

Horizons



PROJECT COMPASSION: FAITH INTO ACTION

Called to Hope & Pray
The Student Becomes
the Principal
Beads of Sweat & Faith

#69
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Horizons

FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

"God has not grown weary of us."

It's a stand-out line in Pope Francis' 2024 Lenten Message. I'm not a theologian or great thinker (yes, yes, I can hear the thunderous reply of "no kidding"), but the Holy Father's message this year is quite uplifting to me. The usual heaviness I always seem to associate with Lent isn't there.

When I was at school, the teacher would ask, "What will you give up for Lent?" For a kid the usual answers were chocolate, sugar, watching TV, fighting with my siblings... This question sets the tone for what Lent is. In my child-like understanding, it was a case of giving up something, and God would be happy with me.

When Lent is framed as 40 days of no fun, it feels burdensome and a bit of a drag. It feels like there's a laundry list of do's and don'ts for Lent. What do I get at the end? I'm hoping it's sainthood because that's a whole lot of chocolate I haven't eaten throughout the years.

"It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause." Oh, seems like I've been going about Lent wrong. By

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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describing prayer, almsgiving and fasting as "a single movement of openness and self-emptying", Lent suddenly doesn't seem like a dull moment to score brownie points with God. "Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause!" It's about revival; it's not heavy and dark at all!

Sorry, we made a mistake!

In issue #68 of Horizons, page 32, we made an error with the photo caption and names in the article body. Our sincere apologies to the people incorrectly named and to the author of the article.

Photo caption: L to R Shane Blackeley, Peter Cavanagh, Josephine Mardini and David Harpin.

Correct names in article: David Harpin, Brendan Doherty and Josephine Mardini.

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Cover image: St Stephen's School Pittsworth students Evie Conway and Oliver Drew at the launch of Project Compassion at St Patrick's Cathedral Toowoomba. Story page 10.



Bishop Ken Howell joined Sacred Heart Parishioners in January to celebrate the Epiphany.
L to R: Fr Roque Maguinsay, Bishop Ken Howell and Altar Server, Gabriel Alger.

THE LIGHT OF EASTER

As a new bishop in a rural Diocese, I'm discovering the critical need for rain in our various regions. I'm told that a good amount of this precious gift has come to the Western parts of our Diocese. Although unexpected, according to weather predictions, the sense of green and life is very pleasing and offers hope to our farmers and producers. The waters of northern rain are passing around Birdsville onto Lake Eyre and the wonder of life will blossom there again. As a people we look to signs of life that come through the simple things of rain, and green grass. However, sadly too much of this gift brings immense hardship as we have seen in recent months in the north of our State.

Easter comes again to refresh the thirst in our lives that need nourishment. Like times of drought, we long for the life that comes from above. Such is our inner life, for our spiritual journey is

marked by the need for our difficulties and questions to be quenched by those things that our soul needs.

Our world is dreadfully marked by death at the moment. War in Israel and Gaza, Ukraine and Russia leave us staggered by the senseless loss of life, especially children and their parents. Our hearts grieve at the irrationality of it all. Death is also accepted in our society as a way to deal with life's problems. Termination of life through abortion and assisted dying are seen as the way forward for the difficult realities of living. Into all of this the Easter message speaks to us again.

Like the rain that comes and waters the earth, God has shone a light into the very heart of darkness that seems to surround us, a light that can never go out, the light of Easter! While we joyfully proclaim this, however the full embracing of this in our lives and hearts

is always a journey of discovery. While we proclaim that Christ is risen, we still see the signs of darkness around us. If we allow the rain of God's love to guide us in our quest to discover the Risen Christ within every aspect of our lives, then despair, sadness and death will be smothered by undying hope and new possibilities.

In our Diocese, let us all continue on the journey of discovery that always accompanies faith and realise that the Risen One is strengthening and walking beside us through his life-giving rain and inextinguishable light.

Easter Blessings to you
and your loved ones,

Bishop Ken Howell
Bishop of Toowoomba
March 2024



L to R: Kathryn McKeefry, CEO St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba, Clive Berghofer and Dr Jeremy Fernando, Director Intensive Care Unit.

STATE OF THE ART INTENSIVE CARE UNIT FOR ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL

CARMEL SENG AND JANE SMITH

The air was alive with excitement at St Vincent's Hospital in late November last year as the final touches were put in place for the eagerly awaited opening of the new Intensive Care Unit (ICU). The tradesmen packed up their tools, the staff began to move equipment and resources across from the old ICU, and all systems had the final tick of approval. We were ready to go!

History has taught us that Toowoomba needed more than one ICU and emergency centre. In the 1990s, people of the Darling Downs had access to only one ICU and one emergency department – both at Toowoomba Base Hospital. In those days, patients at St Vincent's who needed short or medium-term ventilation were transferred to the Base.

St Vincent's worked with Toowoomba Hospital staff and the Queensland Ambulance Service to establish the first private emergency centre on the Darling Downs. On 27 February 1999, St



Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba officially opened its first emergency department, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was housed in the refurbished old kitchen building behind the former maternity building, which opened on the same day as a new medical centre.

The operation of the emergency department heightened the demand for an ICU, and St Vincent's responded by opening the Clive Berghofer ICU on 14 November 2002. Thanks to the generosity of the public, the business community, and Clive Berghofer AM, the unit was equipped with around \$750,000 worth of monitors, ventilators and resuscitation equipment.

As technology developed and demand for our services grew through the 2000s, so did the need for a bigger, more sophisticated emergency centre. In 2020, St Vincent's proudly opened the Clive Berghofer Wing, which included a new emergency department with three resuscitation areas, 15 treatment areas and the first private Medical Assessment and Planning Unit (MAPU) in Queensland. With a busy new emergency centre and around 1200

patients passing through our six-bed ICU every year, the need for a bigger and better ICU became pressing.

We are very proud of the state-of-the-art new facility with eight beds, with capacity to grow to ten in the future as activity increases. Two negative pressure rooms have been built, meaning our hospital has the ability to care for patients with infectious diseases such as COVID-19. All rooms are private, some with an ensuite, and boast natural light, which will assist in decreasing delirium risks. The new

ICU encompasses a high-dependency unit and a coronary care unit.

We continue to offer our heartfelt gratitude to Clive Berghofer, whose ongoing generosity ensured the completion of this project. The Bishop of Toowoomba, Bishop Ken Howell, blessed the ICU as part of the official opening. We were pleased to welcome around 50 local community members and representatives from the Sisters of Charity, Mary Aikenhead Ministries, and St Vincent's Health Australia to the opening.



L to R: Sr Clare Nolan, Sisters of Charity, Bishop Ken Howell and Fr Michael Cooney, Chaplain.



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CALLED TO PRAY AND HOPE

DR DAVID TUTTY



Pope Francis has proclaimed a Year of Jubilee in 2025. We are called to be Pilgrims of Hope and asked to prepare for this heightened holy time with a year of prayer.

We have a long tradition of Jubilee years. The first was called by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300. Over the last 500 years, Jubilee years have generally been every 25 years. Many of us will remember the Year of Jubilee Saint John Paul II called in the year 2000. We will also remember Pope Francis calling an extraordinary year focusing on a Jubilee of Mercy in 2016.

Our Jubilee tradition is firmly rooted in the words of Leviticus 25. Here we have God giving instructions to Moses about the sabbatical year every seven years and the year of Jubilee on the 50th year after seven times seven years.

At the heart of Jubilee is a call to stop, rest, and set things right after all that might have happened over the previous years. During this year, God calls the people to allow the land to rest, to forgive debts, to return ancestral property, to free people from bondage and to enable a just new beginning.

This is echoed in Luke 4 when Jesus unrolls the scroll of Isaiah and proclaims liberty to the captives and freedom for the oppressed.

There is no historical evidence that these Jubilee calls were heeded. But what matters is that the Hebrew people and the early followers of Jesus continued to dream and hope that God's Jubilee would come to be. The hope that God's Jubilee can become a reality is a hope in social and ecological justice.

This Jubilee year is a call to be Pilgrims of Hope.

Pope Francis is adamant that we are in a crisis. The brutality of modern weapons and the exploitation of people and the earth support our pope's analysis. We are at war in many places, and Pope Francis sees that we are also at war with the rest of creation. So, amidst this crisis, Pope Francis calls us to a journey of hope.

We are called to prepare for this Pilgrimage of Hope through prayer. Pope Francis has a famous quote about prayer. He says, "You pray for the hungry, then you feed them. This is how prayer works."

Based on this insight, I feel we can say you hope for what is good and just in each situation, then you do your best to actively work to make it a reality. That is how hope works. To actively make hope a reality requires that we begin with what is possible.

So, where might we start? I want to draw on a few insights from our pope to unpack where we can direct our prayer and our hope.

Firstly, prayer is at the heart of who Pope Francis is and what shapes his teaching and actions. As his above quote indicates, his prayer seeks to be open to God and is formative for his ways of acting.

Pope Francis puts great emphasis on our need to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. The act of deliberate listening

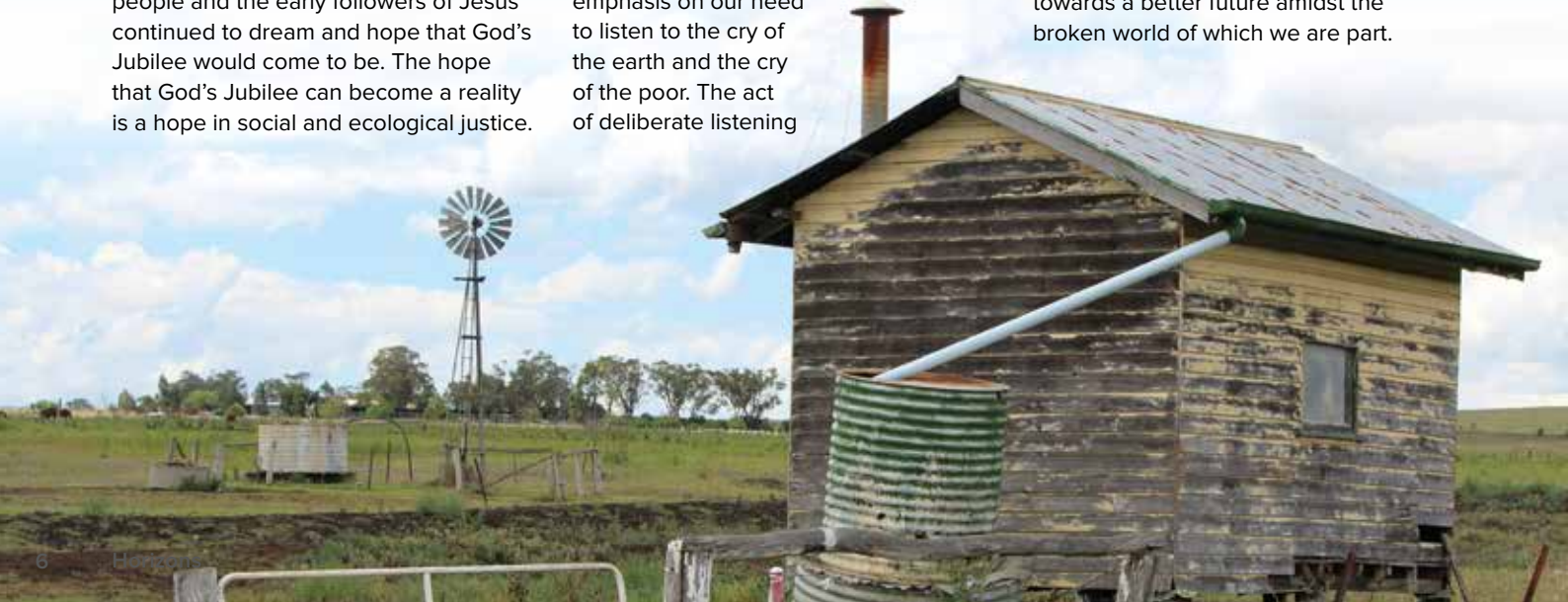
is an act of hope that draws us out of ourselves and into solidarity with the pain of the world. As an act of hope, this listening then begins a long journey of changing our ways so that the earth and the poor of the earth can heal.

In July 2022, our pope did a pilgrimage to Canada to apologise to First Nations peoples for the contribution of the Catholic Church in the deaths and forced assimilation of indigenous children. The pope is willing to face colonial history and to grieve. His actions call us to also have the courage to face our history. In doing this we live hope for a better future.

Many times, Pope Francis has been distressed by the number of refugees drowning in the Mediterranean. We remember the haunting image of the two-year-old Syrian boy's body on the beach in 2015. Pope Francis reminds us that refugees are not political targets but people in need of care and support. This is part of our calling as we learn to live hope for a better tomorrow.

Our pope has put much energy into synodality. He sees hope in a new way of being church. Our participation in the synodal process is an act of hope. The process calls us to embrace new skills of listening and compassion so that we can live hope as we seek a new way forward.

So hope is possible. A Jubilee calling us to be Pilgrims of Hope is crucial. Hope is the energy to work towards a better future amidst the broken world of which we are part.





In the thick of it: Fr Nathan Webb.



Muddy mates: physical challenges during the Forged Young Adults weekend were a practical application of the idea of suffering.

RETREAT FORGED YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FAITH-FILLED PURPOSE

AVA NAUG

"If people don't leave wanting to suffer, then we haven't done our job."

Holy Name parishioner, Ava Naug, sat with Veritas Young Adults chaplain, Fr Nathan Webb, in October of last year with this vision. A young adult retreat focusing on the integral nature of suffering in finding a faith-filled purpose.

"Every young person wants to be able to make sense of their life and to have a clear understanding of their identity and what their purpose is.

We are a generation obsessed with identity but avoidant of suffering. We forget that suffering is the key to this understanding. Especially as Catholics, trial is essential to forging our faith." This was how the concept 'Forged' was born, Ava explained.

Guest speakers Sr Jone (from Sisters of Mary Morning Star), current doctorate student Diff Crowther and Veritas Young Catholics co-founder Ben Maloney all shared captivating insights surrounding this topic. The 20 young adults that attended were then quite literally thrown in the deep end to help put this formation into practice. "All you need is some tunnels, a shaky bridge, a whole lot of mud and a handful of somewhat willing but excited participants and all of a sudden, their attitude to challenge gets put in the limelight."

"It was 42°C, they were exhausted, but they all had grins that you couldn't wipe off their faces. That practical application of 'suffering' really grounded the knowledge they'd received in the talks, and the conversations that flowed from that were priceless." Ava noted she was blown away by the level of joy they had through each challenge. "The difficulty of the activity didn't change, but their attitude of joy caused an infectious mentality through the group

that made each challenge conquerable."

On top of the intensive activities and formation, the weekend certainly did not lack endless fun and fellowship. A 50m giant waterslide, rope swing, campfire, and great food were hard-earned bonuses to the weekend. "The fact that we went from being covered head to toe in mud to learning backflips in the dam, cooking damper, and then praying together before the Blessed Sacrament all in the same day brought the group so close to one another." Ava emphasised how important 'doing life together' as Catholics is, and our interactions shouldn't be restricted to just after Sunday Mass.

Veritas Young Adults aims to provide this on a weekly basis. Following Monday evening Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, the group gets together for fellowship and formation. "Veritas is the perfect outlet for young adults in Toowoomba who crave the Catholic community and want to dive deeper into their faith." Ava praised the hard work of Fr Nathan, Ben Maloney, Lydia Wullems and Ana Malferrari for getting Veritas on its feet and creating something that will hopefully see generations of young Catholics through its doors. More information can be found on Veritas' Facebook and Instagram platforms.



Forged participants also enjoyed moments of quiet reflection and prayer.



Many family, friends and parishioners gathered to farewell Fr Don Murray at his Funeral Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral.

FR EDWARD (DON) MURRAY: A LIFE DEVOTED TO FAITH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

INGRID MCTAGGART

Edward Vivian (Don) Murray was born in Toowoomba on 24 May 1931 to Edward Ernest Murray and Mary Jean Vivian Penrose. He had two brothers, Francis and Henry.

Don attended convent schools in Charleville, Emerald and Taroom. He also attended St Mary's College Toowoomba, Quilpie State School and Downlands College.

In 1951, Don started at Pius XII Seminary, Banyo, for senior and priesthood studies. In 1955, at the request of then Bishop of Toowoomba, William Brennan, Don moved to Rome to complete his studies at The Pontifical Urban University and Propaganda College. Fr Don was ordained on 21 December 1960 at the Chapel at Propaganda Fide, Rome, by Cardinal Gregorio Pietro Agagianian.

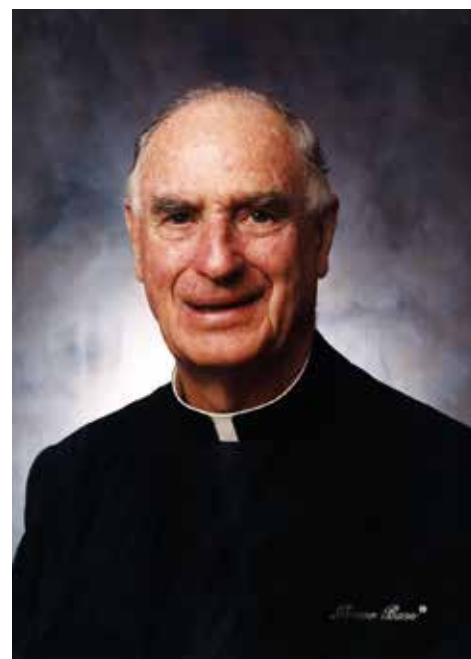
Upon his return to the Toowoomba Diocese, Fr Don was in active ministry from 1961 to 2006. His diocesan appointments included time at Chinchilla, Stanthorpe, Dalby, Miles, Augathella, Wallumbilla and Allora. For 18 months, during his Stanthorpe appointment, Fr Don took leave as Chaplain to CBC Training College,

Mulgoa. He served on the Diocesan Council of Priests from 2000 to 2006.

Fr Don retired from Allora and supplied at weekends in various parish communities in the diocese. He lived privately at Cambooya until ill health in 2019 forced him to move to Vianney Village at Lourdes Home. He died peacefully on 31 December 2023.

At his Funeral Mass, 12 January 2024, Fr Don was remembered as a pastoral and prayerful man with great love and devotion to his family. In his words of remembrance, Fr Terry Hickling described Fr Don's pastoral nature. Even while holidaying at the beach, Fr Don took time to visit former parishioners. "When visiting Warwick, driving with me in the car," recalled Fr Terry, "he would say, 'So-and-so lives here we must go and say hello.'"

Dominic Murray, one of Fr Don's nephews, delivered a heartfelt tribute on behalf of the family. "To many here today, he was Fr Don Murray; to us, his family, he was simply Uncle Don," said Dominic. He recalled many times Fr Don visited with family for big celebrations or



Fr Don Murray

dropping in while passing through town. The last gathering Fr Don attended with family was for a great nephew's birthday. He enjoyed wine, food and catching up with many family members. "He finished the evening with a huge smile, declaring it was the best party ever!"

In Horizons Issue 58, on the occasion of his 60th Anniversary of Ordination, Fr Don humbly observed, "There is nothing particularly remarkable about my priesthood, just a fairly ordinary life." Judging by the number of people gathered to celebrate and remember his life, Fr Don underestimated the impact his ministry had on family, friends, and parishioners.

RITA COLLINS: FIRM IN FAITH, JOYFUL IN HOPE AND ACTIVE IN CHARITY

FR JAMIE COLLINS

Rita was born the eldest daughter of Jack and Mary Maher of Wildash on 24 April 1943. Jack and Mary had six children, Rita, Peter, Paul, Annette, John, and Joan. The Maher Family has been associated with the Wildash district for close to 140 years and continues to do so today.

The Mahers have been generous contributors to community life at Wildash and Warwick over many generations. Mary ran the Wildash Telephone Exchange for most of their married life, with Jack working the farm and milking cows to supply milk and cream to the Warwick Co-operative Dairy Association.

The family has also had a long association with the Wildash Rural Fire Brigade and the Warwick Show and Rodeo Society, an association that continues to this day. Rita herself volunteered at the Warwick Show in the former Horticultural Pavilion for many years.

Rita was sent to Boarding School at Helidon at a young age, along with the older siblings. Rita completed her schooling at the Warwick Convent. Upon leaving school, Rita worked for Fr Mahon in the Parish Office at St Mary's Presbytery. It is believed

she was the first paid office employee at St Mary's.

The church's "Parish Notes", April 1966, announced "Wedding Bells for Mr Frank Collins and Rita Maher on 23 April". Fr Mahon was the celebrant and proposed the toast to the couple at a reception held at the former Langham Hotel (now Condamine Sports Club).

He noted that their union was the coming together of two great families from the Wildash and Willowvale districts. Rita and Frank settled at 7 O'Brien Street in Warwick, where they have lived for 57 years. They went on to have three children, Jamie, Chris and Helen. Chris sadly passed away 18 months ago as the result of a tragic work accident.

In their early married life, Frank would often work weekends meaning Rita would take Helen to highland dancing competitions, Chris to junior rugby league with Collegians Juniors and Jamie to band competitions and festivals with the Warwick City Band.

Rita had a great friendship with Mona Madsen of the Madsen School of Highland Dancing. Together, they



Rita Collins with husband, Frank, at St Mary's Church Warwick.

organised an annual Warwick dancing competition and displays at many local events. Through their friendship, Rita became a great supporter of the Warwick Rodeo Street Parade. With Mona, she helped arrange several floats through the years.

Frank and Rita always wanted the best for their children and encouraged and supported them in each of their sporting and cultural pursuits. In recent years Rita was an active member of the Parish Ladies group at St Mary's.

The main fundraiser for the Parish Ladies was the Annual Cent Sale, which Rita helped organise on many occasions. Money raised from this event has helped support many local and overseas charities. Among the tributes at her funeral, Rita was described as being "firm in faith, joyful in hope and active in charity".

Rita died at St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba on Wednesday morning, 3 January 2024, after an extended period of illness. St Mary's Church in Warwick was filled to capacity with family, friends and community members for her Requiem Mass, celebrated by her son, Fr Jamie Collins, on Saturday, 13 January.

Bishop Ken Howell led the Prayers of Final Commendation and Farewell at the conclusion of the funeral liturgy. Concelebrants included the Warwick priests Rita knew well and several other priests from the Toowoomba Diocese.

An advertisement for 'THE CATHOLIC LEADER'. The background is a solid dark red. At the top, the title 'THE CATHOLIC LEADER' is written in a white serif font. Below it, the text 'Have your Catholic news delivered to your door' is in a smaller white sans-serif font. On the left, there is a small image of the newspaper's front page, which features a religious illustration and the headline 'HE IS RISEN!'. To the right of the image, the text 'To subscribe to home delivery call (07) 3324 3555 or go to catholicleader.com.au' is written in white sans-serif font.



Student leaders were commissioned as Project Compassion ambassadors at the launch of Caritas' annual appeal.

STUDENTS CHALLENGED TO PUT FAITH INTO ACTION AT LOCAL PROJECT COMPASSION LAUNCH

ANGELA TRAVERS

The annual Caritas Project Compassion Launch Mass was held on 11 February, at St Patrick's Cathedral. School students from local Catholic schools and colleges, their families, and staff representatives joined with St Patrick's Cathedral parishioners for the Mass, celebrated by Fr Michael O'Brien.

Caritas Australia representatives Andrew Knife, Alice Carwardine and Sophie Jenkins travelled to Toowoomba for the Mass. Sophie Jenkins shared this year's Project Compassion message with the congregation, inspiring all to create lasting change for all future generations.

We learned about the 2024 Project

Compassion campaign, which brings us the stories of three resilient women from different corners of the world. Though they face vastly different challenges in their day-to-day lives, they are all united by their dream of creating a better tomorrow for all future generations.

There is the story of Memory from Malawi, who trained to become a carpenter to support her family. There are also the stories of Ronita, a mother of two living in a slum in the Philippines who went back to school to support her children and forge a path out of poverty. And Leaia, who, through hard work and determination, is building a better

life for herself and her five children.

The school leaders were specially commissioned and blessed to be Caritas ambassadors in their school communities. Each school was given a lantern to take back to their school communities, spreading the light of Christ through word and action to make the world a better and more just place for all. The students were challenged to put faith and compassion into action to create lasting change for generations to come. Following Mass, all joined in for a shared morning tea in the gardens of the Cathedral.



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DIOCESE IN BRIEF

STORM KING YOUTH CAMP TRIUMPH SELINA VENIER



This year's inaugural 2-4 January Storm King Youth Camp exceeded the expectations of organisers and participants alike, with the January 2025 event already in the making.

More than 120 participants attended on the shores of Storm King Dam in Stanthorpe, key instigator and teenager Vayda Heads saying the goal was to "create a safe place where young Christian people could come together to deepen their faith, foster lasting friendships and grow in their relationship with God".

"Vayda had a beautiful request and it was three months in the planning," lead organiser Gerry Purcell, who invited Toowoomba diocesan priest, Fr Tom Duncan and the Sisters of the Morning Star, from Mitchelton, Brisbane, to attend, said. "We went out on a limb ... (but) the grace of God was evident at the camp.

"The vision for next one is that the faith and friendships will grow ... (and) after such a strong start, next year will be organised on an even larger level."

For more information visit <https://stormkingyouthcamp.wixsite.com/info>



Ecumenical Pastoral Carers for Toowoomba and Region gathered in prayer on World Day of the Sick at Middle Ridge Uniting Church. As part of the service, Pastoral Carers were Commissioned for 2024.





SO, WHAT IS OUR CORE BUSINESS?

DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

From time to time every organisation has cause to seriously consider this question – so, what is our core business? Strongly presented arguments challenging the long-held view about the core business of Catholic schooling are becoming more common. These formidable arguments seem to be signalling a shift away from what has been a traditional understanding of our core business to a more corporatized notion of compliance and governance. Much of the new rhetoric surrounding school leadership is sounding more administrative than educational and the language of schools is starting to sound alarmingly industrial and business-like with references to ‘customers’, ‘commodities’ and ‘products’.

Catholic schools are different. They are not factories or businesses, they are places of human development, places of potential, not products. They have business-like activities which serve to support their genuine core business of providing high-quality teaching and learning within a distinctively Catholic community.

Another way to define our core business is in the hopes and aspirations we hold for our students.

- 1. To enable students to discover and nurture their individual talents, empowering them to lead full and flourishing lives;**
- 2. To enable students to develop for themselves a framework of values and beliefs that they will serve them beyond schooling, to build on and modify throughout their lives;**
- 3. To develop students’ interpersonal skills so they can have positive and enriching relationships with others;**
- 4. To prepare students for fulfilling and productive working lives;**

- 5. To prepare students to be thoughtful and contributing participants in a democratic society; and**
- 6. To prepare students to be confident, capable and contributing participants in the global community and economy.**

Adapted from “Schools Speaking for Themselves: Telling the Real Story” (2018)

We cannot waver on this commitment to keep the formation and nurturing of students at the centre of all we do and resist the growing temptation to turn schools into factories and businesses. That would be a sure sign that we have abandoned our core business and our Catholic identity.



L to R: Sue Keefer (Education Officer at TCSO), Bec Lopez (UniSQ Pre-Service Teacher) and Rachel Harlen (St Saviour's Primary School teacher).

NEW APPROACH TO READING ROLLED OUT

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE



The Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office is leading a new Diocesan Approach to Reading (DAR) project, which was recently rolled out across the Toowoomba Diocese. This has been driven by curriculum changes and current research on the science of reading. These sessions outlined the key messages and new approaches in line with Australian Curriculum V9 English and are designed to build upon the Reading Improvement Strategy (RIS).

This professional development occurred over three days across seven venues, which included over 600 teaching staff members from the 26 diocesan primary schools. This was a team effort between all the education officers and inclusion staff in Education Services.

The strength of DAR is that it is based on the Australian Curriculum, backed by research and strengthened by a common approach in every

primary school classroom across the Toowoomba Diocese. In early January, all primary school teachers participated in professional development so that they could begin a three-year implementation journey to embed DAR in their classrooms. All Toowoomba Catholic Schools will be implementing Australian Curriculum V9 English in 2024, which is three years ahead of the required deadline of 2027.

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NEW PRINCIPALS READY TO INSPIRE STUDENTS AND STAFF

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Introducing new principals to Toowoomba Catholic Schools for 2024. These dedicated educators bring their passion and expertise to their respective schools, ready to lead and inspire their students and staff.



Jim Brennan

Principal of St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Jim's exceptional leadership skills were evident during his tenure as Principal of St John's School in Roma. With a proven track record of fostering high performance and student achievement, Jim is committed to creating an educational environment that supports the holistic growth of all learners. By fostering collaboration and continuous improvement, Jim is dedicated to ensuring the ongoing success of St Joseph's College.



Jessica Wade

Principal of St Saviour's College

Jessica, previously the Deputy Principal: Teaching and Learning at St Saviour's College, brings a vibrant passion for the college's success. With her extensive experience in leadership roles at other esteemed institutions, including St Mary's College and St Joseph's College in Toowoomba, Jessica's strategic vision and educational expertise will continue to drive the excellent educational outcomes across a range of pathways at St Saviour's College.



Michelle Sanders

Principal of St Joseph's School, Millmerran

Michelle's exceptional performance as Assistant Principal Religious Education at St Joseph's School led to her appointment as Principal. Michelle's dedication to her community, both within the school and beyond, makes her an excellent fit for the role. With a wealth of experience and qualifications, including a Masters of Religious Education, Michelle is committed to building on the positive profile of St Joseph's School and fostering faith and learning within the community.

Mark Watson Principal of St John's School, Roma

Mark's wealth of experience and expertise in education make him an invaluable asset to St John's School. With his background as Assistant Principal: Curriculum at St Mary's College and his unwavering commitment to excellence, Mark is well-equipped to lead St John's School towards progress and continued improvement. His exceptional qualities and leadership capabilities will undoubtedly contribute to the school's ongoing success.



Lisa Cavanagh

Principal of Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

Lisa's qualifications and experience make her an ideal fit for the role of Principal at Holy Name Primary School. With her Master of Religious Education and Master of Education-Special Education, Lisa brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the position. Her dedication to fostering a positive school culture and supporting the potential of both students and staff will allow them to achieve their full potential.

Sam Hannant

Principal of St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Sam clearly demonstrated his ability to lead a high performing school and the exemplary record in student achievement at St Saviour's will be further enhanced by Sam's appointment. With his ongoing pursuit of higher education, including undertaking a Master of Philosophy and completing a Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership, Sam brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for creating an inspiring Catholic school environment. Sam believes that every student deserves an inspiring Catholic school environment that prepares them to be expert, lifelong learners and positive members of society.



Kylie Williams

Principal of St Joseph's School, Tara

As the acting principal of St Joseph's School, Tara, Kylie has already made a significant impact on student learning outcomes, community engagement, and staff well-being. With her commitment to creating a safe and productive learning environment, Kylie is well-prepared to continue developing the school. Her Master of Education in Mathematics and Religious Education provide her with the knowledge and expertise necessary to lead St Joseph's School towards ongoing success.

Deidre Young

Principal of St Ursula's College, Toowoomba

Deidre's whole-hearted passion for girls' education within a Catholic school setting is evident in her successful tenure as the Foundation Principal of McAuley College. With her extensive education and leadership qualifications, including a Masters in Educational Management, Deidre is well-prepared to lead St Ursula's College towards collaborative improvement. Through her commitment to excellence and her expertise in various leadership dimensions, Deidre ensures the continued success of St Ursula's College.



Angela Collins

Principal of St Mary's School, Goondiwindi

Angela Collins, the newly appointed Principal of St Mary's School, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position. With her role as Assistant Principal Mission and Identity at St Ursula's College, as well as previous positions at St Mary's College and St Joseph's College, Angela is well-versed in the opportunities provided by a Catholic education. Her community-minded approach and commitment to the Goondiwindi community ensure a strong partnership between the school and its surroundings.



Bridget Trenerry

Principal of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Toowoomba

Bridget's extensive leadership experience and diverse roles within schools make her an excellent fit for the position of Principal at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. With her Bachelor of Teaching Primary, Graduate Diploma of Religious Education, and ongoing pursuit of a Master of Education Leadership, Bridget is dedicated to guiding the community through the next phase of its growth. Her well-rounded qualifications and expertise in behaviour management ensure a positive and thriving learning environment.

★ These new principals, along with the existing principals at Toowoomba Catholic Schools, are committed to **fostering a positive and enriching learning environment for all students.** ★



2024 Graduate Teachers

GRADUATE TEACHERS EAGER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Toowoomba Catholic Schools is thrilled to announce the addition of exceptional graduate teachers to our esteemed group of educators across the Toowoomba Diocese. These new teachers are set to make a difference in the lives of their students and are eager to embark on their teaching careers. We spoke to four graduate teachers about what inspired them to become teachers and what they are most excited about in their first year.

Gabby Brac, a new graduate teacher joining Mater Dei Primary School in Toowoomba, is excited about the prospect of having her own class and being able to impart her knowledge and wisdom to students. She firmly believes that education has the power to shape young minds and is committed to providing a nurturing and engaging learning environment. Her passion for teaching started as a School Based Apprentice at St Thomas More's School in Toowoomba where she was inspired to continue this career path. Gabby knew she had to work in education from a young age and one day hopes to teach in developing countries.

Merryn Gaggi, who is joining St Patrick's

School in St George, is determined to make a positive impact on the world. Eager to immerse herself in the vibrant community, she looks forward to getting involved in the various opportunities a small community offers. Merryn's enthusiasm and dedication are sure to inspire her students.

Tarah-Lea Rival said that working at St Joseph's College in Toowoomba as a School Officer inspired her to continue with her education degree. She was also encouraged by the supportive community at the College. Tarah-Lea is excited to give back to the community that influenced her own educational journey. She looks forward to nurturing her students and providing them with the tools they need to succeed.

Zac Storey, a proud Dalby local, will be teaching at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College in Dalby. With a lifetime dedicated to learning, Zac sees

teaching as an opportunity to share his knowledge and experiences to make a positive impact. Building upon his existing connections within the school community, Zac is ready to empower his students to reach their full potential.

Toowoomba Catholic Schools welcomes all of our new graduate teachers and will provide them with many opportunities to foster their professional growth and development. As a community, we are excited to witness the incredible impact they will have on their students and look forward to the achievements they will inspire.

Holy Name Primary School

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EDUCATION IN BRIEF

On 8 February, St Anthony's School Toowoomba celebrated the beginning of a new school year and to induct Year 6 school leaders for 2024.

Fr Jamie Collins emphasised the important role we all play in contributing to our community. If we all strive to be kind, be fair, be honest, be respectful, be inclusive, be engaged, be persistent, be curious, be a communicator, and be proud we will be laying the foundation for a successful and rewarding path as we journey on our St Anthony's Way.

The symbol of Nano Nagle's lantern is an important one for our school as it reminds us that we all have a responsibility to be a community that shines a light of love to all.



On 9 February, St Mary's School Charleville celebrated their leadership Mass. Year 6 leaders received their badges. The students also created a patchwork banner, which was used to decorate the front of the altar for the special Mass.



TRIP OF A LIFETIME A LESSON IN TEAMWORK

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

At the beginning of January, Year 10 student Ashlin Searle had the honour of being selected to join a crew of young Australians embarking on a life-changing 11-day journey on the Young Endeavour. The group learned how to sail a square-rigged tall ship, lead, support others, and work together as a team.

“The Young Endeavour was a great opportunity that taught me and helped me improve many skills that I will need in the future.” Ashlin said of the experience, “I wholeheartedly recommend it to all other students

as a challenging, but fun and engaging, adventure. I would also like to say thank you to the Stanthorpe RSL-Sub Branch who kindly sponsored me for this trip.”

Ashlin follows her older sister, Elizabeth, who sailed on the Young Endeavour a few years ago. Well done, Ashlin, on an amazing feat!



Ashlin Searle.



Principal Andrew Kendall with 2024 Prep student, Barry Jurd.

HATS ON FOR STANTHORPE 2024 PREPS

JULIE-ANN SPILLER

It's always heartening to hear about the continued support and initiatives from the Parents & Friends Association at St Joseph's School Stanthorpe as another schooling year commences. Their dedication to purchasing Prep hats for the 2024 Prep students not only ensures practical benefits but also cultivates a strong sense of belonging and identity among the students right from the start of their educational journey.

The ceremony where all Prep students received their hats on 24 January, led by P & F President and school's Adopt-a-Cop, Sergeant Dan O'Dea, was a significant and memorable event for everyone involved. The P & F involvement highlights the importance of community support in education and reinforces the sense of unity within the school.

This year also began a new tradition of Prep students ringing the school bell at the beginning of their educational journey. This beautiful and symbolic gesture echoes the Year 12 students who ring the bell at graduation. The tradition establishes a meaningful connection between the beginning and end of their schooling journey and also strengthens the school's culture by promoting unity among students of all grades.

Overall, the efforts of the P & F Association and the school administration play a vital role in creating a nurturing and inclusive environment where students can thrive and feel connected to their school community. It's through such collaborative efforts that the spirit of community and support thrives in educational institutions like St Joseph's School Stanthorpe.



Fr Shane Carr addressing students during the Opening Eucharist.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

ANDREA COLLINS

2024 will be a very special year for MSC people the world over, as March 15 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of our founder, Fr Jules Chevalier. On this special occasion, the four Australian MSC Colleges look forward to celebrating with MSC clergy and laity all over the world to mark this important milestone.

At the start of this new year, Downlands welcomed the return of Fr Vince Carroll, who is enjoying a slightly different pace working on a range of projects as he spends time at Downlands, the Taroom parish and other places of MSC significance. We extend a hearty welcome to Fr Shane Carr, who comes to us most recently from Sacred Heart Parish Cunnamulla, where he was the parish administrator. Fr Shane brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as a liturgist, teacher and counsellor and has already made a dynamic mark at our liturgies. We are grateful for the wonderful presence of our MSC priests at Downlands and look forward to visits from other MSC clergy throughout 2024.

The Downlands theme for 2024 is “Come with Courage and Find Peace”. It follows the previous two themes, “Come to the Table” (2022) and “Come, Walk with Us, Grow” (2023), giving a nod to the liturgical number of three. These three years highlight a distinctive period of change and growth in the Downlands’ 93-year history, now as a Prep – Year

12 college. The word “come” is both an invitation and a challenge as we invite our community to come with courage to explore the MSC spirituality of the Sacred Heart. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, offers a place of rest and peace for those who are prepared to adopt and live the values of kindness, generosity, and compassion that He espouses. References to the Good Shepherd feature in both the Old and New Testament, as well as the extensive writing of Fr Jules, all of which helps us to understand a God who knows and loves each person. Most people are aware of Psalm 23, which begins:

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down
in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths
of righteousness
for his name's sake.*

This psalm was sung so beautifully at our Opening Eucharist, where our Seniors of 2024 were commissioned. This Mass that introduced our 2024 student leaders to the school community was a wonderful way to showcase the extraordinary depth of leadership that exists in the College. Every Year 12 student is to be commended on how they exemplify the servant leadership



Downlands student, Thomas Pikramenos, participated in the school's Opening Eucharist.

style of the good shepherding.

Marking the commencement of this period, we recall St Oscar Romero’s “Be More” theme of a past Caritas Project Compassion launch. St Oscar Romero inspires us not to have more, but to be more. As the beacon of hope and courage in El Salvador – Oscar Romero’s country was ravaged by poverty and sorrow. His dedication to social justice and Catholic social teaching, particularly the preferential option of the poor, earned him the title of Patron of Caritas Internationalis.

This year’s theme is “For All Future Generations” and once again, Caritas Australia has sent us resources that tell the stories of three different people who are calling on us to be more. When we be more, we help others be more to the communities that they represent. We encourage every person at Downlands to be part of the Caritas Project Compassion campaign to make a real difference in the lives of people who need our support. In so doing, we actively contribute to a more just and compassionate world.

TURNING TABLES: WHEN THE STUDENT BECOMES THE PRINCIPAL

ELLIE JOLLEY

When Jim Brennan found himself standing in the Principal's office in 1981, he never dreamed that he would one day be the man sitting in the boss's chair of St Joseph's College.

While he is delighted to be returning to his old school, which he attended from 1981-1982, Jim admits the feeling is surreal.

"It's quite amazing to see how the College has transformed and grown since I attended," says Jim.

"When I came to St Joseph's, it was still an all-boys school, Brother Fogarty was the Principal, Peter Kenny was the Deputy Principal, and I was taught by Mr Allen. My memories of that time include wearing the classic purple tracksuits with gold piping and playing rugby union. I think I played in an Under 15 side, and I was twelve at the time so that was a pretty steep learning curve, but it was a wonderful way to build bonds and memories."

Over the last few weeks, Jim has been immersing himself in the College Community, getting to know the students, parents, and staff.

Jim's vision for his principalship at St Joseph's College is to continue the well-established culture of the College and the high standards set by its staff and students.

"As a Principal, I want to see that every young person, whilst they are improving, is not satisfied with just passing. We want to maximise the full potential of our young people," says Jim.

"There are two things in my experience that underpin high-performing schools, and that's high standards



Jim Brennan returns to St Joseph's College as the principal.

and positive relationships," says Jim.

In recent years, St Joseph's College has achieved great advancements, driven by its dedicated Senior Leadership Team and staff to meet the Towards 2024 Strategic Plan. So not only has Jim inherited a school that is striving for excellence across all areas of the school, but also a school undergoing a major building project. On Jim's arrival at the College, Phase 1 of this project is nearing completion, while the work for Phase 2 has just begun which consists of three science classrooms, a prep lab, nine general classrooms, several multipurpose spaces, four offices, a senior student lounge, a gym and bathroom facilities.

"If you want good learning to occur, then you need to put young people in quality surroundings, and the Mary Rice extension is a great example of that," says Jim.

Jim's diverse career in Education has taken him across the state with positions in Glenden, Emerald,

Roma, Oakey, and Toowoomba.

Under Jim's considerable expertise and guidance, the future of St Joseph's College continues to burn brightly, and the College looks forward to nurturing this partnership in the coming years.



Jim Brennan in Year 8 in 1982.



STUDENTS ARE SUPERSTARS IN NATIVITY PLAY

SANDRA BROOKES

At Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby, we performed a nativity play with a twist. In this play the stars are applying for the position of superstar to lead in the celestial choir. This competition takes place at the same time as the nativity story. The superstar is unknowingly guiding the shepherds to Joseph and Mary. Our students loved the experience of showcasing this fantastic play, which was a different presentation of how Jesus was born. We asked some of our students to give their perspectives of the story and explain what this means to them in their own words.

Our innkeeper, Will, owns the barn where Jesus was born and the inns in the town. Will says that the storyline is that the star gets a notice that there will be competition for having the title name of a superstar in the play. The wise men (apprentices) and shepherds are following the star. The innkeepers direct Mary and Joseph to their stable. Will says

that the best part of the play is owning the inns. "The story made me feel good about being a part of the play," said Will.

Lexis is our shepherd who gets to sing and speak. Eve gets to play the role of the superstar. She is a dazzling star in the sky for the wise men to follow to Bethlehem. The innkeepers help Mary and Joseph to the barn where they can stay. The shepherds follow the star, and that's the end. Lexis was thrilled to be able to perform in front of people. The story means that we can remember that Jesus was born.

Eve, who played our star, guide the wise men and all the other people who came to see Jesus. The storyline is that stars are trying out for the part to guide the people to Jesus. The wise men and the shepherds are trying to find Jesus, which they do in the end. Eve loves how the students get to perform for lots of people and how we're all a

part of it. The story means a lot to Eve because we are the main part of the play, and we only get to do it one time.

Matilda got to play a pop star. She is part of the group of stars that are auditioning for the position of the star in the night sky that guides everyone to Jesus. Matilda starts off as a bossy star who wants the play's lead role. Matilda has the job of counting the stars to keep everyone together. The stars audition for the title role in the play, the wise men go to Herod's palace, the travellers walk past but don't help Mary and Joseph, and then the shepherds fear the angels. Matilda loves that we can have the privilege of having mics to project our voices. Matilda loves how the students get to sing and spread the word of Jesus being born. The play's story means a lot to Matilda because we get such a happy feeling that Jesus was born and he shaped the world.



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OUR SACRAMENTAL JOURNEYS

After months of preparation for sacraments in schools and parishes, many across our diocese have been celebrating the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. Thank you to parents, teachers and parishioners who have helped guide the children through these important milestones in their faith journey in the Catholic Church.



Confirmation candidate from Crows Nest, Summer Fowler. Cutting the cake in celebration are Bishop Ken Howell, Summer Fowler and Fr Nandana Saparamadu.



First Communion candidates from Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba. Celebrating with Fr Roque Maguinsay, family and friends after Mass.

MINI-LIBRARY A BIG SUCCESS FOR AUGATHELLA

CARRIE LOCK

Parishioners at St Patrick's Parish Augathella were delighted to receive their first Rural Library, a mini-library of spiritual books from Sychar House of Prayer and Spirituality in Toowoomba.

These mini-libraries are a fantastic service provided by Sychar to rural parishes. The selection of books and other media arrived housed in an attractive cabinet shaped like a house.

Initially, a parishioner in Augathella contacted Sychar House to see if it was possible to borrow a couple of books for her own reading. She was delighted to discover that it was actually possible to receive about twenty books in a mini-

library that could be shared more broadly. All that was required was for someone to take responsibility for the books as the mini-librarian.

The parish is currently promoting the mini-library in the town and has created a poster to welcome all town residents to browse or borrow. There has been interest from Catholics and non-Catholics, including spiritual seekers. As local resident Peter said, "I look forward to viewing the books. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to borrow quality spiritual books and to explore new topics."



Augathella parishioner, Carrie Lock, perusing one of Sychar's Rural Libraries.

Augathella recommends this service to other rural parishes. If your community is interested in arranging a Rural Library, contact Sr Elaine Morzone at emorzone@twb.catholic.org.au or sychar@twb.catholic.org.au

PARISH

HIGHFIELDS PUTS OUT THE WELCOME MAT FOR NEW BISHOP

PATTI MCNAUGHT

On 10 December 2023, Bishop Ken Howell visited Highfields to celebrate Mass with us, with Fr Brian Noonan concelebrating. This was our official welcome to Bishop Ken from our wonderful St Mary MacKillop Parish community.

The bishop's visit was advertised in our bulletin for some time, and our parishioners were waiting with excited anticipation for his arrival. We were all asked to wear our name tags so the bishop would know the person he met. On his arrival, parishioners welcomed him at the front entrance, and at once, he put us all at ease with his very personable demeanour.

It was the second Sunday of Advent, and the altar looked resplendent in



L to R: Seminarian BJ Perrett, Bishop Ken Howell and Fr Brian Noonan.

purple. The four advent candles were placed beside the altar. A reminder of the four Sundays of Advent representing hope, peace, joy, and love. Each year, there is beauty in reflecting upon how Jesus delivers these virtues to the world and our lives.

The Mass was very beautiful, and it felt so special to us to have Bishop Ken process to the altar with Fr Brian

joined by visiting Seminarian BJ Perrett. Bishop Ken's homily was very inspiring, as were his words of encouragement towards the community.

One of the highlights of the visit was spending time with the bishop, having a cuppa, and chatting after Mass. Thank you so much, Bishop Ken, for allowing us to welcome you to our place of worship in Highfields.

GOONDI-BOUND FR BONY

GERARD WALSH –
TOWN AND COUNTRY JOURNAL

More than 120 parishioners of St Mary's Catholic parish attended a farewell on Sunday, February 4, for Fr Bony Abraham who served in the parish for three years.

Fr Bony left Warwick to take up a role as administrator of Goondiwindi parish.

Parish Pastoral Council chairman Justin Walsh said Fr Bony embodied a spirit of power, love and self-discipline, aspects of the Gospel which he quoted in his sermons at Masses on his last weekend in Warwick.

"He was instrumental in preparing children for the sacraments and in the formation of a youth group which went on to become a mission team which travelled to India in December last year," Mr Walsh said.

"Fr Bony was heavily involved in retreats, formation programs and talking to students at Assumption College and St Mary's School. In recent months, he has facilitated retreats in Melbourne, Perth and many parts of Queensland and is highly sought after for his ability to relate to the younger generation on faith issues."

"Many parishioners of St Mary's expressed gratitude to Fr Bony for reigniting their faith in God. He was highly regarded by people of all faiths."

Fr Bony led the mission in December where he took nine members of the St Mary's Youth Group to India where they met people with disabilities, painted buildings for the missions, just two aspects of their missionary work, and met many of the youth of India.

He arrived in Warwick in December, 2020, returning to ministry after a four-year hiatus.

"The choice to be in Warwick was a gradual entry into ministry, and over the last three years, it has become a profound experience of community," he said.

"Warwick, with its welcoming atmosphere and strong emphasis on community and family values, has captured my heart.

"The Catholic community here has been exceptionally generous and supportive throughout my time.



Fr Bony Abraham cuts his farewell cake after three years at St Mary's. Parish Pastoral Council chairman Justin Walsh is at right. Photo Gerard Walsh/Town and Country Journal.

"As I bid farewell, I am moved by the overwhelming love and appreciation shown to me by the community."

"I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to work with young people in both our Catholic schools and those connected to the parish," Fr Bony said.

"The companionship of Fr Franco and Fr Terry has been not only supportive but also formative.

"The unconditional love and acceptance extended to me, both as a priest and as an individual, have taken me by surprise. I express my gratitude to all the wonderful people I encountered in gyms, community events, volunteering places, the Warwick Boxing Club, and beyond.

"Having spent the last 20 years of my life in Australia, predominantly in large cities, I've come to realise the power and beauty of living in a small community. Thank you, Warwick, for being such a lovely part of my world. I am truly blessed to have spent three remarkable years in this welcoming and embracing community."

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www.smallnewspaper.com.au
editor@thedailyjournal.ink*



St Mary's Youth Group members (from left) Yasmin Scott, Juliana Cruda, Fr Bony Abraham, Erin Walsh and Emma Spencer at Assisi Place for Fr Bony Abraham's farewell. Photo Gerard Walsh/Town and Country Journal.



Even the wooden spoon winning last place team finished the night with a smile on their face.

NO QUESTION TRIVIA NIGHT A SUCCESS

PATTI MCNAUGHT

Q. What do you do on a hot summer night, watch TV at home under the air conditioner?

A. No. You go and have a ball at the Parish Trivia Night.

In early November 2023, our Parish Council hosted their first Trivia Night since COVID-19. It had been planned for some time, and a lot of thought was put into this night. As it was a fundraising venture, we sent out invitations to parishes in the diocese and to various businesses in Highfields. The response was overwhelming, and people started organising their teams of eight. Sometimes, the whole family was keen to attend, and

multiple tables were booked. There was to be a full house on the night.

As a lot of work goes into making something like this a great success, each member of the Parish Council was delegated a special job. This year, the MC, who had done a wonderful job for so many years, was on holiday, so we approached our favourite Irishman, Mark Casey, who was very keen. The bar was capably run by Tony Hynes, an old hand at this job as he had done this for many years. The largest task on the night was the preparation of the questions. Mark Silvester did a very professional job of this. Accolades must go to him for his time and patience in preparing this arduous task.

Every Parish Councillor went about their designated job with ease. The parishioners who arrived to set up in the afternoon were mind-blowing. With so many helpers, the hall was ready in record time.

Babysitting was available to allow parents to relax and enjoy themselves, and various competitions were held during the night. As phones and iPads

were banned, we spent most of the week studying, even though we had no idea what questions would be asked. People with young, sharp minds fared quite well, but we poor oldies forgot most of it when we arrived, even though we had studied all week. Some of us just popped in the names of the people that were at the tables. This added to the fun because some of the answers were hilarious.

Our MC extraordinaire was in fine form and did a fantastic job throughout the night with his quick wit, fun demeanour and Irish accent, which added to the night's success. The multi-draws were a great success this year. Parish Council Chair, Nikki Tonkin congratulated the winning team, and thanked everyone for coming. Thank you to College Principal Chris Gabbett, for allowing us to have the hall once again, and the Parish Council Members for their hard work prior to, and during the night, allowing us to have an amazing event. We all realised how much we missed this night.

We look forward to seeing what the Parish Council has in mind for next year's Trivia Night.



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FAREWELL AND GOD BLESS FR HERMI

KARRA SUHR

In a bittersweet moment for the St Mary's Parish Goondiwindi community, we bid farewell to our spiritual leader, Fr Hermi Rafada, who has devoted six remarkable years to our parish and school. Though tinged with sadness, his departure marks the beginning of a new chapter in his journey as he moves on to Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba.

Fr Hermi has been an integral part of our community, leaving a lasting mark on the hearts of those he has touched. His dedication, compassion, and commitment to spiritual guidance have enriched the lives of parishioners and students alike. Many of us will also miss his jokes and great sense of fun.

Throughout his six years at St Mary's Parish, Fr Hermi has been instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and faith among our community members. His warm presence, engaging homilies and genuine concern for others around him have created an environment that will be remembered for years to come.

As Fr Hermi embarks on his new venture in Toowoomba, we extend our heartfelt thanks for his selfless service, dedication and the countless blessings he has shared with us. The memories of his time here will forever hold a special place in the hearts of the St Mary's community.

While we bid farewell to Fr Hermi, we also welcome a new chapter with the arrival of Fr Bony Abraham, who will be stepping into the role. Fr Bony comes to us from Warwick, bringing with him a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective. We look forward to the new energy and guidance he will bring to our community.

Farewell, Fr Hermi Rafada; your presence will be sorely missed. May your future endeavours be as bright as the light you have shared with us.



Parishioners at Our Lady Queen Church at Weengallon farewell Fr Hermi Rafada.



Parishioner Rose, with the parish choir, sings for Fr Hermi Rafada at the conclusion of his farewell Mass.



Sacred Heart parishioners process with Blessed Sacrament for the Solemnity of Christ the King.

FAITH ALIVE AT SACRED HEART

JOUSHA YU-YAP
AND OWEN WEBB

Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba has had several remarkable events and activities that have kept its parishioners spiritually nourished and connected. From Christ The King Procession to All Saints' Day, Nativity Play and much more. The parish is grateful for the support it has received from the community.

On 23 November 2023, the parish marked the Solemnity of Christ the King with a noble procession of the Blessed Sacrament. This is the spirit, life and blood of Sacred Heart and that of the Universal Church - the Eucharist. Led by a company of servers and children distributing flowers, the faithful left the church, processing along the side of the grounds before returning to the church for Benediction and Adoration. The parish has long been a centre of Eucharistic devotion and maintains a strong commitment to allowing the faithful access to the Blessed Sacrament through several activities such as Adoration and monthly Mercy Nights. If Sacred Heart Parish had to be summed up in a single word, it would be the Eucharist.



Nativity play, lead by Sacred Heart Parish youth.

All Saints' Day on 1 November was a special day for the parish as parishioners came to Mass dressed as their favourite saints. After Mass, volunteers crafted games themed on the lives of these great men, women and children. It was a fun but solemn reminder of our own call to holiness.

Costumes came out again for the Nativity Play as Christmas approached, a longstanding tradition of Sacred Heart spanning more than 20 years. In 2023, the youth took on the responsibility of presenting a short performance before the Christmas Eve Mass. With innkeepers, Roman soldiers and a multitude of angels, the play was a beautiful representation of the Nativity Story, complete with light and music, in all its beauty.

Another landmark event in Sacred Heart's calendar is the Misa de Gallo. For the nine days leading up to Christmas, the community gathered for Mass at 4:30 am each day, followed by mouth-watering refreshments and conversation. The dawn aspect of the Novena serves as a practical reminder of our hope and longing for the birth of our King, the radiant star of the nations, who will bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

The parish has a lot to look forward to in the coming year as it continues its mission of spreading the Good News and helping its members grow in faith and holiness. If you want to see more photos and videos of these and future events, you can check out our Facebook and Instagram pages @ Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba.

FOND FAREWELL FOR FR ROQUE

THOMAS WEBB

At the end of January this year, after over a decade of service to Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba, Fr Roque Maguinsay retired from his appointment as Parish Priest to take up a new role within the PACEM order. Bishop Ken Howell thanked him for his work and wished him all the best in his new appointment in the Philippines. “We sincerely thank Fr Roque for his ministry in the Diocese for almost 12 years and wish him every blessing in his new role.”

On 28 January 2024, the parish held a farewell morning tea for Fr Roque to thank him for his dedicated service to the faithful who are Sacred Heart Parish. In his homily, Fr Roque reminded the parish of its own missionary calling, saying that, “We are all missionaries because the whole world is our great mission.” He restated the core essence of Sacred Heart Parish being the Eucharist, calling the parishioners to deeper prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. “The solution is already there,” he said, “Jesus is already there.” Members of the parish presented Fr Roque with some small gifts in gratitude for his leadership over the years. “Grace does not come from me; it comes from God,” he said.

The Parish is happy and blessed to welcome Fr Hermi Rafada, previously at Goondiwindi, as our new Parish Priest.



Fr Roque Maguinsay

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

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540,000 BEADS OF SWEAT AND FAITH

FR MICHAEL O'BRIEN

*HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE
THE LORD IS WITH YOU.*

For Theresa Blatchly, the presence of Christ has been close to her throughout life. Theresa and her group of helpers spend many hours making sets of rosary beads to be distributed primarily to the schools of our diocese.

Theresa has been responsible for more than 9,007 sets of rosary beads, which are accompanied by a little booklet explaining how to pray the Rosary.

BLESSED ARE YOU AMONGST WOMEN, AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB, JESUS.

Praying the Rosary at least three times a day, Theresa feels the presence of Mary as she contemplates the story of Christ and Mary's role in bringing the redeemer into human history. Theresa, a daily Mass attendee at St Patrick's Cathedral, follows a simple expression of faith, finding Christ in the Eucharist and humble prayer at home. Not only is the creation of the sets of rosaries of personal value to those who receive them, but it offers a meditative experience for Theresa in making them.

HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US SINNERS NOW, AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH. Theresa's love of Christ and prayer goes back to her childhood. She recalled when she was in grade one, in the old "readers" of the time, there was a story of a grandfather and grandson collecting wood. A bundle of sticks was given to the son to break, but he couldn't because, unlike individual pieces, a bundle is too difficult to break. This story stuck with Theresa, and when she later encountered the story again, it was in relation to a talk by Louis-Marie de Montfort, who had a great devotion to the Rosary. This deepened Theresa's understanding that if we pray together, we are stronger as we support and strengthen each other, like a bundle of sticks that cannot be broken.



Theresa Blatchly with her latest batch of hand made rosary beads.



Theresa Blatchly (top left) with volunteers creating rosary beads and how-to-pray booklets.

It is this image that drives Theresa to continue to make rosary beads so more young people will know the power of prayer and encourage others to pray with them, bringing them closer to

knowing the presence of a loving God that guides them to new life. A mighty effort, Theresa, and we thank you for your devotion, especially to our school children in the Toowoomba Diocese.

PARISH IN BRIEF



St George CWL and Vinnies ladies at their annual Christmas luncheon on 13 December 2023. The ladies also celebrated Gwen Lyons' 80th birthday.



Fr Tom Duncan blessing the home of Lynn and David Bowden. Fr Tom offered the Blessing and Chalking of the home to several parishioners on the Feast of the Epiphany. This was done with a blessing at the door of the home and "chalking" of the door. Then each room in the home was blessed with holy water that had been blessed on the eve of the Epiphany according to ancient custom.



Fr Tom Duncan led the Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Service at Roma. He was assisted in the readings and distribution of ashes by representatives of the following Christian Churches Rev Heather Deardon (Anglican), Lyn Kajewski (Uniting) and Paul Sheaf (Lutheran). Fr Tom reminded the congregation that Lent is a time of fasting, prayer and resisting temptation.

St John's School teacher, Carmel Treasure, and school Choir introduced some new hymns to the congregation. The students practised in their own time to add a distinctive voice to the service.

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Horizons

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