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MANUS CRISIS

Bishops urge action over 600 asylum seekers on island

By Mark Bowling

AMID public protests, vigils and picketing of politician's offices, the Catholic Church and United Nations are spearheading criticism of the Australian Government over its handling of asylum seekers on Manus Island.

The future of about 600 men left on Manus remains in limbo after their refusal to leave the processing centre amid fears for their safety.

The PNG Supreme Court rejected a last-ditch application to restore power, water, food, sanitation and medical services to the centre.

"The situation on Manus Island is turning into a humanitarian disaster and it is a direct result of our governments' failed policy," Bishop Delegate for Migrants and Refugees, Parramatta Bishop Vincent Long said.

"As a nation that prides itself on its respect for the rule of law and its globally responsible citizenship, we must find a workable and principled solution."

At the time of going to press, more than 600 refugees had barricaded themselves in the mothballed detention centre, which closed on October 31.

With food and drinking water running out, group members claimed to be too scared to move to alternative accommodation in Manus Island's provincial capital, Lorengau.

They feared they would be attacked by locals.

Basic services including water, electricity and medical services were cut off after the detention centre closure.

"As a church, as a Christian country, what now will we do for our brothers?" St Michael's Church, Lorengau priest Fr Alex Tanai said.

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“ The situation on Manus Island is turning into a humanitarian disaster. ”



Public stand: Protesters at a Brisbane rally supporting the asylum seekers on Manus Island.

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FAITH IN LIFE

My feet of clay

BY BR DAMIEN PRICE



Loved: "I had a shepherd who called me to green and running water in the midst of my every day."

ONE of the most sacred moments of my childhood was to wake up in the middle of the night, the lights all on in our Proserpine home, and ambulance bearers quietly taking my wonderful father away on a stretcher.

Dad was having a chronic nose-bleed, linked to his poor health and bad nerves.

The sacred part was my wonderful mother Zena shuffling along next to Dad, holding his hand. That image of love and commitment has never left me.

When I was born, Dad was a patient in Bailey Henderson Mental Hospital in Toowoomba.

All his life, my father fought the battle of mental illness; paranoia and depression.

The nervous breakdowns of Dad's courageous life broke him in so many ways.

He had longed to make a career in journalism, to influence people through Christian writing, to get a doctorate and to own and successfully manage a newspaper.

The breakdowns ended that dream and left behind a beautifully gentle man who would ride his bike down Faust Street to the Catholic Church for a "visit" before work; who would volunteer at Meals on Wheels and his beloved St Vincent de Paul Society; who was loved by every "no-hoper" in our small town and who would write hundreds of letters to all sorts of people – his own personal apostolate of spreading the Word of a God who loved us totally and unconditionally.

Leonard Cohen has a beautiful song, Anthem, and in it he reflects, "There is a crack in everything – that's how the light gets in."

Yes, there is a crack in everything – we all have feet of clay – and, yes, that is gift. I can remember as a young Brother thinking that I had to be perfect and that life was about finding answers to all the questions that tugged at my heart.

As time went by, the questions found no answers, new questions came, partial answers teased and, in the midst of all the confusion, I learned that life was not about answers, but about fidelity to the journey.

On this journey the day came when I, like my father before me, faced my own battle with mental illness.

Looking back, I had had several patches in my life where I had been depressed though at the time I did not name it as such.

But the day came when upon taking my seat on a flight from Christchurch to Brisbane, I experienced a panic attack.

Slowly, I calmed down, but upon my return to Brisbane I knew I was not well.

I could not sleep, I experienced claustrophobia, I was constantly on the edge of tears and I was

scared. After several fear-filled days I phoned up a doctor friend of mine and said, "Phil, I am not well."

Just below the surface was a fear that I was going to be like Dad with his lifelong struggles with mental illness.

My doctor was brilliant, diagnosed an anxiety disorder, explained things simply to me and put me on medication.

In the midst of this pain and brokenness a small voice gained strength – a voice that told me "it would be okay". More than that, I was loved totally and unconditionally.

This same voice gently tugged at me and whispered an invitation to be gentle with myself; to self-accept, to self-forgive, to celebrate who I am warts and all.

On this journey to better health I knew that I did not walk alone.

I had a shepherd who called me to green and running water in the midst of my every day.

I had my "Beer Garden God" longing to sit with me and I had God's arms wrapping me, God's eyes loving me, God's smile accepting me and God's feet walking beside me in the brothers and sisters and Earth itself that filled my every day.

Dad's mental illness and my feet of clay have led me to savour my heart journey.

It is that journey that led me to the writings of theologian Edwina Gateley.

Edwina who spent most of her life working with prostitutes on the streets of Chicago knew first-hand the struggles to self-love that the hurt and hurting know.

These relationships and these struggles led Edwina to write:

"Let God Love you
Be silent. Be still. Alone.
Empty

Before your God.
Say nothing. Ask nothing. Be silent. Be still.
Let your God look upon you. That is all.
God knows. God understands. God loves you
With an enormous love,
And only wants
To look upon you
With that love.
Quiet. Still. Be.
Let your God – Love you."

That was the God shuffling beside Dad, dreaming through Dad's brokenness, cutting me slack and nudging my fragile heart and honouring my feet of clay.

Each day is a glorious invitation to allow that God to love me.

Christian Brother Damien Price is a former teacher in Brisbane schools including St Joseph's, Gregory Terrace; St Patrick's College, Shorncliffe; and St Laurence's College, South Brisbane. He continues to work with schools across the country.

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  info@catholicleader.com.au

<p>THE CATHOLIC LEADER TEAM</p>	<p>Managing Editor Matt Emerick</p>	<p>Journalists Emilie Ng Mark Bowling</p>	<p>Sales / Marketing Catherine Santos Laurie O'Brien</p>	<p>Location/ Post Sixth Floor, Cathedral House GPO Box 282 Brisbane Qld 4001</p>
	<p>Sub Editor Peter Bugden</p>	<p>Accounts/Circulation Anne Williamson</p>	<p>Phone Editorial 07 3324 3555 Advertising 07 3324 3302 Accounts 07 3324 3223</p>	<p>Email editor@catholicleader.com.au advertising@catholicleader.com.au subscriptions@catholicleader.com.au</p>
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Catholics among top Aussies

By Mark Bowling and Emilie Ng

COURAGEOUS taxi driver Aguek Nyok, who kicked down the door of a burning bus, and unstoppable teenager with Down Syndrome Olivia Hargroder are among the list of nominees for the Australian of the Year awards.

The South Sudanese refugee taxi driver and Brisbane hero has been nominated as one of four Queensland finalists for Australia's Local Hero, while Ms Hargroder, a Southern Cross Catholic College student, has been nominated for Queensland Young Australian of the Year.

Both Catholic nominees have featured in The Catholic Leader in the past two years.

Brisbane Broncos chief executive officer and Jubilee parishioner Paul White has also been listed as a Queensland finalist for the awards' top honour, Australian of the Year.

Mr Nyok said he was over the moon about his 2018 Queensland Australian of the Year award nomination.

"It's an honour to have that, mate," he said.

"It's something that makes me know that whatever good you might have done for people, they remember it."

Mr Nyok said he would be going to the awards ceremony still with a heavy heart after the October 28 first-year anniversary of the bus-bombing and fire, in which he rescued 11 passengers by kicking in the back door of the bus to allow them to escape the smoke and flames.

As Mr Nyok freed passengers, the bus driver, his friend Manmeet Alisher, burned to death at the front of the bus.



Nominees: Aguek Nyok, Olivia Hargroder and Paul White.



Mr Alisher was honoured with the renaming of a park in Moorooka on October 30, just metres from the bus stop where the tragedy happened.

The park is now called "Manmeet's Paradise". So, for Mr Nyok, the award nomination is a bitter-sweet moment.

He is still coming to grips with the horror of the bus fire.

"It's an unforgettable thing. It's something I will have to live with for the rest of my life," he said. "It's like your date of birth. You never forget it."

If there is any light amid the tragedy and trauma, Mr Nyok said it was understanding and feeling grateful as a married Catholic man, with four children and living in Australia.

"We love living in this country; it's a country that always values the lives of the human being and its residents," he said. "It is an honour for

me to have a life in this country.

"Always I tell my kids 'you guys are really, really lucky, you don't know what you have, living in this country. This country that you were born in is a great country'.

"It is a lucky country, mate."

Ms Hargroder, who was told by doctors that she would never speak because she was born with Down Syndrome, was speechless after finding out she had been nominated for Queensland Young Australian of the Year.

She recently received three awards at her high school for Trainee of the Year, Living the Mission and for her sports prowess as a swimmer.

The surprise nomination follows her efforts to have a specific Down Syndrome category included in the Paralympics, a campaign she raised during an address at the United Na-

tions earlier this year. Her speech prompted a Change.org petition that she hopes to present to Australian Paralympic Committee president Glenn Tasker.

The petition has already attracted more than 6000 signatures and the attention of the International Federation for Intellectual Impairment Sport (INAS).

Ms Hargroder said INAS was trialling her D5 category model in international swimming and athletics competitions being held this month.

The go-getter 18-year-old is waiting to see a Down Syndrome category at the INAS Global Games being held in Brisbane in 2019.

The changes have been an important step for Ms Hargroder, an aspiring swimmer who was recently picked for the Queensland swimming team at the Special Olympics in Adelaide.

"Right now I'm feeling awesome," she said.

Controversy growing over White Ribbon's abortion support

WHITE Ribbon Australia, known as the "Say no to violence against women" organisation is under scrutiny for supporting late-term abortion.

The nationally-recognised charity has also entered the Queensland election fray by supporting the "It's Not 1899 Campaign" by Pro Choice Queensland.

White Ribbon is named alongside organisations supporting candidates in the current Queensland election who have made a "pro-choice" pledge to "vote to remove abortion from the criminal code".

Ahead of White Ribbon Day on November 25, South Australian Christian high school teacher Trevor Grace and his wife Robyn, who runs Pregnancy Help SA, are leading a national campaign to inform organisations of the charity's pro-abortion stance.

"Few people are aware that White Ribbon supports and endorses full-term abortion," Mr Grace, a long-standing political activist, said.

He has contacted churches and Christian schools alerting them of White Ribbon Australia's position statement on women's reproductive rights which states that the charity believes: "Denying a woman access to contraception and abortion is a denial of basic rights to health care".

"It is a woman's right to choose if and when she gets pregnant. It is a woman's right to seek an abortion," the White Ribbon statement says.

"Because of this, we advocate for: Decriminalisation of abortion, for example we support the 'It's Not 1899 Campaign' by Pro Choice Queensland."

White Ribbon is part of a pro-abortion coalition that includes Children by Choice, Emily's List, Sex Party, Marie Stopes and Pro Choice Queensland.

The charity has also joined the Human Rights Law Centre, Women's Legal Service Queensland and the Queensland Council of Unions backing a push for Queensland political candidates to publicly state support for abortion.

One-hundred election candidates, including pro-abortion campaigner, independent candidate Rob Pyne, as well as 81 Greens, 17 Labor Party

and one LNP candidate have signed a pledge organised by the group Fair Agenda, which claims to champion "measures to address gendered violence and protecting reproductive rights".

"I will vote to remove abortion from the criminal code," the pledge states.

Mr Grace said it was "hypocrisy" for White Ribbon Australia to come out quite publicly to advocate for late-term abortion and even the decriminalisation of abortion.

"The charity (which is being supported by public figures, media personalities, politicians and social justice advocates) claims to be 'the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end men's violence against women and girls,'" he said.

"The irony there is that fifty per cent of the children killed in the womb are female."

Hillsong Church, which opposes abortion but is committed to stopping family violence, has already dropped its partnership with White Ribbon.

Brisbane archdiocese is among Catholic organisations to have supported White Ribbon.

"In light of these developments, which are obviously a concern to us, the archdiocese is looking into any associations it has with White Ribbon," the archdiocese said in a statement.

On White Ribbon Day last year, workers publicly pledged to speak up against violence.

Brisbane's pro-life Priceless Life Centre chair Catherine Toomey described White Ribbon's championing of abortion as "concerning".

"Our stance is that abortion is actually domestic violence in itself," Ms Toomey said.

"Often it's the case that women in domestic violence situations experience forced and coerced abortion – against their will – and that is something that White Ribbon is not prepared to recognise.

"Studies time and time again show that if a man is ready to stand by his woman, abortion wouldn't be necessary in eighty per cent of cases."

Mr Grace contacted many Church organisations and found many were unaware of White Ribbon's endorsement of abortion.

– Mark Bowling





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'My country is in peril from rising seas eating up our land'

Caritas ambassador urging Kiribati action

FATHER-of-three, Erietera Aram fears rising seas will force his family to leave their Pacific island home of Kiribati.

"My country is in peril from rising seas eating up our land. We are losing our homes. Kiribati is going under water," Mr Aram said during a visit to Australia to appeal for urgent climate action.

The 28-year-old works for the Kiribati Department of Fisheries and is a co-ordinator for the International Coastal Cleanup in Tarawa, Kiribati.

He is also an ambassador of Caritas Australia's latest report on climate change in the Pacific.

Mr Aram has told state and federal politicians that he could be forced to relocate his family and many Pacific Islanders faced a similar fate in the face of rising sea levels – a prospect that tears at his heart.

"Climate change is about justice. It is causing conflict in our country, for example, when a village has to move because the sea has flooded into the village, the people move further inland," he said.

"But that land is owned by other people and there is conflict. Our islands are not big enough for us to just get up and move to higher land."

Groundwater wells now contain water too brackish to drink.

The only reliable drinking water comes

from rainwater tanks.

"Every year my wife and I talk about having to leave Kiribati due to sea level rise," he said.

"Kiribati is our home, it is our language, traditions, culture and we don't want to lose it."

As a Caritas Australia ambassador, Mr Aram is calling on the Australian government to play a much stronger role in the global move to a clean energy future, including a commitment to no new coal mines.

Queensland's proposed \$16.5 billion Adani coal mine in the Galilee Basin makes little sense to him.

"It is inconsiderate of other humans on this planet," Mr Aram said.

"We didn't think of Australia as a country that would do that.

"Proceeding with that new mine is a sad move.

"We live together in the environment but it's like they are ignoring us."

In recent years, Caritas Australia has released an annual report on the state of the environment for Oceania documenting conditions across the Oceania region.

The latest report "Turning the Tide", released this month, found thousands of Pacific people across the region faced "threats to their wellbeing, livelihoods and, in some places, their very existence" due to rising sea levels, king tides and natural

disasters brought about by climate change.

In Papua New Guinea, 2000 households across 35 coastal communities were displaced by coastal erosion over the past year.

In Samoa, 60 per cent of the village of Solosolo was relocated to higher ground.

In the Torres Strait, 15 island communities were identified as at risk over the next 50 years.

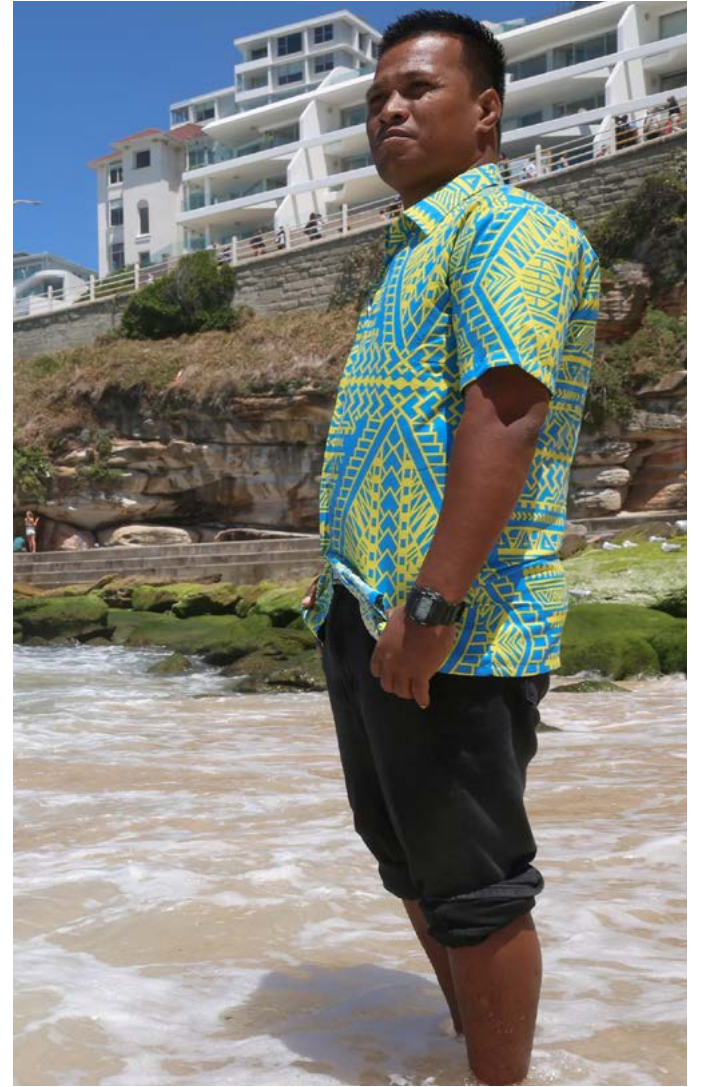
Global sea levels are expected to rise 30cm by 2050 compared with a 20cm average rise over the 100 years before 2000. But in certain areas of the tropical western Pacific, sea level rise has been four times the global average due to El Nino and associated weather effects.

"Australia needs to make a stronger contribution to fight climate change and its impacts," the Caritas report says.

"To reach our emissions reductions targets, Australian policies need to rule out any major new fossil fuel projects or the expansion of existing ones, as this would be inherently incompatible with meeting our global climate commitments."

Mr Aram's experience of climate change is reflected by many Pacific Island case studies featured in the Caritas report.

"I want my kids to look up to me and I must prove that I am responsible for them and my country. I want a clear and bright future for my children, as everyone does," he said.



In peril: Father of three, Erietera Aram, on the sands of Bondi Beach, is visiting Australia to ask its government to take stronger action on climate change.

Photo: Nicole Clements / Caritas Australia

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Singing for justice: Patricia Crilly and musician John Dillon and members of the Emmaus Choir at St Luke's Parish School, Capalaba, featured on a song dedicated to refugees who have fled their homelands. Photo: Emilie Ng

Manus Island turning into 'a disaster'

FROM PAGE 1

"What the authorities should do now is to allow the local residents to go in and find ways to help them."

However, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the new facilities were of a "very high quality" and urged detainees to move.

The United Nations refugee agency has slammed Australia's treatment of Manus Island asylum seekers and called for future processing to be moved to mainland Australia.

"We urge the Australian Government to transfer the men to mainland Australia where their claims can be properly processed," UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch said in Geneva.

"We urge the governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea to fully respect their human rights, including their specific rights under refugee law."

The relocation of the asylum seekers to other facilities on Manus Island is designed to allow the United States time to complete vetting of refugees as part of a refugee swap deal that Australia hopes will see it no longer responsible for the detention of nearly 1400 asylum seekers who have been classified as refugees.

Those not accepted by the US would likely be resettled in PNG or in another developing country, dashing their hopes of coming to Australia.

Bishop Long described asylum seekers as among the most vulnerable members of the global community, and said the policy of offshore detention had cost Australia dearly.

"It is time to find an alternative and conscionable solution, including accepting New Zealand's offer of resettlement and bringing the remaining detainees on Manus Island to Australia," he said, referring to an offer by New Zealand to resettle 150 Manus Island asylum seekers.

"Those who are not refugees can be held here in secure detention until they are returned home. Those refugees accepted for entry to the US can migrate when their vetting processes are complete. The other refugees need to be able get on with their lives here in safety."

Brisbane teacher dedicates first song to refugees in Australia

Singing for justice

By Emilie Ng

PRIMARY teacher Patricia Crilly can only guess how many refugees have stared into the Southern Cross on their journey to Australia.

The Year 4 teacher and school choir co-ordinator at St Luke's Catholic Parish School, Capalaba, is a refugee advocate who has tried to understand the terrifying journey refugees have made while fleeing their homes.

Mrs Crilly (pictured) said she received some insight into the plight of refugees while visiting the Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation centre in Pinkenba.

"Going to the detention centre was a big wake-up call for me," she said.

"I was involved and meeting people and hearing their stories.

"I stopped going because I just felt so

helpless."

But the thought of thousands glaring up at the Southern Cross has always stayed with the England-born Catholic.

"I started writing about the Southern Cross and all these images came to me and it wouldn't leave me alone," Mrs Crilly said.

Her writing eventually turned into lyrics for her first song, *Refugee*, which she recorded recently.

The song follows the journey of a refugee fleeing their homeland with a baby and who is "looking up at the stars and not knowing really where they were but the spirit of the Southern Cross is there".

Featuring on the song is St Luke's own school choir, Emmaus Choir, and local Redland Bay musicians John Dillon and Steve Sparrow.

Refugee has already been played on Byron Shire community radio station Bay FM and has received support from Afghan refugee and photographer

Muzafar Ali, who was at the centre of a 2017 documentary *The Staging Post*.

Mrs Crilly said she met Mr Ali at a screening of *The Staging Post* and shared with him the idea of showing his photographs while a choir performed the song.

"I gave (Mr Ali) a copy of my song and I said I would love to have images," she said.

"He said I could use all of them." The song will also be used by an Australian nurse who has worked in refugee camps in Europe and will be taking a team of teachers and volunteers to Bangladesh this month.

Mrs Crilly said she would like to

see her song being used by schools and universities across Australia to educate people about refugees, and wanted no profit in the process.

"It's more about educating and advocating and giving a voice to people who probably have a voice but not many people are listening to their voice," she said.

"I think art is a wonderful medium for giving people a different paradigm shift and making people think differently.

"It would be lovely to hear hundreds of children sing the song."

Mrs Crilly believes the Southern Cross is a perfect metaphor for the open arms of Christ.

"The Southern Cross is a beautiful image because the Cross of Christ is there as well," she said.

"That calling and welcoming, there is a place for you, you do belong on this earth. Everyone who is born on to this earth belongs on this earth and should have a safe place to be."



Diaconate growing in Brisbane

BRISBANE Catholics are praying for the archdiocese's newest deacons including the first permanent deacon to be ordained in seven years.

Damien Everitt and Thomas Zaraniski were to be ordained deacons on November 10, marking their final stage before ordination to the priesthood.

The two seminarians who are in their sixth year at Holy Spirit Seminary, Queensland, join fellow Brisbane seminarian Brendan Gormley, who is studying in Rome, in the transitional diaconate.

After years of study and discernment, Rosies general manager Andrew O'Brien (pictured) was to be ordained a permanent deacon on Saturday, November 11.

Mr O'Brien will be the first permanent deacon ordained for the Brisbane archdiocese in seven years.

Deacon Tim Shanahan was the last permanent deacon ordained for Brisbane, on July 31, 2010.

Mr O'Brien's ordination will take the number of permanent deacons in Brisbane to 16.

While most deacons in the Catholic Church are transitional, meaning their ordination is in preparation for the priesthood, the permanent diaconate is a growing ministry.

Pope Paul VI asked the Second Vatican Council to restore the ministry of permanent deacon as a sacrament of Holy Orders.

The majority of permanent deacons are married and will dedicate the rest of their lives to serving the Church, including presiding at weddings, funerals, baptisms, assisting at Masses, preaching the Gospel and homilies, and providing pastoral care in parishes and other settings.

- Emilie Ng



Full coverage of the transitional diaconate ordinations and the permanent diaconate ordination will feature in the November 19 edition

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Australia picked to help rebuild shattered Christian town Qaraqosh

Restoring hope in Iraq

By Emilie Ng

CHRISTIANS rebuilding their homes in devastated Qaraqosh could soon receive financial support from Australians concerned about the diminishing presence of Christianity in Iraq.

Benjamin Blanchard, the founder of a non-government organisation helping persecuted Christians living in the Middle East, SOS Chretiens d'Orient, will visit Australia later this month with the hope of raising \$150,000 to help rebuild Qaraqosh.

Mr Blanchard will give a series of talks in Brisbane, New South Wales and Victoria between November 26 and December 10.

He will be welcomed into the country by Ora Duffley, a Brisbane Catholic who volunteered with Mr Blanchard's organisation before Easter this year.

Ms Duffley became the first Australian to volunteer with SOS Chretiens d'Orient, which has attracted 1000 volunteers since beginning in 2013.

She said the organisation was impressed with the financial support she received from Australians and were now inviting the country to support in rebuilding one of Iraq's oldest Christian cities.

"One of the projects they've given Australia is to help us rebuild the Christian city of Qaraqosh," Ms Duffley said.

"We've raised a challenge for Australia to raise \$150,000 in two weeks."

Understood to be the largest Christian city in Iraq, Qaraqosh came under attack by Islamic militants ISIS, who raided the town to erase any



Rebuilding Christian cities: Benjamin Blanchard will give a series of talks in Brisbane, New South Wales and Victoria between November 26 and December 10.

traces of Christianity.

Families fled their homes, many losing their lives in the process, until Iraqi forces took back the city in October 2016.

Several families who fled Qaraqosh were able to take up refugee status in Brisbane and are now living in the Bracken Ridge parish on Brisbane's north.

The funds raised during Mr Blanchard's Australian tour will help SOS Chretiens d'Orient's work in giving hope to those who lost everything

to remain as Christians in Qaraqosh.

As well as providing emergency aid and medical care to Christian refugees in Iraq, SOS Chretiens d'Orient also helps displaced persons to return to the lands where their ancestors lived.

Ms Duffley said Christians in the Middle East had lived in the region for thousands of years and deserved to call their villages home.

"Christians in these countries, in Iraq and in Syria, they are peaceful people and they bring a stability and a civility to society, and the Middle

East needs that," Ms Duffley said.

"Christians are good citizens, they're educated people.

"They bring a stability to this place and without that I think things would be even worse in the Middle East.

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"For the Middle East to lose their Christians, to lose this example, it will be a dark day."

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Injured Masoud fighting on

Family hope to return to Iran

By Mark Bowling

FORMER kickboxing champion Masoud Abdollah Pouri marked his 37th birthday recently – inside an aged-care nursing home in Brisbane’s northern suburbs.

The one-time member of Iran’s elite Thai kickboxing team has a hypoxic brain injury.

He cannot speak, is unable to move most of his body, and is in the constant care of his mother Fatemeh and younger brother Edris.

“We didn’t think he was going to make his birthday, he is still recovering from a severe flu infection,” his brother Edris, who is Masoud’s legal guardian, said.

“Many of the elderly patients here got the flu last month and some of them died.”

In May this year, The Catholic Leader told Masoud’s story – how he “defected” to Australia 15 years ago, became an Australian citizen, studied to become a paramedic, and pursued a professional career as a heavyweight kickboxer, known in the ring as “the Iranian Tank”.

Four years ago Masoud was relaxing at home after work when he suffered a massive stroke.

His mother and brother flew from northern Iran to help, and since then they have kept a daily vigil providing him with constant care, first in an acquired brain injury unit, and then in long-term residential care.

Doctors examined Masoud’s condition and deemed that the former boxer requires full-time care. He probably always will.

Masoud now lives in Gannet House, an aged-care facility in Brighton where most of the residents are twice his age. He is spoon fed by Fatemeh who stays with him most days.

Remarkably, Masoud, who once spoke seven languages, can still follow a conversation (in English and Kurdish) and can respond by blinking – once for “yes”, twice for “no”.

He smiles, and he cries.

Members of the St Joseph and St Anthony parish, Bracken Ridge, have offered Masoud and his family care, support and friendship.

“You come away feeling so enriched by their courage,” Helen Hickey, the parish’s sacramental co-ordinator and one of those lending a helping hand, said.

“Fatemeh and Edris have a beautiful attitude and their care for Masoud is amazing – their devotion touches your heart.”

Edris, 33, an architect, has put his life on hold to care for his older brother.

He is staying in Australia on a bridging visa and was recently granted permission to work.

This has allowed him to start as an Uber driver, working five hours a day so he can buy groceries and pay the rent.

Both Fatemeh and Edris have applied to immigration authorities for carer visas that would allow them to stay permanently.

So far, there has been no progress on that.



Family devotion: Masoud Abdollah Pouri, his brother Edris and mother Fatemeh. Masoud has major brain damage and is unable to move most of his body. Photo: Mark Bowling

Neither mother nor son is willing to leave Australia, because they risk losing their current visa status. However they are hoping that the family’s youngest son, Mansour, 30, who was recently released from the Iranian military, may soon be granted a visa to visit.

“He (Mansour) hasn’t seen Masoud in 14 years,” Edris said.

“I hope to pay for his ticket to come to Australia.”

In the meantime, Edris has set up a Go Fund Me campaign to try and raise enough money to move Masoud out of aged-care to a house where he can receive full-time family care.

“I hope you might be able to help because our family have been through hell and back and are broke with no financial support and we need help for him, if it might be possible to do so,” Edris wrote on the Go Fund Me website.

“If this would be possible, we would spend the money on housing and providing the equipment for Masoud’s care needs.”

Even though it has been a difficult decision to make, the family would one day like to return to Iran with Masoud. “We now believe it would benefit all of us to take Masoud back home although he will lose all medical and disability benefits that Australian Government kindly provide to all citizens in need, but the situation is no longer sustainable for us,” he said.

Edris can be contacted on 0413 401447, and donations made to <https://www.gofundme.com/TankFundraising>



A mother’s love: Masoud Abdollah Pouri and his mother Fatemeh.

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VATICAN NEWS

Through example, saints shine God's light in darkness, Pope says



LIKE stained-glass windows, the saints allow the light of God to permeate the darkness of sin in the world, Pope Francis said on the feast of All Saints.

Just as light enters a church through multi-coloured windows, the lives of saints shine forth "according to their own shade", the Pope said on November 1.

All the saints "have been transparent, they fought to remove the stains and darkness of sin so that the gentle light of God can pass through", the Pope said. "This is the purpose of life, even for us."

Before reciting the Angelus prayer with people gathered in St Peter's Square, the Pope said the day was a "feast for us not because we are good but because God's holiness has touched our lives".

The day's Gospel reading from St Matthew, in which Jesus proclaims the beatitudes, contains the road map for "a blessed and happy life", which the saints followed through in their own lives and deeds, he said. **CNS**

War brings death, cruelty, Pope says at military graves



Remembering: Pope Francis lays roses on graves at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy. Photo: CNS

"NO more, Lord, no more (war)" that shatters dreams and destroys lives, bringing a cold, cruel winter instead of some sought-after spring, Pope Francis said looking out at the people gathered for an outdoor Mass at a United States war memorial and cemetery.

"This is the fruit of war: death," he said, as the bright Italian sun lowered in the sky on the feast of All Souls.

On a day the Church offers special prayers for the faithful departed with the hope of their meeting God in heaven, "here in this place, we pray in a special way for these young people", he said, gesturing toward the rows of thousands of graves. Christian hope can spring from great pain and suffering, he said, but it can also "make us look to heaven and say, 'I believe in my Lord, the redeemer, but stop, Lord', please, no more war, he said.

"With war, you lose everything," he said. **CNS**

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Catholic leaders decry Baptist shooting Texas mass murder

THE Church in the United States stands "in unity" with the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, and the larger community after a shooting during last Sunday's services took the lives of at least 26 people and injured at least 20 others.

Those who died ranged in age from five to 72 years old, and included 14-year-old Annabelle Pomeroy.

Her father Frank Pomeroy is pastor of the church but he was not at the service. "We stand in unity with you in this time of terrible tragedy – as you stand on holy ground, ground marred today by horrific violence," president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston said.

"I extend my prayers and the prayers of my brother bishops for the victims, the families, the first responders, our Baptist brothers and sisters, indeed the whole community of Sutherland Springs."

Law enforcement officials said a lone gunman entered the church about 11.30am, while 50 people were attending Sunday services. Almost everyone in the congregation was shot.

Two law enforcement officials told The Associated Press the suspect was Devin Kelley, described as a white male in his 20s.

He parked at a petrol station across the street from the church, crossed the street and allegedly began firing as he walked toward the church and then continued firing once inside.



Suffering: A man and woman attend a candlelight vigil after a mass shooting on November 5 at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Photo: CNS

He was wearing black tactical-type gear and used an assault weapon, AP said.

After he left the church, he was confronted by a local resident who had a rifle "and engaged the suspect", AP said, quoting Freeman Martin, who is with the Texas Department of Public Safety.

The suspect was later found dead in his vehicle some distance away.

Police said Kelley died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Kelley had been in the Air Force but was discharged for bad conduct and served a 12-month sentence in confinement after being court-martialed in 2012.

His in-laws were members of the First Baptist Church.

"We need prayers," San Antonio Archbishop Garcia-Siller said.

"The evil perpetrated on these (families) who were gathered to worship God on the Lord's Day – especially children and the elderly – makes no sense and will never be fully understood," he said.

"Disbelief and shock are the overwhelming feelings; there are no adequate words.

"There can be no explanation or motive for such a scene of horror at a small country church for families gathered to praise Jesus Christ.

"Let's help these brothers and sisters with prayers; they need us. Also, pray fervently for peace amidst all of the violence, which seems to be overwhelming our society.

"We must be lights in the darkness." **CNS**

Tragedy: A man carries a girl as parents pick up children from school after a man driving a rented pickup truck ran down pedestrians and cyclists on October 31 on a bike path alongside the Hudson River in New York City. The incident occurred near the World Trade Centre memorial, killing at least eight people and seriously injuring 11 others in what the Mayor Bill de Blasio called "a particularly cowardly act of terror".

Photo: CNS



Pope condemns 'murderous folly' of terrorism after attacks

POPE Francis prayed for victims of the latest terrorist attack in New York, as well as victims of other terror attacks, and condemned the murder of innocent men and women in the name of God.

After praying the Angelus with pilgrims in St Peter's Square, the Pope said he was "deeply saddened" by the attack in New York on October 31 that left at least eight people dead and 11 others injured when pedestrians and cyclists were mowed down by a driver in a pickup truck.

"We ask the Lord to convert the hearts of terrorists and free the world from hatred and from the murderous folly that abuses the name of God to spread death," he said.

Police in New York identified the suspect as 29-year-old Sayfullo Saipov, a citizen of Uzbekistan, who has been in the United States on a visa since 2010.

He allegedly drove 20 blocks along a busy bike path near the World Trade Centre about

3pm before he slammed into a school bus.

After being shot by police, he was taken into custody and admitted to a hospital for treatment of his wounds, which were not believed to be life-threatening.

Pope Francis also prayed for victims of recent terrorist attacks in Somalia and Afghanistan.

Five Al-Shabaab militants stormed a hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia, on October 28, killing 23 people and wounding dozens.

The attack occurred two weeks after the terrorist group detonated a truck carrying military-grade explosives in one of the deadliest massacres in the country's history.

In Afghanistan, an Islamic State suicide bomber killed 13 people on October 31 after blowing himself up near the US Embassy in Kabul. The explosion also left 20 people wounded.

"In deploring such acts of violence, I pray for the dead, the wounded and their families," Pope Francis said. **CNS**

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Reformation journey continues for us still

This an address Archbishop Mark Coleridge gave at St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, on November 1, for an event commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

RECENTLY I saw an item on a website which bore the headline "No Luther, No Reformation, No Bach: It's pretty simple". Well, I'm here to say that nothing about the Reformation was or is simple – to the point where, I suspect, only God sees it whole.

And when I say "it" I mean not so much an event as a process.

For one thing, the Reformation's pre-history was exceedingly complex. It's not as if Luther burst out of nowhere in 1517.

For centuries there had been more or less urgent talk in the Western Church of the need for reform, as the understanding of reform shifted from rooting out the weeds in the field of the Church to reform of the Church as a whole, root and branch.

Successive reforms by popes and councils had some effect, but they didn't silence the call for more radical and thorough-going reform of the Church through the Middle Ages.

So pressure continued to build to the point where, by the early 16th century, something like Martin Luther had to happen.

Ecclesiastically and politically Europe had become a powder-keg, and the explosion was bound to come. The only questions were where, when, how and to what effect.

It came in the figure of the German Augustinian friar, Martin Luther, who is nothing if not complex. Not even his name is simple. His surname was Luder which, beyond its rather crude connotations in German, echoed the Latin word for "game", "ludus".

Martin certainly wasn't playing games.

After 1517 he took to naming himself Martinus Eleutherius, echoing instead the Greek word for "liberator", which was much more his style.

And so Martin passed into history as Luther rather than Luder. Beyond his name, he was a personality of astonishing contrasts, even contradictions.

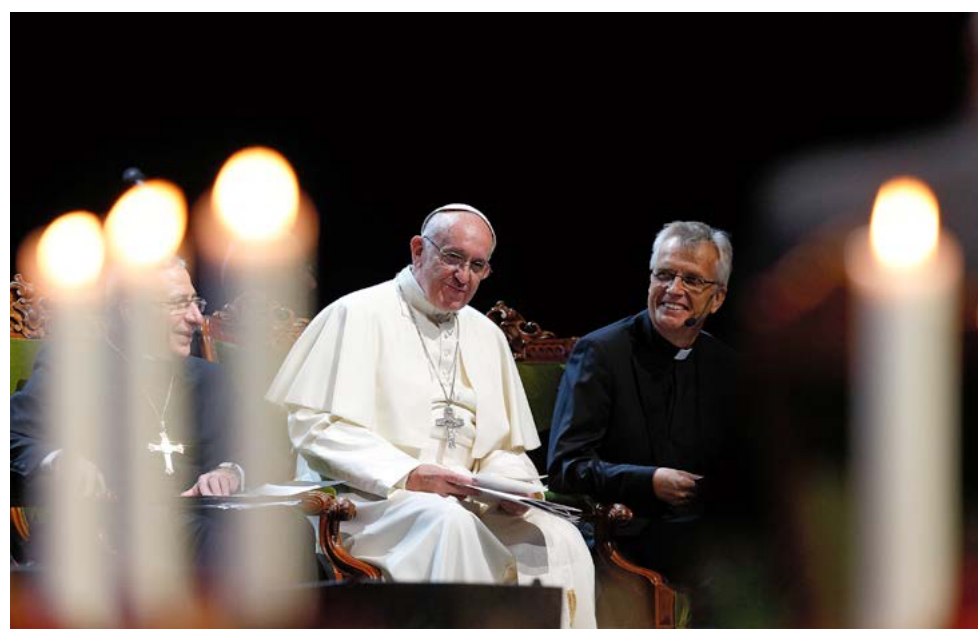
A man of deep piety and prayer, vast intellectual creativity and a huge capacity for work, he was also a formidable communicator, in the word both spoken and written but also in music.

He was known as a model of domestic virtue, a true and hospitable friend and a generous guide to those who sought his help.

Yet he could also be intolerant, obstinate and inflexible, never admitting the possibility of mistake or error.

His vehemence could become at times abuse and slander.

Through all of this Luther stands very much



Call to communion: President of the Lutheran World Federation Bishop Munib Younan, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pope Francis and general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation Reverend Martin Junge attend an ecumenical event in Malmö, Sweden. The event opened a year marking the 2017 commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Photo: CNS

as the modern man, in stark contrast to, say, Thomas More with whom he disagreed violently in what looks to be now a clash between the last medieval man and the first modern man.

The effects of Luther's protest were also extremely complex, in part because the German princes saw their opportunity and decided to politicise the protest.

This led to an intricate and enduring interaction between theology and politics, the effects of which are with us to this day.

It also led to the fateful Wars of Religion, from which the West has still not recovered.

You can hardly blame political decision-makers for thinking that, if this is what religion produces, then better to exclude it from the ordering of the state and its political life. Yet in the midst of all that was dark and destructive, the Reformation undoubtedly produced rich fruit.

The current prior general of the Augustinian Friars has spoken of these as "the revalorisation of the individual, reaffirmed confidence in God, the centrality of Scripture, bringing the liturgy closer to the people, a healthy secularity and the need for reform understood as a return to the essentials".

Others could doubtless be added; and the more general claim would be that a new theology and ecclesiastical polity brought to birth a new world, in which new energies were released, not all of which would have been foreseen or approved by Luther and the early reformers but many of which opened grand new horizons of possibility.

One of those energies was a finally effective commitment to reform in the Roman Catholic Church. It probably took the trauma of the sundering of Western Christianity to stir them,

but stir they did in the Council of Trent which initiated a great arc of Church reform reaching to the Second Vatican Council and beyond.

The arc continues in the figure of Pope Francis, himself a member of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, who were one of the great fruits of the Catholic Reformation, which was itself nothing if not complex.

In some ways, it seems, the Reformation is over; but in another sense it has a long way to run if we look to the task of moving from conflict to communion that lies before us.

Conflict there has certainly been, and it has left the Body of Christ wounded, seriously if not fatally.

With the heat of past polemics now diminished and the political and cultural contexts we face quite changed, the time for healing has surely come, not just for our own sake but for the sake of the world. That process has already begun, but we still have much to do.

True healing will involve the larger understandings which are already emerging.

Sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide was the cry of the Protestant Reformation.

The Catholic Reformation spoke rather of the need for interpretation of the Scripture (what came to be known as tradition); it spoke of divine grace, yes, but also the need for human co-operation; and it spoke of faith, certainly, but good works as the fruit of grace and faith.

Who was right? Well, both were if both are rightly understood; and we're in a better position now to understand what was and is being said in fact.

At the heart of all the complexity there lies

OFFICIAL ENGAGEMENTS FOR BRISBANE'S BISHOPS

ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE

November 13: Truth, Justice and Healing Council meeting, Melbourne

November 15: 10am Mass, Cathedral of St Stephen; Episcopal Council meeting; The Community Leader Awards, Clayfield

November 17: 10am Opening and Blessing of McAuley College, Beaudesert

November 18: 10am Priests Foundation Mass, Cathedral of St Stephen; Youth Adult Ministry Masquerade Gala, Brisbane

November 19: 6pm, Feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs Mass, The Vietnamese Catholic Community Centre, Inala.



BISHOP KEN HOWELL

November 14: 5.30pm, Confirmations, St Columba's Church, Wilston

November 15: 9am, Mass, St Benedict's Church, East Brisbane; Episcopal Council meeting; 5.30pm, Confirmations, St Columba's Church, Wilston

November 16: 9am, Mass, St Benedict's Church, East Brisbane; Meeting with the Bishops' Commission for Health and Community Services; Meeting with the Council for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations

November 17-19: Parish pastoral visit to Maryborough.



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the endlessly complex interplay of grace and sin, which God alone will be able to resolve.

As we look back across 500 years, we tell a story of both. All have sinned but all have been embraced by the grace of God.

We may not yet agree precisely on the effects of that embrace, but surely we agree that it is grace where we start and where we end.

If we believe in the triumph of grace over sin – and surely we renew that belief in this commemoration – then we cannot but commit more passionately to the journey from conflict to communion.

That was the title of the statement produced by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity to mark this commemoration.

Its last paragraph offers words with which I too conclude: "The beginnings of the Reformation will be rightly remembered when Lutherans and Catholics hear together the gospel of Jesus Christ and allow themselves to be called anew into communion with the Lord. Then they will be united in a common mission" (From Conflict to Communion, 245).

That at least is clear, and that at last is simple.

Catholics and Lutherans foster closer ties among parishioners

THE recent commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation was a chance for Catholics and Lutherans on the northside of Brisbane to continue to celebrate common ground.

When Banyo Nundah parish priest Fr Bernie Gallagher heard about a Brisbane event being held at St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, on November 1 to mark the anniversary of Martin Luther's split from the Catholic Church in Germany and the start of the Reformation in 1517, he saw it as an opportunity for the Catholics and Lutherans of the area to again join together in faith as they had been doing for several years.

Banyo Nundah parish secretary Pauline O'Donnell said Fr Gallagher, "as a gesture of friendship", invited Pastor Mark Nitschke and the Lutheran parishioners of St Paul's, Nundah, "to be our guests

and travel with us by coach to St Peter's" where Archbishop Mark Coleridge and the Queensland Lutheran Bishop Paul Smith came together to pray for Christian unity.

Banyo Nundah Catholic pastoral council member Jack Greathead and St Paul's council member Paul Sowa organised for people from both parishes to go by bus together to the Indooroopilly event. About 60 people from both communities attended.

It was a sign of the strength of the relationship that had been building since 2000 when former St Paul's pastor David Larsen and former Banyo Nundah parish priest Fr John Sullivan collaborated to bring their parishioners together for the first time in St Paul's Lutheran Church to celebrate the anniversary of the Catholic and Lutheran churches' signing of the Joint Declaration on Justification.

"The following year, the prayer celebra-

tion was held in Corpus Christi Church (Nundah) and every year since then (with the exception of a short period of time) both communities have come together around October 31 to pray together and then share a supper afterwards, alternating churches each year," Mrs O'Donnell said.

"Both communities also have a strong connection through the Zion Lutheran Nursing Home in Union Street, Nundah, where Father Bernie celebrates a monthly Mass for the Catholic residents.

"The parish has a team of parishioners who take Communion to the Catholic residents each Sunday."

Fr Gallagher said the anniversary event at Indooroopilly was an interesting and enjoyable evening for the Catholics and Lutherans of the local parishes as they listened to addresses by Archbishop Coleridge and Bishop Smith.



United in faith: Attending a November 1 event commemorating the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation in 1517 are (from left) Nundah Lutheran Pastor Mark Nitschke; Paul Sowa, of St Paul's Lutheran parish; Banyo Nundah parish priest Father Bernie Gallagher; and Jack Greathead, of the Banyo Nundah Catholic parish.



Life of faith: Actor Mark Wahlberg and Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago discuss faith and the life of young adults during a re(ENCOUNTER) event.

Photo: CNS

Actor's faith touches youth

HEARING the faith journey of actor and businessman Mark Wahlberg left an impression on the hearts of many young adults at Chicago archdiocese's first (re) Encounter event.

"It's powerful for a celebrity to feel that way about religion," Omar Lopez, 21, said.

"For me, when I think about a celebrity, I think cockiness, selfishness, but to hear an artist say that he takes time to just pray, that's an incredible feeling."

Mr Lopez rushed to the stage at the end of Wahlberg's segment and got to shake the actor's hand.

"I came to hear him because personally I feel lost myself," Mr Lopez said.

"At first I was really sceptical about it. I came here just to hear different stories and to hear different aspects of life."

About 2000 young adults attended (re)Encounter – a night of music, speakers, faith-sharing and Eucharistic adoration aimed at energising the faith of young adult Catholics.

The highlight was a question-and-answer session with Mr Wahlberg and Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich.

Star of movies such as Transformers: Age of Extinction and Deepwater Horizon, and producer of the popular HBO series Entourage, Mr Wahlberg takes his faith seriously, often attending daily Mass and making time for quiet prayer each morning.

He emceed the Festival of Families with Pope Francis

during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in 2015. His faith wasn't always important to him.

Youngest in a family of nine children, he dropped out of school at 13, and served prison time.

At 16, he was charged with attempted murder but he pleaded guilty to assault.

Today, he said, he was committed to being a good father and husband and giving his children the Catholic education he didn't have.

"I'm a street kid from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Grew up in St Greg's and St William's parishes," he said.

Because his parents worked a lot, he was often unsupervised and took to running the streets.

"(I) ended up getting into a lot of trouble, incarcerated, tried as an adult at 16, 17. That was a big wake-up call for me," he said.

"A lot of people go to God, especially when they get in trouble. When I heard the jail doors close behind me, I started praying right away."

It was then that he turned his life around.

"Still, every day it's a process," Wahlberg said.

"That's why I start my day, every day, by getting on my hands and my knees and starting a time of prayer and reading, reading Scripture.

"Then I feel like I can go out there and conquer the world or at least do my job and give back because I've been blessed so much."

Mr Wahlberg keeps in daily touch with his parish priest from when he was growing up, Fr Ed Flavin, who married him and his wife and all of his siblings and baptised his four children.

When Mr Wahlberg decided to turn his life around, the priest was one of the people he looked up to.

The 46-year-old said his biggest mistake was quitting school.

Despite having a successful career as an entertainer and businessman, that haunted him, so he got his GED (General Educational Development, diploma) at age 42.

Responding to a young adult's question about making time for prayer and Mass in a busy life, the actor said it was a "must".

He goes to bed early every night and wakes up before his family to pray in the chapel he built in his home.

Addressing another audience question about knowing when one has made the right decision in life according to God's will, Wahlberg shared how he felt God was calling him to more involvement with his faith leading up to the World Meeting of Families and his role as MC at an event featuring the Pope.

"Somebody came to speak at the church ... they were saying, 'Are you a participant in the Church and the community or are you a spectator?' And I was like, 'Whoa.' I felt like, yeah, I'm a bit of a spectator right now," Wahlberg said.

"I'm coming and getting what I need, but I'm not really giving back, you know, reciprocating the kind of love and support I'm getting."

That encounter resulted in him saying "yes" to ushering when asked a few days later, and subsequently saying "yes" to the event with Pope Francis when asked a few days after that.

CNS

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CAN you make a difference in the life of one Catholic who is no longer involved in the life of the Church?

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More young people are leaving the Church, while older Catholics are steadfast.

So what does that mean for the Church?

Should we sit back and accept that the Church is getting smaller?

If we can't, how can we bring Catholics back to Mass on Sundays?

We have to ask them to come.

All it takes is for you to AskOne person to come back to Mass regularly.

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AskOne person to learn more about the Church.

This is what we're called to do as Catholics – to grow the Kingdom of God. So what can you do to AskOne?

Pick up The Catholic Leader newspaper until next weekend and turn to the AskOne section.

You'll find inspiring stories about Catholics who came back to the Church, reasons why the Church needs you to evangelise, and information on how to gently talk about the faith with people you meet in your daily life.

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Catholics need 'profound renewal' of catechesis

THE head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation said Catholics "need a profound renewal of our catechesis."

Archbishop Rino Fisichella said there was wrong thinking among the faithful that once they received the sacraments, they no longer had to learn their catechism.

"By its nature, catechesis is to support believers to understand every day more the mystery of faith," he said.

Archbishop Fisichella said Catholics could learn this with the help of catechists who were "witnesses" and said that "witness is the sign of a genuine work of evangelisation."

Referring to Pope Paul VI's 1975 apostolic exhortation on evangelisation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, he emphasised what he called a "very important" section of the document that said people nowadays were more apt to listen to someone who lived out the faith and spoke of it than to teachers of it and that if they do listen to teachers, it's because the teachers were themselves witnesses of the faith.

"The world of today needs witnesses," he said.

"And we have got to be there.

"But don't misunderstand the word 'witness.' It is true that witness, it makes, first of all, our life. But to be a witness, it means also to be a preacher of the word of the Lord."

Archbishop Fisichella said being a witness meant using one's mouth to tell others about one's encounter with Jesus Christ and share what Jesus told them.

However, he said the challenge of doing this in a secular age when people were constantly



Changes: "(It) means to be aware of the changes that we have, the new culture that we have, for instance the digital culture. The internet is creating a new language, a new way of thinking. It has created new behaviours and, paradoxically speaking, is creating new pathologies."

on their mobile devices and, he said, becoming more isolated from one another.

"Everybody in the profound (depths) of his heart feels the desire for God," he said.

"And for this reason, the mission of the church is the new evangelisation. New evangelisation doesn't mean a new way to oblige people to believe in God, absolutely not. ... It means only a new step in the world of today, to announce Jesus Christ in the world of today.

"(It) means to be aware of the changes that we have, the new culture that we have, for instance the digital culture.

"The internet is creating a new language, a new way of thinking. It has created new behaviours and, paradoxically speaking, is creating

new pathologies. And so we need to understand all of that and the new culture how to support believers and how to announce and to challenge people without God to think about him."

Archbishop Fisichella said one of the problems of "our big crisis of faith of today" was that people do not have an answer when they are asked why they are believers."

"We cannot be afraid in our catechesis to say the choice of faith makes you free because it allows you to enter in the deepest (parts) of your life," he said.

"Open your mind. Open your heart and you become able to love. You become able to understand your life and future, where you are going." **CNS**

“ We cannot be afraid in our catechesis to say the choice of faith makes you free because it allows you to enter in the deepest (parts) of your life ”

Showing the Christ-centeredness of the Church's teachings

JESUS Christ is the most influential man who ever lived.

But do you really know Him?

Many will answer "yes" to this question, yet, given the various conflicting opinions today about Jesus and His teachings, it is clear that many people have incomplete or

false perceptions about Him.

It is the premise of *Come and See* that the Catholic Church holds the key to discovering the truth about Him.

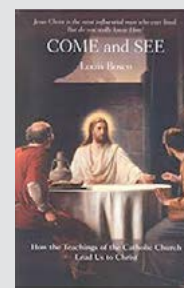
Come and See by Louis Bosco shows the Christ-centeredness of the Church's teachings and how those teachings bring you closer to Jesus.

When the disciples ask where the Lord is staying, He replies simple, "Come and See" (John 1:39).

This book extends the same invitation to all who wish to draw closer to Him and feel called to seriously investigate the teachings, this book will help the reader go beyond

merely knowing what the Church teaches to understanding why she teaches it, and how her doctrines really do bring us closer to Jesus.

This book reviews doctrines of the faith – Trinity, the sacraments, faith and works, the papacy, purgatory, the saints, Mary, and moral teachings.



Where can you go?

To find your closest Catholic parish go to www.brisbane.catholic.net.au or download the archdiocese's mobile app



What people say about Mass

“ In this world I cannot see the Most High Son of God with my own eyes, except for His Most Holy Body and Blood. ”

- St Francis of Assisi



Prayer for Catholics to return to the sacraments

St Monica, I need your prayers.

You know exactly how I'm feeling because you once felt it yourself.

I'm hurting, hopeless, and in despair.

I desperately want my child to return to Christ in his Church but I can't do it alone. I need God's help.

Please join me in begging the Lord's powerful grace to flow into my child's life.

Ask the Lord Jesus to soften his heart, prepare a path for his conversion, and activate the Holy Spirit in his life.

Amen.



Pope Francis
Called to evangelise

Evangelisation can not be presumptuous, the integrity of truth can not be rigid. The truth has become flesh, has become tenderness, has become a child, has become man.



Decades of care from

Schoolies mission extends to homeless, needy youth on Coast

By Mark Bowling

THIRTY years ago a group of 28 young adults embarked on a unique and adventurous mission – to provide safe activities for Schoolies flocking to Surfers Paradise.

Little did they know that their faith, determination and sense of purpose that created Rosies Gold Coast would be alive and strong today, with final preparations for Schoolies 2017.

Schoolies was very different then. It was rough and raw – still a culture of sex and booze, but not the \$40 million industry of today, with tens of thousands of teenagers invading the glitter strip.

“We converted the Surfers Paradise St Vincent’s Church car park into our coffee shop and drop-in centre,” John Daly, one of the original Rosies team members, said.

“A DJ played music and everyone was welcome to come in for a break, a chat and a cup of coffee.

“We used the Anglican Church hall next door as our base and communications centre, and had several loaned school buses which not only ferried our crew around but were also equipped as mobile coffee shops.”

Mr Daly, a teacher at Clairvaux MacKillop College, Upper Mt Gravatt, sported “a mullet” hairstyle back then.

He said the original Rosies members had “fantastic support and a very real sense of purpose”.

“The first Rosies Gold Coast was modelled on the Victorian Rosebud Oblate drop-in centre,” Mr Daly said.

“Rosies Gold Coast had similar ideologies and vision, providing a safe and alternative venue and activity for youth staying at Surfers Paradise for Schoolies Week and summer holidays.

“In 1987, not only did the nights keep the team of 28 busy ministering to the needs of revellers, many of whom were schoolies, but in the afternoons we also ran sport and recreational activities on the Surfers Paradise beach.

“At times we also busked in the mall providing light entertainment for the schoolies who couldn’t get into the clubs, and late at night gave lost or lonely schoolies lifts home.

“What the crew soon realised was that not only was there a need to mission to the schoolies, but that there were also homeless and needy youth on the coast who also needed a helping hand.

“This need became the direction for Rosies in future years.”

In 1987, The Catholic Leader provided an “inside view” of Schoolies as journalist Barbara Mead joined the Rosies Mission, to report.

“Screams and live-band music belt out the dark maw that is the entrance to a beer garden – alcohol and noise have a stronger pull than surf and sand,” she wrote.

“It will close at 3am – and many of the young who tumble out into the early morning salt air will have spent afternoon, evening, night and morning there. It is the same story from opening to closing at all the popular drinking places.

“Only a handful are surfing, hundreds on the beach. They sit in groups, in pairs, alone.

“Mid afternoon and a change comes over the listlessness.

“Fifty kids in white T-shirts blazoned with a lolly-pink logo, scream on to the sand with volleyball nets and footballs. They bring movement, life, laughter.

“Teams form and grow, and games move from water’s edge to dunes and back, over and around the near-naked sunbathers.

“Surfers Paradise beach is suddenly a happier, healthier, younger place.

“The lolly-pink logos are circles enclosing the Christian fish symbols, a coffee cup – for the hospitality and friendship – stylised sun and surf for Surfers Paradise and the one word: ‘Rosies’.”

The 1987 mission ran only for the two weeks of Schoolies at Surfers Paradise.

Oblate Father Paul Costello was instrumental in co-ordinating the mission and recruitment of young helpers, ably assisted by the late Sandra Hazel.



30 years on: Early members of Rosies Gold Coast get together for a reunion. They are (back from left) James White, Kate Andersen, Allan Andersen and John Ryan; and (front) Greg Scott, Berny Power, Geoff Harrison, Alan Quinn, Therese Sheppard and John Daly.

“What the crew soon realised was that not only was there a need to mission to the schoolies, but that there were also homeless and needy youth on the coast who also needed a helping hand.”

“We gathered at Iona College, where Fr Paul taught alongside Sandra, from around April in 1987,” Mr Daly said.

“Most were Brisbane-based university students or workers who answered Paul’s call.

“Some of us had lived on the Gold Coast and had local knowledge.”

Fr Costello drew young people from all walks of life and invited them to be part of the mission, riding in the wake of the successful Antioch, Young Christian Workers, CLAG and Walkabout youth movements that were happening at the time.

The Catholic Leader described Fr Costello, back then on Surfers Paradise beach, as “hard to pick out among the running, laughing, fully alive young footballers”.

“And that ability to blend, to listen, to look behind the façade, has given him a unique insight to Schoolies Week,” the report said.

Fr Costello described Schoolies as a “rite of passage”.

“Because it happens here in this fantasy place it is different from anything anywhere else,” he told The Catholic Leader.



Caring attitude: At the Rosies youth shelter in Surfers Paradise, Fr Paul Costello (right) and Angela Clarke provide hospitality to Ross and Maddog in 1990.

“We know the young look for role models. What are the role models they see here?”

Rosies offered a witness, an alternative, a support, a great faith experience through the work of its members.

“The Rosies Gold Coast mission may have been a naive attempt to give the schoolies an alternative to the alluring lights and nightlife of Surfers Paradise, but in doing so it unearthed a more needy and real mission, helping those who were homeless and in need living on the glitter strip,” Mr Daly said.

“If they wouldn’t come to us, then we went to them and so the concept of the travelling coffee vans was born, in the form of modified buses

being parked at either end of Cavill Avenue and the Broadbeach Hotel.”

Life-long friendships

The formation and early ministry of Gold Coast Rosies has led to life-long friendships.

Most of the early members are in their 50s. They have married, had families, had their own children experience the Schoolies rite of passage, and sadly some have died.

“There are so many stories, some very personal and some life-changing based on the experiences that each of us had in the formation of Rosies,” Mr Daly said.

CONTINUED PAGE 13

humble beginnings

FROM PAGE 12

“Some of these stories will be locked away forever and some are shared when we all get together and remember the old days.

“From humble beginnings in a meeting room at Iona College and a car park at Surfers Paradise, Rosies has become a household name as a trusted charity involved with many apostolic works in numerous locations across Queensland. “Being a member of Rosies was never a personal mission, but one we all shared in.”

The Rosies mission has grown and developed, however Mr Daly believes the Rosies prayer is still at the foundation of what the organisation stands for, and what motivated the early active members.

Rosies Prayer

O Jesus, Make our hearts so human,
That others may feel at home with us,

So like Yours,
That others may feel at home with you,
So forgetful of self that we might simply
become the place
where You and they meet
In the power of Your Love
and the joy of your friendship. Amen

In preparing this story Mr Daly drew on the reflections and insights of early Rosies members: James and Meg White, Allan and Kate Andersen, Bery Power, Brett Rangaira, Peter Ring, Robert Grott, Peter Devenish-Mearns, Angela Clarke, Chris Shinde and Theresa Sheppard.

John Daly was an original Rosies team member from 1987-89 and grew up on the Gold Coast. He is currently teaching at Clairvaux MacKillop College, Upper Mt Gravatt, and has a daughter finishing Year 12 this week.



Strong links: Chris Mead (left) and John Daly (right) present a Rosies T-shirt to Carmelite extern Sr Kathleen Parker in 1988. She received the T-shirt while other Carmelite nuns gathered behind the grille in their chapel at Ormiston. Strong links exist between the Ormiston Carmel and Rosies mission.



Time out: (Above) Young volunteers with Rosies Gold Coast in the early years take time out to relax.



Dedicated to the Lord: Rosies volunteers lead fellow team members in prayer.



Healthy fun: From the early days 30 years ago, Rosies have offered Schoolies the chance for healthy activities at the beach.



Happy days: Rosies volunteers have fun helping Schoolies have fun during their celebrations on the Gold Coast.

Vocations Talk

Faith and experience can make a difference

By Patrick Ransom

At the end of next year I will be a teacher.

I began my studies years ago, and am looking forward to finally finishing them off.

I was one of the (not) clever people that took the long way 'round – one year of study, two years deferred, then a couple of semesters with a less-than-full study load.

During that time I worked in a bookshop, played hundreds or thousands of hours of computer games, rediscovered my faith, began volunteering in different ministries, met a girl, got married, and brought a baby into the world – time not wasted, I think.

While it has been frustrating at times seeing my peers already well-established in their careers while I am still busy attending classes and writing essays, the extra time it took has given me a chance to really work out who I am, what I value, and the person I want to be in my career and as a Catholic man.

My recent experience on practical teaching placement has shown me the value of this experience.



“My experiences, my knowledge, my relationship with Jesus and my Catholic faith are all part of who I will be to my students and co-workers.”

Iraq: It's now or never - please help Iraqi Christians return home

FOR displaced Iraqi Christians forced from their homes and living in displacement camps, the moment they have been longing for has finally come.

After three years of occupation, the terrorist group Islamic State (IS) has been driven out of the area. Now, thousands upon thousands of people have the chance to go back to their villages in the Nineveh Plains – their families' homeland since before the time of Christ.

But the task of repair and renovation is huge and the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) – the largest contributor of emergency help since their escape from the Nineveh Plains – is determined to continue to stand with them.

It is now or never. Their future is in your hands.

With your help, we can fulfil two key objectives. The first is to assist the work of the Christian Churches to roll out plans to restore thousands of homes devastated by IS, a vital step to enable the families to go back. The other is to continue providing emergency and pastoral aid for Christian families awaiting resettlement.

Displaced communities in Erbil and elsewhere in Kurdish northern Iraq have been totally dependent on their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to survive. Bishops and faithful alike are encouraged by the recent successes against IS in Mosul.

Thanking Aid to the Church in Need, Syriac Catholic Archbishop Petros Mouche of Mosul, whose flock make up 60 percent of the displaced community, said: "I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who can assist this work. **With your help, we will be able to rebuild our houses. It is a great mercy to know that we can count on your support.**"

A beautiful olive wood Comfort Cross made in Bethlehem, will be sent to all those who assist this cause with a donation of \$20.00 or more and tick the box in the response coupon below.



Archbishop Mouche of Mosul, holding a broken statue of Our Lady desecrated by IS, outside the ransacked church of Saint George Syriac-Catholic Church in Bartella on the Nineveh Plains in Iraq



The Comfort Crosses are handcrafted in Bethlehem from olive wood pruned from olive trees in the Holy Land. Comfort Crosses are designed to fit comfortably into the palm of one's hand as an aid to prayer or meditation. It is ideal as a spiritual companion for easing children's fears, comforting the worries and stresses of adults and focusing the prayer of the sick and elderly. The Comfort Cross would also be a lovely gift idea for someone you love or care for. The Comfort Crosses (also known as the Hand Cross, Palm Cross or Healing Cross) are lovingly hand carved by poverty stricken families in Bethlehem and your donation helps them survive. (Size: 9 cm x 4.5 cm) If you would like to receive the Comfort Cross **please tick the box below.**

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I/We enclose \$..... to help Iraqi Christians return to their ancient homeland

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to Aid to the Church in Need or please debit my Visa or Mastercard

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Exp. Date ___/___/___ Signature

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The Comfort Cross will be sent out to all those who can assist this cause with a donation of \$20.00 or more and tick this box



Catholic Leader

Sharing: "We didn't speak at any deep philosophical level, but at the end of the conversation I felt as though I had offered wisdom, which absolutely could not have come from my nineteen-year-old, first-year-at-university self."

I spent one month at my placement school.

It took about 30 seconds for a student to identify the type of sneaker I was wearing (my Chinese ultra boosts, very comfy), but almost four weeks for anyone to ask the classic "why do you wear a ring on your left ring finger?"

The shocked disbelief at my answer suggested my Year 8s were not used to guys in their early twenties making these types of commitments.

My favourite follow-up question though was asked by one of my Year 12 boys: "didn't you think you were a bit young getting married at 20?"

Shout out to the young married couples – you are a visible example.

These conversations that start because of the metal I wear around my finger are so valuable.

They're a chance to preach the Gospel, or to share St John Paul II's Theology of the Body, or the Song of Solomon; without necessarily using any of their words.

The follow-up questions days later about family, faith, commitment told me that the students had been thinking about what I had said.

My favourite conversation was with another Year 12 student.

With graduation and Schoolies on the horizon, the cohort was as boisterous as one might expect; but one student seemed to be having an existential crisis.

"God is s--t, sir," he said, I presume to get a rise from me.

I wondered what prompted this.

"What makes you say that?" I asked.

"He doesn't care about you, or anyone."

"All religions are stupid, they're a waste of time."

As we spoke, I found out that this outburst likely stemmed from a tragedy that had recently impacted some of the school's students.

What proceeded was a conversation about the Problem of Evil – essentially, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

We didn't speak at any deep philosophical level, but at the end of the conversation I felt as though I had offered wisdom, which absolutely could not have come from my 19-year-old, first-year-at-university self.

I felt like my faith and experience had made a difference for someone else.

At the end of next year I will be a teacher.

It has taken me much longer than I thought it would, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

My experiences, my knowledge, my relationship with Jesus and my Catholic faith are all part of who I will be to my students and co-workers.

While still ever impatient, I think I will have so much more to offer because of these past years.



BY PATRICK RANSOM

Patrick Ransom is a vocations officer for Vocation Brisbane.

Every milestone, lesson momentous

AT All Hallows' School, Brisbane, students and families are encouraged to give generously in the spirit of Mercy so that positive actions of hope are modelled and a greater appreciation of their own circumstances is fostered.

The school's theme for 2017 Opening Doors of Hope set a challenge for the All Hallows' community to focus on finding ways to provide hope to others.

One example was an initiative in May when the Year 9 Whitty House students set about providing hope by raising \$2500 at Central Station for Hummingbird House.

Hummingbird House is Queensland's only children's hospice supporting kids affected by life-limiting conditions, providing respite and care at the end of life.

After presenting their donation, the All Hallows' students were praised for their efforts by Hummingbird House management who said: "The parents and staff of All Hallows' should be so incredibly proud of the way these young ladies conducted themselves.

"They spoke with passion, commitment and respect and we were so grateful to have them with us for the morning."

According to the Year 9 Whitty students and head of Whitty House Sue Havers who visited the hospice, all praise should be reserved for the wonderful work being done by the Hummingbird House team.

Students and staff were impressed by the care and thought that went into the design of the facility.

While the hospice had all the function of a hospital, a huge amount of effort has been directed toward making the environment welcoming and homely for the families caring for ill children.

"Touring the facilities of Hummingbird House was truly an eye-opening experience," All Hallows' student Charlotte said.

"The sense of community created by the staff shines throughout the building – when you enter you cannot help but smile with an odd mix of joy and melancholy.

"From the dog, Olly, to the sensory room, you can tell that many happy memories are made on the campus.



Generosity: "All Hallows' School, students and families are encouraged to give generously in the spirit of Mercy."

"Knowing that Hummingbird House is working to comfort these children and their families reminds me that the Mercy Mission is being fulfilled in our community."

Fellow Whitty House student Laura was also grateful for the opportunity to visit Hummingbird House.

"I was privileged enough to walk through the halls of the hospice and see that all children, no matter their illness, are able to make memories there," Laura said.

"I am proud to have been one of the many Whitty Year 9 girls

who supported this hospice and the hard-working staff who make it all possible."

As a symbol, the hummingbird represents forever seeking out the good in life and the beauty in each day.

Though the complexity of life can sometimes overwhelm us, it is important to open the doors of hope.

This experience at the hospice reminded the girls we all have the ability to lift up and accomplish great things which begin with the smallest of actions.

Program to help people stay at home with care

MERCY Aged Care Services has delivered aged care and support to Central Queensland residents for more than 75 years.

From 2017, this knowledge and experience has found an additional base, with the opening of the Mercy Day Therapy Centre at Mater Gladstone.

Services are delivered as part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

CHSP aims to assist people over 65, or 55 in the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who wish to remain independent and in their own homes.

Mercy Day Therapy Centre offers physiotherapy and occupational therapy through CHSP at a subsidised rate.

These treatments can assist care recipients to maintain their independence, recover after setbacks, and achieve their health, wellness and reablement goals.

Mercy Aged Care Services' executive officer Lesley Schneider said they were excited to be

offering support to residents of Gladstone and surrounds.

"The needs faced by older people when requiring allied health assistance are very particular," she said.

"Our team has years of experience in addressing these needs and tailoring treatments to suit each individual's objectives."

Manager Jenny Grillmeier and physiotherapist Amanda Campbell have developed a space within the Mater Gladstone where clients can receive private or group treatments.

This gives them the opportunity to deliver a wider variety of therapies and exercises.

"Every person we treat is unique, with their own set of challenges and goals," Ms Grillmeier said.

"Some people want to maintain a high level of physical activity, others just want to be able to use the steps of their house, and anything in between.

"Whatever the need or the situation, our team



Support: "The needs faced by older people when requiring allied health assistance are very particular."

has the experience and ability to adapt treatments and exercises to help our clients achieve their goals."

Mercy is also the only approved provider of Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) in Central Queensland.

STRC is a new initiative from the Government, focused on supporting people recovering from a setback of some kind, or halting a decline in

health and ability to move.

Under this program, Mercy's team assists clients with services specifically tailored to help with independence and the aim of avoiding admission to residential aged care.

Eligible clients can receive therapy and nursing services, assistance with housework or yard maintenance, transport, purchasing of aids, and other services.

Mercy Partners ... operating in Queensland since 2009. Proudly sponsoring ministries in the name of the Catholic Church and nurturing the rich traditions and charisms of the founders of our ministries.

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Our mission is to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced. Our ministries offer services in health, aged care, community services and education. Our ministries include:

- All Hallows' School
- Mount Alvernia College, Kedron
- St Patrick's College, Townsville
- St Rita's College, Clayfield
- St Ursula's College, Yeppoon
- Mater Misericordiae
- Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland
- Mater Health Services North Queensland
- Mercy Community Services North Queensland

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

Safe in the shelter and escaping in the music

WHEN a cancer diagnosis causes a significant life change, patients crave a safe and protected environment that offers the stimulus required to address their psychological, emotional, social, physical and physiological needs.

Mater Cancer Care Centre uses research-based music therapy to provide a distraction from symptoms and side effects, and to promote relaxation whilst improving both emotional and physical well-being.

Mater music therapist Dr Jeanette Kennelly said, "Music therapy provides a safe space for patients to talk about other things going on in their lives."

"Patients don't always talk about their treatment; sometimes just singing a song or playing a favourite piece of music is enough to help pull them out of an anxious or low moment," she said.

"It's the music that provides the access point to talking about their cancer journey."

Jenny is a patient benefitting from music therapy at the Mater Cancer Care Centre.

After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003, Jenny went into remission after treatment, but sadly her cancer returned in 2014.

A professionally trained opera singer who has performed in London, Jenny felt empowered by music to get her through some of the darker times while she was receiving treatment.

"I know I can't get through my cancer

without music therapy. It's as simple as that," she said.

"It's a huge thing that's happening to you when you have cancer.

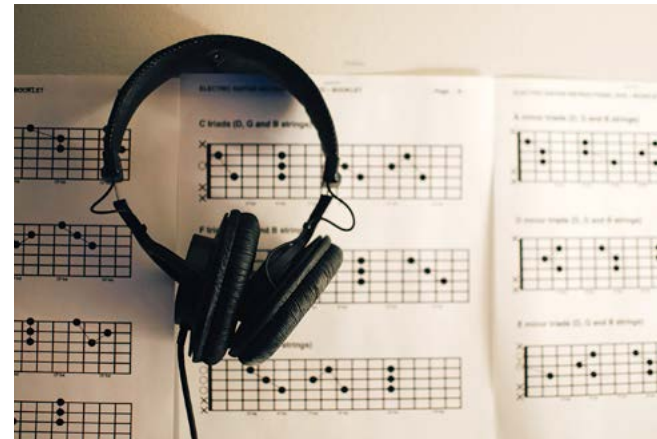
"You have to make a 'new' way of life around you, and music therapy is a part of my new life and a holistic approach to my treatment."

Jenny credits music therapy for helping her being able to work through her cancer diagnosis and ongoing treatment.

"Music therapy is a breath of fresh air, because I don't have to think about my cancer," she said.

"It provides me with an outlet and it's a joy."

Music therapy is just one part of Mater Cancer Care Centre's programs that offers an integrated approach to cancer care for any patient.



Integrated approach: "Music therapy provides a safe space for patients to talk about other things going on in their lives."

Stay close to work, learn, give, grow

TOWNSVILLE people considering a career change to pastoral care don't need to travel down south for the training.

The Mater Hospital held an information session recently where people from all denominations and backgrounds gathered to hear guest presenter Cathy Brown, from Brisbane, present an Introduction and Information session on clinical pastoral education.

CPE is the professional training course necessary for employment in the pastoral care ministry.

Mater Hospital's director of mission Trudy Clarke said this training usually was not available in North Queensland, and people requiring this qualification would have to travel to the capital cities and complete it as a three-month intensive course.

Ms Clarke will be facilitating this course in Townsville from March 2018.

She said the course was only run every two years and the number of participants was capped at six.

There are no formal pre-requisites however there is an extensive application process to complete.

For more information contact Mater Health Services North Queensland's director of mission Trudy Clarke by emailing trudy.clarke@matertsv.org.au or phoning (07) 4727 4105.



Career change: Cathy Brown and Trudy Clarke.

Celebrating community

VILLA McAuley Retirement Village, Townsville, is situated in a quiet suburb and surrounded by tropical gardens.

Originally established by the Sisters of Mercy, it is now a ministry of Mercy Community Services North Queensland offering affordable independent living: A place to call home.

Residents at Villa McAuley embrace a sense of community through coming together to celebrate special occasions and participating in regular activities.

The community centre is often a hive of activity with regular bowls sessions, bingo and tai chi.

Recently, management and residents joined in a Zumba session and it is hoped that this will be a regular way of becoming fit and having fun.

The annual variety concert is always a wonderful occasion where a number of locals, including residents showcase their talents to entertain residents and friends.

Other special celebrations include the annual Christmas function and our barbecue lunches that are held throughout the year.

The sense of community at Villa McAuley Retirement Village is certainly alive.

It provides an opportunity for valuable friendships to be formed and nourished.

She will achieve what the world has not yet imagined

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2017, Year of Simplicity - Travelling Lightly

A genius idea that will knock your socks off

WE all have the potential to generate “genius” to share with the world.

However we don’t always have the time. What would you do with an hour dedicated to investigating and exploring something in which you are interested?

At Mt Alvernia College, Kedron, students participate in Genius Hour where they are challenged to come up with an idea to focus on.

Genius Hour is a global movement, which aims to foster creativity and innovation in the classroom.

When 12-year-old Olivia Cogna had submitted her idea during Genius Hour at her school she had no idea how far it would go.

“Our teacher told us to choose an idea, and Mum and I were brainstorming and I thought we could help the homeless,” she said.

With a win-win strategy to re-purpose those odd socks everyone finds at the bottom of the washing basket, the young inventor is collecting socks and soap for the homeless, so she can sew them together to be used as a washer and hung to dry.

“I think it’s a good idea. I was really surprised, when we came up with it we weren’t sure how it would pan out,” Olivia said.

She has sent emails to Orange Sky Laundry and Making a Difference to see if her idea can be incorporated into the work of these two initiatives that care for the disadvantaged in our community.

Olivia’s mother Tracey Cogna said many people were keen to get involved.

“We were trying to help the homeless without a large cost factor,” Mrs Cogna said.



Creative idea: Twelve-year-old Olivia Cogna has come up with an idea to turn odd socks into soap and washers.

“It is a bit scary actually, because it has become a big thing, but we are very proud of Olivia and this is going to help a lot of people.”

If you are able to donate socks Olivia suggests “the socks don’t

have to be a pair, they just need to be clean, have no holes, and thin socks soap up better”.

To donate socks and help Olivia with her Genius Hour project email ptcogna1@optusnet.com.au

A mustard seed growing with Mercy

CONGREGATIONS of religious sisters have been part of the fabric of Church life in Queensland since the early 1860s.

These religious women opened schools, hospitals and hospices, orphanages and facilities to employ women in need.

From small beginnings in the new colony of Queensland, the sisters took to their work of helping those who were poor and in need of care with great faith in God.

While today many of the religious congregations are facing fewer numbers, their legacy can be compared to the parable Jesus told of the mustard seed, the smallest of seeds that produced a great canopy to protect and nourish the birds in its many branches.

Religious women and men have always embraced challenges.

Since the earliest days, they have sought creative, innovative ways not only to preserve, but also to strengthen and ensure the future viability of service to the sick, the uneducated, the needy, the young, the elderly, the poor and marginalised.

In more recent years congregation institutional

ministries have increasingly been led by lay people committed to the mission of the Gospel and spreading the reign of God.

Mercy Partners is a Catholic Church entity set up with Holy See approval in November 2008 by the four Sisters of Mercy congregations in Queensland to assume sponsorship responsibility for their institutional ministries.

In more recent years the Presentation Sisters of Queensland and the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception Australia have transferred their education ministries to Mercy Partners.

Mercy Partners has the capacity to sponsor in the name of the Catholic Church any ministry entrusted to it.

Through its canonical and civil governance mechanisms Mercy Partners ensures that each of its ministries acts in accordance with its mission as a Church-sponsored ministry.

The mission of Mercy Partners “to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced” is expressed in the active engagement of many people in our ministries of health

care, education, and aged and community care services.

Chair of Mercy Partners Council Dr Ray Campbell speaks of the theological concept of “communion” to describe Mercy Partners.

He said “communion” was a concept expanded in the Second Vatican Council which described the Church as a “communion”, the supreme paradigm for communion being God, three persons in one.

In his ecclesiology, St John Paul II favoured the term “communion” and spoke regularly of the inter-relation of *communio* and *missio*: communion and mission.

Dr Campbell said that “when we speak of Mercy Partners being a communion, I like to refer to it as a ‘communion of charisms’”. A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church.

For Mercy Partners, we have three distinct charisms from the three religious congregations who have transferred their ministries of education, health, and aged care and community services to Mercy Partners.

This, I think, gives Mercy Partners a richness

that supports ongoing collaboration across our ministries as they continue to reach out to those in need in our society.

Council deputy chair Mercy Sister Sandra Lupi said “this idea of a communion of charisms inspires the ministry leaders to understand their role within the Church as they continue the work of the religious congregations who were inspired by the Gospel message and their founding charisms”.

“It also encourages further collaboration and the building of positive relationships between ministries,” she said.

Dr Campbell said, “From the collaborative endeavours between aged-care communities and schools and every relationship Mercy Partners engages in, the focus is rooted in communication, trust, sacrifice and mercy”.

“With time and attention each day for Christ, we will grow stronger,” he said. “The religious congregations ‘planted the seed’. How that seed will continue to grow in each ministry is unknown but, with the continued care and nourishment, every seed of faith will surely grow.”



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Wisdom to enlighten the future

IN Term Three the Year 7B Religious Education class at St Patrick's College, Townsville, was delighted to visit Sr Regina during their time visiting Loreto Nursing Home.

The excursion was an opportunity for students to reconnect with Sr Regina, who they first met in Term One when Sr Regina visited the girls in class and told them of her story as a young girl travelling from Ireland to Australia as a Sister of Mercy.

The girls fell in love with Sr Regina and were fascinated with her story and were so grateful to her for sharing it with them.

As a sign of their appreciation the girls wrote and performed a rap song for her about the traditions and values of the Sisters of Mercy, the founders of our college, which they performed for her at the nursing home.

The words penned in her honour are:

Sister Regina

They are sisters, sisters of mercy, not misters
Working together for better, chasing a mission, a vision

Not missing visions of Catherine McAuley
A sister giving ultimate hope to the poorly
All the displaced, misplaced, out spaced teaching them pride

Taking young ladies aside to work as guides
With a purpose, a future, restoring social order,
Teaching them to open their minds, to think broader.



Future hopes: Year 7B Religious Education class visiting Sr Regina during their time at Loreto Nursing Home.

Every ending is a new beginning

By Sr Sandra Lupi

IN 2005, the congregation leaders of the Sisters of Mercy of Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane met to discuss future sponsorship options for their institutional ministries.

We had already made the transition to lay leadership in many of our ministries and we wanted to honour the call of the Second Vatican Council to provide a vehicle for true lay leadership in the Church.

This emphasis on enabling lay leadership at all levels of Catholic ministry comes through strongly in the original Statement of Vision and Intent that we wrote in 2006.

It was this vision that inspired us as the ongoing meetings and discussions continued over four years.

As one leader commented, "it was a visionary step, not just a practical response to a need".

The hope was "to see our ministries ... flourish in the name of Jesus and remain true to the vision of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy who founded and developed them".

We did not restrict our vision just to our own congregations for we envisioned a structure flexible enough to include other religious congregations with similar vision and purpose.

While collaboration was originally a strategy for addressing future sponsorship, it became a source of enthusiasm and hope, a promise that it could be done.

In November 2008, Mercy Partners was approved by the Holy See as a Public Juridic Person (PJP), giving it canonical – legal – status within the Catholic Church.

Formation of leaders is a critical element in the role of Mercy Partners and we have gone from strength to strength with our formation programs.

The publication of the Mercy Partners Theological Framework in 2017 provides a theological

basis for a communion of charisms working together to realise God's Mercy in the world.

It will guide policy formation and formation programming at a ministry level, and help with the articulation of a new way of being Church in Australia.

Being a founding member of Mercy Partners has been one of the most significant experiences of my life as a Sister of Mercy.

I have learned so much from the actual process of discerning a possible future for our ministries, the collaboration with other Sisters of Mercy as well as other congregations, the working in partnership with council members and ministry leaders.

After 12 years' direct involvement with Mercy Partners it is time for me to move on and allow others to take us into the future.

Thank you to all of you who have been part of my journey within Mercy Partners.

My prayer for you is that you may experience Mercy as expressed in the words of Pope Francis: "Mercy is the force that re-awakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope"

New direction: Sr Sandra Lupi.

Who is Mercy Partners?

We are a not-for-profit organisation set up in 2008 to sponsor the Catholic ministries entrusted to our care by their founding religious congregations. Our ministries operate throughout Queensland in the education, health, aged care, and community services sector.

Mercy Partners Ministries

Mercy Partners sponsors the following ministries in the name of the Catholic Church:

- All Hallows' School
- Mater Misericordiae Ltd
- Mater Health Services North Queensland
- Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland
- Mercy Community Services North Queensland
- Mount Alvernia College, Kedron
- St Patrick's College, Townsville
- St Rita's College, Clayfield
- St Ursula's College, Yeppoon
- Mercy Partners Council

Mercy Partners Council comprises nine members and reports annually to the Holy See. Council members are:

- Dr Ray Campbell, chair
- Sr Sandra Lupi, deputy chair
- Dr Daryl Hanly
- Dianne Hearn
- Dr Ricki Jeffery
- Leslie Jones
- Kieran McCarthy
- Lisa Siganto
- Sr Moira Truelson

Mission and Values

Our mission

Our mission is to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

We express our mission by safeguarding the ministries entrusted to our care, helping them to function effectively within the overall mission of the Catholic Church and in accordance with their founding charism.

We share with our ministries these core values: compassion, justice, respect and hope.

Our values

Compassion: Those who show compassion, enter into another's experience and are moved to respond. They engage with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged people of our world.

Justice: Those who show justice, live and promote right relationships with God, self, neighbour and creation. They uphold human rights, accept their responsibilities to one another, and strive to provide fair access to the world's resources for all people.

Respect: Those who show respect, honour the integrity and diversity of creation. They recognise the unique dignity of every human being as created in the image and likeness of God. Empowered by the Spirit, they are called to be co-creators of the new creation.

Hope: Those who show hope, live the resurrection story by trusting in the transforming power of God. They persevere through difficulties, act with integrity, and serve with joy.

For more information about Mercy Partners see www.mercypartners.org.au and www.facebook.com/mercypartner-saustralia

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Parallel worlds: St Rita's students build two toilet blocks for community in Romchek Village, Cambodia. Photo: srcstudentscambodia

Students work on smiles, solidarity

WHILE most teenagers enjoyed sleep-ins and social outings during the mid-year school holidays, 16 students from St Rita's College, Clayfield, were building two toilet blocks for women with disabilities in a remote village in Cambodia.

As part of the college's biennial two-week Immersion to Cambodia, the Year 11 students left behind their familiar comforts of home to offer authentic acts of service in solidarity with the world's poor and marginalised.

Accompanied by three staff members including St Rita's principal Dale Morrow, the group completed two outside toilets for two families in remote Romchek Village.

With no previous experience or knowledge in construction, the girls learnt how to mix concrete with sand, and then how to place the cement and brick using string lines, hopefully building a straight wall.

"The girls were very enthusiastic for the entire build and immensely proud of their achievements," deputy principal Maree Trims said.

"Seeing the joy on the faces of the families was heart-warming.

"This is such a wonderful experience for our girls to see how privileged they are, not only in their daily lives but also to be a part of this enriching experience."

The group also spent five days in Phnom

Penh, assisting at LaValla School for disabled and under-privileged children.

Here they helped weed the vegetable gardens and school ground, sanded and painted walls and taught classes.

The St Rita's students taught the eager local children about many different topics from Australian animals to geography and Health and Physical Education.

"Overall it was an extraordinary experience filled with fun, learning and most of all the children's bright expressions staring back at us," Ms Trims said.

"The pure joy radiating from the students was empowering to each and every girl, giving us a new perspective on what's important."

"It was not only confronting but an experience we will never forget."

Penh, assisting at LaValla School for disabled and under-privileged children.

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"It was not only confronting but an experience we will never forget."

Belaying the beloved

FATHER and Daughter Caves Day is a part of the Year 8 camp for students at St Ursula's College, Yeppoon, that enables father-daughter bonding over a series of adventure challenges.

Students invite their father, or father-figure, to the Capricorn Caves for a day of high-ropes challenges, adventure-caving and rockwall-climbing.

Father and daughter really need each other to participate in and to achieve these challenges.

The planning for this day by the staff at St Ursula's is meticulous, with the safety component doubling as an effective family bonding opportunity.

Firstly, you need a climbing partner. As one person climbs the other one belays. (Belaying enables a person to apply friction on a climbing rope so that a climber who falls does not fall very far).

Secondly, the safety and enjoyment of a climb is highly dependent on effective communication between the climber and the belayer.



Important time: Tim Cook and daughter Larissa at the St Ursula's College Father and Daughter Caves Day.

Thirdly, maintaining focus is necessary. Don't get distracted by anything and anyone, the only people who exist are you and your climber.

For grazier and coal miner Tim Cook, who travelled from his home at Theresa Creek, near Clermont, to spend the day with his daughter Larissa, 13 – a boarding student at the college – the challenge was accepted without hesitation.

"Larissa was very excited about the camp; she rang me up as soon as she knew the date of it," Mr Cook said.

"We climb up some hills at home, but the climbing wall and the high ropes were a different kind of challenge."

St Ursula's Year 8 camp co-ordinator Kathy Strelow explained the popularity and

success of Father and Daughter Caves Day.

"The activities selected for camp were trust activities; a lot of the students tried the Adventure Caving and High Ropes, but realised it was more difficult than it looked," Ms Strelow said.

"The fathers, or father figures, provided so much encouragement to the students during the activities, there was a lot of team-building, confidence-boosting, affirmative talk between the adults and students.

"The feedback, from parents and students, indicated that Father and Daughter Caves Day really opened up the communication lines for some families, and that is wonderful."

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Latin revival draws interest from Catholics in country regions

Ancient Mass at Mt Perry

By Mark Bowling

TRADITIONAL Latin Mass could be set for a mini revival in rural churches around Brisbane.

Dozens of worshippers braved heavy rain and flooding to attend Mass in the extraordinary form at St Patrick's Church in the historic gold-mining town of Mt Perry, west of Bundaberg, last month.

There was high praise for the Latin Mass from Oratory in Formation moderator Fr Adrian Sharp, altar servers and members of the congregation, with organisers already planning more Masses.

"I think the locals were very happy to welcome us to their special church, which they're very proud of," Fr Sharp, who drove five hours north from Brisbane to celebrate, said. "Many were asking if and when they could have another Mass, and I certainly look forward to being able to do it again some time."

Mass is celebrated once a month in the Ordinary Form in St Patrick's, built in 1904 and heritage-listed, and it's understood this was the first time the Latin Mass has been celebrated there since liturgical changes more than 50 years ago.

The Second Vatican Council ruled that the Mass could be celebrated in local languages while the priest faces the congregation.

The Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963, provided for use of the vernacular at Mass.

"We were able to have a *Missa cantata* (sung Mass with one priest), and the people joined in the singing of the Ordinary Mass and the hymns," Fr Sharp said. "Many availed themselves of the Sacrament of Penance before and after Mass, and the Rosary was recited before the Mass."

After the Mass, most of the congregation gathered for lunch across the road in the town's Grand Hotel.

"They came from Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Hivesville, Biggenden and Mt Perry," organiser Moira Thompson (pictured above), from St Peter's Parish, Biggenden, said. "Local parishioners did a great job preparing the church, cleaning brass candlesticks, and moving the current altar."

"Fr Sharp gave an interesting homily on the difference between the Latin Mass and the *Novus Ordo*."

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI formally allowed the Latin Mass to be more accessible to congregations, and the International *Una Voce* Federation, lay groups associated with the Latin Mass, says member organisations are growing in all parts of

the world.

Church-goers who attend the Latin Mass say the liturgical richness of the past and the seriousness of the service is what draws them.

One Brisbane parishioner dedicated to reviving the traditional service is 26-year-old Thomas Ryan (pictured at bottom). He first altar-serve the Latin Mass when he was six, and says he loves it. Mr Ryan served during the Mt Perry celebration, and said he didn't mind waking up at 3.30am to drive across Brisbane archdiocese to arrive in Mt Perry in time for 10am Mass.

"When I arrived, I found the altar set up for the Mass, the cantor practising and Fr Sharp holding confessions – something very difficult to get to if you live in regional areas," he said.

"I was excited to revisit a town I only ever drove through, visit a beautiful church I had never been to and altar-serve a Mass there for devoted families driving from all over to attend."

Mr Ryan, a member of the Brisbane Oratory community, attributes his "love" for the Latin Mass as the reason he returned to the Church after years away, and he is keen to establish a group that could revive the traditional Mass for others to appreciate and enjoy, particularly in rural parishes around Brisbane.

"Definitely. It would be popular enough to attract people from four hours' radius I would estimate – a traditional Mass with confession," he said. "This would revive the Mass in regional areas for sure."

In Brisbane, Fr Sharp said about 200 parishioners regularly attend Sunday Latin Mass in Annerley, and about 180 in Wilston.

Brisbane Oratory in Formation also provides Latin Mass in Townsville several times a year, and Fr Sharp said the Oratory priests would be happy to do the same elsewhere, time and resources permitting.

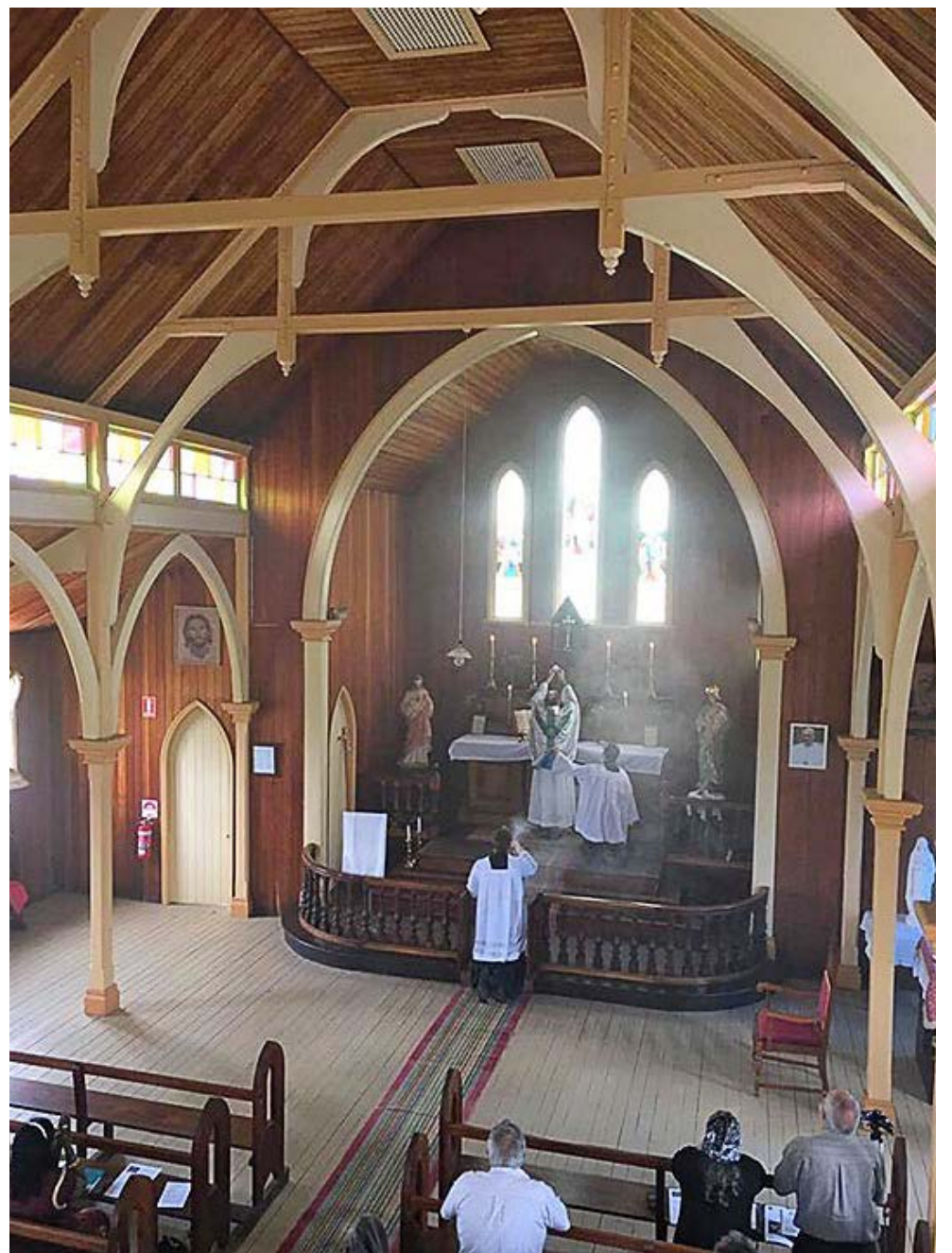
"More Latin Masses will certainly allow more people to experience it, and perhaps choose it regularly," he said.

"For me it's not so much the numbers but rather the fact that it's part of the Church's patrimony and part of the diversity of the Church's life."

"My hope is that those who want to access it can do so without too much trouble. The Brisbane Oratory can do a bit, but our own parish is our first priority."

"Ideally there'd be more priests here and there who can say the old Mass."

"It's something that seminarians should be offered during their training (to learn familiarity with the old Mass) so that they can provide it at least occasionally for their parishioners should the faithful desire it."



Renewal: Fr Adrian Sharp celebrating a Latin Mass in St Patrick's, Mt Perry.

"I was excited to revisit a town I only ever drove through, visit a beautiful church I had never been to and altar-serve a Mass there for devoted families driving from all over to attend."



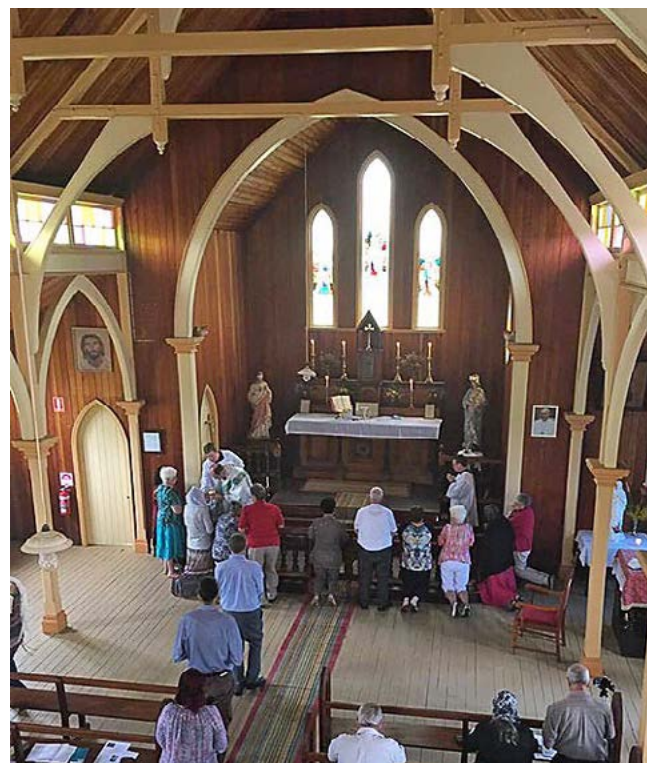
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Latin revival: Members of the congregation bow their heads in prayer at the Latin Mass in Mt Perry's heritage-listed St Patrick's Church.

Communion time: (Left) Worshippers receive Holy Communion.

Unconditional love and letting it take hold

AT a family gathering in Townsville this past week, we met our first great-granddaughter for the first time.

Just one month old, she is an old soul in a young body – “she’s been here before”, as the saying goes.

Despite being fussed over, handed around to all and sundry, poked, prodded, cheeks pinched by dotting women grinding their teeth, she remained placid and calm throughout and not even the loud sounds of disco music fazed her.

There was an instant bond with Great-Grandad, as if we’d known each other for years – we just stared into each other’s eyes and smiled, a lot!

It’s a special experience I have now enjoyed many times – to look deep into the eyes of a baby and see the eyes of God, drawn deep inside to feel overwhelming, unconditional love.

It is spiritual and human at the same time.

Being together as family, welcoming a new member, and celebrating the milestone of a son-in-law’s 50th birthday, emphasised the strength, unity and love we experience as family.

A touching image, highlighted in a painting gifted as a birthday present, depicted the strong bonds of three generations of the family of our daughter and son-in-law.

Depicted as cassowaries, each family member was there, including the newest addition. Our son-in-law is a descendant of the Gugu Badhun people, of the upper Burdekin River of North Queensland, and the cassowary is culturally significant to the traditional owners of the tropical rainforests.

It is integral to their culture, customs and values, appearing in important traditional stories, ceremonies and dances.

The painting then is a beautiful image of family and was emotionally received.

Yet another beautiful image of family and community is from the Makonde people of Tanzania, East Africa, known especially for wood carvings of their “family tree” or “tree of life”.

These carvings, made from one single piece of wood, can be up to two metres high.

It’s a pillar made of people, depicting members of extended family – often representing multiple generations – climbing atop one another



Unconditional love: “There was an instant bond with Great-Grandad, as if we’d known each other for years – we just stared into each other’s eyes and smiled, a lot.”

and supporting one another.

In this way, the Makonde show what it is to live in a community – that each person’s life is built in part on someone else’s.

Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment: love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

Love does indeed make the world go round; it is the key to everything.

I have learned over the years that love abounds within.

It is because God first loves us, with a deep, abiding love that fills us to overflowing.

In receiving such abundant love, we are compelled to pass it on, to love others with the same deep love.

We cannot hold it back – it must be shared.

Love is not love, they say, until you give it away.

Again, too, I have learned over the years just what it does mean to love unconditionally.

The wisdom and words of St Paul say it beauti-

fully: “Love is always patient and kind; ... finds its joy in the truth ... always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

Top-selling author and life teacher Wayne Dyer says: There is no greater power in heaven or on earth than pure, unconditional love.

He suggests you embark on an experiment in which you practise only unconditional love for several days.

Vow to yourself that you will only allow unconditional loving thoughts to issue from your consciousness.

During this time, refuse to have judgmental or critical thoughts.

In your quiet time, think only peace and love.

In all of your relationships, think and act in only loving ways.

Extend loving thoughts and energy wherever and whenever you encounter anyone or anything.

Become unconditional love for this period of time.

By pouring love into your immediate environment and practising gentleness in all of your thoughts, words and actions, your immediate circle of friends will begin responding in a whole new way.

Why not practise giving unconditional love for the next seven days?

Allow love to take hold.

Receive and give love with all your heart, with every fibre of your being.

Love is the greatest – of that there is no doubt.

Our lives are indeed built in part on someone else’s.

Have a golden day and treasure life.



BY TERRY LEES

Terry Lees is a member of the Mount Isa Catholic parish.

Prayer reflections for the week

The following prayer thoughts for the week are from Br Brian Grenier’s book *Attend Unto Reading*.

November 13 – Our True Self

There are two fundamental and inter-related questions which confront us inescapably as human beings: “Who are we? (the nature question) and “Who am I?” (the identity question). If, as Socrates said at his trial, “an unexamined life is not worth living”, we need to think deeply about them. In this connection, it would also be a fruitful exercise to ask Jesus, “Who do you say I am?”; for our true self is ultimately not to be sought in the “I” we utter as a way of expressing our self-awareness but in the “Thou” that our extravagantly loving God addresses uniquely to each one of us.

November 14 – Simplicity of Life

In his *Tales of the Hasidim* the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber relates the story of an American tourist who visited the revered Polish rabbi Hafetz Chaim. Astounded by the fewness of the wise man’s possessions, the tourist enquired, “Rabbi, where is your furniture?” The rabbi, like a good Kerryman, replied with a question of his own: “Where is yours?” “But,” replied the puzzled visitor, “I am only passing through.” “So am I,” said the rabbi. And so are we. It is because all of us without exception are just “passing through” that our lives should be marked by simplicity and detachment.

November 15 – Supporting the Poor

Whether we apply them personally or as a parish community, to take proper account of Jesus’ words – “When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind” (Luke 14:13) – we must acknowledge that all we have is God’s gift to us and

that justice demands that we provide from our superfluity for those who, for whatever reason (our greed, ethical blindness or indifference perhaps), lack the necessities of life. Nor should we expect praise or a reward for doing so. As Jesus added, “You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:14).

November 16 – Intercessory Prayer

Reassured by Jesus’ invitation, “Ask, and it will be given to you” (Matthew 7:7; Lk 11:9), we have no qualms about imploring God’s help in the many trials of life. We also intercede on behalf of others (as Jesus himself did), during the prayers of the faithful at Mass and at other times in private. While this is a holy and wholesome thing to do, it would be a pity if our prayer were limited to the making of petitions. Such activity, intense as it may sometimes be, is hardly the highpoint of a human being’s intimate communion with God.

November 17 – Faith and the Mystery of Life

St Bede records how King Edwin of Northumbria came to adopt the Christian faith. A counsellor spoke to him of a swallow’s flying swiftly through a well-heated banquet hall in mid-winter when a snow storm is raging outside. The bird enjoys a brief moment of calm before disappearing into the darkness where it is at the mercy of the elements once more. “Our brief human life is much the same,” the wise man added; “we know nothing of whence it came and what will follow it.” The king accepted the sage’s judgment that the new faith shed light on these mysteries.

November 18 – The Brevity of Life

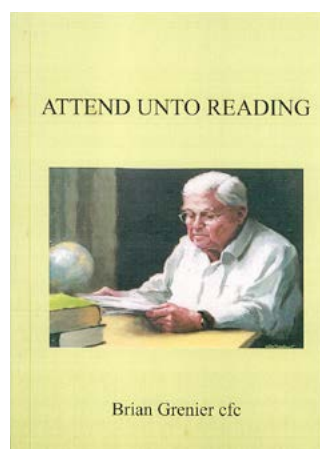
Despite our increased life expectancy, the many biblical references to the fleeting and insubstantial quality of our earthly existence remain pertinent. It is captured in such images as: “a wind-



blown leaf” (Job 13:25), “water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up” (2 Samuel 14:14), “a wind that passes and does not come again” (Psalm 78:39), “a sigh” (Psalm 90:9), “a mist” (James 4:14). Whatever our years may be, Paul assures us: “If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8).

November 19 – Talents from God: a Sculptor’s Gratitude

As this story illustrates, all of our talents come from God and should be used gratefully in God’s service. A sculptor spent many years of his life creatively adorning a medieval cathedral. Centuries after his death, a worker who was engaged in restoration work on the ceiling of this edifice cleared a heavy layer of dust from the top of one of the beams supporting the roof. There he found a superbly crafted image of Christ and the inscription, “God at least will see and will understand.” This was a man’s secret way of saying “thank you” for the gift that was his.



Students raising voices

A PILOT project has given secondary students an opportunity to speak up and “be the change you want to see ...” in schools and colleges across Brisbane archdiocese.

Initiated by Brisbane Catholic Education’s Student Protection Team, five colleges were invited to take part in the Student Voice Pilot Project.

At the heart of the project are the Student Voice Champions, six student representatives from each college who are being guided and supported throughout the pilot year by a college-based “staff mentor”.

Essentially, the Student Voice Champions’ role was to represent the interest of students, voice their concerns and in turn help make schools a safer, more respectful and caring place for all students.

Through the pilot project, these initial champions would build life skills by communicating with diverse groups; thinking critically and creatively; networking with peers; engaging in teamwork; hosting and facilitating discussions; and presenting their ideas to the college and BCE’s leadership team.

A one-day workshop entitled Call to Action – Amp Up your Voice brought together the champions and their staff mentors from Carmel College, Thornlands; San Sisto College, Carina; St Francis College, Crestmead; St Thomas More College, Sunnybank; and Emmaus College, Jimboomba, for the first time.

Facilitated by BCE’s student protection team and hosted by ResourceLink, the champions explored questions during the day such as what does student voices look like in schools right now; do all students really have a say; what are the barriers to students having a voice; what issues are important to students and what does it take to be a “change-maker”?

Miriell Nyange, a young consultant with the CREATE Foundation, the national peak advocacy body representing the voices of children



Voices of action: Call to Action gets a thumbs-up from attendees.

and young people with an out-of-home care experience, spoke to the champions about her own experiences with not being heard.

BCE professional standards and student protection senior officer Carolyn De Witt-Ryall said it had long been recognised that students learnt best and reached their full potential in environments where they felt welcomed, safe and had a real sense of belonging.

“Through the Student Voice pilot project BCE wanted to hear directly from students about how we can better build safe, supportive and inclusive communities where all students

can learn and flourish,” Ms De Witt-Ryall said.

She said the concept of “student voice” was deeply aligned with notions of student empowerment and authentic engagement in learning; and was well established in educational frameworks around the globe.

“These principles are founded in research, recognised in international covenants and are identified as key features of child-safe organisations,” Ms De Witt-Ryall said.

“Encouraging young people to speak out and lead the way for positive change is at the heart

of Student Voice and echoed in the words of Pope Francis in his homily at the World Youth Day Vigil.”

The commitment to authentic engagement with students to create safe, supportive and inclusive school communities reflected the core values of BCE.

Following on from the call-to-action event, Student Voice Champions will host a Conversation Café at their colleges followed by a “Your Voice Matters” survey and will present their findings from the pilot project to the BCE leadership team.

Students on Games time

THIRTY lucky Year 2 and 3 students from St Pius’ Primary School, Banyo, attended the launch of the Longines Commonwealth Games Countdown clock at Brisbane Airport.

The event marked 175 days until the start of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and the unveiling of a five-metre-tall, 1.75-tonne Longines countdown clock.

Longines are the official timekeeper of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Principal Peter Gordon said all 110 students from Years 2 and 3 were keen to attend the launch, but only 30 students could go.

He said all those wishing to attend entered a draw and the lucky 30 students were drawn out. “Naturally, some were very disappointed,” he said.

At the event the excited students met athletes such as Matt Shirvington and Cameron McEvoy, along with games hopeful Amy Pejovic.

Queensland Minister for Education and

Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games Kate Jones and former Queensland Premier and chairman for the Commonwealth Games Corporation Peter Beattie spoke to the students.

Mr Beattie said St Pius’, Banyo, was one of the best schools in the world to which the students agreed.

Mr Gordon said the athletes and dignitaries were very accommodating to the students.

“In particular, Matt Shirvington, who took time out from his MC duties and spoke to the students about the upcoming games, athletics and following your dreams,” he said.

Year 3 students Scarlet and Gus said it was such a thrill to meet the athletes and get their Longines hat signed as well as meeting Borobi, the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games mascot.

“The students had an enjoyable morning and it was certainly a great experience for all who attended,” Mr Gordon said.



Perfect timing: St Pius’ students at the launch of the Commonwealth Games countdown clock.

Pride in the principal: Students Heidi McDonald and Millar Gazzard share principal Dr Michael Stewart’s celebrations of his doctorate.



Principal leads by example

WHEN it comes to cultivating a positive school culture and academic excellence, the new principal at Our Lady of the Rosary School, Caloundra, is leading by example.

Michael Stewart was conferred with a doctorate from Central Queensland University at a recent graduation ceremony held at the Maroochydore RSL.

Dr Stewart, who completed his thesis last year, said key findings from his research highlighted the importance of schools providing a positive classroom/work environment.

“I have two simple goals, the first is that our students and staff love coming to this school and the second is, we all work together to be awesome,” he said.

He said for this to happen respectful relations must occur between all members of the school community.

He recommended staff should use positive language to nurture relationships because it assisted in the development of a positive school culture and promoted a sense of belonging amongst students.

“How successful the school is, depends on the principal’s ability to unite the school community in working together to achieve the

school’s goals and vision,” he said.

During his first nine months at Our Lady of the Rosary School, Dr Stewart has worked with the dedicated staff to establish high expectations and a positive behaviour management program.

“I encourage staff to book kids for good behaviour and I am often ringing parents about their child’s achievements,” he said.

“For a small community school, we have made significant progress with our Year 5 Naplan results in writing the highest on the coast, and our Wakakirri team made the state finals,” he said.

Dr Stewart, who has presented many workshops at various educational conferences and for large organisations including the Commonwealth Bank, FoodWorks, Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Queensland Police and CQ University, has a passion for improving teams and leadership performance.

He brings a great wealth of practical knowledge on how to move organisations forward, especially bringing out the best in individuals.

His book Positive Culture+ effective Leadership = Great Results was aimed for release before Christmas.

ACU forming new leaders

THE Master of Professional Studies in Theology (MPST) is designed to strengthen the capacity of professionals to lead and engage specifically within a Catholic context.

The MPST is:

- Ideal for teachers, leaders and staff in Catholic education, as well as those working in Catholic and other Church-based organisations, including health care, aged care and social services, seeking a deeper level of engagement with theology.
- Specifically designed for professionals who may complete the program in one-and-a-half years (full-time or part-time equivalent).
- Offered via multiple entry points, with recognition for professional experience and prior learning. ACU provides 80 and 40 credit point (cp) pathways, if the student has relevant post-graduate qualifications with some eligibility criteria applying.

For Catholic education professionals, the opportunity to strengthen their capacity to enhance the Catholic identity of their current setting is a highlight.

ACU's programs support students to address the needs of students and staff by exploring contextual approaches to theology and scripture, potentially transforming religious education.

ACU offers spaced-learning units conducted locally, study tours, residential intensives and opportunities for face-to-face engagement with international and local thinkers in Catholic identity and contextual theology.

For more information visit www.acu.edu.au/askacu



Looking ahead: ACU graduate and school principal Dr Nicole Archard.



Ashley
ACU graduate



and
society in
religion.

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Love in Action

We live in interesting times. On one hand we're experiencing unprecedented convenience – cars with cameras, TV on demand, unlimited internet.

And on the other hand – our world is in turmoil. We're living during a time of devastating crises. The scale of the famine in Africa is on a scale so large that the United Nations is calling it the worst humanitarian crisis since 1945. More than 20 million people are facing starvation and famine.

Imagine, almost the entire population of Australia facing starvation.

Across several African countries, drought has a choking grip on peoples' lives and futures.

In many of these places, families rely on farming as a way of life. People farm their land to grow food for their family but also to sell produce to create income. Families use this money to pay for school fees, purchase equipment or farming supplies for their land, and importantly plan for the future.

But consecutive failed rainy seasons, combined with changing weather patterns, means millions are facing failed crops and this results in no money to purchase what they need to survive.

Look at the picture above.

These children in Ethiopia are caught in the devastating famine. Their school has no water; so each student must bring three

litres of water to ensure the school has enough for the day.

Sharing this reality isn't meant to make you feel hopeless; it's simply a real perspective into the experiences of people living through incredibly difficult times.

As you can imagine, aid and humanitarian agencies around the world are responding to this huge crisis.



But CBM's response is unique.

We look for those who are hidden or forgotten.

People with disabilities.

People just like Regina from Zimbabwe. Regina has a physical impairment that makes it difficult to walk long distances.

She, and her two children, were caught in a severe food crisis. Regina had relied on her farm to produce food for her family and to help with income. But after three years of drought, she was left with nothing.

Regina was forced to travel five kilometres to get water to use.

It's hard to put yourself in that situation –

not being able to turn the tap on and have water run freely.

Instead you have to pack up a bucket, travel five kilometres, fill your bucket up, and then travel back. Anytime you needed more water; day after day. Now, think of Regina, who must complete this long journey with her physical impairment.

But CBM's response is ready.

CBM is positioned, across Africa, to reach children most in danger – those with chronic hunger, disability, or from a family with a parent who has a disability.

Our partners are busy providing survival support to meet people's basic needs. Support which can include rice, cooking oil and medical screening.

CBM's work is motivated by love. We are moved to action by the words of our founder, Ernst Christoffel, who dedicated his life to serve others.

He said, "The deed of love is the sermon that everyone can understand"

It is this simple principle that drives us to reach out to those most vulnerable in times of emergency.

While the situation is sobering and the facts hard to comprehend; the good news is that we can be part of the solution.

You can be part of CBM's emergency response – your action can generate love, and give people who are living in desperate need the hope that they are not forgotten.

Be part of love in action and share the sermon that everyone understands.

Visit www.cbm.org.au/ActNow/donate for more information or call our team on 131 226.

Nature setting an example for us

By Sr Elvera Sesta

THE other day when visiting my brother down the coast, I noticed that I was not his only visitor. Perched on the railing of his balcony was a pied currawong.

This is mainly a black bird with a bit of white, about 45cm long and with a sharply pointed beak that has a hooked tip, and a yellow eye.

We sat staring at each other, this beautiful creature with its striking yellow eye and myself.

The currawong and I had a long chat and then I went inside to Google the bird to check that I had the correct species.

We began to play some of the currawong bird calls. Within a short space of time, there were about 24 currawongs either on his balcony or on the hedge just outside.

I wondered just what message I had played to this flock of birds.

They waited for a bit, but when we ceased playing their call, they soon disbanded.

Had I played a mating call or to tell them that there was a good feed around; that this area was safe? Do human beings have similar patterns of behaviour?

Our homes should be places of safety where our young are able to feel protected.

When we read of evil happening in these places, it seems as if that part of the world has become rotten and needs to be excised.

A family or a school should also be a place where our young are able to have their physical needs met. They know that there are adults there who care for them and look out for them.

Not only are their needs met, but they are able to test themselves.

Mother eagles whose nests are made in high places, push their young out of their eyrie and then they quickly dive down to catch the eaglet on its back, if it has not begun, for it, the natural process of flying.

As our children move through their schooling, each year has its own challenges.

If it did not, then they would never grow mentally and spiritually. They would remain as mental babies for their entire lives.

I remember the first time my school gave each of its pu-

pils in Prep or Grade 1 an exercise book – their first one.

I raced home and put the exercise book on my mother's bed as she was not home at the time.

I was so proud of my achievement.

Just as the currawong knows its place in the flock, so in a school, social graces are also learnt.

Once, this happened in the home but with smaller families, the school has taken over this role.

There is a beautiful story told of an injured currawong which was placed in a cage by its carers. Currawongs in the wild came daily with small morsels to feed this injured bird until it was able to be released into the wild.

The other currawongs came to the aid of the captive currawong whose call they had heard.

Their arrival was almost instantaneous and there were so many of them.

There seemed to be no hesitation.

We so often read about the bad that one person inflicts on another, not the good. Here is nature setting an example for us.

We see a similar scene in the school set-up. One student is not managing or coping.

There always is some other student who will come with the comforting word or hand.

It is said that when disaster strikes, it brings out both the good and the bad in people. However, I would like to think that it is the good that predominates.

If we expect that young people will do the right thing then they usually rise to the occasion.

To a certain extent we are able to control what happens in a school. It is a place of learning and testing the boundaries in a safe environment.

Sometimes we fail, but it is a case of picking ourselves up and trying yet again. Trials come our way, to the young as well as to the more mature.

We thought that we could never do it, but St Paul tells us that "if God is on our side can anyone be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

How difficult it must be for people who have no belief in God.

I believe that what happens to me in life – in good times and bad – is in accord with the will of God. God is always there.

Isaiah tells us: For I, the Lord your God, who hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Do not fear, I will help you." (Isaiah 41:13)



Example: "Just as the currawong knows its place in the flock, so in a school, social graces are also learnt."

SAINTLY LIFE

St Margaret of Scotland



Royal saint: St Margaret of Scotland.

MARGARET of Scotland was a liberated woman in the sense that she was free to be herself. For her, that meant freedom to love God and serve others.

Not Scottish by birth, Margaret was the daughter of Princess Agatha of Hungary and the Anglo-Saxon Prince Edward Atheling.

She spent much of her youth in the court of her great-uncle, the English king, Edward the Confessor. Her family fled from William the Conqueror and was shipwrecked off the coast of Scotland.

King Malcolm befriended them and was captivated by the beautiful Margaret. They were married at the castle of Dunfermline in 1070.

Margaret tried to improve her adopted country by promoting the arts and education.

For religious reform she encouraged synods and was present for the discussions which tried to correct religious abuses common among priests and laypeople, such as simony, usury, and incestuous marriages. With her husband, she founded several churches.

Margaret was not only a queen, but a mother. She and Malcolm had eight children. Still, she remained detached from the world.

Her private life was austere. She had certain times for prayer and reading Scripture.

She was always surrounded by beggars in public and never refused them. It is recorded that she never sat down to eat without first feeding nine orphans and 24 adults.

In 1093, King William Rufus made a surprise attack on Alnwick castle.

King Malcolm and his oldest son Edward were killed. Margaret, already on her deathbed, died four days after her husband.

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

Wednesday - **St Albert the Great**

Patron of scientists and philosophers

Thursday - **St Margaret of Scotland**

Patron of Scotland

Friday - **St Elizabeth of Hungary**

Patron of bakers and brides

Saturday - **Basilicas of Sts Peter and Paul**

Mark the place of each apostle's martyrdom

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 19

1st Reading: Prov. 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
2nd Reading: 1 Thess. 5:1-6
Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 12

1st Reading: Wisdom 6:12-16
2nd Reading: 1 Thess. 4:13-18
Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

Next Sunday's readings

BY FR JOHN REILLY SJ

NEXT Sunday's **First Reading** is extracts from a poem praising the ideal wife in the final chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of brief wise sayings, mostly secular rather than religious.

It is a collection of Israelite wisdom gathered over several centuries.

Many of the sayings are attributed to Solomon, the wise son who succeeded David as King of Israel in the 10th century BC.

The Response and the Psalm after the reading remind us that true wisdom comes to those who "fear the Lord", surrender to God in reverent faith.

The **Second Reading** is from the final chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians.

First Thessalonians is the earliest of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, before any of the four Gospels.

It was probably written around the year 50 AD, less than twenty years after the death of Jesus.

St Paul tells us not to be anxious about the future.

Live with an awareness that this life is but a preparation for our true life after death.

Such awareness comes from faith in God, a light that enables us to see even in the darkness and distress of our present life.

To see our wonderful future that God has already prepared for us in Christ.

In the **Gospel Reading** from the Gospel of Matthew, we have another parable.

This time, it is a parable Jesus tells his disciples, those who have begun to believe in him.

Jesus uses parables to help his listeners search more deeply into their own experience

to discover what he is talking about.

What is Jesus talking about?

Jesus talks primarily about God, how God gifts our lives.

Jesus is first and foremost the prophet of God, one who reveals God.

Only secondarily is Jesus a moral teacher, one who tells us how we are to behave.

How to behave not as a "should", but as a "could".

What we could do as a consequence of what God desires to give us in our lives.

Jesus is trying to share with us his own experience of God at the centre of his life, how he experiences the mystery of God gifting him in his human life.

He wants to stimulate us to seek and to discover the same mystery of God gifting us in our lives.

It is the mystery of God speaking silently and lovingly.

The parables of Jesus are primarily about what God desires to do in our lives.

What Jesus wants us to do is always a result of first welcoming God's word and action.

Where is this word and action?

God's word and action are in everything we do, in all the events and experiences of our lives.

We respond to God's personal word and action by using the gifts and opportunities, the "golden talents", God gives differently to each of us.

We begin to experience the fullness and the joy that filled Jesus in his lifetime.

Fr John Reilly was a writer for The Catholic Leader. He died earlier this year. He wrote this commentary in 2011.

Retweet

At least 27 people including eight members of one family were shot dead inside the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, when a gunman carrying an assault rifle opened fire during a Sunday service.

Prayer List



HERNAN ESPINOSA

Lay Catholic

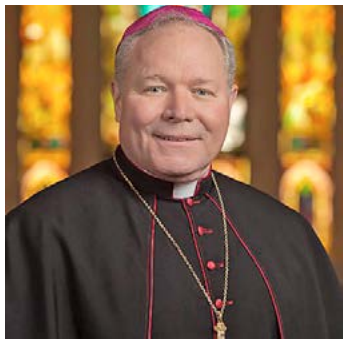
As a Catholic Christian I feel the attack on #SutherlandSprings Texas, we are always on attack and mocked. We must believe in God.



ABBY JOHNSON

American pro-life activist

About to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for our world. After the shooting in Texas, we need peace. Anyone want to join?



BISHOP EDWARD BURNS

Bishop of Dallas, Texas

We offer prayers as we learn the details of the tragedy at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX... Our hope is in the Lord!



SR HELENA BURNS

Member of the Daughters of St Paul

My cop friend says: "People like to talk about law enforcement, perps & guns. The victims often get forgotten." #TexasChurchMassacre #RIP

THIS MONTH

POPE'S INTENTIONS

Christians in Asia – That Christians in Asia, bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed, may promote dialogue, peace and mutual understanding, especially with those of other religions.

THIS WEEK

Germany – A year on from the Paris Agreement, international leaders are meeting in Bonn to discuss progress on implementing agreements on addressing climate change.

Afghanistan – About 9500 children died of diarrhoea in the past year in Afghanistan.

Bangladesh – More than 3000 desperate, tired and hungry Rohingya refugees crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar over the past two days, and United Nations agencies and their partners are working around the clock to provide urgent life-saving aid and shelter to this latest influx.

Yemen – War-torn Yemen is facing the fastest-growing cholera epidemic ever recorded, with about 895,000 suspected cases as of November 1.

The views expressed in the Letters to the Editor are not necessarily endorsed by and do not necessarily represent the views of The Catholic Leader or the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Letters are submitted on the condition The Catholic Leader may edit them in a manner which meets publication and style requirements.

Have your Say

Post: GPO Box 282, Brisbane, QLD 4001
FAX: 07 3236 4897

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lead them to God is obscene. Even worse is the behaviour of their superiors who protected them and moved them to other places where they could continue to assault other children.

The responsibility, all of it, belongs to these people.

They have trashed their credibility, and it will not be restored before they stop trying to blame others for their own failures.

Catholic parents

WE have been a little dependent of late at the tone of some of the letters written with regard to the plebiscite, most of which, understandably, support a No vote.

It was encouraging to read the contributions, which conveyed a measure of empathy for those of the homosexual community and their families.

As parents of homosexual children we had our own struggles to contend with as we, and not least their siblings, supported them in coming to terms with their sexuality.

They have developed into fine young people, gainfully employed, loved and respected without exception by both family and friends.

Unless closely involved it may be difficult from a distance for some people to appreciate the problems encountered along the way by these young adults.

Some will still say it is a lifestyle of choice but I do not believe that to be the truth.

What will have been achieved if the plebiscite fails?

The problem will not go away but the debate will continue with, we fear, increased acrimony on both sides.

Isn't it time we moved on and put this matter



Commentator: Fr Frank Brennan.

behind us?

One of our children once asked, when discussing relationships, "Dad, God made me like I am, do you think He wants me to be lonely all my life?"

How does one answer that?

Deceived and misled

W Andrews
Wynnum
West, Qld

I WAS saddened and astounded by the comments of Fr Frank Brennan in The Catholic Leader of October 29.

His opinion that, like himself, God would be happy with a civil marriage between people of the same gender.

Same-sex couples do not reflect what God in His Word clearly states.

No-name letters

THE Catholic Leader reminds writers to Have Your Say that letters should carry a name, address and contact telephone number.

We receive many letters from anonymous writers requesting publication. Without your name and contact details this is not possible.

We will not usually publish a letter that has already appeared in another newspaper, neither will we normally publish anything which is more than 400 words.

We routinely edit contributions for defamation, grammar, prolixity, coherence and style.

Sacred Scripture clearly shows that God has never changed His mind on same-sex unions. So, Fr Brennan, please explain.

Heterosexuals are the only relationships that produce children naturally.

Same-sex relationships cannot. The word "natural" describes in a nutshell what same-sex and heterosexual relationships are and what they are not.

We must not lose the ability to think for ourselves.

In doing so we are easily duped, deceived and misled.

Responsible?
REGARDING the story "We are all responsible" in The Catholic Leader on November 5.
No, we are not all responsible.
"We" includes victims and parents of victims, many of whom were abused by Church authorities when they reported instances of abuse.
My own father said that the reception he received on reporting some evil behaviour, was not what he would have expected from somebody who referred to himself as being "very reverend".
"We" also includes parents whose spouse is a convert, and who has to apologise to her when her children are abused by a Church that he has recommended to her, and people who simply have trust in the Church.
To claim that these people are responsible for the wicked and cowardly abuse that has been inflicted on their defenceless children by the thugs who were supposed to care for them and

John O'Rourke
Beechwood,
NSW

Name and address supplied



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Giving back to Concannon

Alice Galea started at the University of Southern Queensland and Concannon College nearly four years ago. Alice has been a familiar face at various Young Catholics' events and Movers and Shakers 2017. Now in the final chapter of her university study, Alice reflects on her time at university and college.

THE choice to attend university is huge.

Associated with this decision is the equally large decision of where to live, and this can be particularly challenging when moving somewhere foreign to you.

This was me four years ago. I had completed my gap year and made the decision to study secondary education in Toowoomba, a town where I only knew my sister and a couple of acquaintances.

Thankfully, my time studying was made easier by my decision to live on college throughout my degree.

While college has not been without its challenges, it has provided a plethora of unique opportunities which have enriched my university experience.

Much of my first year was spent studying and overcoming severe homesickness. I missed my parents and long-time friends.

I was tempted to quit uni, get on a bus and train and head home. That would have been easier, caused less pain.

Persistence enabled friendships to form, making my new experiences seemingly easier, and thus contributed to making my college experience enjoyable.

By my second year at college, I became a residential college blogger, assisted with the organisation of college semi-formal and formal events and as the head of the Concannon academic committee, and developed programs such as Project Positivity and the Buddy Program which now exists at all three of the USQ residential colleges.

I was also given the opportunity to attend the Australian Catholic Youth Festival held in Adelaide.

Through these opportunities, I felt that I remained true to myself.

Living in the college community offers opportunities such as leadership development, which are not common opportunities available to young people.

I don't use the word "community" lightly as this is exactly what the residential colleges are.

They are a community of like-minded people living together and supporting one another through the highs and lows of university life.



United in faith: Concannon College residents climb Table Top to celebrate O-Week.

My third year demonstrated to me that anything is possible if you put your mind to it and have wonderful people supporting you throughout your journey.

This realisation began during Orientation Week of 2016 whereby I would partake in a college tradition I had not previously – the Table Top climb.

As an asthmatic, I had always been hesitant to participate. I rose at a ridiculous hour of the morning with the rest of the college group to head to the base of the mountain.

Previous climbers had spoken of how easy a walk it was, so I was expecting a lovely concrete path and gentle incline all the way up. Golly, was I wrong!

The Table Top climb reminded me a lot of life – many ups and downs, different terrains, a few asthma attacks and great friends along the way, with a little frustration thrown in for good measure, as well as desire to give up many a time, before continuing on the journey.

The view all the way up was great, however the view from the very top of the mountain was absolutely spectacular and something that I will never forget.

The lessons I learnt on my Table Top climb assisted me through many hardships throughout the year.

Now in my final year, it is surreal to think, considering how homesick I was in my first year, I am now at the conclusion of my degree.

One of the many benefits of staying on college for the full duration of my degree is I feel I have a connection with the history of the college. This allows me to give back to the college community in so many ways, such as through leadership and providing assistance to new residents.

I feel privileged to have lived in a supportive college environment for the duration of my degree.

I have learnt so much not only about myself, but life – including how to use a washing machine. Living on Concannon College has enabled me to be as ready as I can be for the new adventures, which lie beyond uni and college life.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout this journey.

Concannon student: Alice Galea.

Honouring Holy Mother

DESPITE the torrential rain early in October, the annual Rosary in the Park drew hundreds to prayers for peace.

As forecast, there was a break in the clouds as the faithful gathered for the afternoon at Queens Park, Toowoomba.

"A crowd of about one hundred participated in saying the twenty decades of the Rosary, ten of them in different languages and one by a group of children," a spokeswoman said.

"It was inspiring listening to the Hail Mary being said by a lady from Papua New Guinea, a man from Croatia, a man from Germany,

a husband and wife from Egypt, a lady from Lebanon, among others – a true testament to the universality of the Catholic Church.

"This is a yearly event in October to honour Our Holy Mother Mary.

"It is held in many cities throughout Australia as well as around the world and this year it had a special significance being the one-hundredth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady to the shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal.

"This is the fourth year the event has been held in Toowoomba and the organisers are looking forward to holding it again next year."



Prayerful day: Enid Camilleri praying at the annual Rosary in the Park.



Honoured: Toowoomba Bishop Robert McGuckin and Fr Peter Dorfield with students after the Mass for Mary of the Southern Cross.

Diocese joins in prayer to Our Lady

TOOWOOMBA Catholic schools have celebrated the patronal diocesan feast day of Mary of the Southern Cross.

This title is one of the many given to Mary the Mother of God, and it is under this title that Mary was designated patron of Toowoomba diocese

in 1999.

"This patronal feast is a day on which we especially pray for the whole Toowoomba diocese and recall that it is through the diocese that we are brought into communion with the universal Church," a spokeswoman said.

"As this feast is especially ours, the celebration of Mass on Friday was an opportunity to renew our bonds as a diocese."

Toowoomba Bishop Robert McGuckin celebrated the Mass, celebrating with Fr Peter Dorfield.

Indigenous students graduate with cathedral Mass

THE annual Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduation Mass was held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, last month to recognise 45 indigenous students from across the diocese who completed Year 12.

Fr Peter Dorfield celebrated the Mass, with local councillors, elders, schools and community in the congregation.

"Students were the proud recipients of a commemorative medal and sash during the service," a spokeswoman said.

"The Mass was made extra special with elder Maureen McKellar and her daughter Dr Raelene Ward both addressing the students, and another highlight being when the very talented Jada Dennison from YCLC (Youth and Community Learning Centre) played guitar and sang her own composition, 'All you have to do is pray'.

"The day was a wonderful success with schools and community coming together to celebrate this important milestone in students' lives."

Toowoomba Catholic Schools' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education officer Jennifer Wills said, "It is important to celebrate this occasion, to acknowledge the hard work of the students, families and schools, and to give the students our blessings for their future.

"Recent national data shows the retention rate of full-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Years 7 to 12 was fifty-five per cent compared with eighty-three per cent for other students, so this is a real achievement to celebrate for our Year 12s and we wish them all the best for the future."



Community celebration: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the Graduation Mass.

I must get up and follow Him

By Alessia Harris

EXCITED after registering for the Ignite Conference 2017, the promotional poster stared at me every day in our home and on the door of our Catholic Girls' Club, as the September holiday date edged closer.

The night before we left to attend, excitement was in overdrive as I knew I'd have an amazing time with God and among new friends.

The theme for this year's Ignite Conference "Come" had well and truly caught my attention.

Meeting so many new people instantly and seeing others from January's Summer Camp and last year's Ignite, added to the excitement.

I was happy to explore the conference's vocational expo stalls, to chat



Friends in faith: Alessia Harris (middle) catching up with friends at Ignite.

to priests and nuns, enjoy the food provided, to praise the Lord in the mosh pit and much more.

The speakers talked about the concept of "coming closer to God" in many ways and many times, for example, we heard of the Gospel passage where Jesus called Peter out of the boat and to walk on water with

Him (Matthew 14:27-29).

Peter was called to take the risk of doing something completely crazy to reach the King of Kings.

Jesus was asking Peter to walk on water to reach Him, the apostle putting all of his faith in Jesus to keep him safe.

At Ignite I found myself reaching

out to Jesus, effectively "walking on water" to get the advice I seek from the best advisor, connecting this passage to my own life.

Discussing the theme with other teenagers in our small groups, I found common issues being brought up, that following Jesus can be hard today, especially with so many things that can distract us from living our faith in God.

Distractions like social media, social networks, school popularity and the constantly changing definition of beauty were challenges mentioned.

Hearing countless stories of people who experience God and are renewed when they fall, I decided to think into this word "come" a little more.

Jesus calls youth to come to him and we, just like Peter, listen to Him and put our faith in Him.

We go and walk on the water, putting all our trust into God to save us from their trouble.

We follow Jesus even if we look a bit crazy to others.

As it goes, Peter looks away from the Lord, causing him to sink.

This reminds me of people who get distracted from their faith or travel into sin, as expected in being human.

They follow the Lord as He calls them, but they get heavy with all the sin that they carry or think about what others are saying about them.

I hear a big cry from youth who are curious about God, those who don't believe, wait for God to appear to them, to show them that He is there.

We, as Catholics, mustn't allow distractions, or what others say, to lead us away from the Lord. He's worth much more than we can ever imagine.

This Ignite conference I learnt that if I'm a follower of the Lord, I must trust Him fully with my life, and if I really want to change things, I must get up and follow Him.

Jesus is always waiting for us to "come".

Alessia Harris is a Year 9 student from Toowoomba diocese

School apprentices, trainees celebrate

TOOWOOMBA Catholic Schools Office's School-Based Apprenticeship Program has been successfully assisting employers, schools, training providers and students to come together and build partnerships for more than 18 years.

Recently employers, apprentices and trainees, and their families have been gathering in Toowoomba, Warwick, Stanthorpe and Dalby to celebrate this ongoing partnership in 2017.

Year 12 students and parents thanked employers, alongside representatives from Australian Apprenticeship Support Networks, supervising registered training organisations, Department of Education and Training, secondary colleges and Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office for the opportunities they have had to participate in a nationally recognised qualification.

Employers acknowledged the enthusiastic young people who have contributed to their business success.

"I am very proud of our School-Based Apprenticeship Program," Catholic Schools executive director Dr Pat Coughlan said. "This program, with the support of our employers, enables students to gain skills for employment whilst still in formal schooling.

"For many it leads to further study or to apprenticeships with these employers. This is good for the students and good for the local community.

"With over three-hundred employers providing traineeship and apprenticeship support for Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic school students, this is a very successful initiative."



Education: Courtney Gowley, from St Saviour's College; Youth and Community Learning Centre's Jada Dennison, and Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office's Julie Hintz at the SBA Program celebratory breakfast in Toowoomba. Photo: Gary Wilkinson Photography

Reformation remembered

MORE than 300 people from different Christian traditions gathered in Toowoomba on October 22 to mark the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation.

The event, From Conflict towards Communion, was organised by Toowoomba and Downs Churches Together and held at the Armitage Centre, Empire Theatre.

Choirs from St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba Anglican College and Preparatory School, and Concordia Lutheran College sang hymns.

Fr Brian Sparksman and Pastor Lionel Rohrlach, of the Lutheran Church, jointly led a prayer celebration, which included a homily from Bishop Paul Smith, of the Lutheran Church.

"The desire for greater unity among Christians was evident in the way all present joined in the time of prayer," a spokesperson said.

By-the-numbers action flick

GEOSTORM: Starring Gerard Butler, Jim Sturgess, Abbie Cornish, Alexandra Maria Lara, Daniel Wu, Eugenio Derbez, Andy Garcia, Ed Harris, Robert Sheehan, Richard Schiff, Mare Winningham, Zazie Beetz. Directed by Dean Devlin. Rated M (Mature themes and violence) 109 minutes.

By John Mulderig

MOSTLY murky, with a strong chance of boredom is the forecast for Geostorm. Never, perhaps, has the potential wiping out of life on Earth seemed so ho-hum.

In between the catastrophes that are the real business of the day here, director and co-writer (with Paul Guyot) Dean Devlin tries to engage the audience by having a little girl named Hannah (Talitha Bateman) narrate the backstory and by setting up a sibling rivalry between Hannah's dad Jake Lawson (Gerard Butler) and his younger brother Max (Jim Sturgess).

Jake is the smart-alecky scientist who created the Dutch Boy network, a system of weather-controlling satellites that, as of the near-future, has successfully overcome the effects of global warming.

And Max is a conformist State Department official who had the unenviable task of firing Jake after big brother mouthed off to a congressional committee once too often.

But fraternal estrangement will have to take a backseat to saving the world once it becomes apparent that someone has sabotaged Dutch Boy with the aim of causing a series of overwhelming natural disasters.

Hail the size of volleyballs, anyone?



Future trip: Jake Lawson (Gerald Butler) stars in a scene from the movie Geostorm.

Photo: CNS

So Jake and Max reluctantly bury the hatchet and, with the help of Max's live-in girlfriend Sarah (Abbie Cornish), a Secret Service agent, set about uncovering and defeating the plot.

Armchair apocalypse fanciers may relish the ravaging of cities around the globe and the threat of the titular civilisation-destroying phenomenon.

But anyone looking for more than mere

spectacle in this by-the-numbers action flick will come away disappointed.

Max and Sarah's dodgy domestic arrangement eventually moves toward marriage and the numerous armed confrontations are mostly blood-free.

Self-sacrificing heroism also puts in an appearance as the movie's climax looms. Nonetheless, given the script's lapses into divine name-

taking and earthiness, this is still best suited to easily satisfied grown-ups.

The film contains much gunplay and other stylised violence with minimal gore, co-habitation, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, a couple of milder oaths and several crude and crass terms.

John Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.

Good news stands out in personal letters

LETTERS TO NEVIE: LEARNING FROM THE SCRIPTURES
Gerald O'Collins SJ; St Pauls Publishing, London, SW1P 1E; 2016

THE LITTLE BROWN BOOK TOO: MORE THOUGHTS ON THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST MARY OF THE CROSS IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES
Sue and Leo Kane; St Pauls Publications, Strathfield, NSW; 2011



Reviewed by Barbara Flynn

DURING the past 30 years, the prevalence of electronic means of messaging, most noticeably emails and texts, appears to have cast letter-writing into the shadows as a medium for personal communication.

It could be argued that electronic messages, while very functional, prompt and efficient in their passage between sender and receiver, are not a replacement for personal letters of reflection.

This type of letter has been recognised throughout the centuries as affording both sender and receiver opportunity to experience such human attributes as love between friends,

a range of human emotions, and a sharing of values, feelings and interests.

Letters may be treasured as keepsakes and be important as points of reference to reflect meaningfully on the lives of others.

Fr Gerald O'Collins, a noteworthy theologian and scripture scholar, used 22 letters of instruction and personal reflection to encourage his niece Nevie as she began boarding school.

His aim is to show her affection and concern while encouraging an interest in the biblical scriptures as a way of sharing his own love of the scriptures as the means he used for coming to know Jesus Christ as "The way, the truth and the life".

On the other hand, letters, jottings and sayings retained and treasured in the archival material of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart have given opportunities for interested people to make connections to the spirituality, values and feelings of our first Australian saint, St Mary of the Cross.

In particular, this material is a rich source used by Sue and Leo Kane to author two books, "The Little Brown Book" (2009) and "The Little Brown Book Too" (2011).

In their second book, they invite readers into a further experience of "the spirituality that sustained Mary MacKillop" and, as well, encouraging readers "to be open to her spiritual legacy" as a way of discovering new possibilities to nourish their personal prayer life.

Additionally the authors hope to foster at a deeper level an appreciation of the Gospel truths

that Mary MacKillop lived and witnessed to while she consistently placed her faith and trust in the providence of "her good God".

Letters by Fr O'Collins are intended for an adult audience as Nevie is an avid reader and accomplished student.

Fr O'Collins reveals his inner joy of sharing his knowledge of Jesus experienced through years of developing a personal relationship with Jesus during his daily offering of Eucharist.

Through relaxed "letter conversation" with Nevie, he gives critical interpretations of passages from the four Gospels as he teaches her Christian values and principles.

In a brief postscript to each letter he adds news of personal happenings and sometimes retells humorous anecdotes or gives observations of birds or other creatures thus providing additional insights into the mutual interests of uncle and niece.

This is a unique book providing glimpses into two peoples' lives while at the same time affording the reader engagement in critical explanations of scripture from a scholarly and innovative perspective.

Sue and Leo Kane, assisted by Sisters of St Joseph, offer 60 short directed meditations grouped in tens under six categories or themes which they identify as stages in Mary MacKil-

lop's life and ministry.

Skilful illustrations by Josephite Sister Helen Barnes at intervals throughout the material support the themes.

Each meditation begins with an authentic quote from Mary's writings and concludes with a quotation from scripture therefore reiterating the intent of her statement.

Many of the writings are her reflections on what was happening in her life and that of her Sisters in relation to the presence and power of God's spirit with them in their lives and work.

The categories are Heart Thoughts, Walking with One Another, Ready to Receive, Turning Points, Listening to the Music of Life, and Coming Home to The Centre.

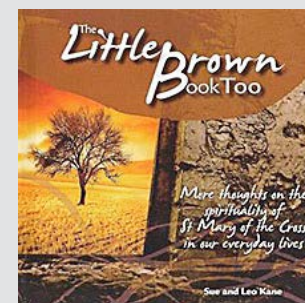
Mary MacKillop's beliefs, values, spirituality and principles by which she lived are explored by the author who frequently weaves a discussion of her own experiences into each meditation.

Mary MacKillop's writings and sayings reveal her spiritual legacy of compassion, concern for others, appreciation of nature and unshakeable faith and confidence in God.

The authors invite readers to appropriate these characteristics of the saint in their lives to bring about deeper personal prayer experiences.

These two delightful books each using reflective letters and sayings as sources for sharing Gospel truths are highly recommended.

Available from St Pauls Book Centre, Elizabeth Street, Brisbane.



PET OF THE WEEK



ROGER is described as being "very polite and well-mannered". He is a one-year-old brindle-and-white mastiff-american staffordshire cross. "This sweet-natured young man enjoys the company of both people and other dogs," a spokesperson for the Animal Welfare League Queensland said. "Socially there is nothing pushy about Roger either, as he prefers to be calm and chilled when interacting with other dogs and people. At 34.7kg, Roger will need a home with a yard and indoor nesting space which can cater for a larger-size dog. His new family will also have to cater for his impressive appetite." Roger is available at AWLQ's Warra Rehoming Centre, 523 Telegraph Rd, Bracken Ridge. Phone 3807 3782.

IN THE GARDEN

Dig plenty of compost into soil before planting natives grown in tube stock or cells. Mulch and water well after planting. Planting now gives them all the summer wet season to establish and grow.



IN THE KITCHEN

The feast day of St Margaret of Scotland is on November 16, and this recipe is offered for the occasion.



HONEY AND WHISKY CAKE

INGREDIENTS:
 170g self-raising flour (or all-purpose flour with baking powder)
 170g butter
 170g soft brown sugar (light brown sugar)
 3 beaten eggs
 4 tablespoons whisky
 Rind of a small orange, grated

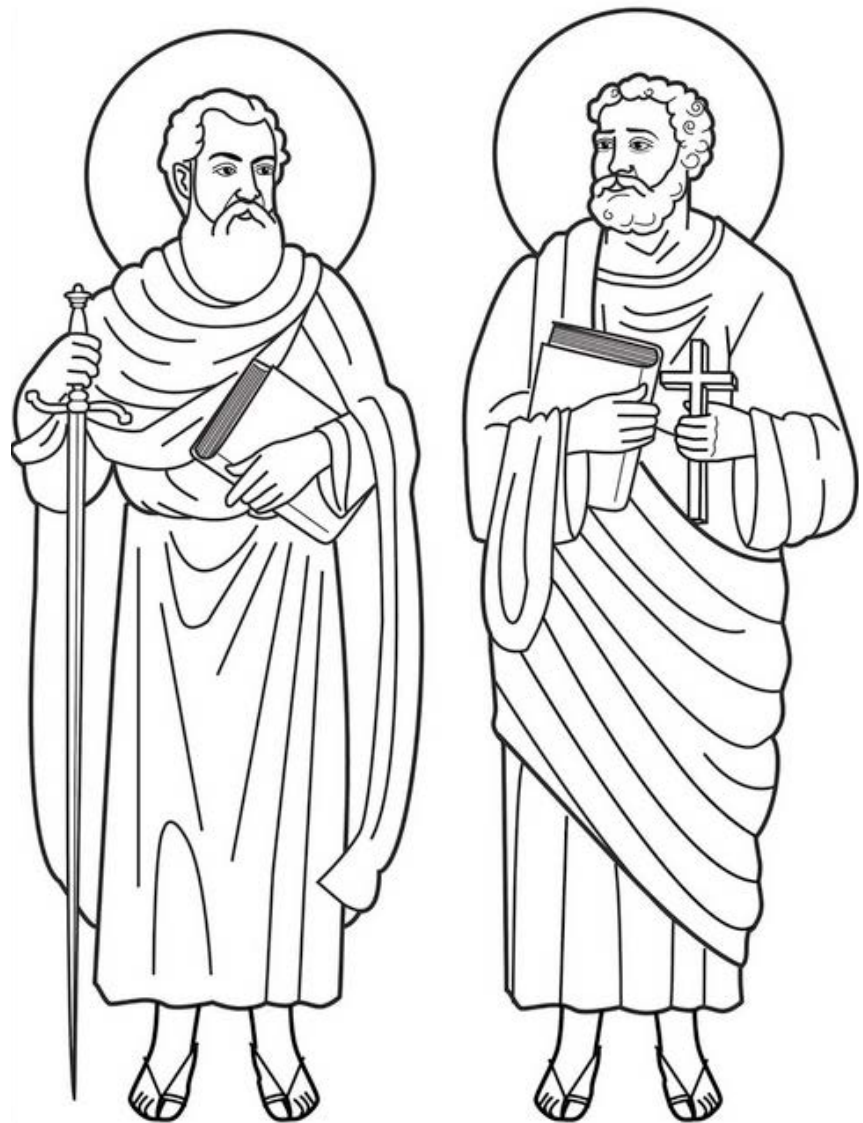
INGREDIENTS FOR BUTTER ICING:
 170g icing (frosting) sugar
 55g butter
 2 tablespoons clear honey
 Juice from a small orange
 Toasted flaked almonds as decoration

DIRECTIONS:
 In a large pot add olive oil and cook the chicken on medium-high heat for 3-5 minutes on each side or until brown on each side and cooked until no longer pink in centre. Remove chicken and set aside on a plate.
 Add the heavy cream, chicken broth, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and parmesan cheese. Whisk over medium-high heat until it starts to thicken.
 Add the spinach and sun-dried tomatoes and let it simmer until the spinach starts to wilt. Add the chicken back to the pan and serve over pasta.

COLOUR OF LIFE

Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts Peter and Paul
 November 18

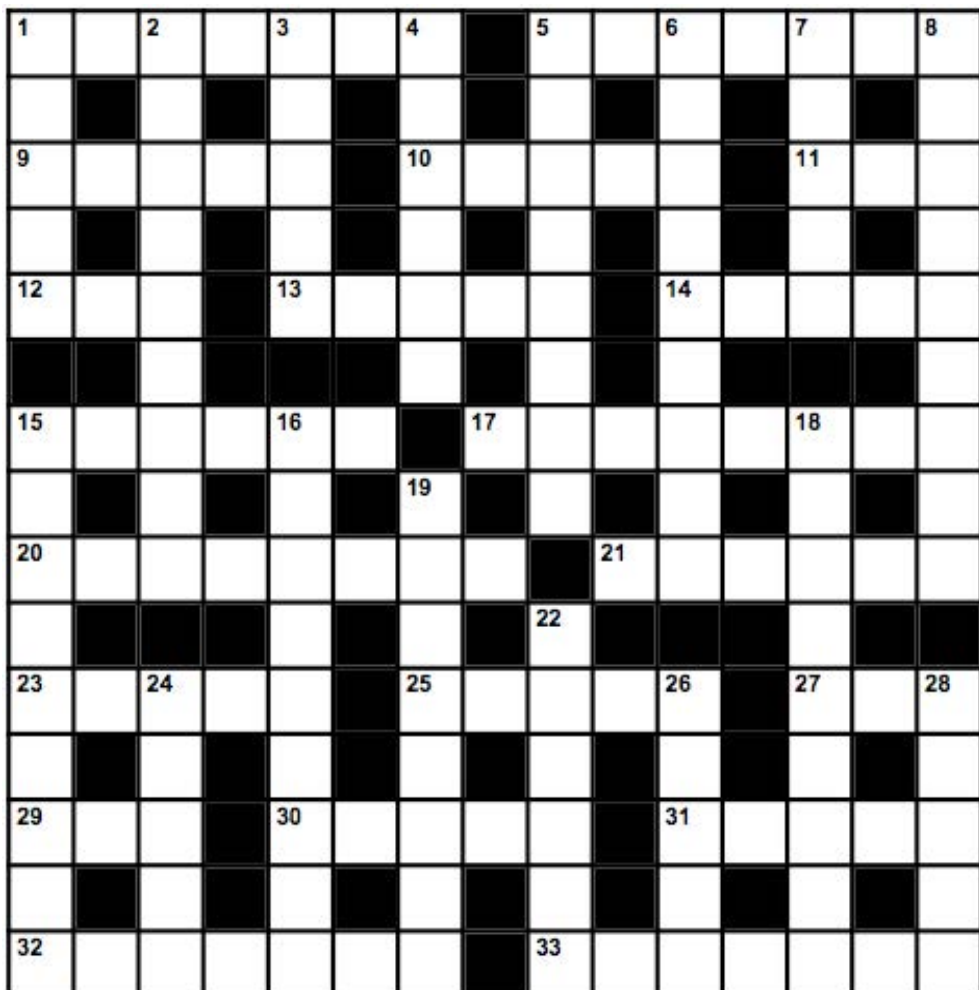
The Basilicas of St Peter and Paul mark the place of each apostle's martyrdom



WIN A PRIZE PACK

Send your entry to: New Generation, The Catholic Leader, GPO Box 282, Brisbane, Qld 4001. Entries close on November 20. This week's winner is Beatrix Dore, 11, of Cotswold Hills, Qld.

Name _____
 Address _____
 P/C _____
 Phone _____
 Age _____

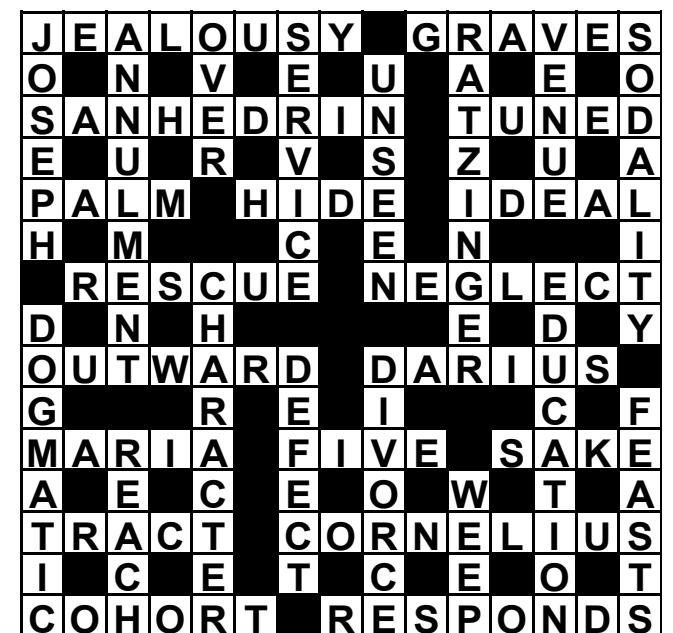


CROSSWORD

Across
 1 One who makes allegations (7)
 5 Catholic overseas development agency (7)
 9 Meaning (5)
 10 Tempest (5)
 11 First word of the Lord's prayer (3)
 12 ___ though it be a cross that raiseth me (3)
 13 Lesions (5)
 14 After that time (5)
 15 Agree to take (6)
 17 Marked with oil (8)
 20 They divided Jesus clothes (8)
 21 Gain affection (6)
 23 Joyful sounds (5)
 25 Does not succeed (5)
 27 Finish (3)
 29 Rerum Novarum author (3)
 30 Measure of weight (5)
 31 Over (5)
 32 Go downwards (7)
 33 Convey (7)

2 Relating to church law (9)
 3 Looks for (5)
 4 Marian prayer (6)
 5 Selecting (8)
 6 Forgiveness (9)
 7 Barb (5)
 8 Let go (9)
 15 Gathered (9)
 16 Ethical norm (9)
 18 It follows that (9)
 19 Deep (8)
 22 Centre (6)
 24 Ceases (5)
 26 Imprint (5)
 28 Attire (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Down
 1 Path to the altar (5)

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Featured Events

Nov 14

MARIAN MUSICAL ORATORIO An evening of Marian sacred and classical music. Directed by Mr Warwick Adeney, director of music of the Brisbane Oratory (and concertmaster of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra). Free admission. Begins at 7:30pm at the Brisbane Oratory in Mary Immaculate church, 616 Ipswich Rd, Annerley. For more information call 38481107 or visit <http://bit.ly/brisbaneoratorio>

Nov 16

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: a support group for those who have been touched by illness. This ecumenical group, which provides a safe, warm and supportive environment, meets on Thursdays, 10am – 11:30am (except during school holiday time) at Villa Maria Spirituality Centre, 123 Warren Street, Fortitude Valley (drop off at the door and park underneath the building). All are welcome. Phone: Denise on mobile: 0439 675 571. Email: ourcircleoffriends@hotmail.com (A ministry of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the Sisters of St Joseph).

Nov 17

BARDON CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL presents the 5th session of 'THE GIFT' a life in the Spirit course. Topic is 'ENCOUNTERING THE HOLY SPIRIT' and the speaker is DAVID PAYNE, at ST MARY MAGDALENE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Cecil rd Bardon Friday 17th November 7.45 pm. All welcome Enquiries: Kathleen 35111627 Paul 0417 104 460 Marie 31723224

Nov 18

IRISH REMEMBRANCE MASS - GOLD COAST: The Irish Australian Support Association of Qld Inc (IASAQ) invites you to our Annual Irish November Remembrance Mass, which will take place in: Guardian Angels Church, Scarborough Street, Southport on Sat. 18 November at 11.00am. Come and join with other members of the Gold Coast Irish Community in praying for the peaceful repose of deceased relatives and friends. Tea/coffee will be served afterwards – an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends. IASAQ is part of the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme. Our primary mission is to assist any Irish or Irish Australian persons in time of need or distress. For further information please contact Association Co-ordinator on 0432 087 328.

Nov 30

MULTI-FAITH ACADEMY FOR CHAPLAINCY & COMMUNITY MINISTRIES: Celebrating 25 years 1992 – 2017. Thanksgiving Service & Luncheon, Thursday 30 November, 12 noon at Duchesne College, UQ St Lucia. For more information and booking: Maurice Cullen 0412 131 152 ticketebo.com.au/maccm25

Dec 3

ADVENT FAIR AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. STEPHEN: St Stephen's Cathedral Choir is holding their annual fundraising event ADVENT FAIR on SUNDAY, 3rd December, the 1st Sunday of Advent, from 9 a.m. in between masses, at the Cathedral Precinct. There will be stalls of multicultural cuisine, fresh homemade cakes, sweets, savouries and many more delectable food items. This will be in cooperation with COSSAG who will have their Christmas Market at the same time throughout the weekend, featuring all the gifts and decorations you will need for Christmas. There will be FREE Tea and Coffee throughout the event. There will be Aussie Sausage Sizzle for the duration of the Fair. The Guides and Welcomers will be there to offer tours of St Stephen's. Come in the spirit of Advent and enjoy festive music!

Full list of events on our website: www.catholicleader.com.au/events
Do you have a special event to promote in this section? Pricing starts from \$14.10 for up to 30 words. Send your enquiries to advertising@catholicleader.com.au or call (07) 3324 3555.

Employment



PRINCIPAL

St Colman's School, Home Hill
Commencing January 2018



The Principal of St Colman's School has accepted a senior leadership role in Townsville, providing a fantastic opportunity for an experienced teacher looking for a leadership role in a supportive and welcoming environment.

St Colman's School is situated approximately 88km south of the city of Townsville in the town of Home Hill. With a population of approximately 3000, Home Hill is part of the Burdekin Shire, the largest sugar cane producing area in Australia and boasting the nation's largest water development project - the Burdekin Dam, which ensures a plentiful supply of water to the district.

St Colman's is a small and vibrant school with experienced and dedicated staff teaching and supporting 64 students across Prep to Year 6. Located in the nearby town of Ayr is Burdekin Catholic High offering Years 7 to 12.

Key to the role of Principal will be fostering effective relationships with staff, students, parents, the parish, the Catholic education community and the wider community. To be eligible for the role you must be a committed, practicing Catholic and accredited to teach religious education.

To apply online visit TCEO Careers at www.tsv.catholic.edu.au. For further information contact Sue Blake, Employment Services Officer at recruitment@ysv.catholic.edu.au or (07) 4773 0946

Applications close Monday 13 November 2017

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'Keep teaching ... Never give up because Jesus is believing in you'

God's work full of surprises

By Peter Bugden

PAUL Hodgkinson, approaching 83 and aware it might be time to call it a day as a teacher, turned to God for guidance. He was bowled over by what happened next.

He'd been a teacher in Christian Brothers schools all around Queensland and for the past 20 years has been a Religious Instruction volunteer in state schools near where he lives at Collingwood Park, west of Brisbane.

"I was going to school one day towards the end of last year and I said, 'Look, Lord, I'll be 83 next year, I'm not sure if you want me to keep going.' I said, 'Will you give me a sign?'" Paul said.

"I had four (Religious Instruction) classes that day, and at the end of the fourth class, a girl came out with a whole page written out."

Paul got the message loud and clear from what the student had written – "God wants you to keep going ... You're not to give up".

"And I hadn't told the kids anything," he said.

"And then the next day another class came along and they said, 'We've formed a prayer group at our place with so-and-so's parents in charge, we've watched you praying, we want you to teach us how you do it'."

"They were kids from Grade 6."

The written message from the girl who wanted him to stick with Religious Instruction said:

"Thank you for teaching us RI. We all want to say thank you. You're a good RI teacher. I hope you can teach RI more in your life, because Jesus is listening ..."

She wrote a similar message in a poem: "Keep teaching ... Never give up because Jesus is believing in you."

Paul had no choice but to keep going, and he's loving it, but the way his life has unfolded he should be used to God's surprises.

He first heard God's call to service when he was a schoolboy, and he joined the Christian Brothers as a 13-year-old.

After many years as a teacher and principal, his life took a different turn.

"I was 40 years in the Brothers ... with no intention of leaving," he said.

"But the Lord had different plans."

He and a Sister of Mercy, Christine, happened to be working together with renewal of religious life and in Charismatic retreats for religious, and then later in supporting the victims of incest.

"And the Lord was healing them," Paul said.

"And one of them said to me, 'Why aren't you two working together full-time?'"

“I was 40 years in the Brothers ... with no intention of leaving. But the Lord had different plans.”



Dedicated volunteers: Paul and Christine Hodgkinson are loving their time as Religious Instruction volunteers in state schools.

"So I got permission from (Christian Brothers) headquarters to work with Christine at the convent at Keera Street, Coorparoo, and the Lord was healing a lot of these women who were abused.

"Halfway through that year I was on retreat and I felt the Lord calling me to marry Christine, which surprised me.

"I had no intention of leaving the Brothers. I had no intention of leaving religious life.

"(But) I put it to Christine, and she said, 'Well, we better get this discerned, hey?'"

"And, well, it was discerned (with our religious superiors), and Rome gave the okay, really a blessing."

Christine, a Sister of Mercy for 25 years, was facing the same decision as Paul.

"As time went by ... and we were still working together, the Lord seemed to be calling us into a new life together," she said.

"It was like he gave us a choice.

"He opened a door and we could go through that door into a new vocation of marriage or we didn't, and we felt that it was the Lord's call, and it was discerned by our superiors and by Rome, writing to the Congregation for Religious Life, and receiving the dispensation from our order.

"I never went back to teaching since we got married, except to do the Religious Instruction."

They joined Brisbane's Emmanuel Community, and they've been together ever since.

That's 29 years out of religious life, but not at all away from Christian service.

Taking the decision to live by divine provi-

dence, they haven't taken on paid employment but made their way from the sale of religious icons Paul has created and religious resource videos Christine has produced, and from selling books and distributing evangelisation videos.

"We were doing many other things – (like) looking after people living with us," Christine said.

"We were involved with the renewal of the Church, Evangelisation 2000, as part of a team we co-ordinated a prayer campaign for the whole of Australia, I worked with videos, made videos, and (we've) done a whole heap of stuff."

That's included caring for the poor, welcoming them into their home, and producing an international magazine on spiritual renewal, called *Renewal in Hope*, with Christine as editor.

"But the Lord's called us into school again," Christine said.

She's co-ordinating Religious Instruction at Collingwood Park and Redbank state schools as a volunteer and taking five Year 1 classes, and Paul volunteers for RI for seven Years 5 and 6 at Collingwood Park and Redbank.

That's another twist that took Paul by surprise. A year after Christine began volunteering in RI, it was Paul's turn to make a decision.

"Christine was at me, saying, 'Hey, you should do this,'" Paul said.

"I said, 'No, I'm finished with school. No way. I don't want to go into a classroom ever again'."

"But I was standing outside the shed one day

and I said, 'Lord, well, if you want me to go, you get someone to ask me other than Christine'."

"And the next day, Christine had to get a book over at Redbank Plains and we went over after Mass and she got the book, and the principal saw me in the corridor – it was only the first week of school – and the principal saw me in the distance and he said, 'Hey, Paul, the Grade 5 parents are screaming out for an RE teacher; would you do it?'"

"Well, my legs started to shake and I had to say Yes, of course, and that was the end of the story."

Having lived by God's providence the couple now has freedom from a different source.

"We're on the pension now, so we're rich," Christine laughs.

"And that's great. It's a freeing thing not to worry about paying the bills, and being able to do volunteer work."

"It's very difficult to get volunteers.

"Even tuckshops and schools can't get volunteers, because a lot of young families are struggling to pay off mortgages, and the poor parents – mum and dad both have to work, and for many years, to pay off things, and so they haven't got the freedom to do volunteer work."

"So, we have the freedom, and it's great.

"We just wish more people could get involved."

Anyone interested in becoming an RI instructor can contact Carole Danby at Evangelisation Brisbane on (07) 3324 3445 or your local parish priest.

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