

CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



"Wild party girl" becomes contemplative nun
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A family affair in West Wyalong
PAGE 20

Wishing all our readers and their families a safe, happy and holy Christmas



FREE

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Reaching out this Christmas

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

Catholics have been urged to "challenge the self-centred commercial mindset" of Christmas and focus instead on their relationships with loved ones and Jesus.

President of the St Vincent de Paul Society (Canberra/Goulburn) Frank Brassil also encouraged families to give generously to people in need.

"Whatever you give to someone you love this Christmas, give that also to someone else," Mr Brassil said. "In that way, you're inviting one more person to your Christmas."

"We have a moral obligation to share our gifts with those who have less and parents should explain to their kids that there are needy people in our community who we should help."

"If we can get the contamination of the commercial world out of it, Christmas is about family and faith and relationships. We should be simple in what we give and expect."

Archbishop Christopher and former Governor-General Sir William Deane launched the Vinnies 2014 Christmas Appeal last month. It hopes to raise more than \$300,000.

Hundreds of Vinnies volunteers from across the Archdiocese will distribute more than 2000 hampers to needy families this Christmas.

The Society was founded by French man Frederic Ozanam in 1833 and started in Australia 21 years later.



Single mother of four Kellie Kirchner says Vinnies has helped her through tough times. "It's a beautiful organisation which has supported me and my children so much," the Charnwood Mum said. PHOTO: LOUISE SELJA

The biggest lay Catholic organisation in the country, with 40,000 members, Vinnies's work in the Archdiocese includes:

- The 'night patrol' providing

food to Canberra's rough sleepers;

- Crisis accommodation at Samaritan House at Hackett;
- Home visitation service, by

Parish Conferences, which responds to more than 17,500 calls for help every year.

- School holiday camps for vulnerable children and teenagers.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

- As a university student in Paris in the 1830s, Frederic Ozanam was struck by poor families who had been affected by the cholera epidemic.

- A taunt from an anti-religious opponent in a debate prompted him to act. "You, who pride yourself on your Catholicity, what are you doing now for the poor? Show us your works".

- On April 23, 1833, Frederic met with friends to decide how they could help the poor. Later, Frederic and his flat mate gave their winter wood supply to a widow.

- The group met weekly and adopted the name The Society of St Vincent de Paul after the Patron Saint of Christian charity. A Daughter of Charity named Sr Rosalie Rendu introduced them to poor people they could help.

- After one year, there were 100 members, and other groups or conferences started in parishes around Paris and France. After some years the Society reached Rome (1842), England (1844), USA (1846) and Australia on 5 March 1854.



Blessed Frederic Ozanam



How you can help this Christmas?

Drop off unwrapped Christmas presents, supermarket vouchers and non-perishable food at your nearest Vinnies Centre, until December 15.

Donate to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal by using the donation

envelope in *Catholic Voice*, call 13 18 12 or vinnies.org.au

Purchase one of six global gifts from Caritas Australia, the Catholic Church's international aid agency. Gifts of food, education, healthcare and water, as well as emergency

assistance, range from \$10 to \$250. Call 1800 024 413 or go to www.caritas.org.au/globalgifts

Volunteer to wrap Christmas presents at the Gunghalin markets between 15-24 December. Call Sarah Clifton on 02 6234 7384

or sarah.clifton@svdp-cg.org.au

Consider joining your local Vinnies Conference to work with others and support needy families in your area.

Contact your local parish or vinnies.org.au

ARCHBISHOP'S DIARY

- 2 December**
11am Solemn Mass of Christian Burial for Bishop Jeremiah Coffey, St Mary's Cathedral, Sale
- 6 December**
9am Missionary Sisters of Charity Silver Jubilee Mass, St Raphael's Queanbeyan
- 7 December**
5.30pm: Farewell Mass for Apostolic Nunciature, Archbishop Paul Gallagher St Christopher's Cathedral
- 10 December**
12 noon: Catechist Mass. St Mary's Parish, Crookwell
3.00pm: Mass at Goulburn Correctional Centre, Maud St, Goulburn
- 11 December**
12 noon, Catechist Mass St Patrick's Church, Cooma
7.30pm, Cathedral Christmas Carols (with St Paul's Anglican) St Christopher's Cathedral
- 13 December**
All day Parish Visitation St Christopher's Cathedral
- 14 December**
11am, Mass, St Christopher's Cathedral
12.30pm, Mass with African Community, St Peter Chanel's, Yarralumla
Archbishop departs for Iraq, Lebanon and Kurdistan
- 24 December**
6pm Family Christmas Mass, St Christopher's Cathedral.
Midnight Mass for the Nativity of the Lord St Christopher's Cathedral
- 25 December**
11am Christmas Day Mass St Christopher's Cathedral 1.00pm Clergy Christmas Lunch Archbishop's House, Canberra
- 25 December - 26 January**
Archbishop on leave

Archbishop's Christmas Appeal 2014

Money collected from the Archbishop's Christmas Appeal this year will help complete a monastery in Vietnam and build a well, and also rebuild a seminary in the typhoon-affected diocese of Tagbilaran in the Philippines.

The appeal is held every year at Christmas Masses and funds will also support building projects in Fiji and Nigeria. Last year's Appeal raised \$71,216.

Please send donations to: Mission & Development Office, GPO Box 3089, ACT, 2601 or call 02 6201 9872.

Make more room for Jesus



ARCHBISHOP'S MESSAGE
ARCHBISHOP
CHRISTOPHER PROWSE

TO MY dear people in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

We now move into the Advent liturgical season in preparation for Christmas. Afterwards, for most Australians, it will be a time for January 2015 holidays and family reunions.

All of us realise that these times are generally characterized by joy and hope. We are aware that for some, however, this can be a time of particular sadness, for all sorts of reasons. In our Christmas spirit, we gather together with those fragile amongst us and ponder the Christian mysteries celebrated in these times. We pray particularly for the Christians in the Middle East.

May I suggest that we read slowly – on our own or in our families and communities – The Infancy narratives of St Luke's Gospel (Luke 1-2). This type of "Lectio Divina" can really help us re-capture the real meaning of Christmas. Given all the commercialization and business of this season, we need to capture every opportunity to meet the infant Jesus at Bethlehem and Nazareth in silence and tranquility.

We will walk with Mary and St Joseph to Bethlehem, and search with them for accommodation. We will join with them at the birth of the Saviour – God dwelling among us in the person of Jesus – our Emmanuel.

We will stand alongside Mary, the Mother of God, as she "treasures and ponders" all that takes place. We will notice St Joseph's faithfulness to all that God asks of him.

With the Holy Family, we will greet the shepherds – the poor little ones – who are the first to greet the Saviour, and who become the first evangelisers of the Christian message of hope and mercy.

We will greet the three wise men who indicate the universal message of salvation of the infant Jesus.

The stars and animals gathered near Bethlehem represent the cosmic dimension of the incarnation. The Kingdom of God embraces all creation in praise of Jesus.

I believe one of the saddest passages in all of the Gospels is found in the infancy narratives. St Luke comments that the baby Jesus was born in a manger, "Because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2/7). For a while, the Holy Family was homeless – like so many in our towns, especially Canberra. Jesus was born on the margins of Bethlehem and placed in a feeding container for animals – a symbol of the Eucharist.

Jesus understands and loves us so much – especially when we find ourselves too on the margins of life – whatever forms these might be.

Dear friends at Christmas time, let us be extra loving to those who find themselves in a "fragile place" in these days.

In making "room" for them in our lives, we are making "room" for Jesus, born in Bethlehem.

May you feel in this little pastoral letter my sincerest Christmas greetings to you and your loved ones. May the peace



Archbishop Christopher launching the Vinnies Christmas Appeal with Sir William Deane and Vinnies staff member Celia Nunez PHOTO: JEANINE DOYLE

and hope of Christmas dwell deeply within you all.

Please join your parish families for our Advent, Christmas and New Year Masses. Invite along family and friends – especially those who have drifted away from the Catholic faith or have no faith. Let the God of surprises surprise them with deep inner Christmas joy.

Say you are carrying to them the invitation of Archbishop Christopher to come along to our Masses!

Thank you for the loving kindness you have demonstrated to me in 2014. I look forward to serving you in Christ's name in 2015.

Christmas and New Year greetings to you all.

Time to "out" Christmas

EDITOR'S NOTE

What are you *doing* this Christmas?

It can be such a loaded question can't it? Why do we have to do anything?

Don't you think it's time to 'out' Christmas, to move on from the absurd notion of a perfect festive celebration and normalise it, so we don't all feel so pressured?

And don't get me started on the presents. How I cringe at the questions, 'Have you finished your Christmas shopping? What are you buying the boys?' Well, not much actually.

A counsellor at Catholic Care recently told me that their message to clients is, 'you can do Christmas however you like'. How refreshing. Let's not compare how many meals we digest or how many homes we visit, but focus instead on how lucky we are to have those

homes, to have fresh tucker and to be with our loved ones.

And let's remember the real reason for the celebration, because a celebration it must be, however you like. That a baby was born in Bethlehem to fill our hearts with his love and our souls with his compassion.

Merry Christmas, dear readers, from my family to yours – please stay safe, cherish your loved ones and see you in 2015,

Felicity de Fombelle

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN

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Our entrepreneurial new Vicar-General

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A PRIEST who takes a keen interest in money matters, studied finance and did his PhD on entrepreneurship has been appointed our new Vicar-General.

Fr Tony Percy, who grew up as one of six children in the family newsagency in Cooma and has been in charge of the Sydney seminary for the last six years, will take over from Monsignor John Woods in February.

Archbishop Christopher announced last month that Monsignor Woods would become Cathedral Administrator and Episcopal Vicar for Education.

Fr Tony said he was delighted to be returning to the Archdiocese and hoped to encourage

ordinary Catholics to become more involved in the Church.

"Good leaders get the best out of people, and bishops and priests should call forth lay people to be confident to participate in the church and society," the 51-year-old said.

"Lay people are indispensable and I really want to encourage them to get involved in the engine room of the diocese."

It was growing up in the family newsagency, that his brother Leo now runs, that gave a young Tony Percy a keen interest in money and led him to study finance at university.

"I always had an interest in money, but not a love for money, and that's a big distinction," he explained.



New Vicar-General, Fr Tony Percy

"Business is one of the professions. It's a noble vocation to be of service to others. Being interested in money is like having an interest in any creative thing.

"But you've got to beware of the danger of having a love for money, as that leads to ruin.

"In the Church, we are into stopping poverty, not creating it. But when we generate more wealth, we can distribute more. We work for the common good, rather than hoarding it ourselves."

Fr Tony entered the seminary after finishing university and was ordained in 1990. He was parish priest at Young until 1995, and then at Queanbeyan and Ardlethan Park before going to Washington DC to study at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family. His thesis was about the entrepreneur and the social teaching of the Church.

Clergy appointments

Vicar General: Fr Tony Percy

Cathedral Administrator and Episcopal Vicar for Education:

Monsignor John Woods

Parish Priests

Cooma & Bombala:

Fr Mick MacAndrew

West Wyalong: Fr Emil Milat

Administrators

Moruya Fr John Armstrong
(and PP Batemans Bay):

Tumut: Fr Paul Huthnance

Assistant Priests

Goulburn: Fr Sijo Jose

Batemans Bay & Moruya:

Fr Dominic Byrne

Two priests ordained in Canberra

BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

A CANBERRA taxi driver has become our newest priest.

In the company of more than 200 people and about 50 priests, Dominic Byrne was ordained on November 21 at St Christopher's Cathedral.

The former St Edmund's student, who was a taxi driver for 14 years, clearly enjoyed the occasion, but said he had one disappointment – that he was the only one being ordained.

"Vocations are needed," Fr Dominic said. "They are growing, but there could be a little bit more."

Proud parents Frank and Patricia were at the Mass, along with several of Fr Dominic's classmates from the Beda College in Rome, where he completed his studies.

The new priest expressed his gratitude to the clergy and laity at the end of the Mass.

"Thanks be to God for people like you, for my vocation was given life, nourished and nurtured through your prayers, and still needs those prayers," Fr Dominic said.

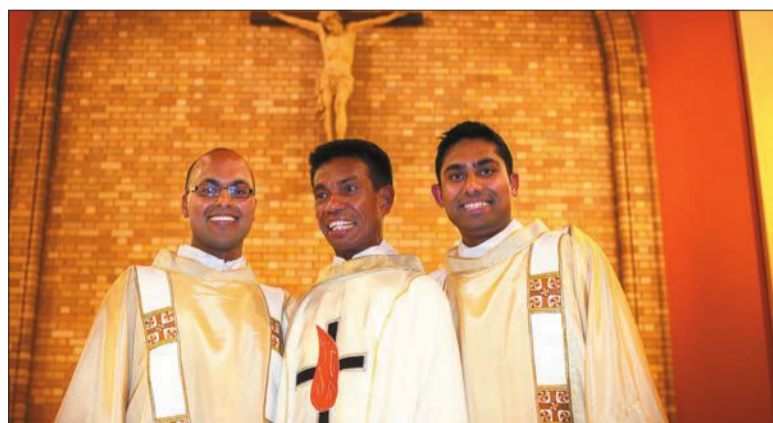
"My vocation was given birth through you. Thank you."

Earlier, Archbishop Christopher Prowse described the occasion as a "moment of grace".

"This is a moment when the Lord encourages us and gives us hope by raising up one of our own from the Archdiocese to be a priest," he said.

The Archbishop explained the meaning of the various parts of the ordination ceremony, reminding Fr Dominic of the duties of the priestly state.

"Our dear brother Dominic, you are chosen by the Lord, and in this ordination Mass this evening you are appointed to act for the people of God in



Above, Fr Dominic Byrne with parents Frank and Patricia; left, Fr Izak Belyanan MGL (middle) with Deacon Lenin Thenarmirtham MGL (left) and Deacon Isuru Weliwatte MGL (right).

PHOTOS: LOUI SESELJA

relation to God as a priest in a spirit of total and complete service," he said.

Fr Dominic graduated from St Edmund's College in 1986, and after stints in a variety of fields, worked as a taxi driver in Canberra for more than 14 years. In 2007 he completed a degree in applied psychology from the University of Canberra, and soon after decided to enter the seminary.

Archbishop Christopher said Fr Dominic's journey to the priesthood was a reminder that

God's call can occur over a long period of time in subtle ways.

"We thank the Lord for this grace of vocation and we hope that there are many people here tonight who also might have the courage like you to listen to God whispering in the depths of their heart a possible calling to the priesthood or religious life," he said.

Fr Dominic has been appointed at the assistant priest at Bateman's Bay Parish, where he has served as a deacon since January.

Earlier in November, Archbishop Christopher ordained Fr Izak Belyanan as a priest for the Missionaries of God's Love congregation, while Lenin Thenarmirtham and Isuru Weliwatte were made deacons.

Fr Izak, who hails from Indonesia, told those present at his November 14 ordination it had been a difficult road to the priesthood.

"I think God must be crazy because he made me a priest," he said. "He made the impossible possible. "For me it took a very long time to be a priest, but God never gave up on me."

Fr Izak will return to Indonesia early next year, where he will take up a role in a local parish.

A Family Invitation



FAMILIES across the Archdiocese are invited to a special conference hosted by Archbishop Christopher to discuss the joys and challenges of marriage and family life.

The **embrace** conference will be held at St Clare's College in Griffith on Saturday March 21 next year. There will be an evening mass at St Christopher's Cathedral on the Friday night, March 20. Other details include:

- There will be childcare for toddlers, and separate programs for primary and secondary students;
- There will also be an expo of Catholic groups, movements and agencies;
- Archbishop Christopher will be one of the keynote speakers.

Archbishop Christopher said he wanted **embrace** to be a family day "and I really encourage mums and dads to come with their kids."

For more information, or to register to have a display at the expo, go to the "Embrace" website embrace2015.org.au or contact Sharon Brewer sharon.brewer@catholiclife.org.au or 0421 846 276

A gracious lady helping the sick

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A LADY GIVES birth to a child with disabilities and cannot cope. A young, dying man asks for help to pray. New parents search for answers when their baby is stillborn.

After nine years as a chaplain at Canberra Hospital, Sr Kath Keenan has seen much of life's suffering. And at 68, she is worn out, hence her retirement at the end of October.

Chatting with the wise Mercy nun on her second last day, you cannot fail to be moved by the stories she shares, and wonder how this gracious lady has coped with such sadness.

"It is very sad, but it's a real privilege to be with people at these times," Sr Kath says. "It takes a lot out of you, but also gives you food for your own journey. It's been an amazing job."

Sr Kath recalls the mother who discovered, soon after giving birth, that her baby had disabilities.

"She turned her head and said, 'I don't want it'," Sr Kath said. "I thought, how could this mum relinquish her child? But then I thought, there's a reason she can't care for it. But I was inclined to judge at first."

"We're living in an age where we can almost buy perfection. So when people have a child who isn't perfect, many can't cope. But I have to ask myself, could I cope?"

Previously a teacher for 35 years, Sr Kath recently supported a young man dying of cancer, who was also a former pupil.



After nine years as a chaplain at Canberra Hospital, Sr Kath Keenan has seen much of life's suffering. And at 68, she is tired and worn out, hence her retirement from the demanding role at the end of October. PHOTO: JEANINE DOYLE

"He asked me to teach him a prayer, so I suggested, 'Jesus, help me'," she said. "And he said, 'if I'd known the prayer was that simple, I would have said it'."

"I was there when he died, at his home. When I arrived his Mum, who isn't a Catholic, said, 'I'd like everyone to leave my son and Sister alone to get ready for heaven'."

"I said, 'I pray that you will now enter into the embrace of God. It's all over now.' And within minutes he was dead."

For the past nine years, Sr Kath's morning has begun

with scanning a list of the approximately 120 Catholics admitted to the hospital each day. Sr Kath, Fr Charles Katttan and the wonderful volunteer pastoral care workers see most patients two or three times a week. The Carmelite sisters have also been a great support to Sr Kath.

The week before our meeting, Sr Kath had organised a baby memorial service at the chapel. They are held regularly for miscarried babies or those born under 20 weeks.

"The babies are kept in the morgue and Tobin Brothers

supply little caskets with their family name engraved on a plaque," Sr Kath said. There were nine caskets at the recent service.

After one memorial, a lady in the nearby oncology ward asked Sr Kath what was going on, and revealed that she had lost a baby 40 years ago.

"She told me that after she and her husband had returned home from the hospital, he said to her, 'now let's get on with our lives', so she never mentioned it to anyone again," Sr Kath said.

"She asked me to do a

service and said she wanted to name her baby. Everything you do has a ripple effect."

Sr Kath has been fired many tough questions, the most common being, 'if God is a loving God, why does he allow people to die so young or in pain?'

"I've never read anything yet that tells me why," she says matter-of-factly. "There is no answer, except that it's God's timing. Sometimes I just say it's a mystery."

A poster on the wall in Sr Kath's office reads, "Jesus did not come to explain away suffering or remove it. He came to fill it with his presence."

"I'm not sure I really understand it," she says modestly, "but as someone once said to me, people need to go through stages of grief, and anger with God, and God can handle it."

"In our society, we can buy and fix and throw away whatever doesn't work, so then in our spiritually human lives, if there's something we can't understand entirely or explain fully, we think this faith thing has holes shot in it."

"While you can throw everything else away, you can't do that with a person. Because they're so precious. I don't know the answers, but I do know that a lot of people come to peace with God before they die."

"It's interesting how you come to journey with these people. Your first conversation might be about fishing, but it's ends up being about God. But if you don't have the fishing, you won't get to God."

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m SC Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Missionary calling

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

ALMOST 480 students and teachers from 24 schools were encouraged to be missionaries at the annual Mission Mass at St Christopher's Cathedral last month.

Head of Religious Education at the Catholic Education Office Mrs Mary Dorrian welcomed the students and announced the theme of the Mass would be, "When I grow up I want to be ALIVE."

Fr Varghese Vavolil celebrated the Mass with Deacon Joe Blackwell, who recently retired as director of Catholic Mission after 13 years. Archbishop Christopher has appointed Mrs Cathy Ransom to the role.

In his homily, Fr Vavolil quoted Blessed Mother Teresa who said, "A life not lived for others is not a life, or is a life without love."

He went on, "Jesus wants us all to have life and have it abundantly. Jamaica, India and Australia are all mission countries. We should all pray and give to mission because we are all missionaries."

The Mass featured the 60-strong choir from St Patrick's Primary at Gundagai; the Prayers of the Faithful were by St Gregory's students at Queanbeyan; the Offertory by St Francis of Assisi Primary students from Calwell and the altar servers and Eucharistic ministers were from St Francis Xavier College in Florey.

Learning with our children

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A NEW Archdiocesan parent organisation aims to boost school performance by encouraging and educating parents to engage with their children's learning.

The Catholic School Parents Association, which comprises parents from across the Archdiocese, was launched earlier this year.

Father-of-four Tim Smith, a senior officer at the Catholic Education Officer who will support the organisation's work, said many parents were unsure how to support their children's learning.

"Parents are very capable but they lack confidence," Mr Smith said.

"They're scared they will say the wrong thing when talking to their kids about their school work. How many parents have showed their child how to do a long division sum, and the child says, 'No, my teacher says you don't do it like that'.

"It ends up in a screaming match and what do you do? Retreat."



Anna Compton, 8, from St Thomas the Apostle Primary in Kambah, reads in the school library with her Dad Paul
PHOTO: JEANINE DOYLE

Mr Smith is well placed to advise the new parent body - he and wife Leesa have four boys aged 12 to 20 and he is a former teacher and principal.

"I think parents want to do the right thing but they are so busy and time poor," he said. "How many times have we as parents skipped pages of our kids' readers just to get them finished? Because you're just so tired at the end of the day."

Mr Smith said parents did not participate as much in their school children's learning and development compared to when they were small.

"Think about when a child learns to walk," he said. "You prepare the environment so they can practise and think about how you can stimulate them." "When they achieve those milestones, you clap and cheer and share the news with

others. So why do we stop? What about when our child spells a word for the first time?

"We want to see a direct correlation, a real improvement in our children's educational performance, through parental engagement." Mr Smith encouraged parents to:

- Develop a relationship with your child's teacher and ask how you can support your child's learning.

- Consider a pizza night at your child's school. The kids can have a pizza and watch a movie while the parents can meet with the teacher about their children's learning.

- Ask your teacher to send a short group email to parents once or twice a week, about what the children are learning at school.

"One of my son's teachers at Marist did that and it was terrific," Mr Smith said.

"It was a simple thing for the teacher to do but helped us parents so much because we could connect with our kids and chat about what they got up to that day."

Our children's nest egg

"What are two things you learned at school today?"

That's the question Paul Compton used to ask daughter Anna, but now the St Thomas the Apostle student automatically tells him.

"You hear so many parents say, 'How was your day?' and the child usually says 'Good' and that's it," Paul says. "I just try to reinforce the learning that's happened that day."

A member of the Catholic School Parents Association, Paul admits it can be a struggle for he and wife Emma to find time to read with Anna and help with homework, but says it's an investment they choose to make.

"We all put money in the bank so we have a nest egg, and engaging with our child's education is their nest egg," he said. "They will engage more with their learning and that will ensure their future."

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HAYDEN PIERCY, BACHELOR OF NURSING



Sr Frances says goodbye to Ungarie

BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

AFTER seven years of devoted service to the community of Ungarie, Sr Frances McAleer RSJ is on the move, preparing to relocate to Nyngan in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes.

Sr Frances has been an integral part of the Western Mission team, which ministers to West Wyalong, Ungarie, Barellan, Ardlethan and Weethalle.

The Josephite sister told *Catholic Voice* it would be difficult to leave the place and the people she has come to know so well, but she's looking forward to the challenge.

"I think I needed a change, and it's good for the [community] to get new people," she said. "I've never been out of this Archdiocese or the Wagga diocese. It's all new, I won't know a single soul... so it'll be a bit scary."

According to the 2011 census, there are almost 1,300 Catholics in Nyngan, compared to only 146 in Ungarie.

Sr Frances said leading groups of children through the Sacramental program has been a highlight of her time at Ungarie, as well as taking Scripture classes in the local government schools.

She said her role has included



Sr Frances McAleer RSJ will move to Nyngan early next year, having spent the last seven years in Ungarie.. PHOTO: LOUI SESELJA

a variety of tasks and responsibilities, some more challenging than others.

Catholics, it's for the whole town, and I would visit as many non-Catholics as Catholics.

over at St Patrick's in Nyngan on January 1, but she plans to spend some time with family be-

"I've never been out of this Archdiocese or the Wagga diocese. It's all new, I won't know a single soul... so it'll be a bit scary."

"At the beginning we had to do funerals... that was very challenging," she said.

"It's really only a religious presence, and it's not just for

"We just chat and play cards... and I'll make sure that I go and see [the sick] in hospital."

Sr Frances officially takes

fore commencing her new role.

Sr Petra Ries RSJ will move to Ungarie to fill the role of community leader as part of the Western Mission.

Clergy refreshed, renewed by retreat

BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

ABOUT 50 priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn attended the annual clergy retreat at Galong last month, led by Archbishop Christopher Prowse.

Temora parish priest Fr Simon Falk, who organised the retreat, said almost all of the Archdiocese's active priests attended. Seminarian Namora Anderson, who is on pastoral placement at Moruya, also took part.

"The purpose of the retreat is to come aside and for priests to really consider where is God present in their lives and in their ministry," Fr Simon said.

"It's meant to be a time for us to really renew ourselves and renew our commitment as deacons and priests, and to go back



Most of the Archdiocese's priests took part in the annual clergy retreat held at Galong last month, led by Archbishop Christopher Prowse. PHOTO: MATTHEW BIDDLE

and somehow be more refreshed in our ministry."

The retreat included daily Mass, recitation of morning and evening prayer, several talks, and time for reflection.

The clergy also provided one

another with the opportunity for Confession, and Archbishop Christopher administered the Anointing of the Sick for any ill priests.

Retired priest Fr Kevin Barry-Cotter told *Catholic Voice*

the retreat was one of the best he's been to.

"I have attended the clergy retreat at Galong every year for the last 50 years, I can't remember having missed one since 1965," he said.

"I have always found great strength in the gathering of priests for a diocesan retreat. This time with the Archbishop leading, the retreat was quite different and it really was a breath of fresh air as the Archbishop revealed his priestly heart to us, as fellow priests.

"For me, personally, in a new age of my priesthood and out of the rough and tumble of parish and diocesan life, It was life-giving and I came to a deeper sense of my new vocation in the priesthood as a retired priest. I hope we have more of the same."

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Gerard Heffernan

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Brokers are now writing a majority of Australia's home loans for the first time in history.

According to research commissioned by the MFAA, brokers were responsible for 51.5% of residential finance in July, August and September.

Brokers were also responsible for 67% of the growth in the mortgage market during the 12 months to 30 September 2014.

The third-party channel accounted for \$37.7 billion of the \$56.2 billion increase in mortgage lending reported by the ABS.

MFAA chief executive Siobhan Hayden said the results show that customers are increasingly turning to brokers, irrespective of the health of the general market.

"The broker channel is going from strength to strength over time, and represents the consistent efforts that brokers are making to offer the best possible service to their customers," she said.

Brokers have a market advantage in being able to professionally offer their clients a wide range of products and solutions hence more borrowers turn to them for assistance!

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Parish feeding both souls and bodies

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

FAITH isn't the only thing on the menu at Holy Spirit Church in Sydney. The North Ryde parish opened a café and gift shop four months ago and business is booming.

Flame Café and Gifts is owned and operated by the parish, which employs a café manager, baristas and kitchen staff.

Open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week, the breakfast menu includes bruschetta, French toast, freshly baked muffins and bacon and eggs while lunch options range from salt and pepper squid and sizzling prawns to wraps and quiche and salad.

The coffee is good, chosen by parish priest and coffee connoisseur Fr Stan Kluk, and there's even a play area for the children, complete with toys and kids TV.

"It's been a huge amount of work, to establish a business from scratch, and it does take time to build up the financial side of it, but we're getting so much support," parishioner



Jenny Hodges and Fr Stan Kluk say the establishment of a parish café and gift shop have helped to strengthen the parish community, as well as providing an opportunity for evangelisation to the wider public. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Jenny Hodges said.

"It's been tremendous for us as a parish community. You can now approach that person in the pew you've always seen but never had a conversation with

and say, how about we go for a coffee and a chat.

"It's been great for evangelising too. We've been a parish here for almost 20 years but the café and gift shop have really

opened us up to the broader community, if you like.

"We're not pushing the faith on anyone, but the Catholic school is next door and we get a lot of school mums come in,

plus people from the local area and shops, and it's interesting the conversations you have.

"One lady said to me, 'I'm not a Catholic but can I visit the church?' People talk to you about praying or they'll wander into the gift shop and ask what a novena is or something about a particular saint."

A part-time nurse, Ms Hodges manages the 28 volunteers in the gift shop, which sells books and sacramental gifts. Husband Jason was chair of the parish council when the café and gift shop were being developed.

The idea for a commercial operation arose after the school offered five empty classrooms to the parish.

They used two for offices and one for a meeting room, and thought about a café and gift shop as a way of making money for their community.

"We surveyed the parish and they were overwhelmingly supportive, so then we set about getting loans and calling on volunteer tradespeople to make it happen," Ms Hodges said.

"It's really brought us so much closer together."

Catholic Bookshop Celebrates

Advent & Christmas

Come in and see our range of nativity sets especially priced to please for Christmas time.

Since St Francis of Assisi started the Christmas crib tradition, nativity symbols have been handed down through successive generations.

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Catholic school fees to rise in 2015

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

FEEs will rise by three per cent in Catholic primacy schools next year, and by four per cent in Canberra's secondary schools. This means tuition fees in primary schools will go from \$307 per term this year to \$316 next year. Tuition fees represent about half the school fees that parents pay, with the rest comprising local levies and charges

struck by each school.

For secondary schools, the tuition fee for Year 7/8 students will rise from \$766 per term this year to \$797 next year. For Year 11/12 students, the fee will rise from \$955 per term to \$993. Tuition fees in NSW primary and secondary schools will increase by three per cent.

In NSW, the primary fee is per family, and will be \$268 per term in 2015. In NSW

secondary schools, Year 7/8 tuition fees will increase from \$391 per term to \$402, and for Year 11/12 students, the increase will be from \$449 per term to \$462.

These tuition fees are only for the 56 schools in the Catholic education system. Daramalan College, Marist and St Edmund's are independent Catholic colleges and set their own fees.

There are discounts for siblings, including a 70 per cent

discount for a second child and an 80 per cent discount for a third child in an ACT primary school, and a 20 per cent and 50 per cent discount for a second and third child respectively in an ACT secondary college. Fees are not charged for a fourth or subsequent child.

Prompted by the Federal Government's 'Gonski' education reforms, the Catholic Education Commission (CEC)

has set up a working party to review school fees and levies. The working party will include parish, school and parent representatives and will consult widely with school communities.

John Barker, head of resource management and strategy at the Catholic Education Office, said the working party would present its recommendations to the CEC in September next year for implementation in 2016.

Fr Ken chosen to lead once again

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

THE man who has been leading the religious order, the Missionaries of God's Love, since they began 28 years ago, has been re-elected as their leader for the next four years.

Fr Ken Barker was chosen at the MGLs convocation last month, which is a gathering of brothers to pray and discern the order's mission and future direction.

It has been a big year for the MGL's – they were officially recognised as a religious institute by the Vatican, opened a new mission in Indonesia and had a priest and another two deacons ordained.

Speaking at a Mass last month to install Fr Ken as Moderator, and the new MGL Council, Archbishop Christopher said he had known of the MGLs for 25 years, and recalled their beginnings in Melbourne as a charismatic community founded on austerity and modelled on the life of St Francis of Assisi.

He praised the growth of



Archbishop Christopher Prowse and MGL brothers and priests pray for Fr Ken Barker MGL after he was re-elected as the congregation's leader last month. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

the congregation and the "internationalising of the Order". The MGLs have missions in the Philippines and Indonesia.

The Missionaries of God's Love began in Canberra in

1986, under Fr Ken's guidance.

Some young men who were involved in a Catholic charismatic community called the Disciples of Jesus told Fr Ken they felt called to the priesthood.

But they also wanted to remain part of the community, so the religious congregation was set up as part of the community.

MGL priests and brothers take vows of poverty, chastity

and obedience and strive to bring God's love to the world. They are still part of the Disciples of Jesus community and are greatly supported by the community's members.

MANUKA PRECINCT UPDATE

New presbytery ready by Christmas

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

THE first stage of the Manuka redevelopment project – creating a new presbytery for St Christopher's Cathedral – will be finished by Christmas.

Archdiocesan financial administrator Helen Delahunty has been visiting the site at 57 Franklin Street most mornings and said it was exciting to see the work progressing so quickly. "We're renovating and modernising the current house so

that it will be a comfortable home for several priests," Ms Delahunty said.

The current presbytery, which includes the Cathedral Office, will be vacated by Christmas so that work can begin next year on major new office buildings and 44 independent living units (ILU's).

The Cathedral staff will move into offices across the road at the Catholic Education Office for two years, until the Manuka redevelopment project

is complete. CatholicCare's 30 staff will also be vacating their building by the end of the year, and moving to their offices at Red Hill.

"It's a huge job to vacate the current presbytery but everything is on track," Ms Delahunty said.

There has been strong interest in the one, two and three-bedroom ILU's and Ms Delahunty said anyone interested in more information should contact her on (02) 6201 9800.

NAME OUR TWO NEW BUILDINGS

As part of the redevelopment of the St Christopher's Cathedral precinct in Manuka, the main office building and the aged care independent living units will be named after a saint or an early pioneer of the Archdiocese. Who do you think they should be named after? Perhaps...

Archbishop Edward Bede Clancy: Born in Lithgow, NSW, Edward Clancy spent a number of his childhood years within Grenfell parish. In 1979 he became the fourth Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, and he was particularly active as a media spokesman for the Church during his four-year term.

Bishop John Gallagher: Bishop Gallagher is remembered as a classics scholar who consolidated the growth of Catholic education in the Archdiocese. In 1900 he succeeded Bishop Lanigan, remaining in the role until his death in 1923.

Caroline Chisholm: Born in England in 1808, Caroline Chisholm moved to Australia in 1838, where she attempted to ease the plight of poor immigrants, establishing immigrant depots in several rural areas, including Yass and Goulburn.

Send your ideas to: Erin Gordon, PO Box 7174, Yarralumla, ACT, 2600.

Australia urged to help persecuted Christians

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

PERSECUTED Christians in Arab nations are “the Aborigines of the Middle East” and Australians must do more to ensure their safety.

Lebanese-born Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, who leads the Maronite Catholic community in Australia, also warned Australians not to take for granted values such as respect for religious freedom, to avoid problems escalating locally.

“Christians have been in the Middle East for 2,000 years,” the Sydney-based Bishop said.

“We speak about the Aborigines here in Australia and their rights. Well, Christians are the Aborigines of the Middle East. So how come there is no serious response from the international community to ensure they can return safely to their homelands?”

“Christians are being persecuted for their faith, but no one has converted to Islam, and that is significant. Faith is very strong in the hearts of these Christians and they will go all the way, even to martyrdom.”

“Christians and Muslims have been living together in the Middle East for 1,400 years. They have built a lot together. But at the same time there have been problems and conflicts, but both groups have stood on the land. And that is where the future must be, to continue to have this co-living and respect.”

Sitting between the trouble spots of Syria and Israel, the Maronite Church in Lebanon has suffered greatly, and is under great pressure now, with political, military and sectarian tensions in the region. That long history of suffering has seen many Maronite Catholics migrate to countries like Australia.

Bishop Tarabay said it was wrong for Australians to think the issues did not affect them.

“We have Middle Eastern communities here who are in contact with their relatives, so the impact is certainly being felt here,” he said. “I am afraid



Maronite Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay with Archbishop Christopher Prowse and the Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros Rai at Parliament House last month. Bishop Tarabay and Archbishop Prowse will head to the Middle East on December 14 to offer spiritual support and humanitarian aid. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

for our harmony here between communities. We have to reinforce the idea that we are living in Australia and are loyal to its values, because as soon as that is weakened you have problems.”

Bishop Tarabay, who serves with Archbishop Christopher Prowse on the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations, came to Canberra last month with the Maronite Patriarch, Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros Rai, who was visiting Australia.

Ten Arab Ambassadors came to Parliament House to meet Cardinal Rai.

“The Christian and Muslim Ambassadors were talking about how important Christians are in the Middle East and saying the Christians are the salt of the Middle East,” Bishop Tarabay said.

“I wasn’t expecting to hear something like that. It was very encouraging.”

Speaking after a general audience in Rome recently, Pope Francis urged a global “mobilisation of consciences” to protect persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

“With great trepidation, I am following the dramatic incidents of Christians in several parts of the world being persecuted and killed because of their religious beliefs,” he said. “They have a right to find security and peace in their own countries while freely professing their faith.”

Bishop Tarabay said Australia should be doing more, using diplomatic channels to mediate and find solutions.

“One thing I have learned in Australia is that, wherever there is a will, there is a way,” he said.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Pope John Paul II once remarked that the Catholic Church breathes not with one lung but two – the West and the East.
- Within the universal Church, by far the biggest – but not the oldest – Church is the Latin Church into which most of us were born and belong.
- The Catholic Church comprises 22 autonomous Churches using eight different rites. The Maronite Church is not just a rite within the universal Church but is a Church in its own right, as well as the Ukrainian Church, Armenian Church and Syrian Church.
- The Churches of the East

are no less Catholic than we, Latin Catholics, are.

- The Maronites trace their origins to the third century Syrian hermit known as St Maron, an Aramaic name meaning ‘little lord’.

- When they eventually moved from Antioch into what is now Lebanon, their first bishop was John Maron, and the current Patriarch is his 77th successor.

- The Maronite Church has suffered greatly through history, located between the trouble spots of Syria and Israel, which is why their faith and sense of identity are so strong.

* This information comes from a recent article by Archbishop Mark Coleridge in *The Catholic Leader* (Brisbane).

Archbishop to lend a hand in the Middle East

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

ARCHBISHOP Christopher Prowse will visit refugees in Kurdistan, Iraq and Lebanon on December 14 to offer spiritual support and humanitarian aid.

The delegation of Australian Catholic Bishops will include the Maronite Bishop, Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, the Melkite Bishop, Robert Rabbat, and the Chaldean Bishop, Jibrael Kassab.

“Christians are leaving the Middle East and, for the first time in history, the Catholic population in the Middle East is in jeopardy,” Archbishop Christopher said.

“In trouble spots, it is the Christians who have been the interlocutors of peace, bringing the Arabs and Jews together at the peace table for example. The Christians have done so much wonderful humanitarian work, building orphanages

and hospitals. That these areas are being depopulated of their Christian communities due to such unspeakable atrocities is a tragedy.

“The main challenge is to let people return to their homes safe and sound. If they don’t, there will be no Christians there at all.

“The dilemma is that families say, ‘We can’t get jobs, we can’t practice our religion’. But they’ve been there since

antiquity. We’ve got to correct the situation.”

Following a request by the Bishops of the Middle Eastern Apostolic Churches in Australia, the Australian bishops have designated Sunday, December 7 a day of solidarity with the Christians of the Middle East.

Catholics are urged to pray and the Australian bishops will make a donation to help alleviate the suffering of Christians, particularly the many

Iraqi refugees. President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart, said: “We hear the plea of our brother bishops from the Eastern Churches and join them in expressing our grave concerns for the suffering of the Christian communities, that trace their roots back to apostolic times, and the danger of their gradual disappearance from their ancient homelands.”

The Daniher name isn't just synonymous with Australian Rules football, the family is also

FAMOUS FOR THEIR FAITH

*They're one of the most famous sporting families in Australia, but, as **Matthew Biddle** discovered, there's something even more important to the Daniher family than kicking goals and winning premierships – their Catholic faith.*

SINCE their ancestors first arrived at Ungarie in 1915, the Daniher family have been a vital – and often large – part of the local Catholic community.

In fact, their presence in the parish is remembered in Ungarie folklore almost as much as the family's footballing heroics are. It's well-known in Ungarie that, for a while, one was never to sit on the left-hand side of the church. That was the Daniher side, and they would fill every available pew.

Today, Jim and Edna Daniher, the parents of the famous footballing quartet, live quietly in the same house Jim's father built almost 100 years ago.

From the moment one enters their home, it's obvious Jim and Edna are proud of their children's achievements, with memorabilia displayed on numerous walls.

But even though the family still lives and breathes Australian Rules football, their faith is the most important thing to them. The only thing that trumps the sporting memorabilia in the home is the number of religious statues on display.

The family's strong connection with the Catholic community began with Jim's father, also named Jim, who played a major part in the construction of the first Catholic church in Ungarie in the 1920s.

In 1923 Jim senior married Eileen, and the couple had six children – three boys and three girls. Later, the family helped establish a Catholic primary school in Ungarie that opened in 1950.

The three Daniher boys – John (nicknamed Jack), Jim junior and Leo – were all out-



Jim and Edna Daniher look through one of the many scrapbooks Edna's kept with photos and newspaper clippings of the family's footballing achievements. Jim says his father started the family's interest in the sport, which still continues today with Jim and Edna's grandchildren.

PHOTO: LOUI SESELJA

standing footballers for Ungarie, as their father had been. Intriguingly, they married three sisters from a local family – Beryl, Edna and Dorothy Erwin.

"There couldn't have been much around at that time,"

boys who made sure the Daniher name would be entrenched in VFL/AFL history. Not to be outdone, the girls also excelled in sports, particularly basketball and netball.

Playing football on a

"We never had electricity, we had to light up the copper to get some hot water, but it's just something I did, you didn't worry about it."

Jim says he never had any great hopes for the boys' football careers other than that

they were good pupils."

Between them, the four boys eventually played 752 VFL/AFL games, and are the only four brothers to have ever run out together in a VFL or AFL match.

Chris says playing with his

"I remember to get them to 7am Mass - I'd never take the babies without bathing them first - I used to get up at about 4am and would bath the babies."

Edna says with a smile.

"There was plenty around, they were just great girls," says Jim, quick to defend his wife of 58 years.

The couple have 11 children – Terry, Estelle, Neale, Anthony, Dorothy, Chris, Colleen, Angela, Julie, Nerolee, and Fiona – and it was the four

Saturday and then rising early for Mass on a Sunday was a part of the Daniher's routine for decades, Jim and Edna say.

"I remember to get them to 7am Mass - I'd never take the babies without bathing them first - I used to get up at about 4am and would bath the babies," Edna says.

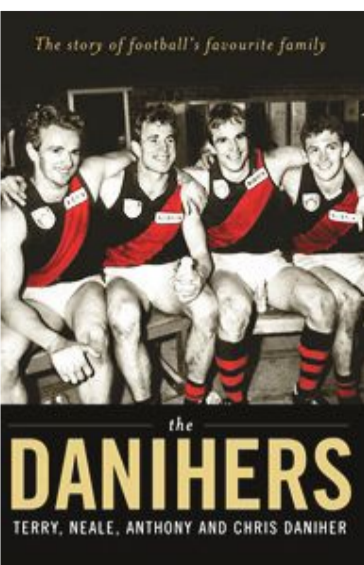
they would follow their father and grandfather in playing for Ungarie.

"You've got to be able to kick and mark to play the game, so I taught my boys to kick and mark so they would play for Ungarie," he recalls. "But I must have been too good at teaching or maybe

three brothers was one of the highlights of his career.

"To actually run out together, it was one of the best days," he says. "At the time it was a bit surreal, we never thought it would happen."

"It was fantastic and we owe Kevin Sheedy a lot of thanks for that."



Above, the cover of the 2009 book written about the Daniher family, which chronicles the rise of four country boys who became elite level stars. Right, former Essendon premiership player Chris Daniher is right at home on the family farm, where he harvests wheat, barley, canola and oats every year with the use of a recently acquired header (bottom right). The family sows about 2,000 acres of land, and Chris says that if they produce anything less than half a tonne per acre, finances will be stretched to the limit. Despite only minimal rainfall this season, Chris says the harvest is looking good. PHOTOS: LOUI SESELJA



During the boys' football careers, Edna even kept a meticulous scrapbook of each one's main achievements.

Although Terry and Anthony both started their careers at South Melbourne, by 1990 all four brothers were at Essendon.

"Edna was the instigator, she got onto Sheedy, she wanted her four boys to play at Essendon, and Sheeds took it up," Jim says.

While Edna took care of the children, Jim looked after the family farm, and even now, at the age of 86, he still lends a hand.

"His body's slowing down, but he's as sharp as a tack in the mind, which is great, it keeps him going," Chris, who returned to Ungarie after retiring from football in 1997 to work on the farm, says.

"Dad's a fighter, it's fantastic to still have him here and to be able to enjoy it with him, it's great."

The youngest of the four boys, Chris says he's always enjoyed the lifestyle of the farm, even during his days playing football at the highest level.

"The farm was such a great getaway, where you could leave the hustle and bustle and just be out here by yourself and not worry about the worries of the world," he says.

"Things are still simple out here, you've got plenty of space and time, and sometimes that's what you need."

Chris attends Mass every Sunday with his wife and five children in Wagga Wagga, where the family live. He drives

to and from Ungarie most days to work on the farm.

"I miss my family, I miss the younger ones," he says. "Nothing's perfect though, and it's a great life out here.

"I'm still very happy and blessed that I've got five great kids and the life I've got."

"Football only lasts a while, it goes very quickly. Your faith and family are the most important things."

At 48, Chris still pulls on the boots for Ungarie occasionally.

"We haven't got enough players to form a side each week so sometimes I get a call up... and if they need me I can just sit in the forward pocket," he says.

Farming in the modern era is becoming increasingly difficult in many ways, Chris says, but with perseverance it can still be profitable.

"We're a dying breed really," he says. "It's getting harder and harder to be viable.

"But as long as you're prepared to give it five or six years, farming's still a pretty good game."

The family farm produces wheat, canola, barley and oats, and Chris says he needs to sow at least half a tonne per acre of produce to cover the overhead costs.



For this year's harvest, older brother Anthony travelled to Ungarie from Melbourne to lend a hand for a couple of weeks.

Still proudly wearing an Essendon cap, Anthony is delighted to talk about his 20-year-old son Joe, who is continuing the Daniher dynasty at the club after he was drafted via the father-son rule in 2012.

"He's going very well, he had a good year and learnt a lot, hopefully he can build on that and have a good third year," Anthony says. "He loves it, he's really keen to try to keep the name going on for another decade if he can."

While there's no doubt the Daniher footballing legend will keep growing, the family's Catholic faith will remain at the top of their priorities.

Chris, who reached the pinnacle of footballing greatness by winning a premiership in 1993, says while the days of playing elite sport were great, they were only ever going to be temporary.

"Faith has always been a big part of my life, and even through my footy days it was a big part of my life," he says.

"Football only lasts a while, it goes very quickly. Your faith and family are the most important things."

THE DANIHERS' AFL LEGACY

TERRY DANIHER

313 games (19 for South Melbourne, 294 for Essendon)

NEALE DANIHER

82 games for Essendon, 223 as coach of Melbourne

ANTHONY DANIHER

233 games (115 for Sydney, 118 for Essendon)

CHRIS DANIHER

124 games for Essendon

DARCY DANIHER

6 games for Essendon

JOE DANIHER

26 games for Essendon

The paradox of Christmas

For many people, Christmas is not a time of joy and family but of heartache and loneliness.

Catholic Voice editor Felicity de Fombelle and photographer Loui Seselja recently visited some of CatholicCare's services to learn how they support people who are struggling over the Christmas period.

ANNE KIRWAN is well aware of the paradox of Christmas – she relishes the celebration with her family and her seven-year-old daughter is already listening to carols in the car.

But the psychologist and CEO of CatholicCare knows well the other side of Christmas – the pain of so many people whose Christmas is not about over-indulging in food or the delight of gift-giving but heartache, loneliness or violence.

Christmas is a peak time for many of CatholicCare's services, and the organisation's dedicated staff work hard to make it a safe and special time for clients, as well as their own families.

"People have this image of what Christmas is, but the reality is that it is a very stressful time for many people, and it can also be very traumatic," Ms Kirwan said.

Catholic Voice recently spent time visiting some of CatholicCare's services and learning about the increased demands and tensions over the Christmas and holiday period.

The organisation's family and relationship counselling services are based at Red Hill, and psychologist Megan Matson, who manages the programs, said they were inundated.

"We deal with everything from communication issues to grief and loss, separation, drug and alcohol use, mental health issues and parental conflict and violence," Ms Matson said.

"Christmas is promoted as a happy time of family togetherness but for a lot of our clients it is extremely stressful. There is a lot of pressure on parents to get things right and make everything happy for the kids, to give them a memorable Christmas.

"But if the parents aren't together and suddenly Dad wants to take the kids to his family, there's huge disruption to the normal arrangements and that can cause a lot of resentment and tension. Unfortunately we

often see an increase in family violence over the holiday period."

Ms Matson said it was important to normalise Christmas, so parents did not feel so pressured.

"We tell our clients 'you can do Christmas however you like'," she said. "There is such an ideal and it's important we set realistic expectations, around what a family is and what to do about presents. Perhaps a mum is a single parent now, for the first time, but she and her children are still a family, just in a different way.

"There's also great pressure to provide an Xbox or Nintendo or whatever, so we talk about what it means to be a good parent and how we define that. But still, some people go to great lengths to provide things they can't afford."

CatholicCare has counsellors in 58 Catholic schools across the Archdiocese, and manager Hannah Turner said some families become anxious about how they will cope at Christmas.

"I don't want to say panic, but there is certainly anxiety in not being able to access services over the Christmas period and wanting to know where they can seek help," Ms Turner said.

CatholicCare support worker Paul Zarnacki will be cooking and eating lunch with six homeless men on Christmas Day. He works at MINOSA House in Ainslie, which provides supported accommodation for up to three months.

"We'll give out some small presents and then cook up a feast, or maybe even a barbecue, depending on what the men want to do," Mr Zarnacki said.

Case manager John Kennedy said many clients have closed their mind to Christmas and did not recognise it.

"Christmas can be a horrible time for these fellas," Mr Kennedy said. "I know one bloke who had a vegemite sandwich for Christmas lunch.

"More often than not Christmas is a time of pain

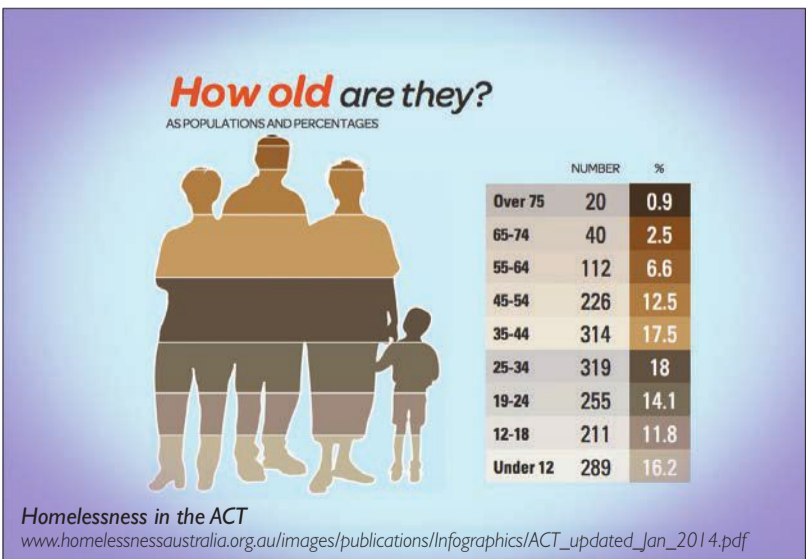


which brings to mind all their problems. Many of them have been through institutions and their journey has taken them away from their families, not closer."

MINOSA House resident Robert Gold said it was a huge shock to find himself homeless, after his former accommodation situation broke down.

"Christmas is just another day for me but at least I'll be with others and have a roof over my head, which is the main thing," Mr Gold said.

Christmas will be celebrated at the Dorothy Sales Cottages with a lunch for its eight residents, their families and the staff. It is a residential home in Hughes for people with ac-



quired brain injury, who would otherwise be in aged care homes.

Manager Julie McRoy said it was reassuring for families

to know their loved ones were well cared for and not alone.

"The day I came for my interview I walked out and thought, there is no way I could

work there, it's depressing and I just couldn't do it," Ms McRoy said.

"But you know, after five years, I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather be. It's the contact I have with the residents and the environment. It gives me such a sense of satisfaction to be here.

"The staff are here at Christmas to care for the residents and that reflects the wonderful relationships we have. There are many more people worse off, who would have no one around them and no Christmas lunch."

One place no one expects to end up at Christmas is the Sobering Up Shelter, but it is the busiest time for the service, which operates on Thursday,



FROM top left (clockwise): Psychologist Megan Matson in a counselling session; Billy Boyes celebrates his 66th birthday with brother Stewart, Stewart's wife Yvonne and their Mum Kathy; Sobering Up Shelter manager Lynall Evans; MINOSA House resident Robert Gold has a cuppa with support worker Paul Zarnacki; CatholicCare CEO Anne Kirwan.

Friday and Saturday nights.

Police and ambulance officers bring highly intoxicated young people, who spend the night in one of five secure rooms and are closely monitored by the three staff on duty. The alternative is being locked

in a police cell. Staff rouse the person every 15 minutes, for the first four hours, to ensure they get a response.

Manager Lyndall Evans said most people did not know about the Sobering Up Shelter and it was often a shock

for families to receive a phone call asking them to collect their loved one.

"We consider being intoxicated a health issue so we talk to clients about their drug and alcohol use and focus on education and prevention," Ms Evans said.

"Most of our clients are aged 18 to 24, and they are mostly men. Young people often do what is culturally acceptable in this country, which is go out and get drunk. Our focus is, what do you need to do to ensure you do not to come back here again."

Did you know?

- CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn started in 1957 and was staffed by religious and volunteers. It became CatholicCare in 2009. There are more than 270 staff and volunteers.

- Last year CatholicCare helped more than 10,000 families and people. Its services include Aged Care, Disability and Mental Health Support to Homelessness, Alcohol & Other Drugs, Counselling and Housing.

- CatholicCare has counsellors in 58 Catholic schools who help children experiencing mental health, learning or behavioral issues as well as family breakdown.

- The ACT has one of the highest divorce rates in the country. Almost 50% of families involved in divorce have children under 18.

- The ACT has the second highest rate of homelessness in Australia. Every night over 1700 people are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Canberra.

Following Christ, serving others - the life of a priest

BY FR LUKE VERRELL

WHILE vagueness surrounds exactly what a priest does all day, it seems unanimous that, whatever it is, he must be very busy doing it.

In my first year of priesthood I have been struck both by how the presence of the priest is so warmly welcomed and yet how surprised people are at this presence.

In contrast to this reaction, one Sunday I greeted a little girl who had recently made her First Communion in the parish. "And what school do you go to?" I asked.

Pursing her lips and with hands on hips, she looked at me with a disbelieving stare before

blurting out "Your school!" I couldn't help but laugh at her animated indignation.

Laughs aside, this girl's expectation of her priest is the better one of the two.

People ask if I am busy and I always give the answer "I try not to be busy" (though the temptation can be to say yes and feel very adult). I find that 'busyness' keeps me away from people. It is easy to be busy all day and yet end up not having visited anyone.

To be 'freed up' to be with others takes vigilance. Everything wants to creep onto the 'must do' list, but, as Christ says to Martha, "few are necessary" (Lk. 10:42).

A calming thought for me is



Fr Luke Verrell with St Francis of Assisi Primary students.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

that I will be a priest for a long time - it's not a sprint - go gently.

Similarly, a priest once likened my first year as "starting

a big adventure". Notions of a fairytale aside, it does conjure a sense of Christian optimism and hope, which I like!

So what does a priest do all day? St Augustine wrote "For you I am a bishop, and with you I am a Christian". Like him, and everyone else, most of my efforts go towards trying to follow Christ.

I have to struggle with prayer, sin, my limitations and life's annoyances. As for priestly work, well, it all starts with a knock, ring, email, visit or conversation and that's as much as I can tell you, because, from there-on-in, nothing is usual that follows.

The priest, like Christ, is for everyone - from all walks to all needs.

Fr Luke Verrell, 32, is the assistant priest at Corpus Christi Parish in Gowrie.

Marriage ought to be protected, defended

BY JEREMY STUPARICH

ONE of the bizarre things about the same-sex marriage debate in Australia is we haven't really had a debate. For the most part, we hear from the advocates for changing the definition of marriage, and we're told anyone against such an idea must be a bigot or a hater.

Let's face it. No one enjoys telling their fellow Australians their relationship shouldn't qualify as a marriage. We're much more inclined to let people live their lives. It won't hurt anyone, will it?

Yes, it will. Awkward as it may be to say to colleagues, same-sex marriage would change the fundamental meaning of marriage to the point it has no real meaning at all.

Let's go back a bit. Marriage hasn't been travelling so well. Divorce, domestic violence and even the fact many couples don't bother marrying have all undermined the public's view of marriage. Many people already see marriage as just an affirmation of love where children can be excluded.

But marriage is worth defending. Marriage is recognised by governments and the broader community because of the biological reality that a loving relationship between a woman and a man can produce children. It is in the community's interest that children are brought up by their natural parents in a stable home. Marriage helps keep parents together. Studies show this is in the best interests of children.

In such a family, children are conceived by their parents,

so they have a genetic relationship. By this genetic relationship, they have a connection with an extensive family tree. They're carried to birth by their mother, so they have an intimate gestational link. They have a social link with their parents through daily contact. They may also have a spiritual connection through their shared faith.

Now let's consider the new model for marriage, based on the slogans of "marriage equality" and "equal love". If all relationships are considered equal, there are no relationships that would not qualify for marriage. Equality is about treating things that are alike in the same way. It is not about treating relationships that are fundamentally biologically different as the same.

All relationships aren't the same. Marriage has a distinct meaning and purpose that should be protected.

FACTS

- The Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee recently (September 25) rejected a bill that would have recognised same-sex marriages solemnised overseas.
- Last year (December 12) the High Court ruled that marriage is a Commonwealth Government responsibility.
- In September 2012 the Federal Parliament voted overwhelmingly against same-sex marriage (House of Representatives 98-42; Senate 41-26).

Jeremy Stuparich is the public policy director for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

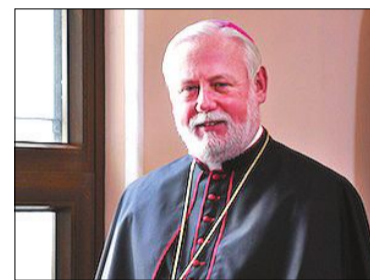
Nuncio 'honoured' by Vatican appointment

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

AUSTRALIA'S Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Paul Gallagher says he is honoured to be appointed Pope Francis' Foreign Minister but admits he is somewhat daunted by the task.

The 60-year-old will leave Canberra before Christmas to take up one of the highest roles in the Vatican, as Secretary for Relations with States, leading its worldwide diplomacy.

"I am truly honoured, but obviously concerned about doing a good job, which can reflect the Holy See's message and vision through the diplomatic activity of the Holy See," Archbishop Gallagher said.



Archbishop Paul Gallagher.

"I am also acutely aware that we are living through very difficult times, when peace and security are more threatened than ever, and when we all have a great responsibility for the future of our human family, but some have more responsibility than others!"

The Liverpool-born

Archbishop has been a Vatican diplomat for 30 years and speaks English, Spanish, French and Italian. He has been Australia's Papal Nuncio since December 2012 and previously served in Tanzania, Uruguay and the Philippines, and more recently Burundi and Guatemala.

Archbishop Gallagher worked in the Vatican's Secretariat of State for five years and was also the Vatican's Observer at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

He is the first Briton to be appointed to the role and replaces Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, who has been Foreign Minister since 2006.

Archdiocesan online calendar launched to help communities promote their events

AFTER months of preparation and in response to an identified need to enhance collaboration, a new Archdiocesan online calendar has been launched.

The initiative is designed to help all communities within the Archdiocese promote their Catholic events.

The calendar uses an interactive and intuitive application, and allows users to view and propose events themselves across a number of selected categories. Synchronisation with Outlook, iCal and Google calendars is also available for those wanting immediate access to the Archdiocesan calendar on their personal devices.

The calendar is only for events that are open to the public or of significant importance to a majority of people within the Archdiocese. Such events might include a parish or school fete, faith formation



The Archdiocesan online calendar can be found at www.cg.catholic.org.au/calendar

events, Archdiocesan youth events, major feast days and parish anniversaries.

Those wishing to submit an event for the calendar will be prompted to complete a simple form, which will be checked by an administrator before going online. As a reminder, if you are inviting a member of the cler-

gy or religious from outside the Archdiocese to lead or facilitate an event, then the appropriate documentation and permissions should be arranged. These requirements also apply to the engagement of laity from within or outside the Archdiocese. This does not apply to staff of the Archbishop's Office who already have the required permissions.

It is hoped the calendar will be a useful tool for informing people in the Archdiocese of the various events and activities on offer. Over time the online calendar will also help with planning and coordination of events across parishes, schools, agencies, groups and movements.

To access the calendar, visit www.cg.catholic.org.au/calendar or click on the 'Calendar' link on the Archdiocesan homepage. For assistance, email calendar@cg.catholic.org.au

Canberra 'party girl' at home in the cloister

BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

ALEXANDRIA Mitchell's journey from a self-confessed "wild party girl" to a contemplative nun living in a cloister will be complete on December 8 when she takes her final vows.

Now known as Sr Anastasia of the Incarnation, the former Canberra resident is one of 11 Carmelite nuns based in Lismore, NSW.

While each has their own unique vocation story, Sr Anastasia's is particularly impressive, as she entered the convent less than a year after becoming Catholic.

Without any religious upbringing, it was an experience working in the USA that started Sr Anastasia's remarkable change.

"I went over as an *au pair*, and I lived with a Catholic family and I was just taking the kids to Mass, but I never intended to become a Catholic," she explains. "After I had been going to Mass for a while with them, I thought I didn't want to go any more... I guess my conscience was getting to me... because I had been a really wild party girl."

But Sr Anastasia went to Mass one more time. She says it was like her guardian angel dragged her out of bed, and it might very well have been, as the priest spoke that day about the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). The curious Sr Anastasia signed up, and from there, never looked back.

"I absolutely loved it, but it was a gradual conversion, I had to learn everything," she says. "I devoured everything I would read and it was just an amazing grace."

At the Easter Vigil in 2009,



Sr Anastasia with her nephew William in the visitor's room of the Carmelite Convent in Lismore.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Sr Anastasia was baptised, a day before her 24th birthday.

A few months later she returned to Australia to live with her mum in Canberra,

became Catholic that I was becoming a religious.

"I never wanted to be an enclosed religious because I thought it would be really bor-

a live-in for 10 days and I decided during that period that I would ask if I could be received as a postulant, and they accepted me."

"If something drastic hadn't happened in my life, I would have overdosed on drugs... my life was really spiraling out of control."

where she discerned her vocation and explored several religious orders.

"I knew I had a vocation," Sr Anastasia says. "I knew before I became Catholic. I told my priest 10 days after I

ing and I could never do that. I did a live-in with the Nashville Dominicans and I was looking at all the active orders but it wasn't working out.

"It just hit me one day to look at [Lismore] Carmel. I did

Anastasia] had an open and exploring heart," he recalls.

"That's the first requirement for finding what God wants in a life, and I related this to the novice mistress."

Five years on since joining, Sr Anastasia says she is thriving as a Carmelite nun and believes she has grown and matured as a person.

"I feel like in my whole life... my heart has always been looking for God," she says.

"I sought happiness in the most extreme places and they almost destroyed me.

"If something drastic hadn't happened in my life, I would have overdosed on drugs.. it was that bad, my life was really spiraling out of control."

For those close to her, the change in Sr Anastasia was indeed drastic. Her mum Debbie Mitchell says her daughter's decisions to become Catholic and then to become a nun were a great surprise.

"She has found her vocation completely in the absence of any influence, so one can only assume and respect that it's a very true calling and vocation," she says.

"When she told me that she was going to become a nun, that was very, very difficult. It took me some time to come to terms with it."

Ms Mitchell says she tries to visit her daughter twice a year, and she's looking forward to attending the final profession.

"She's very happy and she's demonstrated that happiness to me over and over again over the last five years," she says.

"As the years have gone on I've been more and more comforted, as her mother, by the fact that she has been very happy."

Canberra priest Fr Paul-Anthony McGavin, who has known the Carmelite nuns in Lismore for 35 years, says he met with Sr Anastasia before she first visited the convent.

"It was clear that [Sr

Youth team depart after year of inspiring others

BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

AFTER 12 months of inspiring the hearts and minds of youth around the Archdiocese, members of Canberra and Goulburn's National Evangelisation Team (NET) were farewelled last month.

During their time in the Archdiocese, the team – comprising Kim Noronha, Cosme Cham, Peter McAuliffe, Katherine Besaw and Traci Wall – conducted workshops at numerous schools and assisted at various parishes. The team was also a major part of the 'Explosion' youth conference in October.

Mr Cham, who is from Sydney, said he had been impressed with the way school

children in the Archdiocese received the team. He added that living with the other four NET members in a house in Goulburn had been a highly beneficial experience.

"It's very different to living at home," he said. "Living in a community lifestyle, you can't run when you have a problem. It can only be easy if everyone shares the same vision.

"My prayer life has sky-rocketed. Living in a community lifestyle where you are encouraged and people will check up on you if you're not praying just keeps you on track."

Mr Cham said he decided to join NET Ministries because he wanted to be able to give of himself to others.

"I used to play music in a lot of bars and... I'd see a lot of lonely people sitting in bars by themselves," he explained.

"It gave me motivation to give where I can... just to sit with them and listen, just to provide myself because that's all I have."

Archdiocesan parish and schools youth ministry liaison officer Joshua Goldsborough, who supervises the work of NET Ministries in the Archdiocese, said he was impressed with the efforts of this year's team.

"They found the right balance between being relatable whilst also being professional," he said. "In terms of the face-to-face ministry, it is just good to see more and more young



The 2014 NET team, from left to right: Kim Noronha, Traci Wall, Peter McAuliffe, Cosme Cham and Katherine Besaw.

PHOTO: LOUI SESELJA

people stepping up each year to share their faith."

Prior to returning to their homes, the team members trav-

elled to Brisbane, where all NET volunteers from around Australia gathered for a one-week debrief of the year.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2014

ADELONG/BATLOW: Christmas Vigil 6pm (Batlow), Christmas Day 9am (Adelong).

ARANDA: Christmas Vigil 7pm. Christmas Day 10am.

BATEMANS BAY: Christmas Vigil 6pm St Bernard's Primary School, 9pm. Christmas Day 9am.

BEGA: Christmas Vigil 6pm Bega, 7pm Bemboka, 8pm Tathra, midnight Candelo. Christmas Day 8.30am Bega.

BOMBALA: Christmas Day 8am Delegate, 10am Bombala.

BOOROWA: Christmas Vigil 6pm Boorowa, 6.30pm St Clement's Galong. Christmas Day 8.30am St Clement's Galong. No Masses at Frogmore or Binalong.

BRAIDWOOD: Christmas Vigil 6pm.

BUNGENDORE: Christmas Vigil 6pm.

CAMPBELL: Christmas Vigil 6pm (children).

CATHEDRAL: Christmas Vigil 6pm Cathedral, 9pm St Peter Chanel's Yarralumla, midnight Cathedral (carols 11.15pm). Christmas Day 8am Cathedral, 9.30am St Peter Chanel's, 11am Cathedral, 5.30pm Cathedral.

CENTRAL CANBERRA: Christmas Vigil 6pm Dickson (carols 5.30pm). Christmas Day 8am Braddon, 9.30am Dickson.

CHARNWOOD: Christmas Vigil 7pm. Christmas Day 9am.

COOMA: Christmas Vigil 6pm Cooma, 9pm Nimmitabel. Christmas Day 8am Adaminaby, 10am Cooma.

COOTAMUNDRA: Christmas Vigil 7pm Cootamundra, 7pm Harden/Murrumburrah, 9pm

GUNGAHLIN: Christmas Vigil 7pm (children) 10pm (carols 9.30pm). Christmas Day 9am. No 8am or 5.30pm Mass.

HALL: Christmas Vigil 7.30pm (carols 7pm).

HARDEN - MURRUMBURRAH:

MORUYA: Christmas Vigil 6pm (outdoor), midnight. Christmas Day 8am Tuross Head, 10am Moruya. Extra Sunday 5pm Mass Carroll College Broulee on 28 December and 4th January.

NAROOMA-COBARGO:

SOUTHERN CROSS: Christmas Vigil 6pm (children's outdoor) Calwell, midnight Gowrie. Christmas Day 8am, 10am Gowrie. No 6pm Mass.

SOUTH WODEN: Christmas Vigil 6pm 9pm. Christmas Day 8.30am 10.00am, all Sacred Heart, Pearce.

SYRO-MALABAR MASS (Malayalam language): Christmas Vigil, 5.30pm, Yarralumla.

TARALGA: Christmas Vigil 6pm.

TEMORA MISSION: Christmas Vigil 6pm (outdoor) Temora, 6.30pm Barellan. Christmas Day 8am Barmedman, 8am Ardlethan, 10am Temora, 10am Ariah Park.

TUMUT: Christmas Vigil 7pm. Christmas Day 8am Talbingo, 10am Tumut.

WANNIASSA: Christmas Vigil 6.30pm (children), 9pm. Christmas Day 9am.

WATSON: Christmas Vigil 6pm (children), 10pm. Christmas Day 8am, 10am (no 6pm).

WESTERN MISSION: Christmas Vigil 5.30pm Burcher, 7pm West Wyalong, 7.30pm Ungarie. Christmas Day 9am West Wyalong.

WESTON CREEK: Christmas Vigil 6pm Holder (family), 6pm Waramanga (family), 9pm (carols 8.30pm) Waramanga, Christmas Day 9am Holder (carols 8.30am).

YASS-GUNNING: Christmas Vigil 5.30pm Gunning, 7pm Yass, 8.30pm Murrumbateman recreation hall. Christmas Day 8.30am Yass, 9am Gundaroo.

YOUNG MISSION: Christmas Vigil 6pm, 9pm Young, 7pm Bribaree. Christmas Day 8am Young, 9am Grenfell.



Wallendbeen. Christmas Day 8am Muttama, 9.30am Cootamundra.

CROOKWELL: Christmas Vigil 9pm Crookwell. Christmas Day 8am Binda, 9.30am Crookwell.

EVATT: Christmas Vigil 6pm. Christmas Day 9.30am.

GOULBURN: Christmas Vigil 6pm (children), 8pm Old Cathedral, 6pm Marulan, 6pm Taralga. Christmas Day 9am Our Lady of Fatima, 9am Tarago.

GUNDAGAI: Christmas Vigil 6pm, 8pm. Christmas Day 8am.

Christmas Vigil 7pm.

JINDABYNE: Christmas Vigil 5pm Thredbo, 7pm Berridale, 8pm Jindabyne, midnight Jindabyne. Christmas Day 9am Jindabyne, 9am Berridale.

JUGIONG: Christmas Day 10am.

KALEEN: Christmas Vigil 8pm. Christmas Day 8am.

KAMBAH: Christmas Vigil 7pm (children), 9.30pm Vietnamese Mass, midnight. Christmas Day 9am.

KIPPAX: Christmas Vigil 6pm, 9pm midnight (carols 11.30pm). Christmas Day 9am. No evening Mass.

LAKECARGELLIGO: Christmas Vigil 7pm Tullibigeal, 9pm Lake Cargelligo. Christmas Day 9.30am Lake Cargelligo.

LATIN MASS COMMUNITY: Midnight Mass Garran. Christmas Day 7am Campbell, 10am Garran.

MICHEL AGO: Christmas Vigil 7pm.

Christmas Vigil 6pm Cobargo, 8pm Narooma. Christmas Day 7.30am Bermagui, 9.30am Narooma.

NARRABUNDAH: Christmas Vigil 6pm, 8pm (charismatic), midnight. Christmas Day 10am.

NORTH WODEN: Christmas Vigil 5.30pm Curtin (children), 7pm Garran, midnight (starting at 10pm) Curtin. Christmas Day 8.30am Garran, 9.30am Curtin.

O'CONNOR: Christmas Day 11am

PAGE: Christmas Vigil 6.30pm (children), 9pm. Christmas Day 8.30am.

PAMBULA: Christmas Vigil 5pm Merimbula (children) 7.30pm Eden, midnight Pambula. Christmas Day 10am Merimbula.

QUEANBEYAN: Christmas Vigil 6pm (children, Molonglo St), midnight St Raphael's (carols 11.15pm). Christmas Day 8am 10am St Raphael's.

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Archbishop Fisher installed in Sydney

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

“CATHOLICS, come back” – that was the message from the new Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP, at his installation Mass last month.

In a warm, inspiring and hope-filled homily, Sydney’s ninth Archbishop invited disengaged Catholics to return to the Church and help improve it.

“To those disconnected, I say ‘Come back home’,” the former lawyer said. “Give us another chance and help us be a better Church. We need your insights, enthusiasm and prayers.”

After the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, read the ‘Papal Bull’ in Latin and declared the new appointment, a procession of people approached Archbishop Fisher to greet him as their new shepherd.

The Archbishop affectionately welcomed priests and religious, as well as mums and dads with kids in tow, embracing children and happily receiving a teddy bear from a small boy.

Another personal touch was seeing the love and intimacy between Archbishop Fisher and his proud parents Gloria and Colin, who sat in the front row with their four other children.

“I am the first Archbishop of Sydney lucky enough to have

both parents present at his installation... with all my heart I thank them, my siblings and the rest of my family and friends, for loving me so well, and being willing to share me now with a new family of about 600,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese,” he said.

Archbishop Fisher said he had found it “harrowing” to listen to survivors of sexual abuse by clergy and to hear how abandoned they felt and how they continue to suffer.

“To survivors of abuse and all affected I say: the Church is – I am – profoundly sorry for what happened,” he said. “The Church can do better and I am committed to giving a lead in this area. I pray that the Church will emerge from this period of public scrutiny humbler, more compassionate and spiritually regenerated.”

Archbishop Fisher referred to Christianity, Islam and Secularism as “three great ideas that shape the human soul” but said extremist strains of each had sometimes threatened the security of the others. “To people of other faiths or none, I hold out the hand of friendship and collaboration, and to those suffering at home or abroad for their faith I commit to working for peace and harmony,” he said.



Top, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP greets children during his installation Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney on November 12. Right, the former Bishop of Parramatta shares an emotional moment with his parents, Gloria and Colin. Bottom right, the new leader of the Archdiocese of Sydney imparts his blessing upon the thousands of people who were present at the Mass, including many political, religious and civil leaders. PHOTOS: GIOVANNI PORTELLI



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Marriage strengthens spouses' faith



A TIME TO CELEBRATE
BY AOIFE CONNORS

FOR newly married couple Anita and Sok-Ho Chong, attending a pre-marital course called "Catholic Engaged Encounter" in Sydney became a turning point in their relationship and faith.

"After careful consideration we both thought it would be beneficial for us to attend a full course over a weekend," Anita, 27, explains.

"The schedule was jam-packed covering every aspect of a relationship and marriage. It definitely helped us to know each other better, or confirm what we think of our partner," Sok-Ho, 28, says.

Meeting at Canberra's Hyatt Hotel in January 2013, the newlyweds had similar childhood migration experiences. Born and raised in Indonesia, Anita's family immigrated to Australia when she was 15. Sok-Ho's family moved from South Korea to Australia when he was just 5.

The couple admit they were not regular Mass-goers, but say the marriage preparation course



Sok-Ho and Anita Chong say their faith has been strengthened since they were married earlier this year at St Christopher's Cathedral. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

provoked them both to reflect on the Catholic families they were raised in.

"Our parents are definitely the biggest influence on our faith," Sok-Ho says.

"Leading into the marriage we both felt we wanted our children to grow up in the same loving Catholic environment we grew up in.

"We strive to attend Mass whenever we can; both being shift workers it is sometimes hard to attend the Sunday Mass so we try to go either on the Saturday evening or to a weekday Mass."

Jesuit priest Fr Peter L'Estrange married the couple at St Christopher's Cathedral on September 28 this year.

"The date was special to us and we thought it was extra special because it fell on a Sunday," Anita says. "The majority of our friends and family were with us on the day. Everything went smoothly and looking back, we wouldn't make any changes."

The couple describe Fr L'Estrange as a "family member".

"He helped us and guided us in preparation for our wedding and we are sure he will continue to play an important role in our Catholic lives," Anita explains.

"Our Catholic faith has definitely been strengthened and we believe it will continue to strengthen throughout our marriage".

Make space for Christ this Advent



GOING DEEPER
BY SHANE DWYER

I DON'T often think much about the devil, although he pops up a bit in the context of the work I do. I tend to think he has been given too much airplay over the centuries and is best starved of the attention that he craves. However, I must admit that he comes to mind each year as we prepare for Christmas. I

imagine him dancing in demonic joy at the way we have allowed this sacred time to become so banal, so bloated, and so dominated by excess.

Over the next few weeks we are in preparation mode for one of the central realities of our faith – the celebration of our God who loves us so much that he enters our world as one of us. Aside from the events celebrated during the Easter season, there is no more important

celebration in the Church.

Quite apart from anything else, during this season we are being reminded of the centrality of our baptismal vocation. Each of us is called to be someone who brings Christ to birth in our world. In this God reveals his dependence on us. He needs us to consistently agree to make space for him, so that he may be born into our lives and transform every part of them.

That is all very well in theory. Making space for God to be born in us is a profound spiritual challenge. A lot is at stake. In fact, we may deliberately avoid confronting this challenge, being content instead to simply 'celebrate the festivities'. The baptismal vocation is a tough one and is often lonely and exposed. Our lives are to proclaim the presence of Jesus Christ in a world that is at best indifferent, and even increasingly antagonistic to that presence. Wrestling with our personal ambivalence with regard to this vocation is what Advent is all about. God wishes to be born in you that you might bring him to the world.

FIVE MINUTES WITH...
JUDY NETTING



Judy Netting has been the chair of the Archdiocesan Commission for Women since 2010, having joined the Commission in 2007. She previously worked for Centacare.

What do you like most about your job?

As it's an unpaid position I find it hard to call it a job. We are women and men who work toward a better gender balance within the Church and its structures. We provide opportunities for critical reflection on who we are as Catholic women in the contemporary Church, by arranging guest speakers and through an education program. This year we've held sessions on grief and loss in four country towns; in April we had a session on prison ministry and in August Sr Jane Keogh recounted some of her work with refugees.

Do you live to work or work to live?

I live to live, to enjoy life, to thank God for his blessings and to have the strength to face life's challenges. I love God's creation, sunsets, moon rises, mountains, the sea and most of all, the people I meet.

Can you tell me about your family?

Our three sons and two daughters are married and there are 12 grandchildren who are great young people and with whom I have a lot of fun. All except one family live in the ACT.

How do you spend a typical weekend?

I love to be outside and either potter in my small garden, visit family and friends or attend grandchildren's sports. I am a follower of AFL and have been a very enthusiastic St Kilda supporter for 60 years. Recently I drove to Sydney with a young grandson to watch them play the Swans (no comment on the result). I am actively involved with my parish at Kippax.

Shopping, food, reading or travel - what appeals most?

Travel has been a great pastime for me. It started when I visited family who were working overseas, in Toronto, London and later Manila, and Suva. Iceland was always of interest to me as well as Northern Scotland. I visited Iceland in 2011 and even the volcano erupting did not dampen my spirits; it is a spectacular country. I drove around most of the coast of Scotland and the Orkneys, again most spectacular views. I did a liturgy study tour to Europe and visited Israel last year with a CathNews tour.

My philosophy on life is...

It has been influenced by a Sanskrit proverb which I have carried with me for many years. It encourages one to look to this day for it is life, for yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

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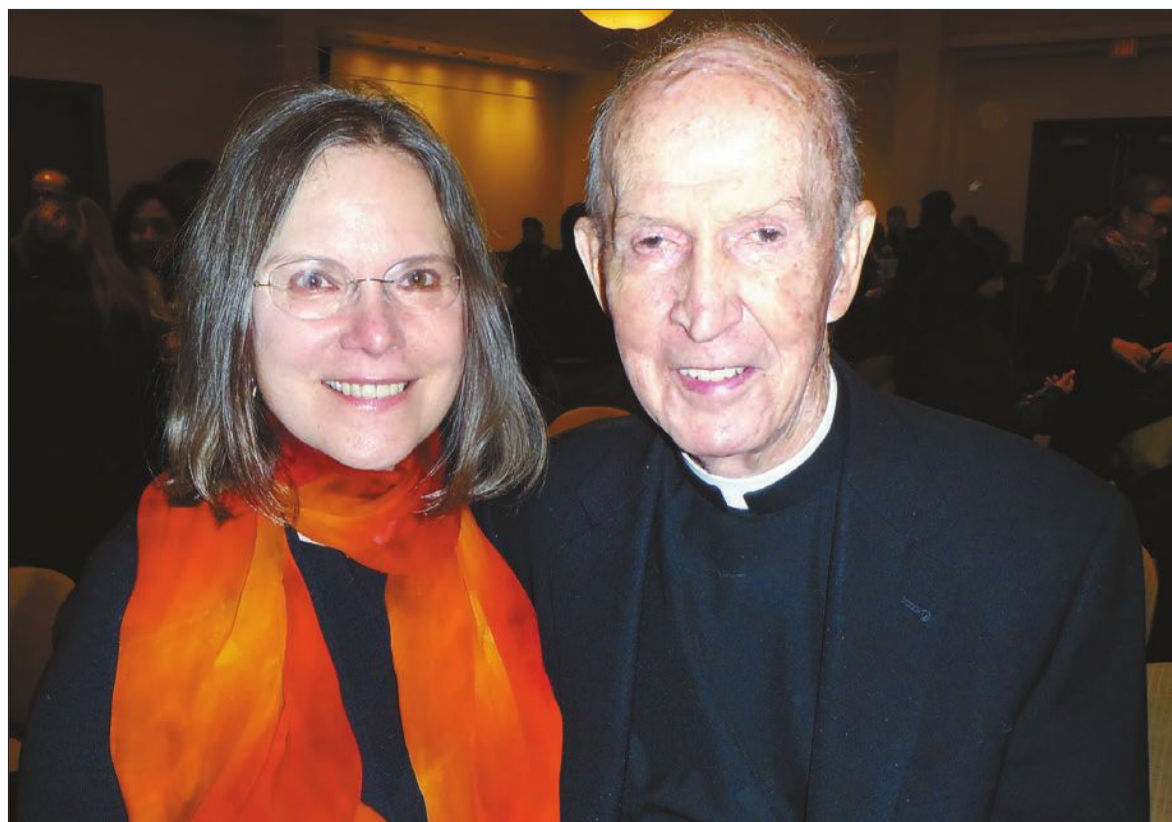
Boston remembers fallen Jesuits



POSTCARD FROM BOSTON
FR FRANK BRENNAN SJ

ON November 16 we marked the 25th anniversary of the assassination of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter at the Universidad Centroamerica (UCA) in El Salvador during their dreadful civil war. Here at Boston College, we marked the event with an address by American poet Carolyn Forché who spent years in El Salvador listening to the horrific stories. She knew Fr Ignacio Ellacuria SJ, the rector of UCA who was the main target of the assassins. He taught her that "each moment of our life shapes the whole of our life, and that we are not always responsible for what befalls us but we are certainly responsible for our response".

She was a friend of the late, and hopefully soon to be canonised, Archbishop Oscar Romero. She was with him the



American poet Carolyn Forché with Fr Donald Monan SJ, who was the president of Boston College when six Jesuit priests were assassinated in El Salvador 25 years ago. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

week before he was assassinated in March 1980. This is how she told the story: "I met with Mgr in the kitchen of the convent of the Carmelite Missionary Sisters, where he told me gently that it was time for me to go home, as the situation had become

too dangerous, and I was more needed in the United States, in the work of helping Americans to understand the struggle for justice. But I begged him to leave, as his was the first name on the death squad's list. He seemed so calm that afternoon,

tapping his fingers on the Bible he carried with him. I realised I was in the presence of a saint. 'No', he said, 'my place is with my people, and now your place is with yours'."

In the audience was Fr Donald Monan SJ, who had

been president of Boston College when his Jesuit brothers were assassinated. He, and other Jesuit university professors, went to El Salvador and sat through the trial of the soldiers indicted with the killings. He spent years lobbying US congressmen to withdraw support for the unaccountable military in El Salvador, observing "the intellectual architects of this crime have never been publicly identified", or called to account.

When Fr Ellacuria became rector of UCA he said his country was "an unjust and irrational reality that should be transformed" and that the university needed to contribute to social change: "It does this in a university manner and with a Christian inspiration." When Fr Monan returned from El Salvador, he was fond of telling his students: "We must do all we can to ensure that freedom predominates over oppression, justice over injustice, truth over falsehood, and love over hatred. If the university does not decide to make this commitment, we do not understand what validity it has as a university, much less as a Christian inspired university."

The age-old question: To Santa or not to Santa?



BEING A DAD
BY BRIAN CURTIS

TO Santa or not to Santa – that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler at Christmas to forgo the yearly homage to the great jolly fat man, who so boldly seizes pride of place at Christmas in the imaginations of dear little ones, with his promises of toys and gadgets and the latest 'must-haves'.

Should the noble parent spin again the fantastic story of the bon-homie Santa Claus, delivering gifts to all the kids in town on Christmas Eve?

What slings and arrows of outrageous penury you might be spared up and down the shopping aisles,

where all the latest and greatest cravings assault your sense of moderation and budgetary propriety. What consumeristic tsunami,

does Christmas now portend when love for family and friends come with dollar signs.

Would the bones of good St Nicholas now turn in their grave,

would his spirit from heaven look down and rejoice

when he sees a counterfeit man in red fur and white beard n' trim

taking licence with his name.

For bishop Santa Klaus, as he was loved in days gone by, in snowy European winters was honoured on his feast day, December 6, with small gifts for little kids and a holy day, now named 'holiday'.

When good and pious souls remembered him at Mass, and his great generosity in leaving three small bags of gold for three young girls

to save them from a life of slavery.

It seems so strange, that 'Christ' and 'Mass' seem out of place

in the modern 'festive season', when greeting cards, so delicately avoid

in their aphorisms benign, the 'reason for the season'.

How then should a Catholic commemorate, in suitable joyful fashion the unsurpassable gift of the

Bethlehem babe?

Perhaps we should follow the lead of those who loved him best that first Christmas night.

To cherish the Bethlehem babe in our own kids, and tell them, with words, how precious they are.

For in their eyes, both small and great, sparkles the image of the divine,

vessels made for love, to receive and to share.

Teach them to give what they

have, like the lowly shepherds, who had nothing but

their love, and that was all that was needed.

For if Christmas is the great gift of God, giving of himself, then it behoves us to share with others the best of what we have,

our time, our love, our company.

And to give God, in those around us, our gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And if truth be told, when I was young,

I loved that dear red man, and his selfless goodness to me, and I still had a place for both him and Christ, in my heart on Christmas day.

So let me not be the Grinch who stole Christmas, with my rant on Santa.

For in my childhood dreams, those many years ago,

with Santa they sure were sweeter.



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A family affair at St Mary's

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

IT'S a family affair at St Mary's War Memorial Primary School in West Wyalong, with a host of the teachers also parents of children at the school.

Year 1 teacher Kylie Tulloch has four sons and three of them: Charlie (Year 5), Harry (Year 2) and Sam (kinder) attend St Mary's. She also has two-year-old Edward.

Mrs Tulloch said her boys have sometimes called her "Mrs Tulloch" at home, instead of mum, as she has sometimes been a casual teacher in their classes.

Assistant principal Phillip Nielsen, who has been in the role since 2007, is married to teacher Sarah Nielsen and their daughter Chelsea is in kinder. Their son Toby is four.

Office assistant Carlie Glasgow has three children at the school: Kade (Year 3), Kelsie (Year 2) and Keelan (kinder); science teacher Patrick Mason's son Oscar is in Year 6 while Year 3-4 teacher Nickey Harland's son Benjamin is also in his final year.

"My eldest son Matt went here and is now at Yanco Boarding School, and my daughter Laura is in Year 8 at the public school but will go to boarding school next year," Ms Harland said.

St Mary's has 103 students;

and the kinder class of 23 is their biggest in almost 10 years. There are 60 boys.

"It's not so noisy with all the boys but they do like to play in the dirt," principal Robyn Akehurst said. "They're forever digging a hole somewhere!"

Having no Catholic secondary school option in town means about 85 per cent of the children move to the government school, while the rest go to boarding schools, which are expensive.

But that is changing, thanks to a partnership being developed for St Mary's to become a feeder school for St Anne's in Temora.

"This year, for the first time, a girl named Winnie Lawrence, who was with us in Year 6 last year, is taking two buses each morning to go to St Anne's," Ms Akehurst said.

"She leaves West Wyalong at 7.30am and in Barmedman she connects with another bus for Temora. She is back at 4.30pm.

"There are 13 children in Year 6 this year and next year we'll have Winnie's sister, Paige, and three or four others going to St Anne's, which is a great development for us."

"It's a shame not to have a Catholic option and the kids are too young to send away in Year 7," Mr Mason said. "The St Anne's partnership is a great initiative."



Clockwise from top: Year 3-4 teacher Nickey Harland with her son Benjamin (Year 6); office assistant Carlie Glasgow with her children Keelan (kinder), Kelsie (Year 2) and Kade (Year 3); teacher Patrick Mason with son Oscar (Year 6); assistant principal Phillip Nielsen with his teacher wife Sarah and daughter Chelsea (kinder); Year 1 teacher Kylie Tulloch with sons Sam (kinder), Harry (Year 2) and Charlie (Year 5). PHOTOS: LOUI SESELJA



Carmelite fete a day to remember

The 39th annual Carmelite fete on October 25 was a great success once again, thanks to a team of hard-working and dedicated volunteers.

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

THE sun always shines on the Carmelite Monastery fete.

"When you've got the nuns praying, you're guaranteed to have good weather," long-time fete helper Millie McKeough laughed. "We've only had one fete where it's rained, at about lunchtime, but usually it's glorious weather and that's one of the reasons why people keep coming."

October 25 was fete day this year and as usual, an army of hard-working and loyal Carmelite supporters, commanded by Kevin Croker, made it a success.

It's a small fete with a 'village fair' atmosphere in a beautiful setting. Mums and kids tuck into Devonshire teas at one of the garden tables, a team of men wander the crowd flogging tickets to the spinning wheel, the cake and plant stalls do a roaring trade and Sr Monica darts about with a tray of sandwiches to feed the volunteers.

"This is our 39th year of the fete now," said Sr Mary Agnes, "and we've got wonderful friends who help us."

"We don't have an income, so we have to live on something!"

Kevin has been organising it for 38 years and all the people involved are very dear to us."

Among those special friends are Denis Taylor from Weston and his wife Robin, who have been running the barbecue for 30 years. Helping Denis turn the sausages and steaks are his son James, and grandson Billy, 12.

"I've been doing it so long now I can't get out of it," Denis joked.

University student Molly Kenny, 19, has been volunteering since she was a toddler, helping at the cake stall each year with her grandma Margaret McKinnon.

And it wouldn't be a Carmelite fete without John and Patricia Andrew and their formidable four daughters.

A former accountant, John has been counting the money for decades, keeping a close eye on the ledger in a back room as stall holders bring in their takings. Daughters Margaret, Catherine, Libby and Mary are all on stalls, with their kids assigned jobs as well.

"Dad's got a spreadsheet which goes back to 1999, and handwritten records prior to that, of what each stall has made," daughter Mary Robinson said. "Stall volunteers pop in during the day to get a running tally. Dad loves it."

"We're a very Catholic family and we just love the Sisters. We've all had our separate challenges with our families and the nuns have been a great support to us."

GOT AN EVENT YOU WOULD LIKE CATHOLIC VOICE TO COVER?

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Clockwise from top: Sr Beth with Margaret Frawley, her granddaughter Chloe Richardson and Joseph Fung; Kevin Croker and Sr Monica; Anton Majer with Molly Kenny on the spinning wheel; Sr Josephine with Dave Tonkin at the plant stall; sisters Margaret Froggatt, Catherine Cusack, Libby Andrew and Mary Robinson with Sr Monica; Denis Taylor with his wife Robin, son James and grandson Billy. PHOTOS: LOUI SESELJA



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Thanks

Thank you St Jude for prayers answered. AM and BM.



Written entries are invited for the February issue to: Catholic Voice, PO Box 7174, Yarralumla, ACT 2600, or email ed.voice@cg.catholic.org.au by January 15. Entries which are accepted are free, courtesy of sponsorship by the Catholic Development Fund.

Archdiocesan Coming Events

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE:

Commence your Christmas celebrations with St Caecilia's Choir at the Advent Carol Service - A service of nine Readings and carols, on Sunday, December 7 at 7.30pm at St Raphael's Church, Lowe St, Queanbeyan. St Caecilia's Choir will be accompanied by organ, strings, brass and timpani. The Carol Service will feature Renaissance polyphony, Gregorian chant, and carols for choir and congregation. Admission free - donations gratefully accepted.

MUSIC RETREAT WEEKEND:

At St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong NSW from Friday, February, 6 to Sunday, February 8. The retreat's theme is 'Restore My Spirit' and will be presented by Sr Carmel Pilcher RSJ and Sr Timothy Monaghan RSJ. Singers, instrumentalists and all interested in music for liturgy are invited to come away for a weekend to pray, rest and explore music in liturgy with presenters who know what support you need. Sr Carmel has taught liturgical formation around Australia and Sr Timothy is a musician who has ministered in country parishes. This is an opportunity to explore

music resources, workshop issues, network with musicians and singers from other parishes, learn new music, develop support for people with fewer resources, pray together and be renewed. Contact: Retreat Coordinator, St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong, NSW, 2585, email: info@stclement.com.au, phone: (02) 6380 5222, fax: (02) 6386 7353.

THE MARIAN MOVEMENT OF PRIESTS:

Invites you and your friends to the eighth annual New Year's Eve prayer vigil at St John the Apostle Church, cnr Blackham and Chave Streets, Holt, ACT, on Wednesday, December 31 from 8.30pm. Inquiries: phone Judy and Joe Mewburn: (02) 6254 6202.

REGULAR EVENTS

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

St Benedict's, Narrabundah, Monday 8am-10pm, Tuesday 12pm-10pm, Wednesday and Thursday 1pm-10pm and Friday 7am-Saturday 8am. All welcome.

AMICUS: Support & friendship/social group for widowed, separated or divorced Catholics; regular activities on second and

fourth weekends. New members welcome. Inquiries: Len, phone (02) 6299 6606; Pat (02) 6292 1631, Enid (02) 6296 5592.

GOOD SHEPHERD PRAYER GROUP:

Meets Wednesdays 7pm-9.30pm, parish room, St Peter Chanel's Church, Yarralumla, ACT. Rosary, charismatic praise and worship, teachings, testimonies, prayer ministry, intercession and fellowship. Inquiries: Susanna, phone 0419 902 293, Neda 0415 266 019, Gabriel 0432 082 642.

HOLY SPIRIT SECULAR FRANCISCAN FRATERNITY:

Third Friday of the month, 7.30pm, St John Vianney's, Waramanga. Secular Franciscans try to follow Christ in the footsteps of St Francis. Inquiries: Tony, phone 0407 072 139, Frank 0400 793 260, email sfo@fastmail.fm.

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Culture not to blame for religion's decline



FAITH MATTERS
BY FR RON ROLHEISER

IT'S no secret that today there's been a massive drop-off in church attendance. Moreover that drop-off in church-going is not paralleled by the same widespread growth in atheism and agnosticism. Rather, more and more people are claiming to be spiritual but not religious, faith-filled but not church-goers. Why this exodus from our churches?

The temptation inside religious circles is to blame what's happening on secularity. Secular culture, many people argue, is perhaps the most powerful narcotic ever perpetrated on this planet, both for good and for bad. It swallows most of us whole with its seductive promises of heaven on this side of eternity. Within our secularised world, the pursuit of the good life simply squeezes out almost all deeper religious desire. Interestingly, this is also the major criticism that Islamic extremists make of Western culture. For them it's a drug, which once ingested, has no cure. That's why they want to block their youth from Western influences.

But is this true? Is secular culture the enemy? Are we, church-goers, the last true remnant of God and truth left standing, prophetic and



The way to fill our churches again is to improve them, rather than to blame secular culture.

PHOTO: ONLINE

marginalised in a society that's shallow, irreligious, and godless? Many, including myself, would argue that this conclusion is far, far too simple. Secular society can be shallow, irreligious, and godless, there's more than sufficient evidence for that; but, beneath its shallowness and its congenital allergy to our churches, real religious desire still burns and the churches must ask themselves: Why aren't more people turning to us to deal with their religious desires? Why are so many people who are seeking spirituality not interested in looking at what the Church offers? Why, instead, are they turning to everything except the Church? Why, indeed, do so many people have the attitude: "The Church has nothing to offer me: I find it boring,

irrelevant, caught up in its own petty issues, hopelessly out of step with my life."

Secularity is, no doubt, partly to blame, but so too are the churches themselves. There's an axiom that says: All atheism is a parasite off of bad theism. That logic also holds regarding attitudes towards the Church: Bad attitudes towards the Church feed off bad Church practices.

The great Jewish scholar, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, would agree. In his book, *God in Search of Man*, he writes: "It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant,

dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendour of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than the voice of compassion – its message becomes meaningless."

Novelist Marilynne Robinson (who has both a deep sympathy for and a commitment to the Church) echoes Heschel. For her, as churches today, we are not radiating the immensity of God and the larger mystery of Christ. Rather, despite our good will, we are too much subordinating the mystery of Christ to tribalism, resentment, fear, and self-protection. Christianity, Robinson submits,

"is too great a narrative to be reduced to serving any parochial interest or to be underwritten by any lesser tale". Blaming the world for our problems, she argues, does nothing to enhance the respect the world has for religion or for Christianity. The drop-off in church attendance is very much our own fault because far too often we are not radiating a Church with a compassionate embrace and we are not in fact addressing the real energies that are burning inside people. For Robinson, the secular world isn't, per se, irreligious. Rather it sees our churches as self-absorbed, non-understanding, and non-empathetic to its desires, its wounds, and its needs. And so her challenge to us, church-goers, is this: "It behoves anyone who calls himself or herself a Christian, any institution that calls itself a Church, to bring credit to the faith, at very least not to embarrass or disgrace it. Making God a tribal deity, our local Baal, is embarrassing and disgraceful."

Some years ago, I heard an Evangelical minister state the problem this way: As Christian churches we have the living water, the water Christ promised would quench all fires and all thirsts. But, this is the problem: We aren't getting the living water to where the fires are! Instead we are spraying water everywhere, except where it's burning! burning!

He's right. The answer to the mass exodus from our churches is not to blame the culture; it's to make better churches.

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BY MATTHEW BIDDLE

Standing at the top of his mark before delivering the first ball of the innings, Jason Behrendorff says a quick prayer asking for help to do his very best.

One of Australian cricket's rising stars, the left-arm pace-man says his Christian faith is the backbone of his cricket success and of his life.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without my Christian faith, so it's something I'm very grateful and thankful for," he says. "It's right at the top of my priorities."

Raised in a Christian home in Canberra with his two younger siblings, Behrendorff says his faith reached a crossroads when he decided to move to WA as a 19-year-old to pursue his cricketing dream.

"I didn't really know all that many people... and it was my decision whether I go to church or not, and that's where I really took it upon myself rather than just doing what was the norm with my family," he explains.

"I've always had a reasonably strong faith, but once I moved across to Perth and it was actually my decision to go to church... I guess my faith started to expand and grow a bit more.

"Once I took it on more myself rather than just doing what my family was doing, I really started to understand a bit more about what it means to be a Christian, not just going to church on a Sunday."

Growing up, Behrendorff played for Tuggeranong Valley in the ACT, representing the Territory in national carnivals on numerous occasions.

He says the decision to move to WA in 2009 was a difficult one, but ultimately one that had to be made if he was to play first-class cricket.

"It was actually really tough," he recalls. "My family and I are all really close and to move not just out of home, but also to move across the other side of the country was certainly something that I struggled with a little bit at first."

While he's grown accustomed to being away from his family, Behrendorff says it's been his Christian faith that has helped me overcome such challenges.

"[My faith] has really helped me in the fact that I know there's a plan for my life and I know that if I keep trusting in God everything will continue to work out," he says.

"I'm not saying that it's going to be easy, but it's definitely refreshing and good to know that there is a plan there and that you're not just walking in the dark all the time."



Canberra star sets his sights on higher honours but says he'll only get there

WITH GOD'S HELP

Canberra's Jason Behrendorff says his faith and trust in God has helped him to become one of Australia's most promising young cricketers. PHOTO: WILL RUSSELL / GETTY IMAGES

Part of the plan for Behrendorff's life was to meet a young lady called Juvelle Hyatt, who Behrendorff married in April.

Behrendorff says the couple has made daily prayer an important part of their life, and it's something that he relies upon in other ways too.

"I've always got a conscious prayer the night before a game just to let me relax and focus and do what I do well," he says.

"Before I bowl my first ball at the top of my mark at the start of the day I'll just say a little, quick prayer about the day... before I run in and hopefully I can take a lot of wickets that day."

Behrendorff says while playing elite level sport hasn't challenged his faith, it's not always easy to be a Christian in a largely non-Christian environment.

"It's a tough thing to do at times with just the way sport and the cricketing culture and the Australian culture is," he says. "All my teammates know where I stand, my views, my faith and my opinions, and

they all respect that, so that's been another really good and positive thing for me, knowing that I'm not going to get ridiculed or brought down because of my beliefs and my faith.

"I certainly know that if it wasn't the case then it might be a lot tougher and I still might not actually be able to do what

from a skinny little kid to now being a really outstanding athlete who's getting stronger and stronger; and his ability to bowl in all forms of the game... his improvement's been immense," Langer says.

The former Australian opener says Behrendorff is the epitome of the type of young man

to the back page... so to have guys who have good values and make good choices, that's a great help as a coach."

Behrendorff's domestic form has been superb over the past 18 months, and he is hopeful that consistent good performances will be rewarded with a national call-up in the near future.

"The ultimate goal for me is to wear that baggy green, so I'm forever working hard to do everything I can to achieve that goal," he says.

But the young fast bowler is quick to recognise that the only way he can achieve his goal is to trust in God.

"The big thing for me has been trusting in what I know and in myself and also knowing that there's a plan for my life," he says. "I've got to continue to work as hard as I can at what I do to fulfill that plan and I don't know exactly what that plan is and where it will end up, but I know that if I keep working hard and keep trusting in God that I'll do everything I can to fulfill that."

“ [My faith] has really helped me in the fact that I know there's a plan for my life and I know that if I keep trusting in God everything will continue to work out.”

- Jason Behrendorff



I'm doing today."

WA coach Justin Langer – a practicing Catholic – says he's been impressed with Behrendorff since the pair first met in 2009.

"He's one of the most improved cricketers in Australia. The way he's gone

he'd love to have in his team.

"He's a lovely guy, he works very, very hard on his cricket and he's an outstanding young person," he says.

"One of my objectives when I took over the coaching role in Western Australia was to take our guys from the front pages