

# Horizons



## EMBRACING DIVERSITY FOR HARMONY DAY

The Easter Triduum,  
Three Days-One Feast

School Upgrade Unites Campus

Church a Testament to  
Community's Faith & Dedication

#61  
JUNE21

FREE Publication  
of the Catholic  
Diocese of  
Toowoomba

# Horizons

## FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

**World Communications Day coincided with Mothers Day this year.** Australia usually marks World Communications Day on a different Sunday to the rest of the Catholic Church. As a communicator in the church and a mum, I felt obliged to pay attention to both sides of the day!

The title of Pope Francis' 2021 message for World Communications Day is "Come and See (Jn 1:46) Communicating by Encountering People Where and as They Are". The title resonated with me; this is the aim for each edition of "Horizons". Could each issue be titled "Come and See"? Well, I guess we did for #60.

In his message, Pope Francis speaks of encounter, "hitting the streets" as he calls it, as a form of truth-seeking and fact checking. To "come and see" is to experience first hand what is the news and what is truth. To "come and see" is to meet people where they are and share their truth. In an age of fake news, false narratives and selfish agendas, it is essential to share the Good News in action, "to go, to see, to share".

In this issue of "Horizons", we hit the streets to bring you stories that are positive and uplifting, sometimes confronting, but always faith-filled. There are heartfelt personal reflections on faith in action. We are asked again to examine painful historical truths in the hope of finding empathy and justice. We also invite you to reflect

*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.*

## CONTENTS

### COVER STORIES:

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| THE EASTER TRIDUUM, THREE DAYS-ONE FEAST.....          | 8  |
| SCHOOL UPGRADE UNITES CAMPUS.....                      | 24 |
| EMBRACING DIVERSITY FOR HARMONY DAY.....               | 26 |
| CHURCH A TESTAMENT TO COMMUNITY'S FAITH & DEDICATION.. | 33 |
| CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE.....                           | 16 |
| EDUCATION.....                                         | 20 |
| PARISH LIFE.....                                       | 30 |

on the journey of the Easter Triduum through pictures from this year's celebrations at St Patrick's Cathedral.

I thank everyone from schools, parishes, and fellow diocesan staff who have shared their stories through words and photos throughout "Horizons" 15 years of existence. Your invitation to the rest of the diocese and beyond to "come and see" has been warmly accepted.

**The invitation to "come and see", which was part of those first moving encounters of Jesus with the disciples, is also the method for all authentic human communication.**

*Opening to Pope Francis' message for World Communications Day 2021*

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Bishop Robert McGuckin blesses Service Awards for staff at St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba at a special Mass to celebrate 100 years since laying the foundations of the hospital.

**2021 is a year that Pope Francis has designated to acknowledge St Jopseph in a special way.** 1 May 2021 was the feast of St Joseph the Worker, and it began a month with many celebrations.

On St Joseph's very feast day in St Mary's Church Warwick, I ordained Brian Redondo as a deacon. Rev Deacon Brian Redondo now continues on his journey towards priesthood. It is planned that Deacon Brian will visit a number of parishes on weekends. Please make him welcome, and please continue to pray for him and for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Bishops of Australia held their annual May plenary, and this continued for a week. Because of a possible closure of state borders, many Bishops were reluctant to leave their home state. The meeting was then held via electronic means, with Bishops from each state mostly meeting together in what might be called state hubs. Whilst it was good to see familiar faces on a screen, it was unfortunate that we didn't have those face-to-face formal and informal gatherings. Perhaps we will all need to have our eyes tested after sitting in front of screens for six hours each day. You might say, by the end of it, I was zoooooomed out.

May has also been a month of many anniversaries. On Sunday, 9 May, I was pleased to be able to join the New South Wales Bishops at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney for the Mass recognising 200 years of Catholic priesthood in Australia.

14 May was the ninth anniversary of my naming as the sixth Bishop of Toowoomba. Please also continue to pray for me.

On Thursday, 20 May, Holy Spirit Seminary at Banyo celebrated 80 years since it was established. Solemn Vespers were celebrated in the College Chapel. A formal dinner was later held in the Seminary, and you would have been proud of the speech given by our Seminarian, Nathan Webb. Hopefully, this can be published in the next edition of Horizons.

On Saturday, 22 May, a special Mass was held in St Patrick's Cathedral, celebrating 100 years since laying the foundation for St Vincent's Hospital in Toowoomba.

On Pentecost Sunday, 23 May, there was the commissioning of those from our diocese called to the Plenary Council. The First Session of the Council

to begin in October 2021, and the Second Session to be held in July 2022.

On many nights of the week, I have been privileged to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation for quite a number of children in a number of parishes: Our Lady of Lourdes, the Cathedral, St Thomas More's, Oakey and Inglewood. Confirmations will be celebrated in a further nine parishes in June. COVID restrictions have generally necessitated two sessions per evening in each parish.

Happy Birthday and every good wish to Fr Don Murray, who turned 90 years of age in May.

Congratulations also to Sr Nora Fitzbibbon, who celebrates 60 years of religious profession as a Sister of Mercy. Every blessing to Sr Nora.

Congratulations also to Fr Mick Carroll, celebrating 60 years of priestly ordination.

St Joseph, Protector of the Church, Pray for us.

**Bishop Robert McGuckin**  
Bishop of Toowoomba  
May 2021



# NATIONAL 17-23 MAY 2021 VOLUNTEER WEEK

**RECOGNISE. RECONNECT.  
REIMAGINE.**

## THANKING THE VOLUNTEERS WHO SUPPORT US

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National Volunteer Week was from 17 to 23 May. Through this feature in “Horizons”, we’re taking the opportunity to showcase the fantastic work of volunteers in our diocese. They are the lifeblood of our parishes, schools and ministries across the diocese. According to the National Volunteer Week website, nearly 6 million Australians give over 600 million hours of their time in service of others.

Volunteers across our diocese fulfil various duties, ranging from staffing the parish office to bringing communion to the sick to St Vincent de Paul and everything in-between. Their work embodies the spirit of Christ-like service in the community and are appreciated for their efforts.



## SYCHAR VOLUNTEERS NOURISHED BY THE WELL OF FRIENDSHIP

**DEB BOWDLER,  
CLARE SMITH AND  
SHEILA SARQUIS**

---

Before Sychar had a name and a home, Sr Elaine Morzone advertised in parish bulletins for people to cover books for a new spirituality centre and library. Deb and Clare answered the call and started covering and collating books and AV materials donated for the new library. A short time later,

L to R: Clare Smith, Deb Bowdler and Sheila Sarquis



Sheila saw the notice and offered to help. As we all had an interest for ourselves and others in spiritual enrichment, it was volunteering work that was close to our hearts. Each of us had a background in library work, which was another advantage. When we moved from temporary premises to our beautiful home in Margaret Street, Tuesday mornings were set aside for Sychar, and the cataloguing commenced in earnest. As others heard of the project, many more donations were made to the library, ensuring that we had plenty of work to keep us going.

We have enjoyed this time doing some "work". The shelves are nearly full, and we must have achieved something among the chatter, laughter and morning teas! Our friendship circle has grown and has been enriched by our time spent together. We have also welcomed other people who pop in and add another dimension to our mornings.

We feel we have been privileged to have a bird's eye view of the evolution of Sychar. We have witnessed Sychar as a welcoming place for all who are seekers on life's journey.

A word from Sr Elaine: Apart from their work in the library, our three librarians have been a great gift to Sychar as they have created a core community able to offer a warm welcome to visitors.

## WHY I VOLUNTEER AT OUR LADY OF LOURDES...

### Mary Ondrus

**I regard volunteering in our parish as a part of my Christian responsibility-sharing talents and skills for the community's life.** I have enjoyed reading stories to kids from my early years, and volunteering to be a reader at parish celebrations began as an extension of that. Mind you, it took an awful lot of courage to read to a congregation of mostly adults. To relive that nervousness at each new parish that I lived in was a challenge, too. The butterflies-in-the-tummy feeling has reduced over the years, but they're still there!

The other areas of church-life volunteering have been less visible nonetheless contribute to the upkeep and well-being of parish life. From every aspect of volunteering tasks, there is joy in sharing; and there is the encouragement to keep going by comments made or

received from others in the parish community. I am doubly blessed!

Volunteer activities contribute to a parish's community life and enhance the Christian responsibility of going to Mass on Sunday.

### Mary McConachy

**Within the boundary of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is Bupa Aged Care Glenvale.** I became part of a team of volunteers who visit Bupa once a month to offer a liturgy to the residents. We gather in the lovely chapel in the complex. Brian is our leader, leading prayer and distributing Holy Communion to all those present and those confined to their rooms. Other team members play the organ, lead the singing, share a reflection, distribute hymn books and serve morning tea. I have become friends with the other team members, and when we leave Bupa,

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I always feel joy at having participated in something really worthwhile.

In the ten years I have been a part of this group, I met Anne, a volunteer who visits Bupa two or three days a week. Anne knows the residents' names and tends to their needs. Anne loves her role and finds much joy in what she does. She lives out the adage, "It is better to give than to receive".

We all have a basic need to belong. By volunteering in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, I have found that I have fulfilled the need to belong, be at home with others and with God. It is good to volunteer and very rewarding.

## Mark Whitelegg

**It's easy to "talk the talk" about volunteering, but quite often, the timing isn't just quite right.** After sorting our family, work, and social calendar and taking the plunge to volunteer, we usually notice that volunteering is easier than we thought it'd be. Each person has different talents and shares a desire to help wherever possible. It might mean helping those less fortunate than ourselves, transporting people to and from appointments, assisting with the running of Sunday Mass, or a myriad of other organisations.

Approximately 20 years ago, I first heard of Special Religious Development (SPRED) from a chap who spoke at Sunday Mass about why he volunteered with this ministry. I couldn't help but think he was speaking directly to me. However, the timing was not right, but it kept gnawing away at me.

So eight years ago, I took the plunge and asked if I could come along to a SPRED meeting at my local parish, Our Lady of Lourdes. I was so warmly welcomed by everyone that it reminded me of the old saying, "there are no strangers amongst us, just friends we haven't met yet". I did the necessary training course then all of a sudden, I had become a new SPRED volunteer.

I've enjoyed volunteering with this ministry, and I know I joined because I thought I could help people with special needs. Still, it was clear early on that our Friends were doing most of the giving and the gap between volunteer and our Friends is quite close.



Volunteers in action: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Liturgy Group



Volunteers in action: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Seniors Christmas Party



Volunteers in action: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Spring Garden Party





A men's group at Sychar have enjoyed their time together in prayerful reflection.

## MEN'S GROUP OPEN TO SHARING EXPERIENCES OF FAITH

JOHN BRIFFA

In late December 2020, the Sychar House of Prayer & Spirituality achieved another milestone with the formation of the first men's group, gathering to reflect and share

their experience on reading "The Universal Christ" by Richard Rohr.

Billed as a seven-week guided reflection, the group gathered in a prayerful way at Sychar to be lead through a series of focused exercises as a means of reflecting on the wisdom sourced from the pages of the popular and universally acclaimed book published in 2019.

The group of seven men bravely broke with convention to share their experiences of faith, a knowledge which expanded in light of reading the writings of Rohr while being meaningfully coupled with real-life experience.

Getting a group of men together to talk matters of faith is a big ask of itself. Coupled with timing around school holidays, the Christmas break, and the continual uncertainties caused by COVID 19, it was always problematic. Each meeting, however, provided the opportunity to express spiritual insights in a respectful and non-judgemental space.


"The Universal Christ" is a heavy read, embracing the concept of an incarnational worldview and seemingly written in a style that may be described as a verbal stream of consciousness. Despite the challenges, the group has been grateful for the experience and a pleasure to be a part of.

### Are you affected by any of the following

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# THE *EASTER TRIDUUM*, THREE DAYS-ONE FEAST

JOHN BRIFFA

The various ceremonies which take place over the Easter long weekend are known in liturgical texts as the **Sacred Paschal Triduum**. They form the centre point of our faith and focus on three elements of the one mystery; the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. The Triduum, meaning three days, is measured from sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday. This respects the Hebrew origins of the paschal mystery, where a day begins at nightfall.

The ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil are three liturgical parts of a single liturgical event.

## Mass of the Lord's Supper

Our Eucharistic tradition has its origins in the last supper that Jesus celebrated with his apostles. Jesus took bread and wine, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it, and he asked his friends to remember him each time they shared a meal with others. The readings of Holy Thursday remind us of the first Passover and the institution of our own Eucharistic celebration.

COVID 19 restricted this year's Holy Thursday ceremony from including the ritual of the Washing of Feet, but the symbols of jug, bowl and towel remind us of the model Jesus set for us by his commitment to serving others. While we might not physically wash the feet of others, our service and compassion for them is expressed by our support for Project Compassion and other charitable causes.







The Mass of the Lord's Supper ends in silence and darkness and provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the agony and torment Jesus experienced while he prayed that night before he was later betrayed and arrested.



## Friday of the Passion of The Lord

The liturgy on Good Friday starts with the same solemn ambience as the night before ended. In silence and with great reverence the Bishop and Priests prostrate themselves as a sign of respect for the sacrifice of Christ. We commemorate the Passion of Our Lord by reading in detail the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

The Cross is the primary symbol of this ceremony and all are welcome to come forward and make a personal gesture of respect during the Veneration of the Cross, a ritual that is well embraced and adds to the solemnity of the Good Friday service.



## Easter Vigil of the Resurrection of the Lord

The celebration of the easter Vigil is the summit of the Church's liturgical expression. The ceremony is rich in symbol, scripture, music and proclamations.

Gathered in darkness, the blazing fire becomes a symbol of the Resurrection of Christ.



The Paschal Candle, lit from the fire, becomes the recurring symbol of the light Christ brings into the world as it burns in the sanctuary until Pentecost.

Scripture recounts the history of our salvation as the Easter Vigil readings narrate the story of God's continued relationship with humankind and remind us that Christ is present with us in the here and now.



The Blessing of Water and the Renewal of our Baptismal Promises complete the special rituals of the Easter Vigil before Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.





Representatives from our diocese to the Plenary Council were commissioned during Mass on Pentecost. L to R: Gabrielle Saide, standing in for Catherine McAleer, Fr John Quinlan, Bishop Robert McGuckin, Mark Copland and Fr Franco Filippetto, were commissioned by Fr Michael O'Brien.

## UPDATED PLENARY GATHERING PLANS

MARY OTTO

**On Pentecost Sunday in 2018, preparation for the Australian Plenary Council began with energy and hope.**

Two Assemblies initially scheduled for October 2020 and May 2021 were put on hold due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Over the past 12 months, the Facilitation Team and others have worked hard on altering plans, dates and venues to meet the requirements set by government bodies to ensure the safety of all.

Currently, those participating in the assemblies are beginning some intensive formation. This formation will prepare them for the task that lies ahead as they gather to consider the matters on the agenda deeply. These matters emerged as a result of discernment and prayer. Firstly by the people of our country, and then by those preparing the writing papers. That material was then further distilled by a team of experts who prepared the document now known as "Continuing the Journey". All of these documents can be sourced on the Plenary website [plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)

The agenda for the two assemblies is currently being prepared. The first assembly will be held in October this year, followed by a second in July 2022. Instead of gathering in Adelaide and Sydney as initially planned, the

members of the Plenary Council will now gather in person in "hubs" around the country. Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane will host these hubs. With the help of technology, these hubs will connect remotely. Members from our diocese: Bishop Robert McGuckin, Fr John Quinlan, Fr Franco Filippetto, Dr Mark Copland and Ms Catherine McAleer participate from the Brisbane hub.

On Pentecost Sunday, these members from our diocese were commissioned at the 9:00am Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral.

If you would like to keep up with the latest news regarding the Plenary Council, you can check out the Plenary Post found on their website. Plenary Post is updated on the last Thursday of each month.

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# THE PLENARY COUNCIL JOURNEY

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.

Nov  
2021  
June  
2022

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

4-9  
July

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

Aug  
2022

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



Plenary Council 2020  
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<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>

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

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E. Phillips Fox, 1770, *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay*

## FACING OUR HISTORY

DR DAVID TUTTY

**Over the next month or so, there are a number of significant events that connect us to First Nations peoples and their issues and concerns.** These events cannot be seen in isolation as they link us to a painful history and our growing awareness of what is just and right.

The coming events are National Sorry Day (26 May), National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June), NAIDOC Week (July 4 – 11) and our Catholic celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday (4 July). Through these events, we are reminded that there is significant pain and injustice in the past that still needs facing. Being open to commemorating and celebrating these events opens us to hearing First Nations voices. It is in our openness to listen that we take a step forward.

Earlier this year, respected historian Henry Reynolds released a new book titled “Truth-Telling: History, Sovereignty and the Uluru Statement”. Reynolds names that he was inspired by the call to truth-telling in the “Uluru Statement from the Heart”. In his book, he recovers key historical information that challenges the dominant stories of the founding of this nation.

The most basic issues to be faced are how sovereignty was claimed and how land was acquired. Reynolds names that what unfolded was based on “tragic misconceptions” (p23) and failures to follow the international law of the day. There was also an unwillingness to learn from their North American experiences and from the reports of early settlers on the east coast of Australia.

On 20 April 1770, Lieutenant James Cook hoisted the British flag and claimed all the east coast of Australia for the King. Cook’s instructions expected him to act “with the consent of the Natives” (p15). Even though all aboard the *Endeavour* “knew that the

entire long coastline was inhabited by the Aboriginal people” (p15), Cook and his crew had limited contact with them and radically misjudged what they saw.

The British Colonial Office, in giving instructions to Arthur Phillip to establish a penal colony, went far beyond Cook’s claim of sovereignty and “made the extraordinary claim of half the continent” (p24). Phillip’s orders included a claim to everything from the coast “westward to 135 degrees longitude” (p24). Reynolds says that “[i]t was truly an astonishing assertion of sovereignty that had almost no credibility in international law” (p24).

Arthur Phillip and subsequent governors learned very quickly that the assumptions underpinning their instructions were not true. There were no lands without people. Tribal boundaries did exist, and the local people “stood their ground and resisted the invasion with every means available to them” (p34). In 1825, this led British peer, Lord William Bathurst, to attempt a new policy. The claim to British sovereignty “out to the centre of the



continent was abandoned” (p41). This meant that the ongoing conflicts were seen as war, and those resisting British advance were “no longer considered to be British subjects but national enemies representing ‘accredited’ states” (p41). This change of attitude was soon reversed with Governor George Gipps, in May 1839, “explaining that the Aboriginal peoples were indeed subjects of the Queen” (p73).

The second tragic event was that Governor Phillip’s commission named that “all the land became the property of the Crown” (p71) in all areas where sovereignty was claimed. Reynolds describes this as the “expropriation of about 400 million hectares of land over half a continent ... an act of theft on a truly heroic scale” (p49). This claim was “fully exposed” (p49) within fifty years, yet “the law was impervious to change” (p50). Henry Reynolds emphasises

is that in the international law of the day, when a conqueror takes control, the property of the locals remains undisturbed. Britain acted illegally!

Reynolds also names that Queensland was different from southern states. He tells us that the “first pioneers who came up onto the Darling Downs in the 1840s had arrived with attitudes shaped by the violent conflict experienced in northern New South Wales. They were heavily armed, ready to fight and convinced of their rights to wrench land from the traditional owners” (p179). This happened all over Queensland and vast farms and stations were claimed. First Nations peoples were forced off their lands and many shot to “terrorise them into submission and to prevent them from attacking the colonists and their property” (p184). In fact, Reynolds draws on evidence that shows an estimated 61,000 First Nations people

were killed in this process (p186).

This is just some of the history that is the context of the current commemorations and celebrations. The British claims of sovereignty and property transfer have underpinned all subsequent issues and concerns of First Nations peoples. There was no consent, no treaty-making and no basic respect for the human beings already present in this land.

Over many decades, Henry Reynolds has painstakingly sought to recover the truth of the raw and painful interactions between First Nations peoples and those who came as colonisers. In doing so, he helps us better face our history.

So as we commemorate and celebrate the coming First Nations focused events, I pray we deepen our listening, grow in empathy and seek a more just and respectful way forward.



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## CENTRE CONTINUES TO BE A HAVEN FOR THE DIOCESE

PAUL AND WENDY LADEWIG



Today the James Byrne Centre (above) looks very different to the site in the late 1970's when construction began on the first building, the chapel.

**It is now approximately 43 years since Bishop Edward Kelly proposed building a youth formation centre in the Toowoomba Diocese.** Nestled on a quiet 130 acres in Highfields, this beautiful natural setting makes it an idyllic place for the James Byrne Centre.

Bishop Kelly and then St Theresa's Parish Priest Monsignor Patrick Doyle would be amazed at the centre as it is today. What they originally saw as a 53 hectare dairy farm, has over the years developed into a successful self-funded business.

The James Byrne Centre is a facility for groups to hold retreats, meetings and conferences. It provides catering and accommodation for groups from 5 to 130 people.

The centre's buildings include an accommodation block which sleeps 90 people, mainly on a twin share

basis with four single ensembles.

There is a separate three-bedroom self-contained unit at the end of the building. Presenters accompanying various groups or staff with school groups often utilise this space.

Sanctuary House is self-contained accommodation with 12 beds, and Kelly House is also self-contained with 30 beds. Marian Hall is an open meeting space used by those staying on-site or booked for day events. The centre also features a commercial kitchen and dining area seating up to 130.

Christ the King Chapel is a beautiful sandstone chapel ideally located on the centre grounds. Its glassed walls offer a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape through its glassed walls.

Although many organisations using the centre have a religious purpose, bookings are also

taken from secular groups.

The Highfields Falls bushwalk is only 200 metres from the entrance to the centre. It is a great place to walk, with lots of birdlife and a variety of native plants. The track is well laid out and easy to follow.

There have only been a few on-site managers at the centre, the longest-serving being Denis and Ann Downs (23years). Current managers Paul and Wendy Ladewig say managing the centre is a challenging exercise, balancing the multiple needs and to achieve the best possible experience for those visiting the centre.

The James Byrne Centre has a strong future. The ongoing improvements and the increasing need for people to have "a few days for reflection" will ensure that the centre will continue for many years to come.





With Sr Beryl Gleeson mss, Megan Brown and Sr Mary Cleary mss.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPROUTS FROM SEEDS OF CONNECTION

INGRID MCTAGGART

**Each year the Social Justice Commission recognises the outstanding efforts of people in the Toowoomba Diocese tackling issues of social justice.** Since 2004, the Social Justice Award has showcased the dedication of a broad selection of individuals, organisations and community groups.

On 27 February, Bishop Robert McGuckin presented the 2020 Social Justice Award to Megan Brown. The award ceremony was held in Roma.

Megan is an Indigenous woman, respected business owner and facilitator of the Seeds of Connection program. She is originally from Charleville and is from the Mithaka First Nations People.

Megan has successfully grown her business, Soaring Souls Yoga, in Roma. Seeds of Connection is a partnership between herself and Highways and Byways: A Community of Service (the mission organisation of the Missionary Sisters of Service). Through this program, Megan has

been working to support vulnerable community members and plug the gaps of disadvantage.

Megan is constantly seeking ways to engage with the marginalised in the community. The work that she does outside the parameters of her yoga business sets her apart and showcases her deep community spirit. Just some of the ways she has supported the community include creating COVID care packages for the local seniors' during lockdown and times of isolation; free online health and wellbeing sessions during lockdown; an Indigenous Women's Group running a range of activities; a community garden for all to participate in, particularly disengaged young people. And so much more, with big plans for the future. Megan is a leader and role model within the community.

Highways and Byways Executive



Bishop Robert McGuckin presenting the 2020 Social Justice Award to Megan Brown.

Officer, Liz McAloon, was excited for Megan, "We are proud of our partnership with Megan through the Seeds of Connection program. In the little over a year since the program launched, it has gone from strength to strength, in no small part due to Megan's dedication to the community."

The Social Justice Commission is pleased to recognise Megan's contribution to the community and wish her every success in the future.



# “THE PACE OF CHANGE HAS NEVER BEEN SO FAST AND WILL NEVER BE THIS SLOW AGAIN”

(JUSTIN TRUDEAU, 2020)

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR: TOOWOOMBA  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**The school year is back into full swing after the Easter break.** Staff and students have settled quickly back into the demanding routines of teaching and learning. Having recently returned from an extended period of leave, I can attest to the importance of the discipline of routine in ensuring a smooth return to duties.

As seems to be the norm in all work environments these days, there is no shortage of demands and commitments to focus on. In education, people sometimes use the analogy of the “hamster wheel” to describe the sheer pace and volume of change which staff are expected to manage. The hope that somehow the change agenda will slow down or even diminish is optimistic, to say the least. A growing number of demands experienced by schools are imposed by external agencies and out of the control of local communities. Changes to senior assessment, Government reporting requirements, the Australian Curriculum, to name a few. What can be done about

this seemingly endless change agenda?

The challenge facing schools today is the sheer range of expectations placed on them — educating the young while preparing them for the workforce, conferring life-skills while also teaching students to think, transmitting cultural identity while tending to students’ individual needs. There is the need to provide a safe and nurturing environment, as well as one that is competitive and successful, so that we can form strong yet gentle, centred but generous young people, ready for the world around them.

People begin to feel overwhelmed and anxious about a future over which they believe they have no control. Whilst we can’t elect to not participate in processes mandated by Governments and other agencies, we do have control over what those mandates look like in the local school context. This involves school communities making local decisions about their priorities and the allocation of resources.

A key principle in the management of change is subsidiarity. The principle of subsidiarity, which was developed as part of Catholic Social Teaching, states: What individuals can accomplish by their own initiative and efforts should not be taken from them by a higher authority. In other words, in education, principals and staff are best placed to make decisions about matters impacting in their context. There is ample evidence to suggest that change has always been a challenge to every generation, not just our own. Subsidiarity does not take away change; it helps us process and manage its impact in a way that honours the abundant wisdom and resources inherent in every local community.

We continue to honour this principle within our system of schools, enabling more decisions to be made at the local level, supporting staff to focus on and accomplish what really matters in education, and listening to staff when change is needed. I look forward to working with school staff to continue this partnership this term.





Teachers gather in Toowoomba to complete the Religious Education Accreditation Program.

# TEACHERS REAP BENEFIT FROM ONGOING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FORMATION

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

As an example of Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) commitment to providing high-quality Religious Education that is faithful to the Catholic tradition, teachers in TCS may complete REAP. This Religious Education Accreditation Program (REAP) provides teachers with an opportunity to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the Religion Curriculum. It focuses on strategies to assist teachers in being responsive to the circumstances of students and their families. These strategies empower students to connect with the richness of the Catholic tradition, their personal experiences and contemporary cultural contexts.

Seventy enthusiastic Religious Education teachers from schools across the diocese recently took part in the REAP program. Teachers came together for three days of interactive workshops, which included both theory and practical sessions. The program was held in Toowoomba and Roma, which allowed for greater attendance of teachers in the western schools of the diocese. Completing the REAP program will enable teachers to apply for further postgraduate courses in Religious Education at a tertiary level. The TCS Formation and Identity Team facilitated

the learning with Professor Peta Goldberg rsm from Australian Catholic University. Her expertise in scripture was a highlight of the three days.

“Over the course, I have developed my knowledge and understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices and feel

more confident in teaching Religion.” Said a teacher participating in the REAP course. “There were so many learnings and invaluable conversations. The program is so detailed, and it reinvigorated my love of teaching religion.” Said another teacher.



L to R: Kimberley Collett (Mater Dei) and Melena Luck ( St Thomas More's).



## WORK AND WELCOME A POSITIVE OPPORTUNITY

### TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

“Work and Welcome” is an employment experience program providing refugees and migrants with paid work experience funded through the TCS workplace giving scheme. TCS employees are currently making regular donations, which has enabled St Anthony’s School Toowoomba to welcome Hasan Lukko to their community for 12 weeks.

Hasan was a primary school teacher in Iraq for over 17 years. In his first experience working in Australia, he supports teachers in classrooms and the administration staff in their work.

Hasan’s shared his story of his homeland of Iraq, coming to Australia, and what it means to him to have the opportunity provided by the “Work and Welcome” program.

“I was a teacher prior to ISIS attacking the country village of Mount Sinjar where I lived on the 3 August 2014.” Recalls Hasan. “Over 800 young women, girls and children were enslaved and taken to Syria. Seventy-seven women who were aged over 40 were killed. I tried to shelter village people in the school however, many of my friends and family members, including my eldest son, lost their lives. My wife lost her

mother and six brothers in the conflict.”

Following the initial conflict, Hasan worked with smugglers to liberate teenagers captured by ISIS and taken to Syria. Many of them moved to Australia, Germany, France, and Canada, and some stayed in Iraq.

Hasan also worked for the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). ICMP has a network across Iraq of families of the missing who share experiences and information to contribute to resolving the fate of loved ones and contributing to the process of truth and justice.



Hasan Lukko has been warmly welcomed at St Anthony’s School Toowoomba





Before coming to Australia in December 2019, Hasan and his family spent two years living in a refugee camp in Iraq where he taught English and Arabic.

“Three of my children came with me to Toowoomba. My son is now studying English at university and my two daughters, the youngest is in high school and the other working in childcare. I also have two sons who are working and studying in Germany; they both hope to move to Australia eventually. Due to COVID, my wife is still in Iraq however, she will arrive in Toowoomba in June this year.” Said Hasan.

Hasan says he is enjoying his life here in Australia. “Toowoomba is safe, healthy, and everything is of a better standard than Iraq. I miss

friends and the school where I taught, but I don’t miss Iraq; I lost so many family members and friends.

“I hope to find a job working in a school. I am enjoying working at St Anthony’s however, I need to improve my English. This is my first job in Australia. I have been studying English at TAFE and by reading books.”

Toowoomba Catholic Schools employees who wish to help someone like Hasan gain work experience through the “Work and Welcome” program can donate to this initiative through a salary deduction. Let us bring hope to the lives of people who are marginalised and disadvantaged. Even modest fortnightly contributions from everyone will make a huge difference to someone’s life.

### TCS Staff

can contact  
payoffice@twb.catholic.edu.au

### If you have a business that would like to be involved in the program,

please contact the team at Multicultural Australia on **(07) 3337 5400** or email [WelcomeWorkforce@multiculturalaustralia.org.au](mailto:WelcomeWorkforce@multiculturalaustralia.org.au)

## TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC KINDERGARTENS AND CARE EXPAND

### TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Toowoomba Catholic Kindergartens and Care opened six new Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services on Monday 19 April. The services are attached to the following schools: St Saviour’s Primary, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary, St Thomas More’s Primary, Sacred Heart Primary, Mary MacKillop Catholic College, and St Monica’s School, Oakey.

These new services follow the opening of two new rural-based OSHCs earlier in the year at St

Joseph’s School, Chinchilla and at St Mary’s School, Charleville.

The OHSCs provide the opportunity for children to grow and develop their social skills in a leisure-based program nurtured by our Catholic ethos. They also provide families with a great option for caring for their children before and after school. The educators work with all children to create fun and recreational experiences to prioritise a child’s well-being, learning, and personal

development. Through the variety of indoor and outdoor activities, children’s diverse interests are supported, and they are provided with some elements that connect to the school curriculum.

The OSHCs offer a combination of before school care (6.30am – 8.00am), after school care (3.00pm – 6.00pm), and full daycare on pupil free days and school holidays.



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Matthew Elara from PNG with members of the Downlands Mission Group.

## MASK MISSION FOR PNG

### DOWNLANDS COLLEGE

Since its beginning, Downlands has committed to supporting Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Missions, and most recently, our friends and families in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have brought to our attention a crucial need for personal protection equipment to help stem the waves

of COVID 19 sweeping the rural areas of our closest neighbour.

Masks are in extremely short supply, and even frontline workers have difficulty securing adequate supplies. Although books, clothing, and other essentials are usually loaded into shipping containers and delivered by boat, these masks will be flown into those rural areas of most desperate need.

Andrea Collins, Downlands Assistant Principal – Mission, was delighted with the response from students. “We are

keenly aware of our many past students who live and work in PNG and our many families who have been unable to send their children to Downlands because of the pandemic.” Said Andrea. “Often worldwide problems seem too big for us to make any difference, but this is one small and tangible way in which we can send help.”

We hope to continue such assistance until this emergency is over, and we look forward to welcoming PNG students to Downlands as soon as we can.

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## VOLUNTEERING SHOWS FAITH IN ACTION

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

**St Joseph's School Stanthorpe and students have always supported members of the community through our Faith in Action program.** One ongoing commitment to our community involves our students volunteering to assist Meals on Wheels.

A number of students and teachers recently had the opportunity to help serve meals to community members. The students worked together with the teachers and Dawn Allen from Meals on Wheels.

By delivering meals to disadvantaged, elderly and disabled citizens, they receive nutritious food and a friendly visit. Anyone can deliver meals, and it's a great volunteer opportunity for

families and teams of employees, as well. This work is an important opportunity for our students to experience community service, and all support is always appreciated.



St Joseph's School students and staff helped with Meals on Wheels' delivery run.

## Downlands College

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L to R: John Gilbert, Kylie Beavis and Sarah Cutler.



Karen O'Neill and Fr Ray Crowley.

## FLASHBACK FRIDAY FOR FORMER STUDENTS

### ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

**Generations of former St Joseph's College Toowoomba students have stepped back onto campus to see the difference a couple of decades makes to a school.** Alumni returned for the annual Joey's Day celebration, held in March, which honours the history of the college.

The class of '95 was represented by John Gilbert, Kylie Beavis and Sarah Cutler, who said it was a great excuse to catch up. "We haven't been up here for so long, and so much has changed. None of these buildings existed," said Kylie. Kylie and John, who first met at St Joseph's, are now planning on sending their son to the same school they both went to next year.

Chris Pomfrett is an alumni and father

of the college, with his children now third-generation Joey's students. "My dad was in the second year of Joey's here, so it's a family thing. We're Joey's through and through."

"It's amazing how much has changed," said Chris.

2021 also marked the first running of the "O'Neill Gift" in memory of former teacher and beloved community member Dan O'Neill. Wife, Karen O'Neill, attended the event to present the race winner with the inaugural Crowley Cup. Other sporting events were also held, including a netball game where current students battled it out against former students.

Mikeely Fanning, College Captain in 2018, helped win the match 16 – 7 with her friends. "St Joseph's really meant a lot to us, I feel like it's shaped us as a group and we're all still friends." Said Mikeely. "It's a bit strange to come back,

some of the students we know, some of them we don't, but it's good to see how the school has grown in different ways."

Joe Cryle, Assistant Principal Student Engagement, said it was a fantastic day to connect with the community. "There was a huge amount of school spirit on display today, it's a really rich tradition, and it's nice to take the time just to tap into that." said Joe.



L to R: Kiani, Matthew, Chris and Alicia Pomfrett.



# NEW STRATEGIC PLAN A PATH TO EXCELLENCE

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

St Joseph's College Toowoomba has revealed its vision for the future as part of an exciting new "Towards 2024 Strategic Plan". The college started planning for 2021 to 2024 last year in response to the ever-evolving education landscape.

Principal Kort Goodman said it was important to acknowledge students' individual growth while setting aspirational targets and benchmarks. "The Towards 2024 Strategic Plan builds on the considerable achievements of the students and staff, and we look forward to the continued fulfilment of Edmund Rice's vision for providing a liberating education for young people." Said Kort. "We are immensely proud of the opportunities that are afforded to students at St Joseph's, which develop young men and women who are prepared for the challenges and possibilities of a dynamic world."

The four categories which the strategic



Kort Goodman and Dr Pat Coughlan.

intentions fall under are Teaching and Learning, Mission and Identity, School Renewal and Improvement and Stewardship and Strategic Resourcing.

Chair of College Board, John O'Brien, said that it is important for the college to have a clear path to follow for the college to reach its potential. "One that everybody involved at the college can buy into, all working towards a common goal with confidence." Said John. "I feel reassured that the Strategic Plan's aspirational targets and benchmarks for students and staff can deliver, by bringing us all together, the best outcome for each individual."

As part of the planning process, the school's history, its commitment to its Edmund Rice charism and understanding of the needs of its students and

their families were considered.

College parent and P&F President Carmen Perrett-Humphries said the plan is a constructive, clear guide for the future direction of St Joseph's and benefits students, staff and parents. "The most exciting direction for St Joseph's is that the targets and benchmarks set, are directly linked to teaching initiatives, student engagement and tracking that begins from when a student starts at the school." Said Carmen. "It is truly an all-encompassing approach to achieving that encourages students, parents and teachers to achieve their best, in a supportive environment for all."

Around 50 people, including parents, students, staff and some Toowoomba Regional Councillors, attended the official launch on Monday night.

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L to R: Fr Franco Filipetto, Emma Timmins (Principal), Jayden Portener (School Leader), Hon David Littleproud MP, Chaylee Bruyn (School Leader), Chris Luhrs and Julie Payne.

## SCHOOL UPGRADE UNITES CAMPUS

JENNIFER SMITH AND KERRY PATTERSON

**St Mary's Primary School has a long, rich history in Warwick dating back to 1867.** By the end of 2021, the school's Lower and Upper Campuses will join together as part of the school's vision, "One School, One Vision, One Community". The project is expected to be completed by the end of this year and used from Term 1, 2022.

St Mary's began in 1867 in the Roman Catholic Chapel by Fr John O'Reilly. By 1877, Fr James Horan built the current Lower Campus as the first permanent school. In 1912, the Christian Brothers opened the Upper Campus for the boys' school, and the Lower became the girls' school run by the Sisters of Mercy. 1980 saw St Mary's and the Christian Brothers College combined to become a co-educational school spread over two campuses. In 1987 the first lay principal administered the school, with

some Sisters of Mercy remaining on staff. The last Sister departed in 1987.

Government funding received from Capital Grants has allowed for a transformation of St Mary's School, constructing a state of the art two-storey building in Pratten Street. The original Christian Brothers College buildings are receiving a revamp and will become new classrooms for Prep, Year 1 and Year 2. The administration office will be in the Parish Centre, originally the Brothers' quarters which is currently undergoing extensive renovations. The facilities and learning environments will be built with a modern, contemporary design with outdoor learning spaces that encourage students to engage in creative play and exploration. These spaces will be tactile, natural and steeped in sustainable practices. Having everyone on one campus will ensure that our students

have better access to learning time, resources, access to teachers, and community access and engagement.

On Thursday 11 February, we welcomed the Honourable David Littleproud, Minister for Water Resources; Fr Franco Filipetto, Warwick Parish Priest; Julie Payne, Acting Executive Director of Toowoomba Catholic Schools; Paul Bryant, TCS Facilities Development Manager; David Cox, General Manager from ASPECT architects; Chris Luhrs, Site Manager from Hutchinson Builders and Lisa Crothers, St Mary's Board Chair, for the turning of the soil for our new building. As part of the celebration, Fr Filipetto blessed the soil. We pray for a safe and fruitful outcome for the school's future, fulfilling "One School, One Vision, One Community".





L to R Makayla Brauer, Jaiken Crothers, Brayden Falvey, Claudia Henderson and Jorja Ellis.

## BREAD TAGS FOR WHEELCHAIRS

SARAH LILBURNE

**In 2021, Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby (OLSCC) is taking inspiration from Matthew 5:14-16, which teaches of the light within us.** The Year 11 Praxis students at OLSCC have taken up this challenge, drawing on Ephesians 5:8 to “walk as children of the light”. This Bible passage has led them to participate in a project which will see them shine in many ways.

The students began the year by brainstorming ideas about what it meant for them to be God’s light and how they could demonstrate that in their everyday lives. Praxis teacher Judy Appleton saw the “7.30 Report” segment on “Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs” and put it to the students who overwhelmingly voted to participate in the project. A committee was formed with roles allocated to various students.

Word spread quickly for people to begin collecting their bread tags.

“Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs” is a charity that collects bread tags for recycling. The funds raised are used to buy wheelchairs for people in need in South Africa.

The Praxis students discussed how life-changing it could be for poor people with disabilities in South Africa. Something small and simple like a bread tag that would generally end up in landfill or our waterways could help those who need a wheelchair. Recycling the bread tags enables students to live their faith through stewardship of creation. Furthermore, by contributing to the provision of wheelchairs to those in need, they are also enacting the Catholic social teachings of human dignity and preferential options for the poor.

The students have spoken on College Assemblies, distributed flyers and spoken to family and friends to encourage people to collect their bread tags. Collection points have been arranged in classrooms. Various local businesses and the school tuckshop that generate large amounts of bread tags have agreed to save them up for the students. As the “Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs” is a well-established and ongoing organisation, the 2021 Year 11 Praxis students hope this project will be a legacy carried on by Year 11 students for years to come.







St Saviour's College Toowoomba students showcase diversity through dance on Harmony Day.

## EMBRACING DIVERSITY FOR HARMONY DAY

GEORGINA BAYLY

**Harmony Day was a smashing success at St Saviour's College Toowoomba, with more than \$930 raised for Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.** St Saviour's College is a mini-Australia. Students from many diverse backgrounds come together as one, which typifies exactly what Harmony Day means to us as a community.

This student-led event embodied many nations through song, dance, food, and activity stalls. The girls prepared foods from Mexico, Australia, America, New Zealand, Japan, England, Denmark, Africa and India. We were also wowed with performances from the Samoan, Tahitian, Polynesian, African, Indian, American and Indigenous cultures.

Our Mercy Girls were joined by senior students from St Saviour's Primary School. We thank them for their enthusiasm in supporting our performances.

During the closing liturgy, students delivered prayers in their native languages (Malay, Samoan, Hindi, Cebuano, Creole, Tagalog) to further celebrate the diverse nature and background of students at St Saviour's College.

The Youth Ministry team gave each homeclass a special gift containing a seedling in a pot and four felt squares to represent the liturgical colours throughout the year. These gifts represent the 2021 College theme of Sowing the Seeds of Hope and Mercy and will go in each homeclass' sacred space.

You can view the event recordings on the college's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

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Footy skills: St Joseph's College Toowoomba students having fun with St Maria Goretti School students.

## STRONG CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS CONTINUES

ST MARIA GORETTI SCHOOL, INGLEWOOD

**In Week 6 of Term 1 2021, a group of students and staff from St Joseph's College Toowoomba visited St Maria Goretti School in Inglewood.** The college has been visiting St Maria Goretti annually to support various projects around the school and create positive connections with our students and school community. This year, the St Joey's boys completed some gardening projects around the school grounds. That evening, students put

on a BBQ for the school community. The next morning they ran a football skills session with St Maria Goretti students. Our small primary school of 29 students, staff and parents look forward to the St Joey's visit each year and are proud of the strong relationship we have between schools. Thank you, St Joseph's College Toowoomba, for your kindness, generosity and commitment to our school. We can't wait for your visit in 2022.

## ANZAC SERVICE AND SACRIFICE HONORED

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

On Friday 23 April, St Joseph's School Stanthorpe gathered to mark Anzac Day. It was an opportunity for the school to honour our service personnel who have served the nation and, in particular, to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The school gathered in the Bathersby Centre for a prayer service. Special guest and past student LT Ryan Mows (Senior and School Prefect 2014), who is currently serving in the Australian Army, addressed the gathering. Following the address, the staff, students and guests, including Councillor Stephen Tancred, moved to the School's Services Memorial Garden for a wreath-laying ceremony.



St Joseph's School Stanthorpe students and staff join the local Anzac Parade.

Thank you to Karen Petrie and her Home Economic students who made Anzac biscuits which everyone enjoyed. Anzac biscuits are a significant part of the Anzac tradition. It has been claimed that wives and women's groups sent biscuits to soldiers abroad because the ingredients did not spoil easily, and the

biscuits kept well during transportation.

Our students also represented our school at Stanthorpe's and Tenterfield's Anzac Day services and parade. Students laid a wreath at the Weeroona Park Remembrance Wall to pay their respects.

# PROJECT COMPASSION BE MORE

“Aspire not to have more,  
but to be more.”  
— Saint Oscar Romero

## SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL TOOWOOMBA

JAMES WREN

**At Sacred Heart Primary School Wilsonton, Lent has always been a special time of year and a great opportunity for our students and families to reach out and help those in need.** 2021 was no different with our school community coming together across a range of fundraising events to raise money for the Caritas Project Compassion appeal.

Building on the learning about social justice that had taken place in class, Year 6 set the example for the younger grades with their Shrove Tuesday pancake sale. Year 6 teachers, Charlie Barrett and Mallory Anderson, have made a pointed effort of connecting the students' learning to the real world. The pancake sale was a great first step for the students in exploring ways to help others. “It ties in really well with our Term 1 religious education unit where

we delve into the Works of Mercy and explore ways we can care for people other than ourselves and connect with the wider community. The children really enjoy knowing they are raising funds for a purpose.” The teachers said.

The Year 1 and 2 classes then took fundraising to another level, with their annual Easter Chocolate Egg Raffle. The raffle has been held for close to a decade. It is led by teachers Angela Tevelein and Hannah Ramsay with the support of school officer Shauna McNeil. Families donate chocolate eggs which are then raffled off at the school's Easter Pageant. Year 2 teacher, Angela Tevelein, has been coordinating the raffle since its inception and values how the raffle brings out the best in our community. “This is an opportunity for the school community to take part in something that is fun, exciting and rewarding.” Said Angela.

“Many students don't know what is happening in communities around the world. Through the Caritas project, we can challenge this thinking and help them understand how they can make a significant difference in our wider, global community. The students have learnt that they have a lot of privileges and because of this they should go out of their way to help those who don't have the same advantages as them.”

Together, our combined efforts raised \$2,611. The donation to Project Compassion shows the school living out our motto to “Journey everyday with Jesus in our hearts”. It also makes sure someone else can enjoy their Easter as much as we did.

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





## ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL MILLMERRAN

MICHELE SANDERS

The Mini Vinnies Club at St Joseph's were very busy last term organising activities each week to help fundraise for Project Compassion.

The small group, consisting of students from Years 4, 5 and 6, decided on a weekly activity that involved the whole school and that would be fun for everyone. The students planned and ran all the activities, which occurred every Friday during Lent. Some of these activities included a pancake toss, ice cream day, cake stall, chocolate hunt, obstacle course and a breakfast.



St Joseph's School Millmerran Mini Vinnies Club.

In addition to all the activities, the students also participated in a Virtual Immersion run by Caritas Australia. During this experience, they were able to ask questions of one of the project

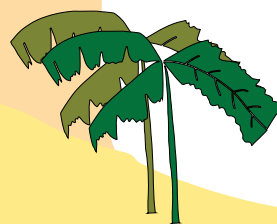
managers working in the villages in Bangladesh. They were able to find out how the money they raise is distributed and how the needs of these small communities are being met.

## ST STEPHEN'S SCHOOL PITTSWORTH

FIONA DREW

During Lent, students at St Stephen's were challenged to "Be More" in line with the theme for Project Compassion 2021. Each class was given a Lenten tree at the start of the liturgical season. Teachers were on the look out for students showing acts of kindness, generosity and compassion. Each good deed noticed was written on a leaf and glued to their class tree. Parents even wrote in the student's diaries for the class teacher when they saw their children "Be More" at home.

Students also donated to the Project Compassion money boxes in their classrooms, and the MacKillop Club held an Easter raffle. Altogether, the school raised \$450 for Project Compassion.



St Stephen's School Pittsworth Prep Lenten Tree.



# FEAR CONQUERED BY FAITH

HUGH BOYCE

My name is Hugh Boyce, and I'm an active part of the St Patrick's Cathedral Toowoomba community. I have the privilege of sharing a little about my recent health and faith journey.

My story started in late February 2020 when I noticed I had blurry vision in my right eye. I had been bathing my eye for a week with no improvement. On Monday, 2 March, I went to the optometrist and was diagnosed with a retinal tear. A referral to an eye specialist in Toowoomba confirmed the initial diagnosis. From this moment, it became full-on. I already had other health problems, including waiting for two operations scheduled for the next 12 months.

I was referred to the Princess Alexandra Hospital at Woolloongabba in Brisbane. There were many trips back and forth from the PA Hospital for treatments, medications and reviews. My brother Brian and sister Genny sometimes were the drivers for these visits. Brian drove me to Brisbane along with our mother, Glenice, for the first repair operation.

I returned to work in the first week of April. Unfortunately, I was still in pain and getting bad headaches. I'd often go to work but finish early or call in sick. Taking a leave of absence was not a decision or conversation I thought I would have to have in this time of my life. My workplace has been supportive, and I have ended up taking a leave of absence since June 2020. After a long time making this decision, I have recently resigned from Coles.

Despite this trying time in my health, I still thanked God for all the wonderful things surrounding me. I thought it could be a worse situation, but I am lucky to be in this place. God's guidance and many prayers from family and friends help me through the challenges of life.

The preceding months felt like a long tunnel with no light. Given I couldn't have some medications, due to being allergic, it was challenging for my



Hugh Boyce singing at the 2021 Easter Vigil Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral.

doctors to get everything under control. I was on 12 different medications, including eye drops and tablets. I received further treatments and operations, lasers, drains, even Botox to protect the eye. During this period, I had to stay in Brisbane for around four weeks to be near the hospital. Regina, my close friend, relocated from Toowoomba to stay with me as

support, for which I will be forever grateful as she continued to work plus look out for my health and well-being. Despite the best efforts of the excellent doctors and nurses at the PA Hospital, my eyesight was going away slowly. It was frightening at the time.

It was now close to Christmas, and I now had an infection in my eye plus an ulcer.



The two were competing against each other. Despite all the right medication and proper treatment, it wasn't getting better. After consulting my doctors, we were at the end of this treatment journey. No options were left to save my eye. They were very impressed that I had been thinking of removal if things did not improve. I made an appointment with Brisbane Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon, Dr Katie Chen. We had a long talk and made a surgery date there and then for 5 January 2021.

Afterwards, I rang some family and friends and informed them of what was happening. There were some emotional and important conversations. This was going to be a massive change for me. It wasn't like the upheaval of the past year; it was the conclusion of it. My nephew said it's the same as having a limb removed, and I would have to say that yes, it is. Over my life growing up on farms and in the horse industry, I have seen and witnessed others lose fingers or limbs, and it's upsetting. But when it's you, I found my response was "this has to be done". The biggest thing that helps me stay strong is there is someone worse than yourself, and you will get through it.

Even in all the failed treatment and the decision to remove my eye, I felt God was always there. I truly thank Him every day and minute I get. Whether it be on a walk or on a bus or singing, whichever way we pray, God listens. "Do not be afraid I am with you".

My eye removal operation went well. My mother stayed with me in Brisbane. I did experience a reaction afterwards and ended up back at the PA Hospital for an overnight stay. The doctors believe it was a case of my body being in extreme shock.

Moving forward, things are much better now, and I'm waiting on my prosthetic eye. By the time this issue of Horizons comes out, I will have had one of my expected operations plus have received my prosthetic eye. A lot has happened in the past 12 months, not only COVID-19, which has changed everyone's life, but a personal health journey that has been challenging to say the least (in all 6 operations). Life goes on, and I am so happy to be back singing in the choir at St Patrick's Cathedral. Thank you to Vicky and choir members for their prayers, and Fr Michael O'Brien too for his support.

Again, I am so thankful for the beautiful people God has given me who have cared for and supported me and to all that prayed for me; thank you all. I am grateful for the doctors that helped me and are still caring for me, plus the nursing staff. I am thankful for my family, who went out their way to do anything for me. My best friends Regina, Paul, Alex and Mitch... to name a few, there are a lot more but not enough ink!



St Patrick's Cathedral Choir at the 2021 Easter Vigil Mass.



Good friends: Hugh and Regina.

No matter what you go through, I have learned to reach out to people who care for you and whom you trust. Ask questions, and don't be afraid. God is with us always and has a plan for us.

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## AUCTION FUNDRAISER AN ENJOYABLE SUCCESS

ED BRIFFA AND CHRIS GWYDIR

St Anthony's Parish Toowoomba was approached in early 2020 by the Diocesan Caritas Office asking if the parish would consider a novel fundraising idea. That idea, largely unknown to many on the St Anthony's Parish Council, was called an "Auction of Promises". Parish Council members Ed Briffa and Chris Gwydir formed a sub-committee to explore the concept.

Chris recalls the steps to getting started. "Once we did some research, we found it was quite a big deal for schools and churches in the UK. One of the things that really stood out was the ability for people to offer up one of their talents or offer to help another parishioner by doing odd jobs." Ever conscious of making it a social occasion, the committee planned for the auction to follow Saturday night Mass.

The parish community responded positively to the call for auction items. Chris said it was wonderful. "After prompting a few ideas during weekend Masses, people starting to offer up baking a cake, doing housework, or mowing the lawn". Business people also came forward to donate gift vouchers, hair styling, massages and meals, along with a wooden rocking toy donated by Toowoomba

Turners and Woodworkers Club.

2020 was not without its challenges, and with the emergence of the COVID 19 pandemic, the committee agreed to postpone the auction. Fast forward to March 2021, and the auction took place in the St Anthony's Community Centre with 38 attendees and one family joining in via Zoom. Amid the hilarity of an Irish singalong led by Tim Fitzgerald, 28 items were auctioned, raising \$2,168 for Caritas. "Auctioneer Brian Taafe did a great job. It was a hugely successful night both socially and financially," said Chris.

Thanks go to all those involved in organising and bringing together this successful night. The committee is profoundly grateful for the donations and promises from family and friends and the support of those able to attend.



Tim Fitzgerald provided entertainment for the evening by leading an Irish singalong.



Auctioneer Brian Taafe gets the bidding started for St Anthony's Auction of Promises





Charleville celebrates the Diamond Jubilee of their church, St Mary of the Assumption.

## CHURCH A TESTAMENT TO COMMUNITY'S FAITH AND DEDICATION

SR ELIZABETH O'KEEFFE

On Saturday, 1 May, the Catholic community of Charleville celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of St Mary of the Assumption Church with Mass and supper afterwards.

On 19 April 1961, the church was blessed and opened by Bishop William Brennan, the then Bishop of Toowoomba. The occasion was well attended with four bishops, much of the diocese's clergy, the building's architect Ian Ferrier and builder Jack Kelly and many locals to celebrate.

There was much to celebrate in the construction of this church. The previous church and presbytery burnt

down in 1959, shortly after extensions and renovations had been completed on them. While the fire had been a devastating blow to the community, within days, plans were underway for the construction of new buildings. Thanks to many generous donors from across the diocese and further afield, the present church rose from the ashes. At the time, the "Courier Mail" reported that the church was "One of the most elaborate country churches in Queensland..."

Our celebration this year was very different from that of 1961. With Vatican II yet to take place, the clergy would have had their backs to the congregation, and the Mass was in Latin. In 2021 as the community gathered to celebrate, current Parish Priest Fr Warren Padilla faced the congregation. As an inclusive community, the singing and the day's readings were proclaimed in English and Vietnamese.

During the Liturgy on Easter Vigil Mass, we welcomed into the Catholic Community Katrina Dunne. Katrina is the Acting Principal of St Mary's School Charleville. We thank Kirsty Lines and Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe, who have supported and assisted in Katrina's faith journey.



Katrina Dunne





Party time for Disco Bingo.

## EYES DOWN FOR 50 YEARS OF BINGO

ANTHONY KING

When you think bingo, you think St Pat's Bingo! They have been calling winning numbers for 50 years. St Pat's Bingo began in 1971 as a fundraising effort for the Cathedral restorations planned at the time. Fr Pat Doyle, the Administrator of St Patrick's Cathedral in the 1970s and his team of volunteers, started a journey that is still going strong 50 years later.

St Pat's Bingo was so popular it soon outgrew the old wooden hall, which was once the tennis clubhouse. Extensions affectionately known as the "Opera House" were added, but this was still not enough to hold the crowds. In 1975 the new St Pat's Bingo Hall officially opened as the first purposely built bingo hall in Queensland. Ian Knight, the caller until 1982 and former 4GR breakfast announcer, estimates there were over 1500 people playing bingo that night.

To celebrate this momentous milestone, St Pat's Bingo offered a \$10,000 Jackpot in 48 calls. A reunion lunch was held on Saturday, 20 March, for all those who have worked or volunteered at St Pat's Bingo since it began. It was a magnificent turnout that included many of those who helped in the original hall 50 years ago.

The day capped off with "Disco Bingo", a fun evening to celebrate the 50th anniversary. It was St Pat's Bingo like you have never seen it before. It was a combination of bingo and an 80's rock concert with plenty of singing and lots of laughs. The evening attracted over 240 people, many in their best disco-inspired costume, to join in the fun between calls.

Carl Betros, who has been there from the beginning, said, "It's exciting to look back over the 50 years and see how the game has changed. We have gone from marbles to ping pong balls to computers that do the calling for you. It was great to relive the stories and talk to people I haven't seen for a long time."

Although bingo is far from the crowds it attracted in the '70s and '80s, there is currently a real resurgence in the game. St Pat's Bingo continues to attract new people every week, coming to see what the excitement is all about. "St Pat's Bingo is not just bingo. The staff and volunteers, the players that come each week and not to mention the prize money is better than ever before in its 50 year history", said Anthony King, manager of St Pat's Bingo.

Feature games like Bulls Eye Bingo and the Big Wheel have attracted a whole new generation, along with the introduction of electronic tickets. Innovations such as these make St Pat's Bingo a different experience for its players. An atmosphere of fun and excitement is created long before the call of eyes down for game one.



Reunion lunch attendees were treated to a bingo call by Ian Knight (L) assisted by Anthony King (R).



Some of the original St Pat's Bingo volunteers.



Last game in the Old Hall, 1975



# PRAYERFUL ECUMENICAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS

PATTI MCNAUGHT

Large crowds attended Easter Ceremonies despite the strict rules of COVID safety and pre-booking. Attendance at Holy Thursday and Good Friday Masses was larger than some years. The Ecumenical Stations of the Cross, which is held every year at Peacehaven Park Highfields, was especially well attended. The wearing of masks was adhered to by all.

The ecumenical service began with an opening prayer, and as we followed "The Way of the Cross", we joined in prayer. John Wybird from the Anglican Church accompanied the crowd with his acoustic guitar. We sang the beautiful hymn "Were you there when they Crucified my Lord" as we moved on to each station.

Peacehaven Park was a sight to behold. It was a reminder of God's presence amongst us to experience the ecumenical presence of all worshipping Christ and to walk with him on his final journey to The Crucifixion and death on the cross. We usually gather afterwards in fellowship over a cuppa, but due to COVID rules, this was not possible.

Thank you, Rev'd Deborah Bird from St Anne's Anglican Church Highfields and Fr Brian Noonan, for a very moving ceremony.



Anthony and Roopali Jacob with daughters Aneira and Anaia enjoying the Ecumenical Stations of the Cross at Highfields.

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*Deacon Brian Redondo (centre) and Fr Rod MacGinley (centre, back) with Allora parishioners after Brian's Ordination as Deacon at St Mary's Church Warwick.*

## PASTORAL PLACEMENT A LESSON IN COMMUNITY CONNECTION

JOYCE GIBSON

"I shall be Their God, and they shall be my people." These words appear twice in the text from Ezekiel, which Brian Redondo invited me to read at the Mass which celebrated his admission

to Candidacy for Holy Orders in March.

As I reflected on these words of Jesus, I felt that they would have brought to mind for Brian Jesus' longing to gather into one all the scattered children of God. The message is that Jesus asks us to be his arms in our world today, reaching out and gathering all.

Our experience with Brian in the Allora community has enabled us to see him in this role. One of reaching out to all and offering God's love and friendship to each one of us. "I am learning to see the people and the community as the true gem and treasure of the church," Brian said during his pastoral placement in the parish. We see him as grounded in faith in our

loving God through our interactions, with the right heart for unity of all.

For Allora parishioners, attending Brian's Candidacy for Holy Orders was a first time experience. The Mass was uplifting and moving. We also recognised that this was of tremendous importance to our friend, an affirmation of Brian's journey to the priesthood.

Each community has a character of its own which can be a challenge when meeting people where they are in their spiritual and community growth. In Brian's pastoral placement with Fr Rod McGinley, he has experienced a truly authentic example of a priest who lives out his belief. That "being involved in other's lives in a hands-on

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



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way” is essential to the life of a priest.

Brian has taken up this challenge wholeheartedly. He spends quality time with parishioners. He shares insights and draws connections between the word of God and daily life by sharing time and experiences, praying with them - just being with them.

I would like to share an encounter I had with Brian. This encounter spoke to me of his openness to unity, his willingness to be involved and his sense of community. As part of our Palm Sunday celebrations in Allora, we come together ecumenically as a community to give Christian witness to this special day. We process through the streets led by bagpipes and carrying large palm fronds in the spirit of the first Palm Sunday.

Brian was asked to deliver a reflection on the Gospel reading of the day when we stopped for prayer in the park. Not only did he present his reflection in a way that spoke of the special significance of the day, but he did it joyfully and enthusiastically. He really captured the essence of the story. All present were drawn into his joy, and we proceeded through the streets with a sense of community, unity and love of the Christian message.

Brian’s involvement in this way has played an important role in helping him bridge the differences in the culture of his home in the Philippines and that of our local community. In Allora, we have found the experience of having a seminarian from another country in our community a really positive experience. He has opened himself to the different lifestyle of our community, and parishioners enjoy hearing about his home and his family. We feel part of his family as we hope he feels part of ours.

We might ask the question, “How have we as a community, or as individuals, been able to nurture and assist Brian at this stage of his journey to Priesthood?” Perhaps this is where we have accepted our vocation as caring, loving followers of Christ, our role of being welcoming, positive, helpful and accepting in all of our interactions with him. Brian has challenged us, as we have challenged him. We might also ask, “Do we as a community, and as

individuals, feel that Brian is ready for ordination?” Those of us who attended the Candidacy for Holy Orders felt a sincere affinity with the ceremony and a genuine connection with the prayers for Brian, including this one:

“We pray that Brian may become a minister of the Church who will strengthen the faith of his brothers and sisters by word and example and gather them together to share in the Eucharist.”



Brian Redondo with Bishop Robert McGuckin, clergy and seminarians after his Candidacy for Holy Orders at Sts' James and John Church Clifton.

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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



# PARISH IN BRIEF

Earlier this year Bishop Robert McGuckin installed Fr Gerardo Tubis as Parish Priest of Roma. Fr Gerardo is also responsible for the communities of Mitchell, Injune, Surat, Wallumbilla, Yuleba and Jackson. (Pictured, front L to R: Romeo Cruz, Jim Brennan, Mark Brennan, Fr Gerardo Tubis, Bishop Robert McGuckin, Alwyn Rapasta, Vivian Bruton and Judy McGuire. Back L to R: Tabole Rapasta and Daniel Tucker)



Fr Gerardo Tubis celebrated a special Mass at All Saints Church Roma to mark the occasion of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. This was a great opportunity for the young people to be involved on the day. After Mass a special luncheon was served.



The Augathella community celebrated the 92nd Birthday of parishioner Beryl Barnsley. (Pictured, front L to R: Gwen McQueen, Beryl Barnsley, Fr Warren Padilla, Joan Mckellar. Back L to R: Ann Frazer and Josephine Gorman)



In early May, Fr Brian Noonan gave a special blessing to Bailey Caldwell as he bids farewell to his family and the Highfields community to join the Army. Bailey is currently undertaking training at Kapooka. The community wishes him well and good luck. (Pictured, Bailey receiving his Certificate of Enlistment)





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