

Horizons

A group of children in costumes, including angels and people in brown robes, posing for a photo. The children are of various ethnicities and are smiling or looking towards the camera. Some are wearing white angel wings and halos, while others are in brown robes. The background is dark with some bokeh light effects.

Fifth Plenary Council Begins
St Monica's Oakey Centenary
Organ-ic Music on the Menu

#63
Advent 21

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Toowoomba



FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

This “Horizons” is packed to the brim.

Pandemic life in the diocese brings life! While we might not be travelling too far afield, people celebrate where and when they can in many ways.

The celebration of life given in service can be seen in the simple but reverent act of cleaning the graves of long-departed clergy. Milestone celebrations for people and places are a testament to the longevity and endurance of the Spirit alive in our diocese. A parish and diocesan agency taking the time to come together to focus on mental health is a life-giving step in self-care.

The World Teacher’s Day article in the Toowoomba Catholic Schools section is a lovely exercise in reflection and celebration. To see how we impact those around us both as a giver and receivers of gifts can be magical. As year 12 students cross the finish line, I’m reminded of my teachers and the adults in my life at that time that formed and inspired me. I may not have appreciated it in the moment, but I can now recognise it. The students in this article are much more insightful than me to recognise such gifts as they are given.

As I transition into wrap-up mode for 2021, I am conscious that Christmas is in itself a beginning, while it also feels like it heralds the end of a year-long journey. With an early 2022 baby on

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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board, I anticipate the sense of newness that a tiny person brings to your life. The new year will be all sorts of new for me in particular. I am thankful for the ability to slow life down, just for a moment, and be “mum”, be home, be with my family. I know this sounds like I might pass the time in reflective poetry writing, but the reality might be closer to complaining that no one seems to be able to keep the lounge room clean and possibly watching “Bluey” on repeat.

Many blessings for the Christmas season to everyone across this beautiful diocese. Thank you for being so supportive of “Horizons” through submitting content, ads and, of course, picking up a copy to read.

“What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.”

Agnes M Pahro

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L to R: Fr Shane Carr MSC and Bishop Robert McGuckin, blessing and opening of new facilities at Sacred Heart School Cunnamulla.

As this edition of “Horizons” goes to press, I am pleased to welcome Deacon Nathan Webb as the youngest cleric in the Diocese of Toowoomba. Nathan’s ordination to the diaconate was celebrated in the Cathedral on 13 November 2021. Coverage of this is also in “Horizons”.

In September, we sadly farewelled our oldest cleric, Fr Lino Valente with Funeral Rites in Stanthorpe and at St Patrick’s Cathedral.

It certainly has been a busy year for all of us, complicated somewhat by the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. I am pleased that we are moving forward as more people within the diocese are vaccinated, giving true regard to the exercise of our rights, taking into account the rights of others and our duties towards them and, indeed, the common good. Echoing Pope Francis’ appeals for people to be vaccinated, calling it an act of love.

My travels around the diocese have continued with Confirmation in Goondiwindi, Pittsworth, Clifton and

Allora. There have been blessings of new school facilities at St Thomas More’s in Toowoomba, Sacred Heart in Cunnamulla and St John’s in Roma.

Centenary celebrations have been the flavour of the past couple of months: St Monica’s School Oakey, Holy Name Church Toowoomba and St Joseph’s Church Dalby. Congratulations to those communities. May we build on what has gone before us.

October saw the historic first session of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, the last Plenary Council celebrated in 1937. The first session had been planned for the 300 plus members to gather in Adelaide. Because of various lockdowns, this was not possible and therefore was held in hubs via multi-media platforms. Whilst this was not ideal with members not being able to meet face to face, it was necessary. In this first session, a number of questions were asked. There was much prayerful listening to people of faith. There was a great realisation that we are on a journey together as we prepare for the second session when in July 2022, we

hope to meet face-to-face in Sydney.

With Christmas approaching and as COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted, may we again experience true communion as we gather in fellowship. May we play our part in creating a welcoming community where people experience God’s love, which is something real, bringing joy and hope.

May we not forget that this is a very special time. Wherever we might be, a Christmas gift of financial support to people in need is certainly a meaningful and worthwhile act of charity, something that speaks louder than words. Donations may be made to Caritas Australia www.caritas.org.au or to the St Vincent de Paul Society www.vinnies.org.au or to some other charity of your choice.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your loved ones through this season and in the year ahead.

Bishop Robert McGuckin
Bishop of Toowoomba
Advent 2021



The Rite of Christian Burial for Fr Lino Valente was celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral 21 September 2021.

FR LINO VALENTE

INGRID MCTAGGART

Lino Anthony Valente was born on 2 July 1928 in Shell Harbour, New South Wales. He was the eldest of three children of parents Giacoma Antonio (Tony) and Artura Tullia (Tullia) Valente. Tony Valente left the village of Cesuna, Italy, for Australia in 1924. His then-fiancee Tullia arrived in May 1927, with the couple marrying in June. While brothers Lino and Aldo (deceased) were born in New South Wales, sister Rita was born in Queensland when the family moved seeking work during the Great Depression.

Finding work at farms near Texas, the family settled in the area. Fr Wiemers, who lived in Texas, said Mass in the shearing shed at "Eldorado" once a month, the farm where the Valente's were at the time. It was a formative experience for a very young Lino.

During World War II, the family was interned near the town of Tatura, Victoria. Lino's parents were not naturalised until after the war and,

like many others, were deemed "enemy aliens". During the school term in 1943, the boys were allowed to attend the Marist Brothers' school and sister Rita attended the convent school in Kilmore due to the efforts of Bendigo priest, Fr Arthur Owens.

During school holidays, the children stayed in the internment camp with their parents, where Lino would gather the Italian women to say the Rosary. The whole family was released in January 1944 and were allowed to return to the Texas area. After a good tobacco growing season in 1949, Lino's parents purchased a dairy farm called "Bellbrook" just outside Inglewood and converted it to growing tobacco and raising cattle.

By that time, Lino was 20 and already studying to be a priest at Banyo Seminary in Brisbane. He had completed school with the Christian Brothers in Warwick and Marist Brothers at Eagle Heights (Mt Tamborine). Fr Lino

Valente was ordained as a priest in Warwick on 29 June 1954 by Bishop William Brennan, the first priest ordained by Bishop Brennan. His ordination to the priesthood marked the culmination of his youthful ambition. At the age of 14, Lino had told his parents he wanted to be a priest.

Fr Lino has served across the Toowoomba Diocese, pastorally caring for many communities. Since his first appointment to Dalby in 1955, Fr Lino served in Stanthorpe, Mitchell, St George, Wallangarra, Crow Nest, St Patrick's Cathedral and Inglewood. He spent a time in 1974 on loan to Annerley Parish in the Brisbane Archdiocese. Of these communities, Fr Lino spent multiple stints in various parishes, especially Stanthorpe.

Even with his busy pastoral schedule, Fr Lino made time to celebrate with his family for special occasions. He officiated many, if not all, weddings and baptisms for his immediate

family. Christmases were also a family affair, with tales of Fr Lino racing to join family at Inglewood after Christmas Mass at Stanthorpe.

Fr Lino was remembered as a kind and welcoming man whose pastoral presence was appreciated by everyone who encountered him. Upon announcement of his death, many took to the diocese's Facebook page to express their condolences to the family and recall how Fr Lino had impacted their lives. Demonstrating his positive effect on the communities he served, many non-Catholics expressed their sadness at his passing, saying that he was a welcoming and warm presence to them.

In 2003, Fr Lino was awarded the Certificato Di Benemerenzia from the Italian Consul Brisbane for his efforts to promote interest in Italian culture and language, a testament to his love for his Italian roots.

During his Words of Remembrance delivered at the Funeral Mass, Frank Vardanega recalled his Zio (Uncle) Lino's unique sense of humour. "He never seemed to wash his car, and in his defence, he would say 'I don't wash it so it won't rust'. If you asked him how he was going, he would many times say, 'If I were any better, I would be in heaven'."



Fr Lino Valente and nephew, Frank Vardanega.

Fr Lino officially tendered his retirement in 2003. However, not one to rest, he continued to serve as Priest in Residence for the communities of Inglewood and Wallangarra until 2015, when he moved to Stanthorpe. In 2017 Fr Lino moved to St Vincent's Care Services (Lourdes Home) Toowoomba. Fr Lino died peacefully on 14 September 2021, with his sister Rita by his side and

one of his great-nieces holding his hand.

Fr Lino's nephew, Frank, summed him up best at the end of his Words of Remembrance by saying, "Uncle Lino was a larger than life character in our lives and will be sadly missed but never forgotten. He has been referred to as a 'priest's priest' and, as my daughter once said, 'the type of priest you would want for your own parish priest'."

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ONE-OF-A-KIND PRIEST FAREWELLED

SELINA VENIER

It's impossible to sum up the sentiment of locals, and even those who've moved away from Stanthorpe, about the impact of the pastoral legacy of Fr Lino Valente, who went home to the Lord God on September 14 and was farewelled from Toowoomba's St Patrick's Cathedral a week later.

To countless many he was much more than a spiritual guide over decades – parishioners used phrases such as “incredible witness of faith in God”, “beacon of goodness”, “life of the party but always second to Christ” and “the happiest priest on the planet” when asked recently to remember the man who exuded the joy of the Gospel at every interval.

Former Stanthorpe Parish Priest, Fr Brian Connolly, his closest priestly brother in Toowoomba Diocese in the latter part of Fr Lino's 67-year ministry, recalled at the Vigil Mass on September 20 at St Joseph's before the funeral, distant and closer memories, not the least of which was the precursor to their shared ministry, years later.

“I first became aware there was a Fr Lino Valente on the day he was ordained at Saint Mary's Church, Warwick, on June 29, 1954,” Fr Brian said.

“I was nine years old and in Year Four ... (and) after school, I rode my bike home and went past Saint Mary's Hall where a dinner was being held for the newly ordained priest from Inglewood.

“For many years, stories were told about that dinner – the main one being about the long speech Fr Lino gave. It was a sign of things to come. It may have been a long day, but it was a great day for (Toowoomba) Diocese for on that day, the diocese was given a wonderful priest for the next sixty-seven years, Father Lino.”

Fr Brian added his own adjectives to remembering Fr Lino – that of “a beautiful man, a fine human being, a faithful and outstanding priest and an ‘Italian charmer’”, which many present and listening to the broadcast of the Funeral Mass, agreed with.

The newly retired priest, who now resides in Warwick, also aligned Fr Lino with well-loved Popes.

“In Lino, there was a great deal of Pope John XXIII, the great Pope of the Second Vatican Council,” Fr Brian continued. “(He) inspired people, as did Lino, with his warmth, his wit and his humble humanity. When John XXIII was told, in November 1962, he had inoperable cancer, he said, ‘Don't worry about me. My bags are packed. I'm ready to go,’ and so too was Lino.”

Serving God and the people of Stanthorpe faithfully, Fr Lino also knew how to enjoy the moment and was particularly impacted by the witness of Our Holy Father.

“Lino was fascinated and enthralled by our wonderful Pope Francis,” Fr Brian said. “(He was fascinated by) his down to earth and relaxed style ... something that especially appealed to Lino. Often disregarding security measures to be close to people, Pope Francis said, ‘I know anything could happen but let's face it, at my age, I don't have much to lose.’

“There was a lot of that Pope Francis spirit in Lino. There were never any barriers between Lino and people.”

Parishioners agreed with Fr Brian's description of Fr Lino's “warmth, and kind, caring spirit” as well as the ability “to take life as it comes”.

“He had the deep faith to surrender himself and the circumstances of his life into the hands of God's loving providence, and in recent years, the hands of those who would care for him,” Fr Brian continued.

“Even when he was having frequent



Fr Lino Valente (right) and Fr Brian Connolly in 2009 in St Joseph's Church, Stanthorpe.

TIA strokes, before going into full time care at Lourdes, he never seemed at all concerned. Like Pope Francis he probably thought, ‘At my age, I don't have much to lose – in fact, I've got a lot to gain – heaven.’

“Very few of us have escaped being told by Lino, when we asked, ‘How are you?’ (that he'd say), ‘Any better I'd be in heaven.’

“During his long life, Lino was a much-loved son and brother, brother-in-law, uncle, great and great, great uncle, a friend to countless people, a happy priest, a brother priest, a charmer, a beautiful man, a fine human being and above all, just ‘Lino’, who allowed the Lord to work through him as a priest of sixty-seven years.”

Farewelling Fr Lino to the presence of God “at the heavenly liturgy”, Fr Brian's words confirmed what Stanthorpe parishioners knew - that on September 14, we gained a new intercessor.

Vale Fr Lino, from your Stanthorpe family. You were a much-loved part of our parish for so long and we were immeasurably blessed to have known you in this life.

REFLECTION ON ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

DEACON NATHAN WEBB

Accompanied by the rousing strains of “Thaxted”, I joined the procession into St Patrick’s Cathedral and took a seat beside my parents. It struck me that it was all happening: the day had arrived. Each part of the celebration fell into place as had been prepared and practised; the readings and prayers spoke to a God whom I have come to know and whose voice had led me to where I was standing. The nerves and excitement faded as the liturgy took its course.

The church was alive and present, I felt. The people of God had gathered at His altar as the Bishop, accompanied by his presbyterate, assembled with others of Christ’s faithful. People came from near and far and showed that they believed not only in the church and her ministries but also that those who are given these offices are not alone. The whole communion of saints, including our brothers and sisters in heaven who were invoked during the Litany of Supplication, were brought together for the praise and glory of God.

In fact, I felt a bit funny being somewhat in the middle of the celebration. I have come to realise that it had little to do with me. So much of the celebration bore testament to the faith and life of the diocesan community and those who had gathered there on the day. For me, it felt a bit like I was changing seats on a

moving train. The church does not stop and wait for a candidate, so it was time to respond to the call that had been discerned so far.

It was a great joy to be surrounded by my family, friends, and so many good-hearted and kind people who have been part of the journey in various ways. The four of my siblings who were unable to attend joined others from around the globe in viewing a live stream of the ceremony. I wish to thank Bishop Robert McGuckin, the diocesan staff, the various priests who have guided me to and through the years of seminary, my parents, siblings, and friends who have accompanied and formed me foundationally, and the seminary brothers and staff who share this ongoing journey of formation.

We know from Acts (6:1–7) how service (diákonos) has been at the heart of the church’s life since the earliest times as she carries out the mission entrusted to her. Ordination to the diaconate, as I understand it, therefore, is an

invitation to an intrinsic part of what it means to minister in the church.

Formation for the presbyterate continues as I take up the office of Deacon. I have been appointed to the Cathedral with the Dean, Fr Michael O’Brien, where it is expected that the self-emptying of service will prepare me, in due course, for ordination to sacerdotal ministry. Please pray for me that I can be true and docile to the Lord’s will and witness His presence to those I am called to serve.



L to R: Monsignor John Grace, Deacon Nathan Webb and Bishop Robert McGuckin. Photo by Alan Edgecomb – Purple Moon Photography



Happy family: Deacon Nathan Webb (back, left) with his family and Bishop Robert McGuckin (front, right). Photo by Alan Edgecomb – Purple Moon Photography

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



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Opening Mass Fifth Plenary Council: Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB. Photo by Ron Tan/Archdiocese of Perth

FIFTH PLENARY COUNCIL A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

ACBC MEDIA



A PRAYERFUL START TO THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB opened the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, he said Catholics “must become, even more than we are already, a community of true disciples”.

The Plenary Council, the first such gathering in Australia since 1937, is being celebrated across nine months, bookended by assemblies from October 3-10 and in July 2022.

Archbishop Costelloe, the president of the Plenary Council, celebrated the opening Mass at Perth’s St Mary’s Cathedral on Sunday morning. It comes after three-and-a-half years of preparation, including a significant period of national consultation.

That consultation focused on the question: “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?”

The 278 members of the Plenary Council, made up of bishops, priests, members of religious orders and lay people, met in local clusters and online over six days, starting on Monday DATE.

Plenary Council members were called to develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia. They contemplated an agenda that contains 16 questions across six themes: Conversion; Prayer; Formation; Structures; Governance; and Institutions. The Council’s members will engage with the agenda’s questions through listening and dialogue, using the spiritual conversations process widely used in Catholic settings.

As part of the opening of this historic event, Pope Francis sent greetings and blessings from Rome. A message read

out during the opening plenary session this morning said the Plenary Council “represents a singular ‘journeying together’ of God’s people in Australia along the paths of history towards a renewed encounter with the Risen Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit”.

The message, read by Msgr John Baptist Itaruma from the Apostolic Nunciature in Australia, said Pope Francis “prays that the Council may be a graced occasion for mutual listening and spiritual discernment, marked by profound Communion with the Successor of Peter”, a term used to describe the Pope.

“In this conciliar process, the Church in Australia is challenged to listen to the voice of the Spirit and to bear witness to the perennial truth of the Gospel and to develop new and creative expressions of evangelical charity,” said the message, signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin.



Opening Mass Fifth Plenary Council: Welcome to Country. Photo by Ron Tan/Archdiocese of Perth

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

The process for communal discernment by the 278 members during the Plenary Council's two assemblies follows the centuries-old practice of "spiritual conversations". Using that process, 10 groups of members are praying with and reflecting on 16 questions across six themes.

From the start, a common theme emerging from those small group sessions was the importance of listening to and accompanying people, including those on the peripheries and at all levels of the Church. There was also an emphasis on hearing the voices of "churches" in the plural – noting the rich diversity of liturgy and traditions in the Eastern Rites and migrant communities, many of which have had a long history in Australia. One group spoke of the differences between rural and metropolitan parishes and another pointed out that the Council agenda needed to address the issue of "ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and cooperation".

After a moving Acknowledgement of Country during Monday's opening plenary session, the group exploring Indigenous issues expressed the belief that the Church would be "enlivened" with the full participation of First Nations peoples. There was a call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be able to minister to their communities and to each other.

There was also discussion about the need for imagination in how to

present a missionary Church and suggested drawing on existing expertise on governance and mission, including from Catholic social service and health agencies.

The question of formation was considered across a number of groups and seen as an issue for not just the ordained or Church leaders, but should be normalised as a culture within the Church. During a discussion on clericalism, one group asked how we could prevent a bad culture of clericalism in a group, whether it be priestly or lay. Parishes were seen as a place where the laity could be empowered to live out their baptismal calling as missionary disciples, with faith formation being an important part of this. The group on governance reflected on "How do we as a Church walk side by side, women, men, lay and ordained, priest and Bishop towards the road to Christ?"

Catholic education was considered by one group as having served the church well for 200 years, noting that the emergence of the Catholic tertiary sector had enhanced and changed the landscape.

After the broad discussions of the first small group sessions on Monday, discussion moved to more specific questions, suggestions and proposals during the week.

Many parts of the Plenary Council were live streamed during the week. These videos are all available to watch at www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/masses-and-livestreams/

SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The months between the first and second general assemblies of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia are a time for "prayer, reflection, maturation and development", according to a concluding statement from the first assembly.

The statement, approved by the Council's members during Saturday's final plenary session, speaks of a week in which regular prayer and spiritual conversations, encouraging deep listening, "allowed space for still nascent dreams and visions to come to greater maturity".

The concluding statement said the process of members listening to each other in those various forums "has planted promising seeds and raised important questions for us".

"We have experienced and expressed the range of emotions that come with facing profound issues together, holding in tension diverse interpretations and expectations," it said.

"Through prayer and reflection, we have been called to be patient with the process, with each other, with the Church and, most importantly, with the Holy Spirit."

Full concluding statement, as well as other key Plenary Council documents, can be accessed at www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/keydocuments/

PLACING OUR CHURCH AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Two of our diocese's Plenary Council members, Catherine McAleer and Mark Copland, offer their reflections on the first general assembly.

Both Catherine and Mark were chosen to report on behalf of their respective small groups on the live stream session for Saturday 9 October (www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/masses-and-livestreams/ second video listed on the page). You can view their reports at timestamps 49:45 Catherine and 1:28:24 Mark.

PLENARY REFLECTION CATHERINE MCALEER

Deep listening was first and foremost on the agenda of the Plenary Council. Not the type of listening that requires us to maintain eye-contact, smile and feed back to the speaker what we heard when they finish speaking. Although I think there was and is a time and a place for that. From my experience at the Plenary deep listening required us to suspend those thoughts, hold the words of the speaker in a sacred space, in a sense be curious about their words and to hold off from responding. Can I say I still need plenty of practice! Listening was and still is required by all at the Plenary for the Australian Catholic Church to move forward. My biggest takeaway was the diversity of the church and her people. That sounds so simple and obvious. It wasn't as if I wasn't aware of it before, but this was somehow amplified. The members who gathered were from every facet of the church. As someone put it 273 members and 273 views, opinions and experiences and in reality, there were voices definitely missing from the table. Voices the members didn't hear or didn't know about. Diversity, whilst at times is challenging, is a real gift. Celebrating our diversity is as important as is understanding it.

The challenge is finding the common ground for where this is allowed to unfold. This is perhaps where the Plenary has the most work to do, in the months leading to the second assembly, at that

assembly and beyond. I can honestly say people were very respectful of what they heard – differing views, practices, experiences, challenges, hopes, dreams and pain. It was all shared. It has been placed on the table or perhaps better phrased as at the foot of the cross. Now, we're not sure what to do. What we know is that Jesus didn't remain on the cross; after the cross came a time of waiting and then the resurrection. My hope is that the resurrection is coming. I would like to sincerely thank you all for your prayerful support of the Plenary, it was much appreciated.

PLENARY REFLECTION MARK COPLAND

I want to thank all of my diocesan family for their prayers and intentions during this first assembly of the Plenary Council. I am so grateful to be a part of this historic process. Bishop Robert has been encouraging and supportive of all Plenary Council members from our diocese and given us full freedom to fully participate.

It's sometimes tempting to focus on how far we have to go as the People of God without recognising how far we have come. I am almost certain not one of the bishops attending the last Plenary Council in 1937 could name the First Nations that were there 60,000 years before we decided that we would put some more lines on the map and call them dioceses. And it would have been more than perplexing when images of Aboriginal people in chains were a part of the beginning Acknowledgement of Country. So if there was an orthodoxy at this Plenary Council it was that almost every speaker began by acknowledging that they were on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land. There seemed to be consensus around standing with our First Nations brothers and sisters, learning from, sharing and working for change in concrete ways like committing to the "Uluru Statement from the Heart".

One of my fellow Plenary Council members, Catherine McAleer spoke eloquently and passionately about the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and the urgent need for our church to be prophetic when it comes to taking action on climate change. I am so proud to be on this journey with Catherine.

The one word that almost everybody would use to describe the Plenary would be diverse. There were arch-conservatives and uber-progressives,



Catherine McAleer



Mark Copland

representatives from the Eastern Rite, members from multicultural inner-cities, and representatives from remote Indigenous communities and small rural towns. I moved from hope to despair and back again during each day and across the week.

Spending 6 days online had its frustrations, but I can also say there were many moments of deep prayer and vulnerability amongst those I encountered. I felt quite close to many members, including some that I could not agree with. True dialogue was challenging, as the medium made it more a series of voices speaking, with little opportunity for responses, even in the small groups. So the feelings that I left the first Plenary Assembly with were humility, despair and hope. Humility that so many people deeply wounded by our church somehow stay with it, somehow believe that we can be better. Humility that people have worked so hard to bring the voices of the wounded to the centre of our church. Despairing that we may never find common ground. And hope that this is more than politics, that this is not a numbers game and that we are seeking to genuinely listen to the Spirit of God in this ancient land.

PRAYER FOR PLENARY ACROSS TOOWOOMBA

MONICA BRENNAN

During September and October, parishes around Toowoomba engaged in prayer liturgies supporting the upcoming Plenary Council.

Instigated by Our Lady of Lourdes Liturgy Team, Toowoomba parishes were invited to participate in this prayer experience. The communities at St Theresa's (combined with Highfields), St Thomas More's, St Anthony's and Sacred Heart came together to share in the prayerful experience.

Each Thursday afternoon from 2 September to 7 October, a different parish offered prayers with the Plenary Council as its focus.

The diocese's Plenary candle was passed from parish to parish to add to the continuity of the prayers offered for the success of discussions at the council.

The variety of prayer experiences in each community was a wonderful expression of each parish's uniqueness. "Listening to the Spirit" was always at the forefront of the prayer for the Plenary Council. The combined effort of the parishes led to a feeling of greater involvement in the Plenary Council process.



Fr Brian Noonan, St Theresa's/Highfields Parishes, hands the Plenary candle to Bernadette Prescott, St Thomas More's Parish, at the second prayer gathering.



Sr Maria Joyner, St Anthony's Parish, hands the Plenary candle to Annamaria McGregor, Sacred Heart Parish, at the fourth prayer gathering.

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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



Before: The full diocesan plot at the Drayton Cemetery before cleaning work was undertaken.



GRAVE RESTORATION A SALUTE TO PAST SERVICE

INGRID MCTAGGART



After: No part of the diocesan plot was left untended by Kevin McGrath. Everything from brick wall to headstone was cleaned and the graves topped with new pebbles.

Our priests' devotion to their communities can be evident by the acts of kindness and dedication parishioners show, even if these priests are no longer with us. The impact we have on others can be long lasting.

If you've ever driven past the Alderley Street end of the Drayton Cemetery in Toowoomba, you would have passed the resting place of two bishops and 31 clergy of the Toowoomba Diocese. Sadly over time, as with many monuments in the cemetery, the gleaming white crosses had become discoloured with moss and muck. Over the years, various discussions about a restoration of the plot had taken place, but prohibitive costs often meant any planned project stalled.

Cut to 2021 with a visit to the plot from a former housekeeper of one of the priests and a phone call to a well-placed

family member; the graves seemed they had their best chance for restoration yet. Retired funeral director, Kevin McGrath, points to a phone call from his sister setting the wheels in motion.

"Early this year, I received a phone call from my sister Von asking how well did I know the Bishop?" recalls Kevin. "Von explained on her last visit that she found the diocese's plot at the Drayton Cemetery to be dirty and neglected. She asked whether I could ask the Bishop to do something?"

Kevin explained that his sister was the housekeeper for Fr James Leo O'Donohue (known to all as Fr Leo) for many years before his death. It was Fr O'Donohue grave in the plot she was visiting. Kevin himself had a personal connection to many of the men buried there, through youth spent as an altar server and later a career in the funeral industry. "After inspecting the graves

myself, I wrote to Bishop McGuckin pointing out the sacrifices these early priests had made to bring faith to the people. For this reason, something needed to be done." Said Kevin.

Diocesan Financial Administrator, Tom Jolley, was tasked by Bishop Robert to meet with Kevin to discuss how to clean the diocesan plot. During a visit to the graves by both men, Kevin recalled, "My dilemma was this, could I clean Fr O'Donohue's monument only? That might not be very respectful of the others buried there. In a weak, or perhaps inspired, moment, I offered to clean them all."

The monuments atop each grave in the diocesan plot consist of a sandstone base, approximately 600mm by 800mm by 500 mm, each with a marble column and cross about 1.5m high. The headstones were provided by the families, parishioners, or diocese.



Labour of love: Kevin McGrath (3rd left) with brother Brian (4th left) and family helpers covering the graves with the fresh layer of stones.

Each of varied quality, but all follow a common design. All of the monuments were covered with lichen, moss, mildew and other growth, creating an all-encompassing black stain.

When speaking of the process used to clean each headstone, you can hear care and reverence in Kevin's voice. His approach was methodical, researching monument cleaning techniques and compounds available both locally and internationally. Finally settling on Wet and Forget Australia, which has a product specially formulated for tombstones, Kevin discussed the best approach to cleaning with their staff.

Kevin managed the project, obtaining the appropriate Toowoomba Regional Council permit to work on the graves. "I was somewhat bemused to hear that concern was raised as to the safety of an 'elderly retired gentleman' working there on his own," Kevin said, having a chuckle. "So I co-opted my brother Brian to come and keep me company and help. I am 90, but he is only 87! Together we moved on the project, working for half a day, two days a week."

Everything was sprayed with the appropriate dilution of the cleaning formula, left for the required time to dissolve the grime, and then sprayed down with high-pressure cleaners. It was discovered that some of the headstones have lead lettering, with much of it missing or damaged over time. Kevin enlisted Robert Wagner of Heritage Stonecraft and Design to do the lettering, a very tedious job.

With the headstones cleaned, the grave surface could be topped up with

a fresh covering of pebbles. Calling on more hands, Kevin reached out to Cemetery Management to assist with lifting some four cubic meters (five tonnes) of stones over the high plot's brick surround. After assembling a group of extended family members and helpers, a working bee saw the new cover of pebbles transferred on the top of the grave. Payment in the universal currency of "a couple of cold beers" was enjoyed by all after the heavy work.

The first burial in the diocesan plot was 1930; the last was October 1979; plenty of time for grime to flourish, even if the headstones had received a spot clean at some point. Importantly, it was never the intention to make the headstones appear as new, explained Kevin, instead to refresh them. "I feel that has been achieved. Up to 90 years of staining does not disappear. But a 90% improvement is noticeable."

The material costs only of this project, covered by the diocese, came in much lower than previously obtained quotes. The hard work in terms of time, energy and physical labour of Kevin, his helpers and the businesses he sourced is immeasurable in value. "Kevin's labour, and that of his extended family and supporting businesses, is a gift to the diocese. It's a gesture of gratitude to the memory and vocation of the priests buried there," said Tom Jolley.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Toowoomba Diocese in 1929, this project reminds us that we must not forget our heritage. Our church, as it is now, is a legacy of those who came before us.



Before: A visit to Fr O'Donohue's grave set the cleaning project in motion.



Work in progress: Years of grime disappearing to reveal beautiful sandstone.

ENTWINED FOR ETERNITY

FR RICHARD LEONARD SJ

For the last couple of months, Fr Richard Leonard SJ has enjoyed being at home and working in the Toowoomba Diocese. He has recently returned to Sydney to become the 22nd Jesuit Parish Priest of St Mary's, North Sydney. Fr Richard shares with us a reflection for the first week of Advent.

I am not sure whether the Advent wreath has made a debut or a comeback. It was never a feature in the Advent liturgies of my childhood. I was an altar boy, and I would remember seeing it or lighting the candles. I was always looking for something to do, for it made Mass go more quickly.

In fact, the Advent wreath has a very complex history.

Wreaths go back to the Etruscans, the ancient Greeks and Romans, and symbolised all sorts of things from one's office or status in society, a success or an achievement (the forerunner of the ribbon, medal, or plaque) to a fashion statement.

By medieval times, wreaths had come to be used in three ways: as symbols of the harvest; as the completion of the circle of life at funerals; and as an anticipation of Christ's coming during Advent. As best as we can make out, in Europe, during dark December, green branches were found and woven together as a promise that spring was on the way, and candles were lit as a metaphor for Christ's birth, piercing through the darkness of our sin. It may well have had an echo of the ancient relationship between Advent and Lent in that the wreath can also symbolise Jesus' as yet un-thorned crown.

This largely German ritual was confined to people's homes. In this regard, the ritual lighting of the candles is also a nice quotation of the ancient Jewish custom of the kindling of the Sabbath candle or, better still, the lighting of the Menorah candles during the Feast of Dedication, Hanukkah, which, and not by accident, often coincides with our Advent.

The Puritans did not like the pagan origins of the Advent wreath so opposed it, but it persisted, and as German Catholics and Lutherans migrated all over the world, they took this domestic ritual with them as well. It caught on, and though it is not an official part of the Catholic advent liturgy, it has come to be a legitimate custom. It is a rare cathedral or church that does not now light the Advent wreath.

It's striking that while harvest rituals and their accompanying wreaths have largely gone, the funeral and advent wreaths remain as strong as ever. During Advent, the wreath entwines both ideas: the completion of our life-long journey; along with the final unveiling, or the apocalypse, of Christ.

Without doubt, the most nagging question confronting Christians, as they contemplate the end of their lives and the end of the world, is what will the next world be like? Let me speculate on what may lie beyond the veil.

Some time ago, Pope Benedict XVI surprised a few people when he suggested that heaven, hell, and purgatory may not be places where we do time but could be experiences through which we arrive or pass. I think he is right, not only because time and space are elements of this imperfect world, and not the next world, but also because this opens up interesting ideas about what these experiences might be like and how rich the Catholic tradition is in this regard.

When I think of what the hereafter might be like, I turn by way of analogy to the magnificent parable of God's mercy in Luke 15:11-24, the Prodigal Son. Here is a Jewish boy who commits two of the worst sins he could commit: he squanders his patriarch's inheritance and is so down on his luck and would have gladly eaten what the pigs are eating. Then he decides to go home and make up with his dad. I think that is what death is like for all of us, the final journey. This image is poignantly evoked in the final Holy Communion given to our dying, which is called "viaticum," which literally means "food for the journey."

Meanwhile, in the story, the father watches and waits on the road all day, every day, for any sign of the son's return. It is worth noting that the father did not go and club the son over the head and haul him home. The son had to put himself on the road home, which is similar to what happens when we die. We begin the final journey home. And when this extraordinary father sees him, he rushes out, kisses him, and calls for a party, even before the kid has had a chance to finish his well-rehearsed apology. That has to be heaven. For some of us who do our best, though we also fail, we get the basics right and God, who knows our heart and has accompanied us as we have laboured under the difficulties with which we have lived, does not even want the apology. We are welcomed home.

For some of us, however, the meeting with God may be personally painful because God takes our free choices very seriously. So when the extraordinary Father sees some of us, he rushes out to meet us, but when we are face to face with love itself, we are aware of the many free and knowing times we have been destructive toward ourselves, others, and our world. At that point, we will be allowed to start and finish the well-rehearsed apology, asking, indeed, in some cases begging, for forgiveness. It will cost us dearly to own what we have done, because it will be so stark, and it will cost God to forgive us. But because the Father is full of mercy and compassion, we will be cleansed, or purged in love.

Finally, I think there may be some of us who will make the journey home. The Father will rush to meet us, but when we are face to face with love itself, we will do what we have freely and knowingly chosen to do all our lives – we will reject God's love and walk away, the ultimate sin, which no doubt reflects how our lives on earth were spent. That has to be hell—the abyss—to see the face of God; of love itself, and walk away from it because we always have. And the Father painfully respects our choice, even this one to reject him. As the Pope says, "... it is precisely the last judgment of God that guarantees justice.... We must speak



specifically of sin as the possibility of destroying oneself, and thus also other parts of the earth.” But like the Pope, I do not think this final group is large. “Perhaps there are not so many who have destroyed themselves so completely, who are irreparable forever, who no longer have any element upon which the love of God can rest, who no longer have the slightest capacity to love within themselves. This would be hell.”

As painful as death and grief are, and the end of time may be, the Advent wreath symbolises both the completion of the cycle of life and our hope in Christ’s reign beyond time and space, where we hope and pray that our parting from those we have loved in this world is not a definitive “goodbye,” but more a “see you later.”

Fr Richard Leonard SJ is the author of “What are we waiting for? Reflections for Advent and Christmas” available from www.paulinebooks.com.au



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CATHOLIC NEWS MAKING THE NEWS

ACPA & HORIZONS EDITOR

The Diocese of Broken Bay's quarterly, "Broken Bay News", has taken out the top gong at the 2021 Australasian Catholic Press Association Awards (ACPA). The Bishop Philip Kennedy Memorial Trophy is awarded to the publication that wins either one of two awards: Best Print Publication or Best Online Publication. "Broken Bay News" was awarded Best Print Publication after judges commented that it was a very engaging publication and an outstanding contribution to the Catholic media landscape in Australia and New Zealand.

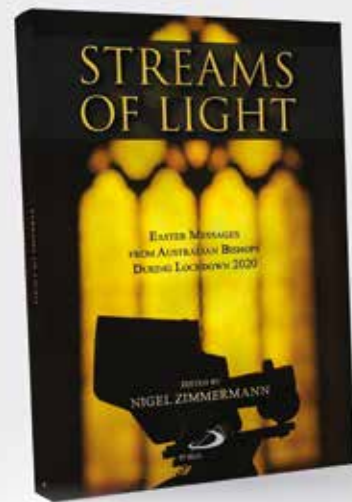
The awards were held in September via ZOOM after the annual ACPA Conference was cancelled for the second year due to COVID-19 state lockdowns.

ACPA President Neil Helmore said the awards are an opportunity for the Catholic Media to celebrate the outstanding contribution organisations make to the local Catholic Church. "Catholic media in Australia continues to strive to lift up the church and celebrate the diversity and mission through dedicated and

talented journalists, photographers and designers that make up the Catholic Press," Neil said.

"Horizons" received two awards this year, Winner for Best Photo (Easter lockdown photo in the Cathedral) and Highly Commended for Layout & Design – Publication. With so much talent and a diverse Catholic Media landscape within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region, the award wins are gratifying. "Horizons" is the hard work of many, including our contributors across the diocese. A special thanks go to Danielle Chimes, our graphic designer at Greenridge Group, and Rod Gray, our account manager at Greenridge Group.

Other award winners included the Archdiocese of Perth "eRecord" for Best Online Publication, "The Well" from the Diocese of Paramatta for Best Use of Digital Media, the Diocese of Wollongong for Best Layout & Design – Website, "The Majellan" for Best Layout & Design – Publication and the Diocese of Auckland "NZ Catholic" for Best Feature Content – Multiple Content Producers.



NEW BOOK GATHERS LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS OF LOCKDOWN

Easter 2020 was unlike any other, celebrated in mostly empty cathedrals and churches throughout Australia, lived streamed to the community in lockdown around the country.

Australia's lockdown timeline started just before Holy Week celebrations, throwing the usual preparations into chaos.

"Streams of Light", edited by Nigel Zimmermann and published by St Pauls Publications, gathers pastoral messages from bishops across Australia from Easter 2020. This book is a time capsule of the pastoral response to a time like no other in living memory. The selection of reflections, messages and homilies draws parallels between the Easter story and the lockdown we all faced together. These messages from the Australian Bishops hold on to positive themes of hope, solidarity, and life amidst fear, isolation, and death.

Even today, these reflections on the joy of the Easter story and Christ's Resurrection in the context of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic ring true as we negotiate what the "new normal" is.

"Streams of Light: Easter Messages from Australian Bishops During Lockdown 2020" is now available from www.stpauls.com.au

NEW LOOK DALBY VINNIES OPEN FOR BUSINESS

STEPHEN EDWARDS,
WESTERN DOWNS
TOWN & COUNTRY



L to R: Mabrey-Ann Fogarty, Sharlene Smith, Adam Bruggemann and Kathie Brosnan at the opening of the new look Dalby St Vincent de Paul store. Photo by Stephen Edwards, Western Downs Town & Country

After a short shutdown for refurbishment, St Vincent de Paul have reopened their popular thrift shop in Cunningham Street.

Speaking to St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland, Toowoomba, Executive Officer Kathie Brosnan she said that after giving the Warwick store a makeover management chose Dalby as the second store to be refitted.

Ms Brosnan said that the Dalby store was well supported by the community and most importantly that the funds

raised locally were spent locally.

Prior planning and preparation meant the refurbishment proceeded smoothly without any major problems.

Retail operations manager, Adam Bruggemann said the refit took three weeks but the store only lost thirteen days trading.

When the countdown to reopening neared, volunteers who had previously cleared the stock from

the store returned to assemble display racks, build flat pack furniture and to re stock the store with a range of popular merchandise.

As part of the refurbishment, up and coming local indigenous artist Sharlene Smith was commissioned to paint an artwork which is proudly displayed in the store and is incorporated into an information panel behind the cashier's desk.

(Story from "Western Downs Town & Country", permission to reprint)

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CALLED TO A DEEPER CONVERSION

DR DAVID TUTTY

Conversion is not a normal, everyday Catholic word. We have in the past often talked about converts as people who feel drawn to join the Catholic Church, but we have rarely applied the word conversion to ourselves. Most of us were baptised as babies, and all we have ever known is being Catholic. We do not normally see ourselves as in need of conversion.

Yet every time we acknowledge we have sinned, we see that we are in need of repentance and we hope our openness to God will help us become more holy. Every time we say we are not worthy, we hope and pray that we can become more worthy as time goes on. Each Mass, each Eucharist, we say words that recognise that we are in need of a deeper conversion.

So while conversion is not an everyday word for Catholics, it describes the most fundamental attitude we are called to have as Christians. We are called to have an ongoing openness to God and to grow in our awareness of God and God's creation. Our openness to God deepens our awareness of God's will for us, and for all creation, and we are invited to change so that we respond in a way that reflects God's will. Because of this, conversion is never a once and for all event but an ongoing lifelong journey. Each day, each moment, we are invited to deeper conversion.

Conversion is more than just a change of mind. It is about the direction we walk, the path we take in life. Our Christian call is to be continually open to God and God's will for us. Our growing openness to God is what the Christian life is about. We learn about God through the words of

Jesus, the experiences of the early church, the insights of the writers and prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures, and through the Holy Spirit at work in the Church and the world today. Our task is to be open, to learn and to walk towards God, for it is God who will change us.

Conversion is always an act of God, and so we are called to place ourselves in contexts that will make this more likely. We grew up knowing that prayer and works of love and charity are such contexts. Yet over the last century or so, we have recovered from scripture that contexts where we work for justice and seek to protect God's creation are also contexts that open us to God and make an ever deeper conversion more possible.

Pope John Paul II first talked about our need for an ecological conversion. Pope Francis took this a step further by helping us see that an ecological conversion also requires a conversion to community and to a new way of structuring our economic relationships. In "Laudato Si'", Pope Francis says

that everything is interconnected and uses the term integral ecology to describe this. We cannot protect God's creation without being committed to the common good and seeking to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Our current economic structures do not support this and therefore we need an economic conversion so that our economic relationships no longer contribute to the destruction of creation or of human community.

In this year's Social Justice Statement, "Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor", our Australian Catholic Bishops draw on Pope Francis and talk of this holistic conversion. They see that we need to experience a conversion where we seek a new understanding of the universe and of our human role within God's creation. We need a new commitment to community and to live more humbly and sustainably for the sake of God and what God has created.

Part of this deeper conversion is moving beyond simply believing in God and choosing to work with God to achieve God's mission.



FORMATION EMBRACES ALL CREEDS AND NATIONALITIES

DR MARK COPLAND

A second formation experience has been created for Managers and Executive Team members at St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba.

Called "All Creeds and Nationalities", the title is inspired by a phrase used by the Sisters of Charity to promote a building fund for the hospital in 1920. An emerging challenge that has been identified is a lack of religious literacy amongst staff. We are proud of our Catholic heritage and identity, but the changing demographic in the region means that staff need to support people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds.

Participants visited several faith-based sites, including:

- St Patrick's Cathedral to learn about the seasons of the church year and aspects of the Catholic Faith.



St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba Managers and Executive Team at the Purelands Temple Hall of the Ancestors.

- The Garden City Mosque, where they spoke with the Imam and senior members of the local Muslim community.
- The centre of a local Buddhist Community, Purelands Learning College.
- Learning more from local community members who work to uphold the Dignity of the Human Person from a non-faith based perspective.

Lunch was held at a local refugee support organisation where managers

and executive members listened to the stories of community members from a refugee background. Participants were invited to ask questions and enter into respectful dialogue as part of this experience.

The day also had a local heritage flavour to it, learning more of the steps taken by the founding Sisters of Charity. A trip to the Drayton Cemetery to visit the graves of local Sisters of Charity was included to give context and appreciation of our founding story.

Are you affected by any of the following

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- Broken bones?
- Trauma?
- Sports injury?



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A BIG YEAR FOR FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Many building and facilities improvements have been completed in 2021, and many more projects are currently underway across the diocese's schools and colleges.

With growing enrolments and our commitment to ensuring contemporary technologies and learning spaces at the heart of our schools, this is an exciting time for Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

One of the major projects for 2021 was the creation of a single campus at St Mary's School, Warwick. Moving the lower campus to the current location of the upper campus is fostering a united community spirit for students, staff and parents. It is also providing modern and flexible learning areas where all students have equal access to great indoor and outdoor play spaces. With all teachers and support staff together, there are more possibilities for cross-school teaching and learning, and of course, the time saved with not having to spend 10 minutes commuting between campuses.

The construction of a two-storey building in the secondary precinct at St John's School Roma has also been completed and officially opened. The building consists of four general learning areas, four flexible learning areas, student amenities, a lift, covered walkways and verandahs. The addition of these new general learning areas and specialist learning areas enables more elective subjects to be offered in the growing secondary school.

Sacred Heart School Cunnamulla have opened their new library. This wonderful learning space provides students with a contemporary and flexible area that allows for whole class, small group and individual instruction. The design and layout has increased safety, visibility, accessibility and is supportive of students with physical disabilities. The undercover area provides a functional communal area for students to enjoy their morning tea and lunch and is an ideal space for outdoor learning.

In 2022, four large projects are scheduled to be completed at St Saviour's Primary School, Good Samaritan College and Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School in Toowoomba and Assumption College in Warwick.

St Saviour's Primary School will complete a refurbishment of existing classrooms, administration, canteen and multipurpose room in stage 1 of their plans. Stage 2 will see further refurbishment of classroom spaces and an extension to create more general learning areas, a learning support room and associated travel spaces. The additional space will allow the growing school to cater for an additional 50 students and several new teachers.

The significant expansion planned for Good Samaritan College is to cater for a fifty per cent increase to its student population and support the growing demand to attend the college. The project will see the construction of a three-storey building to provide more general learning areas, specialist learning areas, ancillary spaces, storage, and amenities. Construction is expected to be completed in August 2022.

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School continues to grow rapidly. To cater for this, a new two-storey administration building that will include meeting rooms, staffroom, amenities, storage and sick bay is being constructed. Current older classrooms will be partly demolished to accommodate additional classrooms and a specialist learning space. Ancillary spaces, new amenities, storage, multipurpose areas, and a new canteen also form a part of the upgrades. Construction is expected to begin in September this year and to be completed in November 2022.

This year, Assumption College Warwick proudly unveiled its plans for a new building, Our Lady of Assumption Learning Centre. The space has been designed to create a learning hub for the school community that will encourage students and teachers to collaborate, communicate and share. The new facility will cater for eLearning technologies and contemporary resources to maximise educational outcomes. Construction is due to commence in December and will be completed by the end of 2022.



Bishop Robert McGuckin with St John's School Roma students at the blessing and opening of the John the Baptist Learning Centre.



Mary MacKillop Catholic College Highfields year 12 students celebrate on their final day of school

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR TCS

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

It's hard to believe we are at the tail end of another school year so quickly.

As is the tradition in schools, the last few weeks have been occasions to celebrate the year's achievements and highlights, thank and farewell departing staff, students and families and begin the early preparations for the start of the new year ahead. At each of these events there is always great enjoyment and laughter when the highs and lows, challenges and triumphs of the year are presented for all to see on the big screen. The sense of pride and accomplishment is awe-inspiring.

This year has been another successful one for TCS. After attending many of these celebrations, I am even more convinced about the importance of education to building a better world and the difference our work makes to the lives of each and every student. I can't help but be filled with hope for the future when I see the quality of talented and generous students in our schools. And there is a reason for this.

More and more parents are seeking an education based on a Christian

worldview and values for their children. It is an ideal foundation for life in a fast-paced, rapidly changing world. A Catholic education is founded on three fundamental human values critical to a flourishing life. Each flows from a central belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God.

HUMAN DIGNITY – a Catholic education teaches students to respect and embrace difference, to serve the needs of those less fortunate and always act graciously towards others.

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL – a Catholic education unlocks and enables the potential of every student. Students find and pursue their passion and purpose in life.

FULLNESS OF LIFE – a Catholic education empowers students to choose and serve the higher good over personal ambitions and to live lives of service and meaning.

There are, in fact, 1,700 reasons why students thrive in Catholic schools, our staff. All staff can be justifiably proud

of the achievements and difference made to the lives of 9,200 students this year. I sincerely thank each and every one for their immense contribution to making the lives of each and every student happier and more rewarding.

Fittingly we conclude the school year as the season of Advent is beginning. Advent is a period of expectation, reflection and hope leading to Christmas and the celebration of the birth of Jesus. As we conclude another year there is no more appropriate message than the promise of a hope-filled future for all students. We maintain our unwavering belief in the power of education to change people's lives for the better. Before we turn our thoughts to next year, be grateful for the opportunity to be part of this wonderful story of Catholic education in the Toowoomba diocese. It is indeed a privilege.

All the best for a happy and peaceful Christmas break. I look forward to catching-up with everyone again in the New Year.



WORLD TEACHER'S DAY: CELEBRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR EDUCATORS

There are many reasons why students succeed in our schools, but the most important of these is our staff. After the family, the teacher is the most influential person in the lives of students whilst they are at school. Our teachers make a difference every day, educating and inspiring our young students.

World Teachers' Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and thank our teachers for their important role in our communities and for the positive impact they have on the lives of students. All of our schools acknowledged the contribution their teachers make to their community in some special way.

I find it difficult to choose a favourite teacher because I was blessed to be educated by engaging, dedicated and passionate teachers from my first day of Preschool to my final day of Year 12. They taught me some of my favourite subjects, including Maths and Science, but more importantly, to be persistent, resilient, curious and much more. I hope that I have been able to pass on these gifts to the learners I have learned alongside for the past two decades. The best part of choosing to become a teacher is that we are paid to learn new things every single day, and the best teachers I have are the children in my classes.

Amanda Thompson | Teacher | St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Some of our teachers have taken the time to share a short story about their teaching careers, why they chose it, what they enjoy about it.

Being a teacher is a privilege. It provides an opportunity to shape the future of our society by having an impact on the next generation. Teachers nurture the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable our students to be positive, creative contributors to the world. It's a dynamic profession in which every day is different, and there are always new challenges; however, knowing that you have made a difference to a young person's life is a total gift.

Angela Martlew | Deputy Principal | Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba



#THANKYOUTEACHERS

As a child, when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always responded in one of two ways – a nun or a bus driver. Moving to secondary school, however, I became more attuned to my passion and overwhelming desire to work with children and so chose to pursue a career in education. The beauty of the teaching profession is that it is a powerful one. Each day you have the power to make a positive impact in the life of a child. And every time you change just one person's world, in essence, you begin a butterfly effect with the potential to improve lives for generations to come. This is true power.

Kerri-Ann Manthey | Middle Leader | Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

Becoming a teacher means I have the opportunity to give back what so many teachers have given me, a chance and the opportunity to learn through my strengths and interests. Growing up through the school system with ADD and Dyslexia was difficult. I will always remember the teachers who took extra care, time and support, allowing me to strive to succeed across my schooling. As an Early Childhood teacher, I can start each child's individual journey of education, taking account of their many cultures and differences to build and instil lifelong skills and aim for early intervention, allowing each child the chance to succeed; and to have a sense of emotional wellbeing and the ability to own their individuality in the current world that is more complex than what I knew growing up.

Christel Anderson | Teacher | St John's Kindergarten, Roma

We also asked some of our students if they had a teacher that they found inspiring.

We love how much effort and time teachers put in to help us learn and grow. Teachers always make us feel like we are in a safe and calm environment where we are welcome to share and dialogue. Most importantly, teachers make us feel like we BELONG!

Zoe and Ariane | Year 6 | Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

I think Mrs Holzeimer is the definition of inspire. She has had a big influence on me ever since I started school. Just recently, she gave me and many of my classmates the opportunity to be cast in a musical. I have found a big passion for acting and watching her support us inspires me to do my best. Thank you for everything Mrs H.

Ella Seeto | Year 6 | Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba

When I came to Holy Name the teachers became a huge part of my life. They helped me with learning and language. They were patient, kind and caring. Teachers encourage us to be the best we can be, and they help us through tricky times. We are lucky to have amazing teachers at Holy Name.

Leen Zahlouz | Year 6 | Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

Ms Roberts has inspired me to be kind and listen carefully when others are talking. Mrs Jenny encouraged me to keep trying when I find things difficult.

Eva | Year 3 | St Thomas More's Primary School, Toowoomba

All through my primary years I've learnt one thing. To be who I truly want to be, to lead by example and not to become a boss but a leader, not a sheep but a shepherd. To be a light in the darkness and to be the friend everyone can lean on. We can all make mistakes but it's how we overcome. I would like to thank my Year 6 teachers, Miss Cav and Mr Philp.

Lusi Manibe | Year 6 | Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba

Ms McVeigh encouraged me to get out of my comfort zone. She inspires me to be brave. Miss Byrne inspires us all by giving us a chance to be involved in different ways at school in lots of different groups.

Grace | Year 4 | St Thomas More's Primary School, Toowoomba

On World Teachers Day I would like to recognise Ms Harlen and Mrs Jackson. They do so much for our learning to make our lessons fun and engaging. They make sure the lessons are fair and everyone understands.

Olivia Dunlop | Year 6 | St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba



ATSI 2021 Graduates with Narelle Jackson (far left), Frs Hal Ranger, Peter Dorfield and Ray Crowley (middle back) and Dr Pat Coughlan (far right).

SPECIAL MASS MARKS END OF SECONDARY EDUCATION JOURNEY FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The Toowoomba Catholic Schools' Mass for the 2021 Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduates was celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral on Tuesday, 14 September.

Students from Toowoomba and Warwick Colleges attended along with their parents, grandparents and community members.

"The completion of Year 12 is a milestone to celebrate in all young people's lives. Although they may not grasp it fully now, they have a precious gift that over half the world's population do not have, a world-class education. It is a gift to be shared, to help others achieve what they have achieved and to make the most of opportunities which come their way. Education is the great enabler to unlock and rise above the challenges and disadvantages which get in the way of people leading full and flourishing lives. Higher levels of education are associated with improved health outcomes, economic status and

quality of life," said Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director: Catholic Schools.

The Mass included a student-led Smoking Ceremony, Acknowledgement of Country and didgeridoo playing. Narelle Jackson and Chris Bartlett, proud Indigenous people, shared messages to guide and inspire the graduands. Graduands were presented with specially designed sashes and a medallion as a memento of this milestone in their lives.

St Mary's College Year 12 student Zachary Lasserre commenced his secondary schooling journey at St Mary's in 2016. Zachary said, "I am grateful for the opportunities that I have experienced

as a Mary's man. I graduate with fond memories and a great sense of pride. I have been proud to be a part of a community of brothers, that always look out for one another. Next year, I plan to study for a Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Southern Queensland. While I am excited to move onto the next chapter of my life outside of school, I will dearly miss this great College."

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CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING WIN THE DAY FOR DALBY STUDENTS

SARAH LILBURNE

When curious minds and innovative thinkers get together, they are capable of incredible things. Students at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby have recently been presented with opportunities to compete in the Opti-MINDS and STEMPunks challenges. They have proven what creative talent we have at our school.

Students were invited at the beginning of the year to become part of a Critical and Creative Thinking Club in preparation for Opti-MINDS. They engaged with great coaching to promote curiosity, facilitate teamwork and help get their creative juices flowing. The college entered 2 teams to compete at the recent Opti-MINDS Creative Sustainability Challenge in Toowoomba, one from Early Years and one from Middle Years. The Early Years team won the most coveted prize, the Spirit of Opti-MINDS, for their outstanding presentation in the Social Sciences category.

The Middle Years team faced some fierce competition in the Science

Engineering category. They managed to walk away with first place at the regional event, qualifying them for the State Finals at the St Lucia Campus of the University of Queensland in Brisbane.

The Middle Years students were whisked away to a secret location to prepare for their challenge at the finals. Three hours later, they emerged and presented a dramatic rendition of an alien invasion. The students had the opportunity to watch the rest of the finalists perform.

The results were not announced at the competition. After a nail-biting wait, the Middle Years Team were awarded Honours at the State Finals, which placed them in the top 3 teams throughout Queensland.

On 10 October, the college entered two teams in the STEM Punks Innovation Sports competition held in Toowoomba at the Cobb+Co Museum. Students competed against seven other schools. The competition sought to uncover the fastest, most innovative thinkers in the region utilising the design thinking process and realising their

design solution in the virtual world of Minecraft. Both the Year 7/8 and the Year 5/6 teams progressed through to the finals after two initial rounds.

The final round saw Our Lady of The Southern Cross College and St Saviours Primary go head-to-head in a winner takes all challenge. Students were asked to design a new airport for Toowoomba that could accommodate flying cars. Although St Saviours Primary put up a strong challenge, the technical prowess of the Year 5/6 team shone through. They hoisted the champion's belt in jubilation, foreshadowing the future E-sports tournaments to come for Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

These opportunities allowed the students to display many of the college's learning dispositions, especially curiosity and creativity. The college is very proud of the students. They have shown initiative and creativity to represent their school and succeed on a stage that compares them with other schools in our region and across the state. They are to be congratulated on their amazing success.



ASSUMPTION COLLEGE CONTINUES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' GROWTH

SHARON NEWLEY



Assumption College Warwick builds on agricultural experiences offered to students.

Assumption College Warwick is committed to providing our students with a progressive and engaging curriculum designed to meet the learning needs of all students, including an extensive range of subject offerings and student pathways. This year the school has continued to build on the agricultural facilities and experiences currently offered, including the subjects of Agricultural Science and Cert II in Rural Operations. The college has also seen the introduction of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) into the current curriculum. Fundamental to all learning at Assumption College is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills.

The college's Careers Department offers a variety of information and opportunities for all students. The Careers Department provides valuable information and guidance to students on school subjects and pathways, ATAR and university options, vocational education including qualifications and school-based traineeships and apprenticeships through to job opportunities and short courses.

Our dedicated and experienced teaching staff provide a regular tutoring program after school hours to assist students in achieving their desired learning outcomes in a structured, well-supported environment. Staff

from across different subject areas are present to help with classwork, homework and assessment.

Assumption College is well-positioned as a leading secondary school educator within the district that strives to provide a quality education, where all students have the opportunity and support to achieve their personal best and pursue their chosen pathway. Enrolments are now open for 2023 with limited vacancies remaining for 2022. Families considering Assumption College can contact the school on 4660 4000 at any time to arrange a tour of the campus or for any enquiries.



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L to R: Katie Wright, Fr Vince Carroll MSC, Jorja Niki, Phoebe Collins, Brandy Collins, Liana Niki, Jordan Harding, Erica Kirkman, Ethan Niki, Rachel Costigan, and Stephen Koch.

A GOOD IDEA CAN TAKE YOU PLACES, A GREAT IDEA CAN BUILD FOUNDATIONS

DOWNLANDS COLLEGE TOOWOOMBA

Rachel Costigan, Director of Funberry Kids Childcare, invited the Downlands Early Childhood Studies class to create a mural at the centre just across the highway from Downlands.

It turned out to be a great idea, leading to a lasting friendship between the Costigan family, Funberry kids and Downlanders, students and staff alike. From the beginning, all parties worked together to bring to life an amazing First Nations Mural.

Downlands boarding student and artist, Liana Niki, from Karama, Northern Territory, was instrumental in bringing together the elements of the art. Liana explains, "It was important to incorporate a sense of family and reconciliation and to truly connect with this childcare centre. The middle circle represents Funberry. The words inside are important and share a key message. Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples for the benefit of all Australians. To achieve reconciliation, we must acknowledge that we are ONE family, one group of people, united together."

Liana and her classmates devoted hours to completing the project which was unveiled and blessed by Fr Vince Carroll MSC on 23 November.

Liana further explains, "Funberry and everyone involved with it are represented through the bright yellow, red and purple circles. They are the foundation of our future.

The circles at either end of the mural represent the different families that have journeyed and will journey through this childcare centre. The white dots are the past, present, and future kids, and the blue dots represent the diversity of all families.

The green symbolises the earth.

The hands surrounding the mural are those of the kids that come to Funberry now. These hands were made to celebrate NAIDOC week and fitted in beautifully with our mural."

Funberry Kids and Downlands share a deep belief in Liana's wise words, "Together, we call Australia home and together, we can move forward to acknowledge our history, respect one another and build trusting relationships into the future."

Downlands Early Childhood Studies teacher, Katie Wright, could not be prouder of her students, "Liana and her classmates were wonderful. The Funberry staff and children made the work enjoyable, and working with them was so rewarding. We are very grateful to the Costigan family for this wonderful opportunity to share in something bigger than us."

The mural will be a talking point at Funberry Kids for years to come.



Natalya Mah Yen and St Saviour's College Art Teacher Ms Joanne Stewart at St Saviour's College Winter Showcase.

PRIZE WINNING TRIPTYCH EXPLORES GRIEF

GEORGINA BAYLY

St Saviour's College Toowoomba Year 12 Student Natalya Mah Yen has been awarded second place in the Sisters of Mercy Student Art Prize.

With this being her first entry into the external competition, Natalya was taken aback when she received the initial shortlisting notification.

"It all came about as a complete surprise, first to be shortlisted and then to come second; I really didn't believe it," she said.

Natalya's submission entitled "Triptych with Samoan motifs" was a mixed media triptych.

The work literally and metaphorically saw Natalya weaving visual symbols of her Samoan and Christian heritage into a visual consideration of how tradition and faith comforts and gives meaning to the complexities of human responses to grief.

The complex patterning and mirroring of headstone and galaxy motifs encouraged viewers to think about a life beyond the here and now.

Judges commented that Natalya's entry was a strong artwork that was multi-layered and thought-provoking, with very intricate brushwork and a very effective use of the triptych format.

Within the senior visual arts section, all works were in response to Isaiah 1:17; "Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."

The shortlisted works were displayed at Adderton House in Brisbane.

"I wasn't able to get to the exhibition, but I was impressed with the judges' feedback," Natalya said.

"Triptych with Samoan motifs" was also the winner of the People's Choice Award at St Saviour's College Winter Showcase earlier this year.

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ST MONICA'S SCHOOL, Oakey CELEBRATES CENTENARY

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

On Sunday 12 September St Monica's School Oakey marked their centenary. Celebrations began on Saturday night with a special dinner where guests enjoyed a nostalgic evening with memorabilia and speeches from past principals.

On Sunday, Bishop Robert McGuckin celebrated Mass and blessed the school's new prayer labyrinth. A labyrinth was chosen as it is a universal and inclusive sacred space that welcomes all faith traditions.

This prayer labyrinth was designed by Indigenous artist and Oakey local, Damon Miri Anderson, and reflects this land's native plants and animals. Damon graciously shared his talents with the students, whose contribution can be seen in some of the handprints and



St Monica's prayer labyrinth and sculpture of the Good Samaritan story. L to R: Dr Pat Coughlan, Pat Weir (Member for Condamine), Bishop Robert McGuckin, Warrant Officer Paul Simpfordorfer and Fr Thomas Areekuzhy.

colour bursts. The centrepiece, a steel re-contextualised sculpture of the Good Samaritan story, was designed and created by Mark Anderson, who also designed the school's remembrance statute and memorial garden. It reflects the school's Good Samaritan tradition and includes the final line from the story, Jesus' challenge to "Go and do likewise".

After the blessing, each class placed an item in a time capsule which was buried at the top of the labyrinth. Students then

entertained crowds with their mini-musical "St Monica's School: This is your Life". Families also enjoyed an old-time fete complete with local performances. Later in the day, Kath O'Brien, aged 97, who attended the school in the 1930s, cut the centenary cake.

The entire school community looks forward to another hundred years of learning and growing "The St Monica's Way".

TALENT SHINES AGAIN FOR STANTHORPE

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

St Joseph's School Stanthorpe is renowned for bringing musicals to life and presenting their biennial musicals, providing entertainment for all to enjoy. Performances of "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Coat", "Oliver", "The Pirates of Penzance", "Back to the 80s", "Bats", "Joseph", "Man of Steel", "Annie" and "The Wiz" have all showcased the talents and skills of the students over the past years.



St Joseph's School Stanthorpe perform the musical "Matilda".

This year, the school was thrilled to recreate "Matilda, The Musical", which was jam-packed with high-energy dance numbers and catchy songs about a courageous and clever young girl. Students geared up to take the audience on a captivating journey based on the 1988 children's novel "Matilda" by Roald Dahl.

As with musicals the school has previously produced, several talented performers were unearthed. Students from both campuses eagerly jumped on board to be part of this iconic musical. The students were kept busy with rehearsals and were well and truly prepared for the 27 and 28 August performances.

PEACE GARDEN A GREEN WORK IN PROGRESS

KRISTIN BYRNE

In 2020, an eager group of Year 6 students floated the idea of an outdoor prayer space. The 2020 class placed the first item in the space, a cross-shaped birdfeeder, as their Year 6 legacy. After a year of planning, many interruptions due to COVID and the busyness of school life, phase 1 of our St Thomas More's Peace Garden is finally complete, with the addition of a beautiful garden bed around the cross. This year, the school P&F took control of the project. October saw the first garden bed planted with the support of a wonderful team of family helpers made up of parents and children alike. In 2022, we plan to finish the garden in a multi-phased approach.



Growing Peace Garden: Maeve and Evelia, Year 4 students.

The Peace Garden promises to be a dynamic outdoor space. Classes can use the garden for outdoor prayer time, and that students can utilise it during breaks for some quiet time with nature. With wonderful shade over the area, classes will also be able to hold prayer celebrations in this space in the years to come.

Our Peace Garden is also part of our green initiatives at the school. The garden will eventually feature many recycled items. We can't wait to see how the Peace Garden progresses and look forward to enjoying many prayerful times in it in the years to come.



The exceptional grounds and maintenance team at St Mary's College Toowoomba do a wonderful job in preparing and up keeping the immaculate grounds of the college. The team starts preparing almost a year in advance of springtime, drawing inspiration from the many beautiful gardens in town. The floral displays at St Mary's reflect the importance of participating in the rich traditions of the garden city.

IT'S ELECTRIFYING!

MIRANDA MURRAY

Students at Our Lady of Lourdes in Toowoomba are called to be Lourdes' Learners. As part of their science and technology unit in term 3, Year 6 students engaged in a multifaceted design. The challenge was to plan and construct a renewable energy model that demonstrated how energy from a primary source is transformed into electricity and transferred to households and businesses.

Students also produced a PowerPoint that included a photostory and journaling of their journey from the designing phase through the construction and their final presentation.

This amazing design technology opportunity saw the students engaging in the highest levels of thinking, including insightful oral discussions, creating,



L to R: Sophie McKenzie, Lexie O'Dempsey and Ella Reynolds

designing, analysing, sourcing materials, reviewing, problem-solving, fielding questions from guests, and reflecting.

Year 6 students invited family, friends and students from other grades to attend a spectacular Year 6 Science & Technology Expo, giving them an authentic opportunity to showcase their

ingenious models to their guests.

There was a real buzz as the students energetically delivered their PowerPoints to the attendees, who were both fascinated and enthralled by the absolutely incredible models involving working circuits, hydroelectricity, wind and solar battery systems.

HOST EMPLOYERS THANKED FOR SHARING SKILLS WITH STUDENTS

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

To acknowledge and thank host employers, St Joseph's School Stanthorpe hosted a Luncheon on 18 October at the Queensland College of Wine Tourism. The luncheon was a chance to thank businesses for providing students with the opportunity to participate in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

For five Year 12 students, along with completing their education, they have also completed their school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.



Host employers with St Joseph's School Stanthorpe students.

Host employers not only provided students with the opportunity to work as a paid employee and obtain a recognised qualification, but also supported the students through navigating the world of work.

The luncheon also recognised the

Year 12 students who have worked diligently to complete their work hours and units of competency to obtain their qualification. Congratulations to all our students, and thank you to the employers.

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS AND PARISH LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The latter half of 2021 has seen some big changes for parish leadership, with many clergy moving between parishes and lay parish staff changes.

June saw a change in lay leadership at St Thomas More's in Toowoomba with the retirement of Parish Leader Michael Bermingham after six years of service to the community. John Briffa commenced as Parish Leader after finishing in the Diocesan Liturgy Office.

July saw some changes with Fr Shane Carr MSC taking up an appointment as Priest Administrator of Cunnamulla Parish after the departure of Sr Maureen Andrews MFIC. Also, Fr Sean Lynskey CSSp concluded his appointment at Inglewood-Yelarbon and Texas Parishes and commenced as Parish Administrator to Miles and Tarrom-Wandoan Parishes in August.

September was another month with much of the parish leadership shuffle taking place. Fr Brian Connolly retired to Warwick after 18 years as Parish Priest of Stanthorpe. In his place, Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran takes up the mantle of Parish Priest of Stanthorpe after five and a half years as Priest Administrator of Chinchilla Parish. Fr Gonzalo is also the Priest Director for Wallangarra Parish. Deacon Brian Redondo also commenced his appointment at Stanthorpe Parish.

Also in September, Fr Gerardo Tubis PACEM commenced his appointment as Parish Priest of Chinchilla after departing from Roma Parish. Fr Thomas Duncan started his appointment as a Parish Priest, serving the community in Roma. It is Fr Tom's first appointment as a Parish Priest, moving from St Patrick's Cathedral, where he has been since his ordination in 2019.

Communities celebrated and gave thanks for the ministry of those departing and eagerly welcomed the newcomers.



A farewell Mass for Fr Gerardo Tubis was held at All Saints Church Roma on 22 of August. The Mass was also a Family Day Mass, where students and teachers of St Johns School participated and students made up the choir. During his homily, Fr Gerardo encouraged the students to say their prayers in the morning and at night. A well-attended morning tea was held after Mass.



At the end of June, St Thomas More's community came together to farewell Parish Leader Michael Bermingham. After Mass, cake and a cuppa was shared.

On 29 August, the St Patrick's Cathedral community bade farewell and good luck to Fr Tom Duncan as he finished in the parish. Fr Tom concelebrated Mass with Frs Michael O'Brien, Nandana Saparamadu and Mick Carroll, and following Mass a morning tea was shared in the Cathedral Centre. A surprise rendition of "The Irish Blessing", performed by Aylish Ryan (singing), Vicky Coccozza (piano) Jo Cosgrove (violin), touched Fr Tom as he gave an emotional thank you speech.



L to R: Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran and Deacon Brian Redondo, celebrate Mass at St Joseph's Church Stanthorpe

MEN OF FAITH SERVE STANTHORPE

SELINA VENIER

Stanthorpe Parish had a unique pastoral partnership in the presence of Fathers Brian Connolly and Lino Valente over many years.

Now, with the death of Fr Lino in mid-September and the retirement of Fr Brian just weeks earlier, The Granite Belt community has again seen a unique pairing in the appointment of current Parish Priest, Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran and Deacon Brian Redondo.

Fr Brian was farewelled at a Parish Mass and morning tea at which he relayed feelings of "having been blessed by so many over eighteen-and-a-half years" of local ministry.

"It was the best birthday gift ever (February 22, 2003) to begin as Parish Priest in Stanthorpe," Fr Brian said. "The highlights of my ministry have been the ordinary events of the lives of the people in which I have shared.

"I have always enjoyed the friendliness and the community spirit of this special place – The Granite Belt - in God's vineyard, and the faith and goodness of the parishioners who have supported me in my role as their pastor."

Retired to Warwick – his hometown and where, in the 1980s, he spent eight years as the Associate Pastor with Monsignor John Bergin - Fr Brian looks forward to the ordination of former Stanthorpe parishioner and Holy Spirit Provincial Seminarian, BJ Perrett, as well as St Joseph's Church's centenary in 2023 and the sesquicentenary of the parish and school in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

Asked to be addressed as "Father Gonzo", the new local Parish Priest who arrived from Chinchilla Parish said he's acclimatising to Stanthorpe weather patterns and is enjoying meeting a variety of parishioners.

Deacon Brian has been a vibrant and energetic presence as he journeys towards priesthood.

As a faith community, we give thanks for the pastoral leadership of the past and wish Fr Brian well in retirement. We welcome Fr Gonzo and Deacon Brian and look forward to continuing to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in and around Stanthorpe.

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ORGAN-IC MUSIC ON THE MENU FOR TOOWOOMBA

DR STEVEN NISBET OAM

The Organ Society of Queensland (OSQ) held an Organ Ramble in Toowoomba on 11 September to visit a variety of organs across the Garden City. The ramble visited St Patrick's Cathedral, St Luke's Anglican Church and Lifeworks Uniting Church. The event coincided with the annual Carnival of Flowers, so the title of "Organ-ic: The Toowoomba Festival of Organ Music" was aptly bestowed by the OSQ Committee.

OSQ's regional representative in Toowoomba, David Prestridge, who coordinated the ramble, reported that the three churches involved were very enthusiastic about the concept and supported the event with much publicity. Other churches in Toowoomba also got on board and helped with promotion. Twenty OSQ members and guests travelled from Brisbane to join with OSQ members and guests from Toowoomba and Warrick.

The festival began at St Patrick's Cathedral, where the organ had undergone a rebuild in 2020. A recital was given on the organ by OSQ Past President, Dr Steven Nisbet OAM. His program featured "Fanfare in Bb" by Henry Purcell (demonstrating the brilliant Trumpet stop), "Gymnopédie I" by Erik Satie (demonstrating the Oboe stop) and "Chorale & Fugue from Sonata VI" by Felix Mendelssohn (demonstrating the Principal chorus).

The program also included Steven's own composition, "Wesley Suite", written as a tribute to the Wesley family. John Wesley, a preacher, and Charles Wesley, a hymn writer, were co-founders of the Methodist Church. Samuel Wesley and his son Samuel Sebastian Wesley were both composers. The Suite has four movements, "Wondering Soul", "Wesley's Gallop", "Chapel Prayer" and "Liberty Fanfare", giving opportunity for Steven to demonstrate all facets of the organ (principals, flutes, strings



Dr Steven Nisbet at the St Patrick's Cathedral organ console.

& reeds). At the end of the recital, the large, enthusiastic congregation joined in singing three verses of the hymn "All creatures of our God and King".

Overall, the organ performed brilliantly, demonstrating the success of the 2020 rebuild by Pierce Pipe Organs, represented at the event by Imogen and Lachlan Pierce.

The festival continued at St Luke's Anglican Church in the afternoon with a recital by local Toowoomba organist Eduarda van Klinken. Her program included "Carillon" by Herbert Murrill (demonstrating the Principals and Great Trumpet), "Offertorio" by Domenico Zipoli (demonstrating the Flutes) and "Deus Miserateur" by Robert Boughen (a gift from Robert to Eddy). At the end of the recital, the large congregation sang the hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth".

The organ performed well, despite having suffered damage by vandals a few days before the recital. Imogen and Lachlan Pierce of Pierce Pipe Organs spent time in the days before the

recital cleaning the organ by removing all 464 great pipes, vacuuming glass fragments from shattered windows from the pipes, and refitting the great pipes.

The third recital of the festival was held at Lifeworks Uniting Church. It was given by David Prestridge, who uses the computer program "Hauptwerk" in conjunction with the church's Makin organ. He has installed on his laptop the full digital sample set from the Marcussen organ in St Laurenskerk, Rotterdam. So while playing the Makin organ, David virtually had access to the 85 stops and 7600 pipes at St Laurenskerk. Amazing technology.

David's program included "Tuba Tune" by Paul Fey, "Chorale Improvisation on Slane (Be thou my vision)" by Paul Manz and "Palm Sunday Procession" by Phil Lehenbauer. The congregational hymn was "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty". Between items, David gave an excellent explanation of how "Hauptwerk" functions and how he connects his laptop to the organ.

DIVINE ART ON DISPLAY FOR JACARANDA FESTIVAL

LOR NOLAN

I have the privilege of looking after the beautiful St Colman's Church in Goombungee. Maria Goulding approached the community to host an art display inside the church. At the time, I did not take it any further because of COVID 19. But a few months ago, a newsletter was distributed asking if we could help on Jacaranda Day, Saturday 16 November 2021.

So, I got the wheels turning. Maria became the spokesperson for the artists, and I liaised with Fr Peter Doonan to make sure everything was in order.

Parishioners from Crows Nest and Goombungee presented themselves for a cleaning bee and made the church shine from floor to ceiling. Brass was polished to a very high standard,



St Colman's Church Goombungee transformed into an art gallery for Jacaranda Day.

ceilings swept, and lawns mowed. After Mass on Sunday 31 October, the church was converted to an art show that would be the envy of many studios. The artists had the whole week to make our church perfect.

The patron of the church, St Colman, was very present. A painting of the church caught the light from one of the leadlight windows at the right angle, and it penetrated the canvas. It was just one of the majestic sights from the day.

All artists are local to Goombungee.

Artists featured included Nick Geraghty, Let Von Vonderen, Lynette Pukallis, Kerrie Thorne, and Barbara Scott. Bronwyn Holland was our curator, and Margaret Tabor was our chief photographer. Many of the visitors were interested in the history of our church. No one was disappointed because Leonie Kruger was on hand to answer questions. Leonie is the author of the centenary booklet published in 2002.

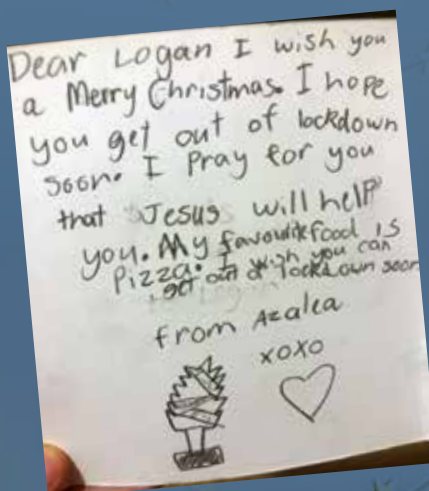
The exhibition was a huge success, and the community is looking forward to hosting many more.

PARISH

CHRISTMAS CARD OUT REACH

OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

Due to the extensive period of remote learning for schools in Victoria, Fr John Quinlan thought it would be an ideal time to let some school children in Melbourne know that we were thinking of them. Every year level at Our Lady of Lourdes School Toowoomba written personalised Christmas cards to all students at St Joan of Arc, Catholic Primary School. This gesture has enabled them to implement what it means to be a "global citizen", a major focus for the school this year. The students enjoyed this experience, with one class



repurposing the Christmas cards into boxes with their messages inside.

The students and teachers of St Joan of Arc have received the Christmas cards with much delight. Replies have started to arrive, showing as much care and creativity. The card exchange has been

Our Lady of Lourdes students connected with St Joan of Arc students in Melbourne to brighten their Christmas.



a bright spot during this challenging time during COVID lockdowns.

Thank you to Fr Quinlan for your excellent suggestion and the anonymous Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner who donated the Christmas cards.

100 YEARS YOUNG CELEBRATION FOR BELOVED CLIFTON PARISHIONER

HELEN GILLAM

A very special day was celebrated in Sts' James and John Church, Clifton, on Sunday 7 November, Nora Logan's 100th birthday. Nora is a much loved and highly valued member of the parish community. It was indeed fitting that a Mass celebrating this significant milestone in Nora's life was held with many family and friends.

Honora Francesca Cranitch was born in Clifton on 7 November 1921. She was the eighth child of 10 for William and Ellen (nee Lyons) Cranitch who lived in the Elphinstone area of the parish.

Life would not have been easy in those days with a large family, but the love of family and the Catholic faith was extremely important in the Cranitch household. Their life would have been full with farm work, family and social outings. Nora was a keen tennis player and can still recount winning shots. She also played golf and bowls. Nora still enjoys cards, with games of Euchre, Bridge and Solo being the most often played.

Nora married John (known as Jack)

Logan on 31 March 1964, with Fr Peter Gillam officiating. The happy couple honeymooned at Alexandra Headland. The family didn't holiday away from Clifton much, with Jack saying he would rather go to Leyburn than go to the coast. Jack farmed with his brother, Peter, on the property known as "Terra Bella" to the west of Clifton. They have one daughter, Maria. Nora also has a granddaughter, Kate.

After Jack passed away in 1994, Nora continued living in Clifton. Nora was involved in a wide range of community activities, including involvement with Meals on Wheels for about thirty years. Interestingly, Nora never received Meals on Wheels herself as she didn't want to be tied down to being at home at a certain time. Social outings are still a priority for Nora.

Nora has remained loyal to her faith, attending daily Mass. Nora was especially dedicated to doing the flowers for the different seasons in the church calendar. Her nieces, Annette and Genny, remember well mornings



Nora Logan (right) with her daughter Maria (left).

spent arranging flowers for weddings, funerals and weekend Masses. They made sure the flowers were done for Nora's special celebration Mass.

One of Nora's best traits is her positive attitude. When she could not get her driver's licence at 95, she said she would move into the local aged care facility, Nirvana. Of the move, she said, "It is so lovely to have a warm bed, food cooked for you, and you don't even have to do the washing".

Fr Rod MacGinley and Fr Terry Hickling celebrated Mass, where she was presented with a Papal Blessing to mark the occasion. Fr Rod said, "At 100 years of age, you can't fake goodness, and Nora had gallons of it." After Mass, over 125 family members and friends gathered at the Clifton Bowls Club.

GIRLS' BRIGADE JOIN CROWS NEST FOR CELEBRATION

MARGARET FOWLER

On 10 October, we welcomed members of the local Girls' Brigade Unit to our celebration of the Eucharist at St Matthew's Church Crows Nest.

The girls were joined by leaders, the Regional Chaplin of the Brigade, Jenny Head, and family members. We were privileged to witness Alyssa Callaghan and Eloise Gotz presented with a special award called the Pioneer Pin. This award is the highest given by the Girls' Brigade

at the national level. Both girls were also presented with their Queen's Award on 5 November. This award is the highest award given by the Girls' Brigade and is an international award. These awards were achieved with a lot of dedicated work by the girls with support from their leaders and family. Congratulations to them both.



At the end of Mass, Fr Peter Doohan gave the girls and their leaders a special blessing. This visit is a yearly event, and there is usually a cuppa or cold drink afterwards.



St Mary's parishioners attended a Mission presented by Fr Richard Leonard. L to R: Terri Beaver, Margaret Miller, Elia Faa, Fr Richard, Michael Ryan, Sharon Young and Fr Bony Abraham. Photo credit: Gerard Walsh

FORMER WARWICK STUDENT BACK IN TOWN FOR MISSION

GERARD WALSH

After leaving Warwick with his family at the age of five, Fr Richard Leonard was back in town for the St Mary's Parish Mission. Fr Richard celebrated Mass at St Mary's Church Warwick on a Sunday in October before talking to an audience of 100 at Assumption Place on the church grounds.

"It was one of the most generous audiences to listen to my talks," he said.

"There was a little bit of local boy made good but also a hunger to reflect on some of the most important issues in our Christian lives and how we can live our lives with hope and joy."

Fr Richard was born in Warwick in 1963, the youngest sibling of Tom and Joan Leonard. His father worked for stock and station agents Elders in Warwick before setting up his own business, Tom Leonard and Sons.

Tom died while selling cattle at the Warwick Saleyards in August 1966, when he suffered a stroke at age 36. That left Joan with three children under the age of eight, Peter 7, Tracey 5, and Richard 2.

Fr Richard was only five when the family moved to Toowoomba in 1968, but he remembers the great kindness to his family at the time. He paid tribute to Charlie and Edna Fraser and their family Ross, Les, Susanne and Peter, Don and Nea McGinness and their children from the Warwick area.

His uncle, Fr Frank Leonard, was parish priest of Wallangarra and a great help to the young family at the time.

Fr Richard started school at St Mary's in Warwick before the family moved to Toowoomba, where he continued his primary schooling at St Saviour's Primary School. He attended St Joseph's College for years 8-10 and St Mary's College for years 11-12 before heading

to Banyo Seminary for four years of study to be a priest. In 1987 Fr Richard joined the Jesuit order and has been involved in a wide range of media and church-related activities since.

"While I like talking, preaching and teaching, the most surprising part of my ministry is the reach and the impact of the books I have been honoured to write. People may not be able to get to a lecture, but they can access a book in their own time, at their own pace. What a privilege."

Fr Richard lists his book "Where The Hell Is God" as the work which made the most impact. "People seem to find hope reading that book in tough times," he said.

As he finishes his time in the Toowoomba Diocese, Fr Richard has returned to Sydney as Parish Priest of North Sydney.

CATHOLICCARE VISIT FOCUSES ON MENTAL HEALTH

PATTI MCNAUGHT

At our Vigil Mass on 18 September, Kate Venables from CatholicCare came to our parish to speak to us about mental health. Kate is the Executive Director of CatholicCare Social Services in the Toowoomba Diocese. She has spent the past 20 years working in the social services sector across Central Queensland, the Darling Downs and South West Queensland. Kate works with teams who provide services to families and individuals needing support, refugees and migrants, our First Nation Peoples and separated parents. Kate is aware of the many vulnerabilities and complexities of our varied communities and the enormous resilience they can develop.

Articulate and full of energy, this delightful woman captivated us as she spoke on one of the most important issues of this time, especially as we struggle with COVID in our lives. Prior to her arrival, parishioners were encouraged to use a suggestion box to submit questions that they would like Kate to answer during the course of the evening.



Kate Venables, CatholicCare Social Services, speaking to Highfields parishioners.

After our Mass, we had a pot luck dinner where parishioners were asked to bring something to share with others. It was during this dinner that Kate answered questions that were put to her. Kate not only attended our Mass and our dinner but very patiently answered our questions. What a wonderful ambassador for CatholicCare and our diocese. Kate really enjoys people and has a wonderfully diverse staffing body who are working towards the same vision.

Thank you to Fr Brian Noonan and Nikki Tonkin, Highfields Parish Pastoral Council Chair, for organising Kate to come to our parish. Also, thank you to all those who worked so hard to make this a night to remember.

When the evening came to an end, Kate was presented with a small gift. Thank you, Kate, for reminding us to be mindful of those in trouble and ask this very important question, RUOK?

We are really looking forward to visiting parishes across the Diocese – and what a fab parish to begin with! It was a delight to spend some time with parishioners from Highfields and hear their passion and commitment to recognise and respond to the impact of poor mental health on individuals, families and even wider communities.” Said Kate. “Engaging with folk across a range of ages was great fun and an awesome opportunity to talk about our services and consider ways we could work together in the future!

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QUIET TIME TO REFLECTION ON ST JOSEPH

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL LITURGY GROUP

To share the importance of the Year Of St Joseph, St Patrick's Cathedral Parish hosted a morning of prayer dedicated to St Joseph on 16 October.

The day started with Mass at 7:00am, with several hymns to St Joseph being sung by members of St. Patrick's Cathedral choir. Every hour adopted a different theme ranging from reconciliation through to quiet reflection time and song. There were times of spoken reflections that were led by some members of the Parish Liturgy Group. This invited many into a deeper understanding of St Joseph's life.



St Joseph's College Toowoomba students led part of the St Joseph's reflection in song.

Students from St Joseph's College Toowoomba led one of the hourly sessions in song, signing every 10 minutes, followed by quiet reflection time. We thank the students and staff of the college who participated in this dedication while highlighting the broad range of talent in their school's youth. The morning concluded at 1:00pm, with choir members singing "Great St Joseph, Son of David", accompanied on the pipe organ by the Parish Organist, Vicky Cocozza.

Those who attended, valued the environment dedicated to St Joseph, the carpenter, husband, father and mentor, and many lit candles in his honour. The morning was well attended, with many people appreciating the quiet time to reflect on the life and meaning of St Joseph.

In the future, St Patrick's Parish hopes to celebrate any years explicitly dedicated to a church theme in a similar way.



On 5th September, 13 children made their First Holy Communion at Holy Name Parish Toowoomba. Parish Priest Fr Darrell Irvine celebrated Mass while parents, visiting relatives and the community supported the First Communicants. A sumptuous morning tea and specially crafted celebration cake from a talented mother helped commemorate the event.



On 26th September, nine children received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Robert McGuckin. Proud parents, visiting relatives and the parish community watched as the children became soldiers of Christ through anointing with the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, piety, counsel, fortitude and a holy fear of the Lord. The community shared a generous morning tea featuring decorated cakes from another gifted mother.

100 YEARS CHRONICLED IN NEW BOOK

STEPHEN EDWARDS,
WESTERN DOWNS
TOWN & COUNTRY

As part of organising the celebrations for the 100 years anniversary of the present Dalby Catholic Church, the committee put out a call for historic photographs and information with a view to preparing a book to mark the event.

The result is a very comprehensive publication titled "The Gem of the West" compiled by Damien Morgan. Released on the first weekend of November, the launch event included a speech by the Western Downs Regional Council Mayor Paul McVeigh and a talk by Damian Morgan who gave some interesting insights into preparing the book.

Covering the history of the church from the first days of meeting in the former Plough Inn Hotel on the banks of the Myall Creek, the book tracks through time right up to and including the effect the COVID pandemic had on church services.

Beautifully presented in gloss colour, "The Gem of the West" is an interesting and informative read covering many aspects of church life and social history related to the parish.

Books are available for purchase now by contacting the St Joseph's Parish Office on 4662 4011.

(Story from "Western Downs Town & Country", permission to reprint)



L to R: Fr Jim Cronin, Damien Morgan and Mayor Paul McVeigh at the launch of "The Gem of the West". Photo by Stephen Edwards, Western Downs Town & Country

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PARISH IN BRIEF



Many gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral to mark National Police Remembrance Day. The service was an opportunity to pay respects to the Police men and women who have died protecting their community. Photo credit: Queensland Police

Fr Truc Quoc Phan SVD (centre, front) from the Diocese of Rockhampton during his visit to St Mary's Church Charleville. He celebrates Reconciliation and Mass with the local Vietnamese community.



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The LAST BITE



Welcome to The Last Bite where we peek into the pantry and check the fridge for the ingredients of a great story and something to eat.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Ingredients

250 grams butter
1 1/3 cups light brown sugar
5 eggs
1 1/2 cups soft white bread
2 cups plain flour
1 pinch salt
1/2 teaspoon mixed spice
4 cup raisins
6 cups sultanas
1 cup mixed peel (I leave out)
2 cups currants
1/3 cup chopped blanched almonds
1/2 cup brand
3/4 cup milk

Instructions

1. Cream butter and sugar until light.
2. Add eggs one at a time, beat well after each addition.
3. Add breadcrumbs, sifted flour, salt and spices.
4. Stir in the prepared fruits and chopped nuts.
5. Add brandy and milk and mix well, divide in two.
6. Scald and flour cloths, place in large pans of boiling water, cover with lid and boil for 4 hours, replacing water as necessary.
7. Allow to cool and hang in a cool airy place.
8. Boil a further 2 hours the day the puddings are used.

Happy eating

When I visited Fr Peter Schultz at the cottage at James Byrne Centre a few years ago, the kitchen was in full-scale production mode. He was getting a jump on that year's puddings. With the usual excitement reserved for passion projects, Peter explained that putting in the hard work early yielded a nicer pudding. Besides, the puddings would easily keep until Christmas. I remember him saying, so long as the finish product was kept and a cool, dry place, it could theoretically keep for a long time. I still have the pudding that Peter made for me that year, which must have been for Christmas 2017. It's still hard as a rock and hanging from my pantry door. Not sure I should test his theory that it would keep, although I wonder what "treasure" it might hide in its maturity.

Thank you to Peter's family for sharing the Christmas Pudding recipe and his homily.

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 1997, HOMILY

BY FR PETER SCHULTZ

Last Wednesday a parcel arrived for me from Melbourne. It was not a surprise as it is something that comes every year around this time. Some weeks, if not months ago, my mother would have spent a day in the kitchen making Christmas puddings. Every year it was a part of our family preparation

for Christmas to produce the puddings in their cloths and hang them until Christmas day. Ever since I have been in Queensland, Mum has sent me two. It is a sign that Christmas is near.

The puddings are also a reminder for some things to be worthwhile, you have to wait for them, you have to take time. When the puddings are made there is the effort of preparing the fruit and making the mix. Then there is the preparing of calico cloths and the actual tying of the puddings, so they are secure. Then the pudding needs to be boiled, dried and hung for a period to age. Only then on Christmas day after they have been re-boiled and they are their best.

There have been times when my father has been unable to wait and has boiled up a pudding and eaten it in secret when the family was out or all in bed; these were times that were almost grounds for divorce when Mum discovered the theft. But most times, the puddings have been allowed to achieve their peak.

In some ways, we are like these Christmas puddings. The adventure of life is one of continual preparation, of waiting to achieve our peak. We need time to develop and grow, and in the end, it is only in Jesus the Christ that we are fulfilled. The chief danger for us is that we can think we have got it all together, that we are ready. The people of Israel often thought this way. The prophets continually challenged them to get out of their complacency and to strive for the fidelity that their covenant relationship with God demanded.



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