral Society

Youth Choir, which was all musical theatre. My singing teacher thought that I should give classical singing a bit of a go because he felt that was where my voice was leaning towards. I basically just found that I enjoyed classical singing, and my voice suited it.

I was in the children's chorus for a couple of the Opera Australia productions at the Empire Theatre when they came for their regional tours. I was in two of those, "The Magic Flute" and "The Marriage of Figaro". That made me realise that this was the kind of career I would like to have.

I received a scholarship from Opera Australia, the Regional Vocal Scholarship, in 2019. I spent a week in Sydney and learned from all of these incredible people the company's inner workings. That just made me even more determined to have that career. I enjoyed being in there and singing in that sort of environment.

So do you enjoy performance combined with singing?

Aylish: Exactly. I love the fact that you get to play a character and dress up in amazing costumes. That combined with the fact that I get to sing the

way my voice is comfortable with and the style that I enjoy singing.

Do you ever think that you might go behind the scenes in any way?

Aylish: It's a possibility. I've always been interested in conducting and teaching, and I've done a little bit of that with the Toowoomba Philharmonic Society. I've helped out a bit with the children's choir. So I've taken a couple of rehearsals when their conductor has been away, or I'll go and help out as an assistant conductor. So I'm open to it, but I think for now I'm interested in becoming a professional performer.

Did COVID change how you approached your exams and applying to the Conservatorium?

Aylish: I don't think so. I was always going to audition for the Conservatorium, and COVID didn't affect that at all. As for exams, it wasn't too bad. We weren't in lockdown for too long and then grade 11 and 12 went back first. So it just felt relatively normal at school for us thankfully. It was quiet with just us at school though. It was nice!

There were obviously a lot less performance opportunities. I didn't get to perform nearly as much as I wanted to, to prepare for my audition, which was a bit scary and nerve-wracking! I think it was a bit more nerve-wracking because I hadn't had the usual opportunities to practice performing. Everything was cancelled or postponed. But we did have a school musical, that was one of the only times that I got to perform solo. I'm happy we got to do that.



A parting gift from the Cathedral community. L to R: Aylish Ryan, Fr Michael O'Brien and Vicky Coccozza

How did you find the experience of being one of the few going to Mass during the lockdown?

Aylish: It was weird to be singing to an empty Cathedral! It was just a strange feeling. But, after we'd been doing it for a while, I got used to it. It became normal just having you guys around [clergy and minimal crew] and basically singing for a congregation invisible at home.

Angela (Mum): And it was good because it was one of the only things that kept you singing. Something to look forward to each week.

It was nice to see everybody, too; it was a little family. For a lot

of us, these would be the only people you'd see for the week.

Watching today as everyone was thinking about "what are we going to do without Aylish?", it's clear you are a cherished part of the Cathedral community. I certainly enjoy listening to you and being with you in lockdown; the community will miss you.

Aylish: Thank you. Everyone has been supportive. Fr Peter Dorfield was always happy to have me singing at things; he was here when I first started. He's such a lovely man.

And Fr Michael is the same, he's continued to encourage me during his time here at the Cathedral. Vicky of course is also wonderful and supportive of me.

I'll be back for holidays and maybe the odd weekend. But I'm excited to start this next part of my journey.

On behalf of the Cathedral community, Fr Michael O'Brien said, "So many people comment on Aylish's lovely voice, and those who know her personally know that she has a humble and generous spirit. Everyone joins in thanking Aylish for sharing her gift with our community and we all wish her every success at the Conservatorium and look forward to hearing her talent increase – if that is possible! Thanks you Aylish and God's blessing for this new chapter in your life."



Aylish (front, centre) singing with St Saviour's Primary School students and Jo Cosgrove (piano), Christmas Eve 2018.

COMPANIONS WITH A JOSEPHITE HEART

ROBYN PHELAN

Josephite Companions is a group open to people from all walks of life who share Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods' values and spirit. The common thread that links Companions and the Sisters of Saint Joseph is the Josephite charisma's centrality. For Josephite Companions, this is expressed through the commitment to friendship, prayer and service.

The original Josephite Associates movement was formed nearly 40 years ago. The new revitalised and reimagined Josephite Companions was

launched online in October last year by Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The launch was in conjunction with the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the canonisation of Mary MacKillop.

There are two Josephite Companions groups in the Toowoomba Diocese, Allora and Pittsworth. Both of these parishes have schools that the Sisters of Saint Joseph established in 1916 and whilst the Sisters no longer staff them, their legacy lives on. Companions meet regularly for friendship and prayerful reflection. Our connectedness is extended to the broader community through friendship and supporting the needs of others. Like St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and with Josephite hearts, we believe that God is active in our lives and calls us to the service of others.

Pittsworth Companions supports Sr Christine Symonds with the MacKillop

Gate Ministry, which provides a mercy pack of essential items to help those released from correctional centres. Allora Companions hold an annual luncheon in aid of the Josephite Mission in Peru. Along with other Sisters, Sr Christine attends bringing along lovely quality hand-crafted products made by the Peruvian women. Branded as Ethica Accessories, the project provides employment and fair income for women living in impoverished parts of Peru.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph Peruvian Mission was chosen as the 2020 recipient of half of the Diocesan Christmas Collection. Well known in our diocese and hailing from Allora, Sr Monica was very appreciative of the support for the Mission. She encourages us in these days of COVID-19 to look to Mary MacKillop's life which continues to speak to our realities and "take fresh courage" (Mary MacKillop, 21 May 1877) as we endeavour to live with hope in a chaotic world.

CHANGE AFOOT AT CROWS NEST PARISH

MARGARET FOWLER

Since 2016 Fr Dave O'Connor has availed himself to the Crows

Nest Parish. In November last year, Fr Dave was asked to minister to Esk Parish as he is incardinated to the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The communities of Crows Nest, Haden and Goombungee are appreciative of Fr Dave's presence and support. He will be missed, but as he lives the district, we hope to catch up sometimes.

We also welcome Fr Peter Doohan as our Administrator. Fr Peter celebrates two Masses each weekend. He is also Priest Director for Helidon, which

makes for a busy weekend for him.

Another change within the parish is Maureen Causer has retired from her position on the Parish Co-ordinating Team. The team was appointed by Bishop Bill Morris in 2007 when Fr Terry Hickling retired to Warwick. The team has served the parish by doing what was needed to be done such as office duties when the part-time parish secretary left. We thank Maureen for her many hours of tireless work for the parish.



Fr Dave O'Connor celebrates outdoor Mass with the Crows Nest community.



St Mary's Goondiwindi Parishioners with Fr Hermi Rafada on Australia Day

AUSSIE CITIZENSHIP A PROUD MOMENT FOR FR HERMI

INA WINTER

The St Mary's School and Parish in Goondiwindi are very proud of our Parish Priest, Fr Hermi Rafada. On 26 January 2021, he received his Australian citizenship. Parishioners, school staff and friends were on hand

to share in his joy and gratitude.

Fr Hermi was born in the Philippines. He studied at the University of the Visayas and the University of St Thomas, where he obtained a Bachelor of Sacred Theology. He is a member of the PACEM missionaries and has served as a priest for 21 years.

Arriving in Australia on 30 January 2014, Fr Hermi stayed at Sacred Heart Parish in Toowoomba. His first appointment within the Toowoomba Diocese was Hospital Chaplain. In May 2018, Fr Hermi became our Parish Priest at Goondiwindi Parish.

Fr Hermi's involvement and contribution

to our school and parish, in addition to the greater Goondiwindi community, is valued. We appreciate his willingness to assist and lead in so many areas.

Fr Hermi joined us to celebrate the beginning of the new school year with Mass for our school staff. He also celebrated our first whole school Mass, and he visited and welcomed our new Prep students in their classrooms. A very excited group of Prep students toured the church with Fr Hermi as he talked about the symbols we use at Mass.

We, as a school and parish, congratulate Fr Hermi on becoming an Australian citizen. We are blessed to have this humble, sincere and witty Parish Priest.

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Stanthorpe Branch of the Knights of the Southern Cross

AWARDS RECOGNISE LOCAL KSC MEMBERS

PAT LYNCH

Recently, awards were presented to local long-serving members of the Knights of the Southern Cross (KSC).

The KSC is a Catholic men's group established in Queensland in 1921 under the Bishops' auspices. The aims of the order are to foster the Christian way of life, promote Australia's advancement, support their local clergy, and render mutual support to members and their families. The Stanthorpe branch will celebrate its centenary in 2027 and the Warwick branch in 2031. Both groups have had a long involvement with local and parish groups like Parish Councils, Parents and Friends, Cherish Life, Rosies, Pregnancy

Help and Orange Sky Laundry.

In December 2020, eleven Warwick members were recognised for 25 and 50 years of service to the order. The State Chairman, Br Eddie Radke, made the presentations. The ceremony was attended by 13 Warwick members, three State Councillors and the retiring District Chairman. In February, Br Radke joined the Stanthorpe branch for their monthly meeting. He presented Br Terry Hopgood with a certificate and pin for 50 years of service.



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LOCAL TEACHER WELCOMED TO HIGHFIELDS FAITH COMMUNITY

PATTI MCNAUGHT

In November 2020, there was a feeling of great excitement at Mary of the Southern Cross Parish in Highfields. Community member Julia Ryan had been on her faith journey and preparing for reception into the Catholic faith. We welcomed Julia's family and friends who joined us in witnessing this beautiful ceremony led by Fr Brian Noonan.

Growing up, Julia's primary schooling was at Our Lady of Mercy in Epping and Rydalmere Primary School. Julia's secondary education was at Coombabah State High School on the Gold Coast, and her education degree was completed through Griffith Uni. Although baptised Anglican, Julia felt drawn to becoming a Catholic. Julia decided to

become a Catholic because her husband and children are Catholic, and she wanted to be able to take communion together, united as a family. She also felt as a teacher in a Catholic school, she needed to lead as an example. She regularly shared with her Year 1 class her journey to receiving her first Eucharist.

Julia was received into full communion with the Church in November 2020. Her work colleague and friend Jodie Inskip was her sponsor. Margaret Hendriks, our RCIA Co-ordinator, is to be congratulated on her professionalism and handling the challenges that 2020 brought. Julia lived by this faith for many years and is now happy to make it official.

REFLECTIONS FROM CUNNAMULLA

SR MAUREEN ANDREWS

The year 2020 will be remembered for the many changes it brought to our lives. COVID-19 has caused us to see things differently. Cunnamulla was isolated, with no tourists allowed past the border gates for the high tourist season. However, we knew that we were safe and positive changes occurred, such as people playing family games.

The usual dust blew through town during November, coming in through windows, under doors and up through the floors. We sighed and cleaned. The

heat came, and the birds found it hard to adjust. How could they change? I managed to save a couple of birds: a peewee hanging upside down on the screen door at the back of the house and a swallow. Unfortunately, a brightly coloured kingfisher could not be revived and fell from the branch.

Over the past few Sundays, we have heard how we are called to be disciples, and this call means that we must change. We need to repent and believe the Good News. Geoff Plant in "Releasing the Captive" says this is not about seeing anything different but seeing differently. He gave the example of sliced bread. We often say that something new is the "greatest thing since sliced bread." The breadmaking machine was developed in 1912, to great opposition by bakers. In 1942 Melbourne bakers voted to

prohibit slicing machines. Go forward to 1999, Australians were spending \$359 million on sliced bread. Bakers had learned to see things differently.

The look of the Assembly Hall/ Church/ Multi-Purpose Room in Cunnamulla has changed. We now have blue chairs suitable for the congregation. This newness was in time for the First Communion of 10 young people. This event was a time of great excitement for the children, parents and the rest of the congregation. Because of COVID-19, it was easier to have a simple cake and meal at a local pub instead of the usual supper.

There was a steady stream of people trickling through to the doors of the church on Christmas Eve. It was a service filled with joy and gratitude for the blessings of simply being together and making new friends. One small girl danced up and down the aisle every time a carol played. Grandfather angle parked in his chair as he observed her dance and was filled with pride.

Our faith community extends to the community of the town, and we felt happy to sit and watch the celebrations for 26 January. The small verse below captures some of the things that we are thankful for.

*You are the Gold to my Coast,
The vegemite to my toast;
The lamingtons in my fridge;
The Holden to my ute,
Australia you're beaut!*



Cunnamulla Parish volunteers Christmas lunch.

PLENTY OF TIME TO CELEBRATE CENTENARY

ST JOSEPH'S PARISH DALBY

The Centenary of a church is always a reason to celebrate, and the Parish of St Joseph's Dalby has such an occasion in December this year. The first Catholic Church in Dalby was blessed on 5 August 1866. It was replaced in 1886, and our current church was dedicated on 4 December 1921. Plans are in hand to celebrate this event, and we would invite any past parishioners to watch our Facebook page for updates. As



Moya Coutts was born between the opening of St Joseph's Church in 1921 and its consecration in 1928

part of our centenary preparations, we have put together a pictorial calendar which is available through our parish office. Going through the many photos

to choose suitable ones gave the committee a look into our past. It was often a walk down memory lane, as well as reminding us of the present.

LONG TIME PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS THANKED FOR THEIR SERVICE

PATTI MCNAUGHT

In January, we saw Naomi Goddard and Paul Canavan's retirement from our Pastoral Parish Council after many years of service.

Naomi first started volunteering in 2006 in the role of secretary. Naomi continued in this role on and off for 11 years. We thank Naomi for her time on Parish Council and the contributions she made over that time.

Paul has also been a member of Parish Council for 11 years in a continuous capacity as head of our financial committee. He has been a real asset in his knowledge, preparation of

reports and handling of all expenses. We thank Paul for his invaluable time and effort in this role.

As a token of thanks for the final Parish Council meeting of the year, members enjoyed dinner at Lily's Restaurant Highfields. Fr Brian Noonan offered Naomi and Paul thanks for their service on the council and presented them with a gift. They then enjoyed the dinner and some fellowship.

It has been a big year with COVID-19, building interruptions and many challenges. The positives were that they really reflected their mission: to be a vibrant and supportive community and pursue the idea of having our own place to worship in Highfields in the future. Such a promising way for them to finish the year.

Our parish community

would also like to thank Naomi and Paul. While they leave our Parish Council, they will not be leaving our community.



L to R: Fr Brian Noonan, Naomi Goddard and Paul Canavan.

PARISH IN BRIEF

Wallangarra parishioners participated in a successful Advent reflection program in December 2020. Meeting each Thursday for four weeks, 13 participants enjoyed reflecting on the coming birth of Jesus following an outline of resources from the Broken Bay Diocese. The group met in St Mary's church. The program was run by Tom Hodgson and Liz Smith, with everyone agreeing that it should be continued next year. The parish is running the Lenten program from the Diocese of Wollongong.



Australia Day in Charleville this year was one of the first times in a while that the community could let their hair down and come together to celebrate. Everyone got into the spirit of the day including residents at Waroona Aged Care. They were treated to an Australian Day BBQ followed by singing and dancing, which they entered into with great enthusiasm. (Pictured: Ron Currie and Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe)

On 24 January, St Mary's Parish Warwick had the privilege of celebrating Sinulog with the Filipino community. To celebrate this feast day, the Filipino community participated in the Mass through many different forms of ministry. The parish also welcomed Fr Saldie Resolado OSA from St James Parish Coorparoo for the celebration.

Congratulations to three St Mary's School Charleville past pupils recognised by the local council in the citizenship awards this year: Hope Doyle, Young Sportsperson of the Year, with Amber Heinz and Abbie Galagos as Young Citizens of the Year.





Parishioners in Dirranbandi gather with Fr Salvador Fernandes to remember the faithful departed in November 2020



Some of the Rumble and Tumble Playgroup Charleville graduates on their first day in Prep.



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