

# V.Catholic Viewpoint†

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DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

*Christ is my  
Light*



*Abbey Thomas, Olivia Joyce, Lara Walters, Hunter Simpson, Dominic Flanagan, Holli O'Brien, Laura Hooper and Caitlin Black.*



# Families don't just fall from heaven



## The Bishop Speaks

“No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed.” (325) This, I believe, is one of the key messages from Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), his response to the two recent Vatican Synods on the Family. It is a document packed with both idealism and realism. Following the example of his predecessors Pope Francis presents the beauty and perfection of God’s plan for marriage and family as a community of life and love that reflects the very life and love of God himself in the Blessed Trinity (11). But he also laments that “at times we (the Church) have proposed a far too abstract and almost artificial theological ideal of marriage far removed from the concrete situations of real families.” (36)

### Families can be messy

The everyday lives of families are often messy affairs. This should be no surprise to anybody. It is even the case in the Bible. Pope Francis says that “the idyllic picture (of family) presented in psalm 128 is not at odds with a bitter truth found throughout Sacred Scripture, that is, the presence of pain, evil, and violence that break up families

and their communion of life and love.” (19) “I thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way.” (57)

The Pope acknowledges that there are indeed many cultural challenges that make life particularly difficult for families today. Yet, “for all the many signs of crisis in the institution of marriage the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant” (1)

### The Joy of Love

As the name “The joy of love” suggests, the Pope speaks much about the importance of love and the need for love to grow in marriages and families. In this regard he places *acts* of love, as opposed to mere sentiment or emotion, centre stage: “Growth in love can only occur if we respond to God’s grace through constant acts of love, acts of kindness that become ever more frequent, intense, generous, tender, and cheerful.” (134) In an example of his realism for the actual situation of couples and families he says: “The other person loves me as best they can,



with all their limits, but the fact that love is imperfect does not mean that it is untrue or unreal.” (113)

When speaking of growth in love Pope Francis rightly emphasises the part played by the gift of sexual love in marriage: “Sexual union, lovingly experienced and sanctified by the sacrament, is in turn a path of growth in the life of grace for the couple.” (74) “The erotic dimension of love” he says “must be seen as a gift from God that enriches the relationship of the spouses.” (152)

Problems and crises will emerge in every marriage requiring great patience from husbands and wives. The Pope’s sound advice: “Neither spouse can expect the other to be perfect. ... Each must accept the other as he or she actually is.” (218) “Each crisis becomes an apprenticeship in growing closer together or learning a little more about what it means to be married.” (232) “Crises need to be faced together.” (234)

### The needs of children

As would be expected, Pope Francis devotes considerable attention to the raising of children. To a world in which the wants and desires of adults often trump the rights and needs of children he says quite simply: “When speaking of children who come into the world, no sacrifice made by adults will be considered too great.” (166)

Pope Francis offers much very practical advice to parents including: “Parents need to consider what they want their children to be exposed to ... who is providing their entertainment, who is entering their rooms through television and electronic devices, and with whom are they spending their free time?” (260). But be careful he warns because “obsession is not education. We cannot control every situation.” (261) Yes, it’s important to know where your children are, but what’s more important is “where is their soul, do we really know?” (261) So Pope Francis encourages parents to spend time with their children and to speak with them about important things. (260)

Passing on the faith is one of parents’ key responsibilities to their children. Parents may not feel up to the task but the Pope reminds us of Jesus’ parable of the mustard seed, small as it is, which becomes a great tree. “This teaches us to see the disproportion between our actions and their effect.” (287) Even the smallest of efforts by parents can have great effects. The Pope goes on to mention the specific importance of a few minutes of family prayer each day and of the family attending Sunday Mass together. (318)

### Same Sex Unions

The secular media has not shown much interest in the Pope’s exhortation. It may be because it runs counter to the marriage redefinition bandwagon. Nobody should be surprised about that. He says: “De facto or same-sex unions may not simply be equated with marriage. No union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society.” (54) And even more emphatically, “There are absolutely no grounds for

considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family.” (251)

There are some who believe that the Church should stay out of the current marriage redefinition conversation in Australia. Pope Francis would disagree, saying: “As Christians, we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities. ... We would be depriving the world of values that we can and must offer.” (35)

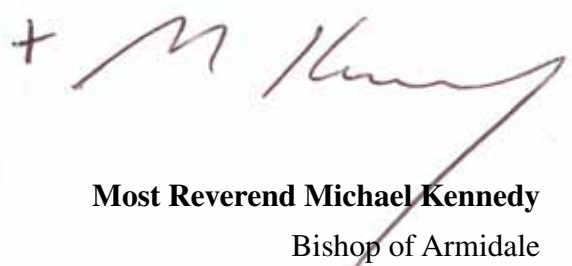
### “Irregular Marriage Situations”

Pope Francis gives considerable attention to those who live in what we often refer to as *irregular situations* such as being divorced and re-married or living in de facto relationships. “The Church turns (to them) with love; she seeks the grace of conversion for them; she encourages them to do good.” (78) He wants the Church’s pastoral care in such situations to follow what he calls the *logic of integration* whereby the people involved are more fully integrated into Christian communities in the variety of ways possible while avoiding any occasion of scandal. ... so as not to feel as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members.” (299) “The Christian community’s care of such persons is not to be considered a weakening of its faith and testimony to the indissolubility of marriage: rather, such care is a particular expression of its charity.” (243)

### Families Doing Their Best

The Pope offers thanks and encouragement to families who are trying their best to follow the Gospel: “With inner joy the Church looks to families who remain faithful to the teachings of the Gospel, encouraging them and thanking them for the testimony they offer.” (86)

Pope Francis sees families as being *so* important: “God has given the family the job of domesticating the world.” (183) But our families do not have to be perfect to fulfil this mission: “No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed: families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love ... May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us.” (325) May our families be “the nearest hospital” (321) in which we care for one another and help one another to seek and find the fullness of love.



**Most Reverend Michael Kennedy**  
Bishop of Armidale



# ADIG

armidale diocesan investment group



*Marketing Officer, Jason Crocker, talking to students at Sacred Heart, Boggabri.*

## ADIG Part of the Community

In the past two months staff members of ADIG have been touring throughout the Diocese. During that time we have visited eighteen schools and numerous Parish Priests.

We have had the pleasure of meeting with school staff and Parent, Teachers and Friends organisations. We have discussed the role of ADIG with Principals. Schools have been assisted in the establishment of Business Banking and staff trained in its use. We have enjoyed meeting students and talking about the benefits of saving and goal setting for individuals. Rainbow Banking and regular savings assists students to save for their goals but importantly, it also assists their schools and parishes. We look forward to visiting the remaining schools and parishes in the near future.

ADIG loves being part of the Diocesan community. We were thrilled to present two ADIG Returning Student Scholarships at St Alberts College Academic Dinner. Karen Willcocks and Craig Norrie were awarded these Scholarships as outstanding St. Albert's community members. We were also proud to sponsor the recent Spirit of Catholic Schools Education Awards. ADIG would like to congratulate all the exceptional award recipients.

The distributions made annually, throughout the Diocese, as a result of the mutual efforts of parishes, schools, organisations

and individual investors, make a real difference to the parishes and the Diocese. ADIG has a variety of products to assist individuals Savings and Investment plans. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these options, with both groups and individuals.



*John Brown and ADIG General Manager, Helen Dawson, at the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards.*



*Craig Norrie and ADIG Marketing Manager, Meg Lloyd, at St Albert's College Academic Dinner*



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# ADIG

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### What is Easter all about? What is your favourite day of Holy Week?

"It's about Jesus dying on the Cross for us and he showed us how he loved us. God is more powerful than anything. Good Friday is my favourite day because you get to hear the story of how Jesus died on the cross and what he went through that day." *Heather, 9*

"Easter is all about remembering that Jesus died for us on the cross. However, the chocolate is all about the death and resurrection of Jesus' life and him. My favourite day of Holy Week is holy Friday because this is the day that Jesus died on the cross for us. I, Ella Munday, would like to say thank you to Jesus for dying on the cross for us and that day, Good Friday, is the day that my dad and Jesus share their death." *Ella, 9*

"Easter is all about celebrating when Jesus rose from the dead. My favourite day of Holy Week is Easter Sunday because we have special food and mum lets us eat chocolate all day!" *Oliver, 9*

"Celebrating the new life of Jesus. My favourite day of Holy Week is Holy Thursday because I like the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet which shows us how to serve others." *Anna, 9*

### Palm Sunday

Saints Mary and Joseph's Cathedral Parish celebrated Palm Sunday with a procession into Mass and a Family morning tea afterwards.



*Dr Richard Koech with his sons, Sidney and Ishmael*

### Stations of the Cross

Students from St Mary's, Armidale hosted two Stations of the Cross Prayer Assemblies on Holy Thursday. The Infants students participated in the Stations of the Cross in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel and the Primary students were in the Cathedral. This was an important part of their preparation during Holy Week.



*Year 3 & 4 students portraying The Last Supper, in front of the main Altar in SS Mary and Joseph's Cathedral.*



# A Familiar Face Joins Oak Tree

Armidale's newest Retirement Village welcomes another familiar face to the growing community at Oak Tree.

After Bert's passing in August of last year, the time had come for Fay to make some decisions on how she wanted to manage and live her future. As you can appreciate the thought of leaving their home of 37 years where together they raised their family and created many fond memories was not easy.

Fortunately, Fay has a supportive family and after a few visits to the village with daughter Gail and son in-law Peter, the decision was made to make the move.

"We looked around at different villages and I decided I liked Oak Tree the best; I really fell for the design and layout. My new home is so easy to clean and being only two bedrooms - it's perfect" Fay said.

"I was staying with my daughter for three months before making the move to Oak Tree. At first I found the village a bit lonely but after being here for just one month I am adjusting well and I love the peace and quiet that Oak Tree offers."

With Kate Pigram, a long-time family friend and manager of the village, the transition for Fay has been smooth and gives further peace of mind to the family their decision was the right one.

Whilst there are many benefits to moving to a Retirement

Village, the sense of comfort for the family knowing there is support in community living and peace of mind for the family that mum or dad are surrounded by like-minded people with similar interests and life experiences prove invaluable.

Fay has now settled into her new routine and enjoys her pianola which has taken pride of place in the Village Centre for all to enjoy.

If you are thinking about your future and would like to know more, pop down to see Kate – she would gladly show you around and ensure you receive all the information you need to assist in your future decision making.



Fay at the pianola

A large portrait of Fay, an elderly woman with white hair, smiling and holding a cane. She is wearing a light green top and a patterned shawl.

The logo for Oak Tree Retirement Villages, featuring a stylized tree above the text "OAK TREE" and "RETIREMENT VILLAGES".

*I made the right move!*

89 Martin Street, Armidale      1300 367 155      [www.oaktreegroup.com.au](http://www.oaktreegroup.com.au)

## From a garage to media empire

You could always hear Mother Mary Angelica coming. The thick rosary hanging alongside her hip would graze her aluminum crutches, adding a tinkling accompaniment to her slow progress. The juxtaposition of the cheerful sound and her pained movement might have seemed incongruous, only with Mother Angelica it wasn't. Her constant pain — caused by a genetic spinal defect and many other ailments — was “a gift,” she often said. “The Lord allowed pain before anything he asked me to do,” she once told me. “It kept me dependent on him to do whatever he asked of me.”

When Mother Angelica died on Easter Sunday at 92, she was the only woman in the history of broadcast television who had founded and led a cable network as chief executive and show host for 20 years. Her Eternal World Television Network became the largest religious media empire on the planet, bringing a message of hope to 260 million households in more than 100 countries. The EWTN radio network broadcasts on more than 300 affiliates in the United States and a stand-alone Sirius channel.

Before a desperate back surgery in 1956, she made an impassioned pact with God: If he allowed her to walk again, she would build him a monastery in the South to pray for racial healing. Mother Mary Angelica would indeed walk again. But only with the aid of crutches and a pair of back and leg braces, leading her to comment years later: “When you make a deal with God, be very specific.”

Mother Angelica's street-smart, biting humor and traditional Christian teachings attracted a following in the late 1970s when her recorded programs aired on the Christian Broadcasting Network.

In 1981, with little broadcast experience and only \$200 in the bank, she launched EWTN in a bare-bones studio in her monastery's garage. One of the hallmarks of her broadcasts was her empathy and concern for those suffering from hardship or disability.

Having united her suffering with that of her Savior, her work persists beyond infirmity and even beyond death. If you don't believe me, turn on her network. Mother's still there, speaking to those who need her most.

*Extract from obituary by Raymond Arroyo, managing editor of EWTN*



*Mother Mary Angelica broadcasting*

## Don't let it snowball We all need to talk...

The earlier you ask for help, the sooner you'll be back on top of things. We're all a part of our community – and we're here to support you, and your family.

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# Amoris Laetitia

## The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family

### Summary of *Amoris Laetitia*: On Love in the Family

#### *"In the light of the Word"*

The Pope begins his reflections with the Holy Scriptures in the first chapter, which unfolds as a meditation on Psalm 128. The Bible "is full of families, births, love stories and family crises". This impels us to meditate on how the family is not an abstract ideal but rather like a practical "trade", which is carried out with tenderness. The Word of God "is not a series of abstract ideas but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family that experiences difficulties or suffering. For it shows them the goal of their journey..."

#### *"The experiences and challenges of families"*

Families face many challenges, from migration to the ideological denial of differences between the sexes; from the culture of the provisional to the antinatalist mentality and the impact of biotechnology in the field of procreation; from the lack of housing and work to pornography and abuse of minors; from inattention to persons with disabilities, to lack of respect for the elderly; from the legal dismantling of the family, to violence against women.

"The fear of loneliness and the desire for stability and fidelity exist side by side with a growing fear of entrapment in a relationship that could hamper the achievement of one's personal goals".

It is unrealistic to think that families can sustain themselves "simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace". Calling for a certain "self-criticism" of approaches that are inadequate for the experience of marriage and the family, the Pope stresses the need to make room for the formation of the conscience of the faithful: "We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them".

#### *"Looking to Jesus: The vocation of the family"*

These 30 paragraphs concisely depict the vocation of the family according to the Gospel and as affirmed by the Church over time. Above all, it stresses the themes of indissolubility, the sacramental nature of marriage, the transmission of life and the education of children.

The reflection also includes the "wounded families" about whom the Pope says that "it is always necessary to recall this general principle: 'Pastors must know that, for the sake of

truth, they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of situations' (*Familiaris Consortio*, 84).

#### *"Love in marriage"*

This section is truly a painstaking, focused, inspired and poetic exegesis of Saint Paul's *Hymn to Love* in 1 *Corinthians* 13:4-7. It is a collection of brief passages carefully and tenderly describing human love in absolutely concrete terms. The psychological insights enter into the emotional world of the spouses—positive and negative—and the erotic dimension of love. This is an extremely rich and valuable contribution to Christian married life.

The chapter concludes with a very important reflection on the "transformation of love" because "Longer life spans now mean that close and exclusive relationships must last for four, five or even six decades; consequently, the initial decision has to be frequently renewed".

#### *"Love made fruitful"*

The focus moves to being on love's fruitfulness and procreation. It speaks in a profoundly spiritual and psychological manner about welcoming new life, about the waiting period of pregnancy, about the love of a mother and a father. It also speaks of the expanded fruitfulness of adoption, of welcoming the contribution of families to promote a "culture of encounter", and of family life in a broad sense which includes aunts and uncles, cousins, relatives of relatives, friends.

*Amoris Laetitia* does not focus on the so-called "nuclear" family" because it is very aware of the family as a wider network of many relationships. The spirituality of the sacrament of marriage has a deeply social character. And within this social dimension the Pope particularly emphasizes the specific role of the relationship between youth and the elderly, as well as the relationship between brothers and sisters as a training ground for relating with others.

#### *"Some pastoral perspectives"*

The Pope treats various pastoral perspectives that are aimed at forming solid and fruitful families according to God's plan. It reiterates that families should not only be evangelized, they should also evangelize.



The Pope then deals with the preparation of the engaged for marriage; with the accompaniment of couples in the first years of married life, including the issue of responsible parenthood; and also with certain complex situations and crises, knowing that “each crisis has a lesson to teach us; we need to learn how to listen for it with the ear of the heart”.

Mention is made of accompanying abandoned, separated or divorced persons. The Exhortation stresses the importance of the recent reform of the procedures for marriage annulment. It highlights the suffering of children in situations of conflict and concludes: “Divorce is an evil and the increasing number of divorces is very troubling. Hence, our most important pastoral task with regard to families is to strengthen their love, helping to heal wounds and working to prevent the spread of this drama of our times”. It then touches on the situations of a marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another denomination, and between a Catholic and someone of another religion. Regarding families with members with homosexual tendencies, it reaffirms the necessity to respect them and to refrain from any unjust discrimination and every form of aggression or violence. The last, pastorally poignant part of the chapter, “When death makes us feel its sting”, is on the theme of the loss of dear ones and of widowhood.

### ***“Towards a better education of children”***

The seventh chapter is dedicated to the education of children: their ethical formation, the learning of discipline which can include punishment, patient realism, sex education, passing on the faith and, more generally, family life as an educational context. The practical wisdom present in each paragraph is remarkable, above all the attention given to those gradual, small steps “that can be understood, accepted and appreciated.

### ***“Guiding, discerning and integrating weakness”***

The Pope uses three very important verbs: *guiding*, *discerning* and *integrating*, which are fundamental in addressing fragile, complex or irregular situations. The chapter has sections on the need for gradualness in pastoral care; the importance of discernment; norms and mitigating circumstances in pastoral discernment; and finally what the Pope calls the “logic of pastoral mercy”.

The last section treats “The logic of pastoral mercy”. To avoid misunderstandings, Pope Francis strongly reiterates: “To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being. Today, *more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages* and thus to prevent their breakdown”.

### ***“The spirituality of marriage and the family”***

The ninth chapter is devoted to marital and family spirituality, which “is made up of thousands of small but real gestures”. The Pope clearly states that “those who have deep spiritual aspirations should not feel that the family detracts from their growth in the life of the Spirit, but rather see it as a path which the Lord is using to lead them to the heights of mystical union”. Everything, “moments of joy, relaxation, celebration, and even sexuality can be experienced as a

sharing in the full life of the resurrection”. He then speaks of prayer in the light of Easter, of the spirituality of exclusive and free love in the challenge and the yearning to grow old together, reflecting God’s fidelity. And finally the spirituality *of care, consolation and incentive*: the Pope teaches that “all family life is a ‘shepherding’ in mercy. Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others”. It is a profound “spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them”.

In the final paragraph the Pope affirms: “No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love ... All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us”.

Edited text from <https://zenit.org/articles/summary-of-amoris-laetitia-on-love-in-the-family/>



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## Sister Petra Ries RSJ

The diocese welcomes Sister Petra as the new Pastoral Assistant of Barraba.

**1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family background? Mum, Dad, Siblings? Where you grew up and what it was like?**

I was born in the beautiful city of Albury, on the mighty Murray River. Both my Mum and Dad's families were Pioneer Families of Albury, coming from German-Irish background. I had one sister, Pauline, who died of cancer at the age of 42yrs. I was taught by the Sisters of Mercy. I left school and worked at Dalgety's for a few years.

**2. When did you first think about becoming a sister? How did this progress, any key events?**

It was while I belonged to the Legion of Mary that I began to think seriously about becoming a Religious. It was Fr Frank Bell who guided me in this decision. He wrote for information about different Congregations. I chose the Sisters of St Joseph because I thought it was good to have an Australian Foundress and I loved the rural areas. I entered at Baulkham Hills where I did my Novitiate. I then did my teacher training at North Sydney. I loved teaching and taught in all rural areas: Woy Woy, Hillston, Milton, Nimmitabel, Eden, Bega, Picton and one term in the city at Lalor Park. It was from there I went home to care for my Mother, after Dad's death, for 8 and a half years. It was after this time I did Clinical Pastoral Education at



Sister Petra working in Kunnurra, WA

St Vincent's, Sydney and started Pastoral care.

**3. Do you have a favourite encounter that you could share?**

My favourite encounter was when I volunteered to work at Warmun in the Kimberley area. This was my Sabbatical year. I learnt so much from the Spirituality of the Aboriginal People.

**4. What has brought you to our Diocese?**

I have chosen this Diocese because of the wonderful experience I had in this area.

**5. What do you look forward to achieving in the Diocese of Armidale?**

I look forward to serving the people in any way, especially the sick, bereaved and visitation. Fr Abmar has three Parishes to minister to, so I'm happy to be able to support him here in Barraba. I thank Bishop Michael Kennedy for accepting me into the Armidale Diocese.

## SOS! ... Christianity in the Middle East ... SOS!

Moved by the desperate plight of Christians throughout the Middle East, the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) calls on your support to help the region's beleaguered Christian population.

A mass exodus of Christians from the Middle East is now taking place. For some, like the Christians of Iraq and Syria, it is a question of their very survival as they flee the bloody persecution of the militants of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh).

For others, in parts of the Holy Land that Our Lord Jesus Christ knew so well, the proportion of Christians has plummeted from 20% to as little as 1.4% in the last forty years. The faithful now live in fear as increasing

poverty and growing extremism threaten the survival of these ancient communities.

ACN is helping to keep faith and hope alive throughout the region by providing urgent aid to priests, religious and lay people, offering subsistence help to refugees and building and repairing Churches and convents. Please help us strengthen and rebuild the Church in the land of Christ's birth.

An olive wood rosary handcrafted in the Holy Land, will be sent to all those who give a donation of \$20.00 or more to help this campaign.

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Made of olive wood from the Holy Land, the rosary is simple in design and yet profound in its symbolic significance. The rosaries are lovingly handcrafted by families in need in Bethlehem and your donation enables the faithful to put food on the table for their families.



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Viewpoint

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# CWLA news

## Conference

Plans are in hand for the 2016 Annual Diocesan Conference of Catholic Women's League which will be held in Tamworth 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> October, in Tamworth. Two delegates from the Diocese will be attending the State Council Meeting in Sydney on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

## Branch news

*Armidale Branch* joined with the Inter Church Group to celebrate World Day of Prayer hosting the celebration in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel. This was the first event to take place in the Chapel since the completion of the Cathedral Precinct works.

The programme was organised by the World Day of Prayer members from Cuba and contained history about Cuba. The theme was "Jesus said: Receive Children, Receive Me" with Fr. Richard Gleeson as the guest speaker and his words were very thought provoking.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with a Luncheon at the Services Club following monthly meeting.

*Tamworth Branch* members led the Stations of the Cross the first week in Lent. They have just celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the branch with a luncheon where one of the original members Gwenn Gerathy prepared the history of the branch.

*Quirindi Branch* also hosted the World Day of Prayer this year followed by a delicious supper. They placed a wreath at the Cenotaph on Anzac Day.

*Moree Branch* helped with the organisation of the Jubilee Celebrations for their Parish Priest Fr. Paul McCabe and donated the cake.

They were saddened by the death of one of their original members Joan Reibert recently.

*Gunnedah Branch* members led the Stations of the Cross one week in Lent using the 'Praying the Stations with Pope Francis' a very prayerful and challenging way of the cross.

Members hosted an Inter Church Morning Tea in April.



## *Our Lady of the Angels Chapel back in good use for World Day of Prayer*







**Mission is Action: the work of the Catholic Church in Cambodia.**

*Jacqui Toakley, the new Diocesan Catholic Mission Director was privileged to personally witness mission in action in Cambodia earlier this year.*

In February I had the opportunity to travel to Cambodia, one of our poorest southeast Asian neighbours, to see

some of the projects Catholic Mission supports there. It was an amazing experience which showed me the strength of the Catholic Church in its pastoral mission, as well as vividly illustrating the inspirational power of God's love.

The work of the Catholic Church in Cambodia typifies its approach to mission throughout the developing world; comprehensive, practical action that is designed to effect lasting change. At every parish and diocese I visited the church provides nourishment, education, healthcare and employment for the community in a way that builds



*Ash Wednesday mass at Ta-Om Parish. This was one of the few churches in Cambodia that was not destroyed by the Khmer Rouge. They used it to store rice.*



the capacity of the local people, and is both sustainable and culturally sensitive. Some of the programs are very creative: a café and a textile factory established by the Diocese of Battambang to provide training and employment for people with disability; an agricultural research centre in the same diocese that works with local farmers to improve their rice yields through better planting and propagation techniques; a mobile learning centre on the back of a tuk-tuk used by the Daughters of Charity to take education to the children of itinerant workers living in Phnom Penh's slums. There were many more, too many to mention here.

The practical aspect of the Church's mission in Cambodia is incredibly impressive, but the thing which makes those programs so exceptional is the love and joy with which the missionaries work. Amid the dispiriting environment of poverty, deprivation and hardship in which so many Cambodians live, the missionaries I met were energised by hope. I will never forget the excitement on the face of Christina, an Italian lay missionary working at the New Humanity centre for children with intellectual disabilities, as she described the children's progress, or the obvious affection Bishop Olivier (from the Diocese of Phnom Penh) feels for the HIV-positive residents of his Peace Village, and most memorable of all – the sheer love emanating from Sr Eulie of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul as she moved through the Phnom Penh slums, ministering to the poorest of the poor. These are people who truly embody what Pope Francis calls the joy of the Gospel. I feel so privileged and blessed to have met them.

## Cambodia at a Glance:

- 30 Years of War (1969-1998);
- 19,662 people killed by landmines;
- 44,540 people injured by landmines;
- In 2012- 186 reported accidents caused by landmines;
- 45.9% of its 14.9 million people live in poverty;
- 23% of population live on less than \$1.25 a day
- 80% of population live in rural areas;
- 60% of population work in the agricultural industry



*Students at the Lindalva Centre, a day-care centre established by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent De Paul in Phnom Penh to provide care and education for the children of garment-factory workers.*



*Visiting the mobile learning centre run by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in one of Phnom Penh's poorest neighbourhoods. Sister Eulie is front right, Sister Mercy holding the little girl making peace signs.*

*All of the enterprises described here and all the places I visited in Cambodia, were funded, partially or completely, by Catholic Mission. It is through the generous support of Catholic Mission's donors in the Armidale Diocese and throughout Australia that this life-saving work is made possible. I invite all interested members of the Armidale Diocese to hear more about the power of mission and the work of the church in Cambodia at a Catholic Mission dinner to be held in Armidale on the 11th of June. For details please phone 67713517.*

# Around and About

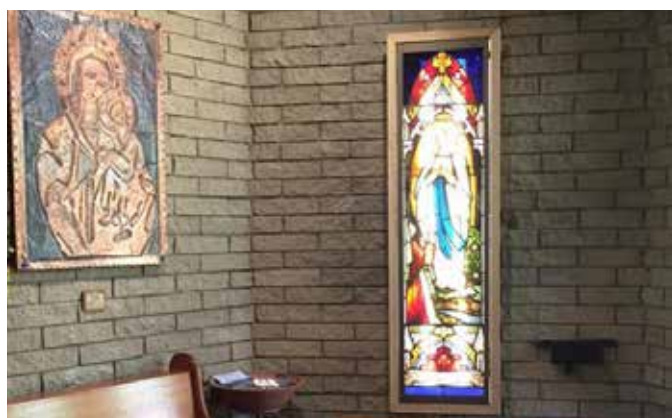
## Celebrating Catholic School's Week at St Edwards!

St Edwards, Tamworth celebrated Catholic School's Week earlier this term. Our theme this year was 'I belong. You belong. We belong.' which was a perfect reflection of our school community. After interviewing a number of staff members and students and asking them what these words meant to them a common theme of 'love' and 'family' was articulated when linking this year's theme to their time at school. It was certainly evident across both campuses as the children and their families celebrated the occasion in such a special way. We began the week with our Years 2 and 5 Family Mass, a hearty BBQ breakfast, liturgies and time in the classroom with our families. Heartfelt thanks to Mrs Sally Clarke, Mrs Willis and our dedicated teachers for organising the week's activities. It was truly fabulous to be able to showcase learning and teaching at its best at St Edward's School! It was also a wonderful privilege for our School Captains



*Sam Studte, 1G and his family working in the classroom*

and Mrs Long to be in Armidale last Wednesday as part of Catholic Schools' Week. The day began with Mass in St Mary's & St Joseph's Cathedral at 11.00am and concluded with the presentation of the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards. Amelia Fauchon and Thomas Littlejohns read the Prayers of Intercession at the Mass. The students thoroughly enjoyed being part of the formalities and were fine ambassadors for our school!



*The Apparition of Our Lady in Lourdes, stained glass window*

## Saints of a feather flock together!

St Patrick's, Walcha and St Joseph's, Uralla shared a combined saints day to celebrate their patron saints. (St Patrick's is on 17/3 and St Joseph's is on 19/3) The children came together for a mass with Monsignor Wilkes, followed by a shared morning tea consisting of everything green! Many thanks to the parents who sent in all of the yummy goodies. The children were then split into groups and participated in activities to learn more about their patron saints and played some games. The children in years 3-6 learnt how to play Gaelic Football which is the most popular sport in Ireland. After lunch we said goodbye to St Joseph's and the schools will look to team up in the future to do more great things.

*Alexi Ross, Emily Powell and Connor Imberger*

## Our Lady presides over the Lady's Chapel

This stained glass window, which depicts the Apparition of our Lady in Lourdes, France, is now placed at the centre of the Lady's Chapel in Sacred Heart Inverell Parish to give it more prominence. It is now also more visible with a back-light installed. The stained glass window was from the old Inverell church demolished due to unsafe structures in the early 1980's.

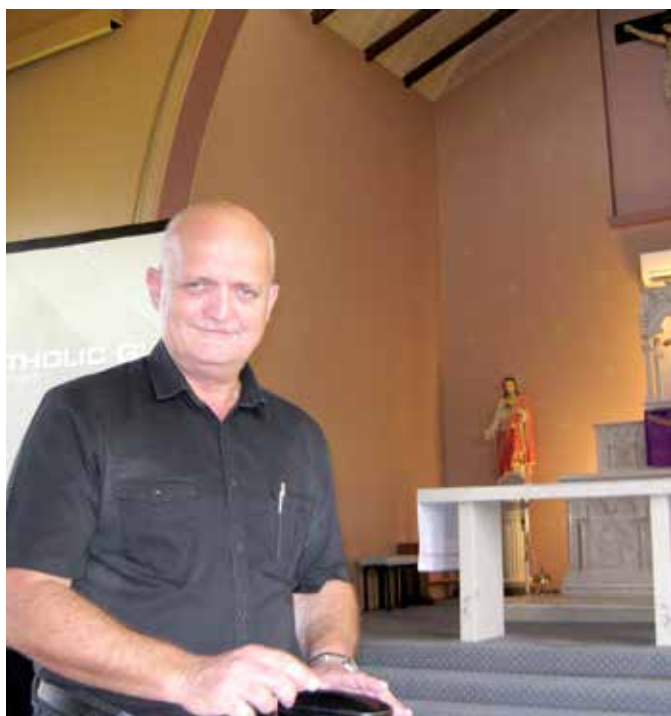




# Around and About

## The Catholic Guy

Bruce Downes, 'the Catholic Guy' presenter of the TV programme screened around the world, came to St Francis Xavier Parish, Moree. Bruce is a powerful, faith-filled witness, and his words made a profound impression on those attending. Through scripture, music, art and story-telling, he led us deeper into the mystery of Christ in his own life, and invited everyone to allow their life experiences to reveal the action of the Spirit. Bruce is thoroughly Catholic and obviously loves the Church and our Great Catholic Tradition. The last mission to be held in Moree was many years ago, so having a layman, powerfully bringing the message of the Gospel in the spirit of Vatican II to us, was a truly uplifting and inspiring experience for the parish of Moree.



*Bruce Downes, 'The Catholic Guy'*

## BULA!

Holy Trinity School, Inverell, held a "BULA day" to raise money for the Caritas Fiji Appeal. The students wore loud, Hawaiian shirts, sarongs, lays and other tropical attire. Their gold coin donation raised over \$885. This was also supported by donations of uniforms, school supplies and hygiene items that will be sent to Fiji. Well done!

The School community also came together for the annual Easter Fair. There were a great number of food stalls and a wide range of activities for families to enjoy, from a basketball competition to a fashion parade. The Fair was a success and even brought the rain, the first, in a few months!



*The students of Holy Trinity say 'Bula!'*



*Armidale Diocese u15's Rugby League team*

## NSW CCC State Selection

Armidale Diocese U15's Rugby League Team competed against Maitland/Newcastle and Lismore Diocese at the Northern NSWCCC Trials in Smithtown.

The team played extremely well with narrow losses in both games. This was by far the best result for an Armidale Diocese Team in a number of years.

As a result of these trials, Tyler Carson from O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale and Cain Eather from St Mary's College, Gunnedah, were selected. The boys will now compete at the NSWCCC State Selection Trials on the 20th and 21st of May at St Mary's Gunnedah.

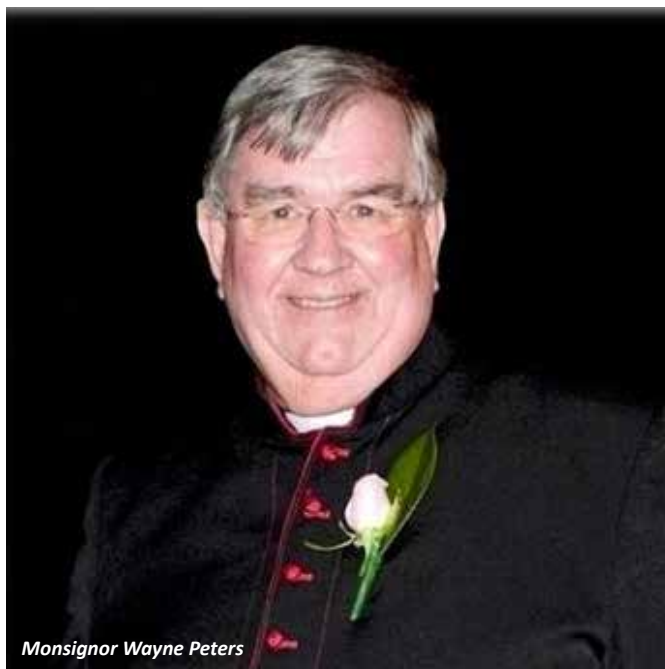
# Around and About

## How to make school fun!

To celebrate Catholic Schools Week, Sacred Heart Primary Boggabri held it first Grandparents/House Day. The day started with our sports houses Namoi & Cox splitting up into their teams to attempt some scientific activities: making a table out of eight pieces of newspaper that would hold a heavy book and making a boat from four plastic cups, straws, tape and glad wrap which needed to hold twenty five 20 cent coins for 10 seconds without sinking and make a costume out of newspaper. Most of the teams accomplished this with a lot of help from their adult spectators.



Genevieve Maunder, Jack Rees & Miah Moseley all dressed up



Monsignor Wayne Peters

## Monsignor Wayne Peters Anniversary

Parishioners of St Joseph's Parish Uralla gathered on Monday, 22nd February, 2016 to celebrate a Memorial Mass for Monsignor Wayne Peters on the first anniversary of his death. Monsignor's sister Kristine, her husband Wayne, brother Shaun and friend Susan, joined parishioners to pray for him, honour him and to thank God for his life.

Uralla Parish Priest, Monsignor Ted Wilkes, spoke with insight and affection about Monsignor Peters, highlighting his love and passion for the Church and his life of sacrifice for her.

It was a lovely Mass and a special opportunity to remember a man who has touched many lives with kindness and generosity and who embraced his calling as a priest to serve the Lord and His people.

## Couples for Christ, Christian Life Program

A Christian Life Program retreat was held in St Edward's Tamworth Parish over three week-ends in lent. The program was delivered by members of the Christian Life movement drawn from the Diocese' of Broken Bay and Maitland. Each session involved a presentation, a period of prayer, a period of reflection, scripture readings and discussion. Topics covered included God's Love, Who is Christ? What it means to be Christian, Repentance and Faith, The Christian Ideal, The Christian Family and Life in the Spirit. About forty parishioners took part in each session.





# Around and About

## Armidale Antics

St Mary's Armidale held their annual Art Show with over one thousand artworks on display! Categories for awards were Best Artwork in Years K-2, won by James Lawry, and Best Artwork in Years 3-6, won by Bonnie Serow. These two winning artworks are to be entered into the NSW "Operation Art" competition. An artwork from each class also received a highly commended award and these artworks will be entered into the local "UNE Let's Hang It" art competition.

102 St Mary's students also participated in the recent Armidale Autumn Festival Parade. The theme was Sporting Legends and the students dressed as Future Sporting legends of Armidale.

*Overall float prize winners*



## Fr Thaddeus is in the House!

St Joseph's Gunnedah, Fr John McHugh, has welcomed the arrival from Nigeria of new assistant priest, Fr Thaddeus Osita Ike, who has already been overwhelmed with the warmth and friendliness of Australians. Fr Thaddeus willingly agreed to leave his home and country as well as his siblings and elderly mother, who gave him her blessing with promises of prayer. Although English is his second language, Fr Thaddeus says it will take him a while to get used to the Australian accent.

Fr Thaddeus has already met many parishioners, visited aged care facilities and the local Catholic schools, and is looking forward his stay in Australia.



*Frs John McHugh & Thaddeus Ike*

## Going, Going, Gone!!!

At St Joseph's, Mungindi, the leader of the Student Representative Council, Cuthbert Shanji has really taken on the position and run with it. Students would bring in unwanted items and auctioned them off, in the effort to raise money for Project Compassion. This unique idea saw local auctioneer, Mr Peter Prosser conduct the proceedings. All items started at 10c and were capped at \$1.00. So with paddles raised and children excited to take home more loot than what they had come to school with, the auction was off to a flying start. The very sought after football was the last item to be auctioned, it fetched a whopping \$16 (yes, we broke the \$1.00 rule for that one!). After the auction we asked children if they would like to donate any left over money that they had and they were happy to give a little extra to people more in need.



*Charlie Barlow bids*



## Ordination of Deacon Henry Kingsley Etoh as a Deacon

Mary Help of Christians Church, South Tamworth was the venue for the ordination to the Diaconate of the Rev Kingsley Etoh by Bishop Kennedy on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> March. The moving ceremony was witnessed by dozens of priests, deacons, seminarians, nuns from throughout the Diocese and laity who had assembled from all parishes in Tamworth as well as from Moree, Armidale, Tenterfield and Inverell.

Kingsley was presented by Father Peter Thompson, CM, rector of St John Vianney Seminary in Wagga Wagga as a suitable candidate for the Order of Diaconate. During the ceremony Kingsley promised among other things to “assist the priestly Order and to benefit the Christian people, to hold fast to the faith in word and deed and to remain celibate as a sign of his dedication to Christ.” Cantors from the seminary lead the congregation in a beautiful rendition of the Litany of Supplication.

During the Laying on of Hands Bishop Kennedy prayed that the Lord would, “look with favour on His servant who will minister at His altar... that he be strengthened by the gift of your sevenfold grace for the faithful while

carrying out of the ministry... that there may abound in him love and concern for the sick and poor... and that by example of his way of life he may inspire the imitation of your holy people.”

A magnificent choir drawn from St Nicholas’, St Patrick’s and St Edward’s parishes, lead and inspired the congregation which responded in one powerful voice during the ordination ceremony and Mass, concelebrated by over twenty priests.

At the conclusion of Mass Deacon Kingsley thanked Bishop Kennedy for accepting him as a student, the priests of the Diocese for their encouragement and example, his fellow seminarians for travelling to Tamworth and adding so much dignity to the liturgy, the choir, the people of the four parishes in which he has served and all who by their attendance had helped to make this the greatest day of his life.

After the ordination Mass all assembled in Mary Help of Christians Hall for the cutting of the ordination cake by Deacon Kingsley and a celebratory lunch prepared by the ladies of St Edward’s Parish.





*“...on that day, I could not believe I was the one being ordained. I felt this most, after being vested and when the bishop hugged and welcomed me among the clergy in the diocese.”*



*“the part (of the ceremony) that I cherished mostly was the chanting of the litany of the saints. While lying prostrate on the floor, I became fired up when I realized that I was not only being prayed for by the faith community here on earth but also by the saints in heaven.”*

*Deacon Kingsley*

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## WHO WE ARE

Centacare NENW is a registered NDIS provider. Our friendly, trained staff are here to enrich the lives of all people with disabilities, turning their dreams and goals into reality. At Centacare NENW we encourage you to choose your own adventure.

## OUR MISSION

To provide services for the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities in the New England North-West.

## OUR VISION

A society in which there is recognition of individual and social rights and responsibilities, a society that promotes the dignity, equality and participation of all its citizens.

## OUR SUPPORT SERVICES

Centacare NENW is passionate about supporting adults with disabilities to live life their way and be included as valued members of their community. Together we can develop client centered plans to meet individual needs, giving participants choice and freedom to be involved in the daily activities they desire.

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (18 - 25yrs)

*Promoting an inclusive community.*

### LIFE CHOICES (25 - 54yrs)

*Empowering adults with disabilities to gain freedom and control.*

### ACTIVE AGEING (55 - 64yrs)

*Promoting choice and control to ageing adults.*

## SUPPORTED LIVING

Supported living gives freedom and opportunities for people with disabilities to live the life they choose. Participants are encouraged to voice their decisions around their everyday living and functioning of their home. We strive to operate in a participant-focused approach. We can provide a broad range of drop-in support services to help you live independently in your own home. We can provide you with training to learn new skills including numeracy, literacy, budgeting, safety, shopping and cooking. Programs are developed around your needs to grow your skills and provide the ongoing help you need to live independently.

***Centacare NENW offers accommodation services that are individual and supportive that meet the diverse needs of participants.***

### Drop-In Support

*For people living in their own, rented or family home.*

### Individual Accommodation Support Packages (IASP)

*Empowering adults with disabilities to gain freedom and control.*

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Catholic Diocese  
of Armidale



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Jenn Honner and Sarah Clift

## Education Evolution

At the international gathering of Catholic Educators in Rome in last year, it was recognised that in order for schooling to meet the challenges of present and fulfil the hope of future; 'The community of a Catholic educational institution must be formed by teachers who possess solid, professional expertise that can claim autonomy and the ability to plan and evaluate, form relationships, be creative, be open to innovation, and show a sincere interest in research and experimentation. These challenges can be boiled down to one point:

*'we must promote a **holistic** educational journey for young people, entrusting its care and guidance to an educating community of **evangelization**, within which the identity of the educational institution itself is lived out in a life-giving way. Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing passion'* Rome-Castel Gandolfo 18-21 November 2015

Catholic schooling across the diocese, from St Joseph's Walgett in the west to St. Mary's, Armidale in the east, is transforming; classrooms are changing shape, changing colour, changing furniture and teachers are leading students in their learning



Mrs Sarah-Jane Canham with Kindergarten

through creative, innovative and collaborative frameworks. Our system of schools is embracing the world-wide movement towards building effective Professional Learning Communities, for us this means Catholic Professional Learning Communities, where educators are committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results in faith and learning for all students. In real terms this means the walls are coming down! Teachers are no longer isolated in classrooms, they are working in trusted and supportive environments with colleagues, who have a shared vision. They are rigidly examining student learning data and systematically planning for improvement and intervention.

St Joseph's Waa Wee and Quirindi are two schools where students have embraced the opportunities to engage, collaborate and learn together through direct instruction and individual reflection. Learning spaces will allow students to work at a traditional desk and chair, learn on a wobbly stool (for those who just can't stop moving), learn on a cushion or a couch, while sitting or standing or laying on the floor.

Mrs Jen Honner Principal, St Xavier's Gunnedah says the key to monitoring student success is the creation of data walls. Staff can see the progress of every student and have daily conversations about the learning needs of each. In this way Mrs Honner explains resources can be immediately directed to support intervention at the point of learning need. This is the power of teachers working as Leaders of Learning. Mr Jamie McDowell, St Joseph's Wee Waa, encourages all teachers to meet in Professional Learning Teams each morning to discuss and review the day ahead.

The Catholic Schools Office, Mission and Evangelisation and Learning team is also transforming. The newly created System Performance Team will provide support for schools within the context of a TRANSDISCIPLINARY TEAM, a team where, information, knowledge & skills are transferred across disciplinary boundaries. Team members work as coaches alongside principals and staff to craft the teaching practice that will support explicit learning and inquiry thinking models for maximum student engagement and therefore learning. The team will provide research for schools as they ask the big questions of how can we ensure all students learn to their individual potential. The staff at St Edward's Tamworth are undertaking an Action Learning initiative in the area of student and staff well-being. All students have undertaken a survey and some interesting results indicate that the school can take some immediate steps in supporting students. This is the power of gathering data, examining the reality and planning for action. Watch this space as during the year we focus on other schools leading the way in creating a new educational culture across our system of schools.



Mel Thibault shows off her data display



# Education *Excites*



## Scholarship for international travel awarded to Tamworth teacher

Tamworth teacher Lisa McSweeney has won the 10<sup>th</sup> Australian Catholic University (ACU) Frater Travel Scholarship.

Established by Dr Bob Frater AO and Mrs Margaret Frater DSG, the scholarship recognises and awards teachers within diocesan Catholic primary schools who display leadership qualities and commitment, and who will contribute to the continuing development and enhancement of the school system through participation in an international experience.

Lisa, a teacher at St Nicholas in Tamworth, will use the money from the scholarship to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> International Centre for Innovation in Education Conference (ICIE) in Rijeka, Croatia. She chose the conference in Croatia because she said the theme 'Creativity – Innovation- Latest Development in Research and Practices' complemented her own teaching and leadership philosophy.

"I can share innovative ideas with not only my immediate colleagues, students and families in her own school community but also with others in the Diocese," Lisa said. She will create a blog to share with the school

community so staff, students and parents may follow her journey.

"I feel very privileged and very humbled. I love learning as a teacher and I can't wait to get overseas and see what the rest of the world is doing in terms of innovation and creativity in classrooms and bring back some ideas for my crew in Tamworth."



Lisa McSweeney



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## St Mary's College Gunnedah's Champion Carcase

St Mary's College Gunnedah students have once again shown their outstanding ability to select, prepare and present award winning carcasses at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Competing in the Woolworth's Trade Carcase competition, a St Mary's College entry, 'Old Man', was awarded the Champion, from the 42 entries. The carcase, derived from a Murray Grey cross steer purchased from Gunnedah Saleyards in November, scored 91.3 points to win the major award and also gain the only Gold Medal presented in the competition.

'It was the carcase's excellent combination of fat coverage and great muscularity that created a score worthy of the Easter Show's highest accolade', said St Mary's Agriculture Teacher Lachlan James.

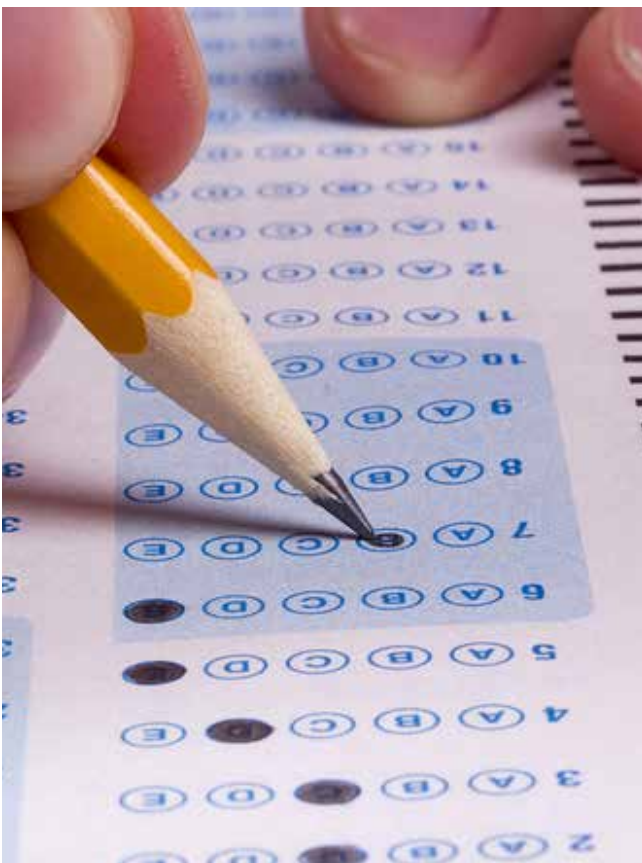
'The students had put in countless hours of preparation and to see them rewarded with the Champion ribbon is excellent. This is the second time in 4 years that the College has been able to secure the Champion Trade Carcase award' he added. St Mary's also exhibited another steer in the Purebred classes, which resulted in a carcase that scored 89.5pts, placing third in its class of 22 and being awarded a Silver medal. The St Mary's College cattle team will take a sort break before starting preparations for October's Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza.



*St Mary's College students Elise Bowen, Zac Murnane and Ashlee Van Os with 'St Mary's Blonde' at the completion of the hoof judging of the Trade Cattle section at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.*



*St Mary's College Agriculture Teacher, Lachlan James, accepts the Champion Trade Carcase award from the Chief Carcase Judge Mr Geoff House.*



## NAPLAN Achievements

St Joseph's Walgett and St Mary's Catholic College Gunnedah have demonstrated substantially above average gain in NAPLAN 2015.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for Australia's national reporting program, including *My School*. The *My School* website is updated annually with the previous year's NAPLAN results and other enhancements. For the past few years, ACARA has released information on schools demonstrating substantially above average gain in their NAPLAN results as students' progress from Year 3 to Year 5 and from Year 7 to Year 9. Gains of this magnitude are significant and worthy of acknowledgement.

St Joseph's Walgett is recognised for the outstanding student growth in reading from Year 3 to Year 5. St Mary's Gunnedah Mathematics teachers are celebrating outstanding student growth in Numeracy from year 7 to Year 9. This is the first time the system of schools has had a secondary college recognised at such a high level. Principals and teachers are all very proud of the academic focus displayed by the students in really paying attention to improving their results. Congratulations to both schools.

# Farewell to Joan Shanahan

The CSO farewelled prominent staff member Joan Shanahan as she embarks on retirement. Representatives from schools across the Diocese joined with CSO staff to farewell Joan. Director of Schools, Chris Smyth presented Joan with a Distinguished Service Award for her contribution to Catholic education in the Diocese of Armidale.

Joan's work at the CSO has been diverse over the years from consultant for ESL, gifted and talented, and additional needs students. In addition, she has assisted with mentoring teachers new to the profession and in recent years she has developed child protection training for schools.

She taught in Inverell for 4 years and at St Mary's Armidale, and finally served at the CSO for 15 years. Joan's mother was one of the first lay teachers in the Diocese, filling in until a religious person, Ursuline nun took her place.

Her sister in law spent time in Uralla and St Mary's Armidale teaching, her brother was the school inspector and later the Director of Diocesan schools.

The combined years of family contribution is near on 100 years, so Joan's retirement brings to a close her family involvement in Catholic education for the Diocese of Armidale.

Joan's expertise and commitment to students with learning disabilities has been commended and her support will be missed by many students, teachers and parents. We wish Joan every success and happiness as she transitions to the next stage of her life.



*Joan Shanahan and Paul Holman, long serving CSO work colleagues*



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## Europe's Debt to Christianity

Liberalism and democracy owe to Christianity their humanitarian idealism and their faith in progress; yet this idealisation of humanity has become a substitute for the Christian faith in a divine order, and has made it possible to regard secular civilisation as man's final end. Socialism derives from both Christianity and Judaism its passion for social justice, and for the rights of the poor and the disinherited; yet this passion has become the driving force of the Communist attack on Christianity, and the basis of social atheism which leaves no room for human rights and spiritual freedom. — Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. xxi.





*Fr Armstrong writes*

### **THE ANNUNCIATION AND GOOD FRIDAY**

This past March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation and Good Friday coincided. The last time this occurred was in 2005, and the next time it will occur will be in 2157. There is a very ancient tradition, which cannot be confirmed by any scholarly means, that Christ died on the anniversary of the day he took our human nature to himself. Whether or not that was in fact the case in the calendar, it nevertheless points to a profound truth of faith.

St Augustine wrote that some believe it incredible that we could someday live with the Almighty in a personal communion beyond this life. Yet, he continued, something even more incredible has taken place: God died for us. For Christ to do this, however, it was first necessary that he take on himself our humanity, since God cannot be killed.

“This Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us: for in himself he was incapable of dying for us, unless he had assumed mortal flesh from us. In this way the immortal one was able to die, in this way he wished to give immortal life to mortals; he would later make them sharers in himself, since he had first shared in what was theirs.

For of ourselves we did not have the ability to live, as of himself he did not have the ability to die. Accordingly, he carried out a wonderful transaction with us through our mutual sharing: he died from what was ours, we shall live from what is

his.” (Sermon Guelf 4, page 262 Volume 2, Liturgy of the Hours)

Investigating the link with the Annunciation, we can note that the assent of Mary of Nazareth was necessary before the Word became flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit. Materialistic atheism has great difficulty with the idea of the miraculous, as if wanting to dictate to God the terms on which God could be God – which is to say not at all.

If all things are possible to God, it means the way in which the Almighty chooses to carry out a miracle is very significant, and the manner of the Incarnation very significant indeed. The proponents of various atheistical ideologies certainly do not hold the virtue of chaste self-mastery in high regard: we see, therefore, a magnificently defiant gesture on the part of the Most High in decreeing the manner of the Incarnation of the Word.

Yet, the “let it be done” was awaited by the Trinity from Mary of Nazareth, a humble girl from a town which did not enjoy a good reputation. St Bernard, in a sermon *In Praise of the Virgin Mother*, writes: “Behold, to you the price of our salvation is offered.

If you consent, straightway shall we be freed. In the eternal Word of God were we all made, and lo! we die; by one little word of yours in answer shall we be made alive.” (Page 142 Volume 1 of the Liturgy of the Hours) We do well to consider the Annunciation deeply in order better to comprehend our own cooperation with grace, and repeat our own “let it be done to me according to your word.”





# Proclaim 2016

## On a Mission of Mercy: Evangelising Parishes

### Broken Bay to host PROCLAIM 2016

For the first time, the Diocese of Broken Bay will host the Proclaim Conference, a national conference on parish evangelisation.

PROCLAIM 2016 will run across three days from 1-3 September, 2016 at The Concourse Chatswood, in Sydney's northern suburbs.

Being held for the third time, this important initiative of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation is expected to draw together over 500 participants to discuss, exchange and learn fresh ways in which parishes can become evangelising communities of the twenty-first century, filled with missionary disciples that announce the profound joy and mercy of the Gospel.

The theme of this year's Conference, "On a Mission of Mercy: Evangelising Parishes", embraces the challenge of Pope Francis for the joyful and pastoral conversion of our parishes, so that our practices, resources, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world (*Evangelii Gaudium* 27). Keynote speakers include Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, Bishop Nicholas Hudson of Westminster and Dr Susan Timoney from Washington, with a focus on parishes as oases of mercy and centres of missionary outreach. Their input will be complemented by numerous

workshops that will offer some of the best practices and strategies by which the mercy and joy of the Gospel can be lived out by local communities of faith. Conference liturgies, panel discussions, social media initiatives, and a night of praise and worship open to young people will also form part of the Conference.

"I am excited and have high hopes for what PROCLAIM 2016 will bring to the parishes of Australia and beyond," said Bishop Peter Comensoli of Broken Bay.

"PROCLAIM provides an inspiring forum for the people in our parishes, those at the frontline of the Church's mission, to gather, discuss and learn new ways of evangelisation."

For further information please contact Annie Carrett, Manager, Office for Communications on +61 2 9847 0724 || [news@dbb.org.au](mailto:news@dbb.org.au)



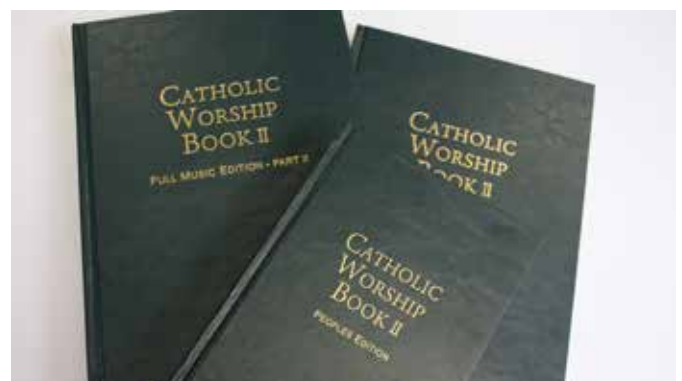
## Bishops want Catholics singing from the same hymn book

The Bishops of Australia launched a new liturgical worship book at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne on Friday 8 April 2016, thirty years since the last one was published.

The *Catholic Worship Book II* hits all the right notes with a broad range of liturgical music, including the chants for the revised Order of Mass (2010), new and revised Mass settings and service music, plus music for the Sunday Eucharist, the various rites of the Church and Morning and Evening Prayer.

Music featured includes old favourites like *Praise to the holiest* (by Cardinal Newman) and *Christ be our light* (by Bernadette Farrell) but also contemporary Australian music like Chris Willcock's, *If I could tell the love of God* and Michael Herry's, *Lord, to whom shall we go?*

Morning Star Publishing representative Hugh McGinlay said, 'A special feature of the planning has been to promote the work of Australian writers and composers and they are well represented among the texts and music,' McGinlay added.







# Loving Unconditionally...

When we had our first child, I had no idea how to be a parent and I am sure that echoes and resonates with many others who started out on this fascinating but rather frightening adventure that is being a parent; and obviously in my case being a father.

However, it's not just about being a good parent but being a good, dedicated, intentional Catholic parent raising Catholic children and that's a whole different ball game as I am discovering day in day out with a 6 year old son and 2 year old daughter! Sure, I have bit of theology I can draw wisdom from, and some pastoral experience of supporting others that I can dredge my memory bank for when I need it. But if I'm honest raising children continues to baffle me.

Is there a method to becoming a good parent? I don't think so because parenting isn't like creating a perfect assembly line product— each child is different. And thank God they are for that's what reminds me that we're all unique, made in His image and likeness and that my children (though they share mine and my wife's traits, our genes, my looks - God help them - though they are blessed with hers) are destined for eternity with Him and not to be my/our projects.

Although I don't follow any parenting approach in particular, there are helpful hints to be found in the way that God parents us. I figure if anyone knows how it's done, it's God. These lessons aren't limited to parents with strong faith though — they're just grounded in common sense advice from child-raising experts.

Our family hasn't endured an adolescent (can't abide the word 'teenager') yet, so we're not in the slamming doors phase where the kids swear they'll never forgive me for not letting them go to the party/disco whatever, but even our youngest can test my ability to patiently love her. Nevertheless it can be tough even now (no matter how cute they can be) to not return their naughty behaviour by withdrawing my affection (though I'm a big softy really and I don't withhold it for long – barely a few seconds a times!)

As a parent, it's natural to want to reward good behaviour with affection because it might promote good behaviour in the future, but one expert. Alfie Kohn, writes that it is far better to love children, "for who they are, not for what they do." He goes on to list all sorts of subsequent issues that children develop when their parents love is conditional. When it comes to God's parenting example, it is heartening that he never gives up on me.

Another emphasises unconditional acceptance and patience, saying; "God loves first, even when love is not returned." My children might be ungrateful at times and fall short of my expectations, as they struggle to individuate and find their place in the world, but no matter what, my job in my own imperfect fatherly way is to love them as patiently as possible because that's the way God the Father loves each of us and as the venerable Fulton Sheen said: "Patience is power."

*Edmund Adamus - Office of Marriage and Family Life,  
Diocese of Westminster*

# Pope reaches out to bomb blast victims

VICTIMS of the Easter Sunday Pakistan bomb blast recovering in hospital have received a personal message of sympathy from the Pope. Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore described how he was going from bed to bed visiting the wounded when he received a call on his mobile phone from Vatican officials who said that they had received a message from Pope Francis who was anxious to send a greeting to those wounded and grieving.

Latest reports say 72 people – 29 of them children – were killed and more than 340 were injured when an Islamist suicide bomber struck at Gulshan-i-Iqbal Park with the apparent aim of targeting Christians enjoying Easter celebrations.

In an interview with Aid to the Church in Need, Archbishop Shaw spoke of his “delight” to receive the phone call about the Pope’s message. “There were so many wounded and others we wanted to see and I was getting very tired and then I suddenly got this phone call from the nunciature in Islamabad. I was told that the Secretary of State had phoned the nunciature to say that the Holy Father is praying for the people who are suffering and that he personally wanted to send them his good wishes. I have to say it was a very timely call. There were more than 100 people I was visiting and they were so pleased to know that the Pope had them in mind – not just the Christians but the Muslims too. Many Muslims were also victims of the blast.”

Thanking ACN for the charity’s prayers and other messages of support, Archbishop Shaw stated: “We need your prayers

so that we may continue the mission our risen Lord Jesus had given us.”

*By John Pontifex*

The link to this story can be found at <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1459378908.html>

*Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore visiting people wounded in the bomb blast on Easter Sunday at Gulshan-i-Iqbal Park, Lahore © Catholic TV Pakistan*



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Photo: Vatican Insider / African Catholic service

## Catholic growth surges in Africa and Asia

The highest growth for the Church over the past decade was in Africa, where Catholics increased by 41 percent, followed by Asia, where the Church grew by 20 percent, according to a report by the Vatican's Central Office for Church Statistics. The percentage of baptised Catholics as part of the general population remains highest in North and South America, where they "make up almost half" of the world's Catholics, the report said.

In Europe, the Church grew by 2 percent over the nine-year period in the report, 2005-14, but while 40 percent of the continent is Catholic, that figure has not changed in nearly a decade.

The number of baptised Catholics globally reached 1.27 billion, or 17.8 percent of the global population, an increase of 157 million, the report showed. This means the Church is growing at a faster rate than that of the world's

population on every continent apart from Oceania.

The number of priests has also increased in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, but decreased slightly in Europe and Oceania.

The report said numbers for diocesan and religious orders were "stable" overall, but the variation in the number of men training to become priests varies by continent. There is an "evident decline" in the numbers from Europe and North America, while "Africa and Asia show great vitality," it said.

Women in religious orders continued to decrease, dropping by 10,846 in 2014.

The biggest decreases were seen in North and South America, Europe and Oceania while numbers in Africa and Asia continue to rise.

You are invited to the

### CATHOLIC MISSION DIOCESAN DINNER 2016

**WHEN** Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, 6.30 for 7pm.

**WHERE** Torregiani Room, Catholic Cathedral Precinct, Armidale.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** All interested members of the Armidale Diocese are invited to join Catholic Mission and its supporters for this inaugural fundraising event. Jacqueline Toakley, Diocesan Director for the Armidale Diocese, will speak on the work of the Catholic Church in Cambodia.

\$25.00 pp. For bookings or further information please phone 67713517 or email: [armidale.director@catholicmission.org.au](mailto:armidale.director@catholicmission.org.au)



*Invitation*

# Create in Me a Clean Heart



Anyone who uses the internet, watches television or follows the news would know that pornography is pervasive. Such is its prevalence in the USA that the Catholic Bishops felt moved last year to issue a pastoral letter on the subject, “Create in Me a Clean Heart.” A summary is below.

- Estimates of revenue from pornography stretch easily into billions of dollars each year. The industry is described as aggressive, savvy and regulated only sporadically.
- Pornography is often misrepresented as a harmless pastime or even promoted as good, for example, as an aid to marital intimacy. However that is untrue and there are many victims. Every person portrayed in pornography is beloved by God our Father and is someone’s daughter or son. Their dignity is abused as they are used for others’ pleasure and profit.
- Pornography trains men, and women, in a “pornographic gaze” and conditions them to look at others simply as sexual objects, rather than as persons who deserve respect and love
- Those who use pornography often experience a deep sense of shame and an erosion of self-worth. Men in particular can develop a narcissism and an inflated sense of “machismo.” After using pornography, the person craves more and over time seeks out more extreme images to get the same “high.” A person addicted to pornography may become obsessed with viewing it, take increased risks to view it, such as accessing it at work, continue viewing it despite adverse consequences to self and others, and may feel out of control or helpless to stop.
- Increasingly, young people produce their own pornography, in the form of sexual photographs or videos shared with peers.
- Pornography use within marriage severely damages the spouses’ trust and intimacy both because of the pornography use itself and because of the deception and lies usually involved in one spouse hiding his or her behaviour from the other.
- Parents struggling with pornography addiction

waste time watching pornography, and they may inflict financial burdens on the family through their compulsion.

- God created the human person, male and female, in his image and likeness, as the crown of creation. Every one of us is a gift, with the inviolable dignity of a person.
- Jesus, in his life, ministry, and ultimately in his saving Death and Resurrection, shows us the way of love as a sacrificial, fruitful gift of self. Every man and woman, whether called to marriage or not, has a fundamental vocation to self-giving, fruitful love in imitation of the Lord.
- Because of the beautiful meaning and dignity communicated by our bodies—which communicate our very selves—our bodies should be treated with the greatest respect.
- The virtue and vocation of chastity is essential to love in all its forms. Chastity integrates our internal desires for sexual pleasure into our overall pursuit of moral excellence and holiness. As Pope Francis has indicated, love is chaste. The chaste person also seeks to cultivate the virtue of modesty, which inspires one’s choice of clothing and behaviour out of reverence for the dignity, even mystery, of oneself and others, a reverence which includes appreciation and respect for the human body.
- The moral status of pornography is that it can never be justified and is always gravely wrong. It is a mortal sin if it is committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent. This sin needs the Lord’s forgiveness and should be confessed within the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The full text of “Create in Me a Clean Heart” <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/pornography>

## *Holy days of obligation*

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference determined in 2001 that, in addition to all the Sundays in the year, the only feast days to be observed in Australia as holy days of obligation are the solemnities of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These two holy days of obligation are to be observed annually, regardless of the day of the week on which they fall.

The number of holy days of obligation was once much greater. In 1911, Pope Pius X reduced the number of such non-Sunday holy days from 36 to 8. The number of days varies from country to country.



## Welcome back – to a U-Turn!

The teachers and students of St Philomena School Moree, welcomed back the U-Turn Youth Ministry Team from Sydney, for a return visit to provide a half day retreat and to promote the Discovery Youth Camp.

The U-Turn team ran the mini retreat for Years 9 and 10 and then Years 7 and 8 and they spent the afternoon joining in the students' sporting activities. The focus for the retreat was "The Father's Love" with skits, talks and testimonies bringing to life the reality of how much they are loved by their Heavenly Father. Eleanor, from U-Turn, shared her very moving and dramatic testimony of how the Lord restored her life from a path that was leading to destruction.

The team stayed in Moree over the weekend and ran a number of youth meetings. Members of the Parish took great care of the team and Father Paul McCabe invited Michael, the leader, to speak at Mass about their ministry.

A number of the young people went to the Discovery



*U-Turn team mingle with students*

Youth Camp at Lake Keepit in the first week of the April school holiday. This camp is run by the Good Shepherd Fellowship of Armidale and Uralla.

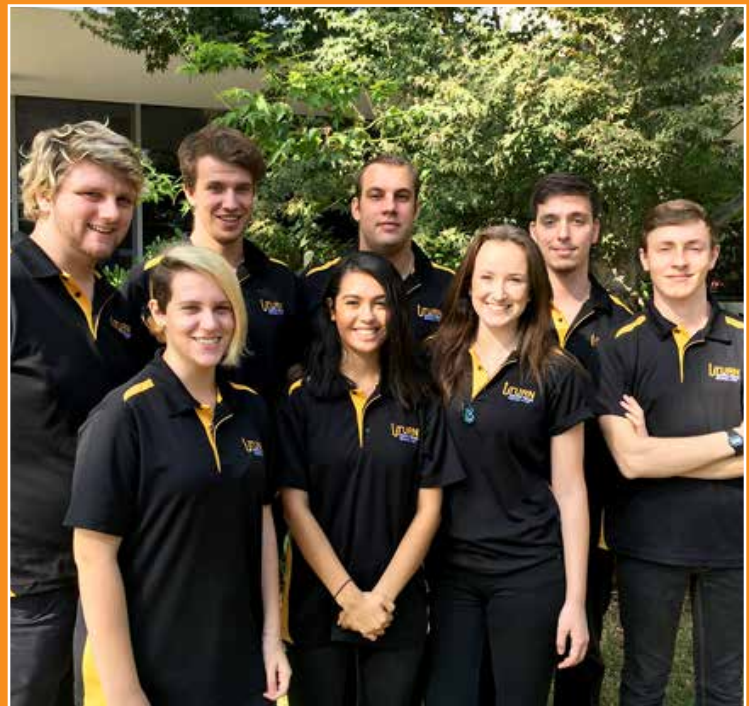
## U TURN

### *"Direction 4 Life"*

U-Turn Members receive training in youth ministry as well as formation in Christian principles for living. They are given opportunities to develop a life of prayer, live in community, and to be a living witness to others.

The Team serves in schools and parishes on behalf of the Bread of Life Fellowship, to bring the gospel to young people in a dynamic and personal way in Australia and on overseas missions.

They also serve The Servants of Jesus community through their Friday food services program, in Kids and Youth Ministry, running youth conferences each school holidays, street evangelising, overseas mission and many other practical ways



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Fr Paul McCabe with his family

## Fr Paul McCabe 50 years of Service

From earliest childhood in Glen Innes, when the Sisters of St Joseph taught me to read, I was fascinated by the words painted around the great arch in the church: *I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth*. Even as a child, I felt drawn to priesthood, even though when I went to the seminary I used to pray they'd kick me out.

After five years boarding school at De La Salle, Armidale, and three years Philosophy at St Columba's Seminary, Springwood, I was sent to Rome in 1962 to complete the Theology degree.

The Vatican Council was in full swing, and I reveled in the debates around the Church in the modern world. To borrow from Wordsworth: "Bliss it was to be alive, but to be young was very heaven."

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1966, Pope Paul VI ordained our class from the "Collegio de Propaganda Fide". It was apparently the first time since the Reformation that a pope had ordained anyone to priesthood. The Council had just finished, and Pope Paul decided to celebrate the Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles, by ordaining people from all over the world. There were 62 in our class from 23 different countries.

After a year's pastoral experience in England, I did post-grad studies in Moral Theology and Psychology in Rome and in Ireland before returning to Australia in 1969 where I was appointed assistant at St Nicholas's, East Tamworth. In 1973, the bishop asked me to go to Moree. Driving out here for the first time, I shall never

forget the moment, near Biniguy, that I first experienced the wonderful horizon of the black soil plains. The four years which followed with Mons Ryan, and mates like Bernie Frize and Barry Bell were among my happiest.

I was then appointed to South Tamworth with the great Fr Frank Le Fevre, and in 1978 was thrilled to receive word from the Bishop that I would be parish priest of Walgett. I loved the west, and dearly treasure the memories of those almost nine years. There followed a short stint at Guyra before I was asked, in 1988, to take on the job of Rector at St Patrick's Seminary at Manly, Sydney.

To prepare for this task, I attended Loyola University, Chicago, and visited seminaries in different parts of the world. The years in charge of the seminary were perhaps the most difficult but most rewarding of my life. I was never comfortable telling anyone I did or did not think God was calling them to priesthood. In 1996, the seminary was relocated to Homebush, and I returned to the Armidale diocese as parish priest of Inverell. After seven years, the bishop appointed me to Moree to succeed Mons Gerard Hanna who had been appointed bishop of Wagga Wagga. It was like coming home, and these past thirteen years have been among the happiest of my priesthood.

It is almost 70 years since I first read those words above the sanctuary in the church in Glen Innes: *I have loved O Lord the beauty of thy house and the place where thy glory dwelleth*. I don't understand them much better now than I did then; but I am certainly still as fascinated by their unfathomable significance.



# Kids Kapers

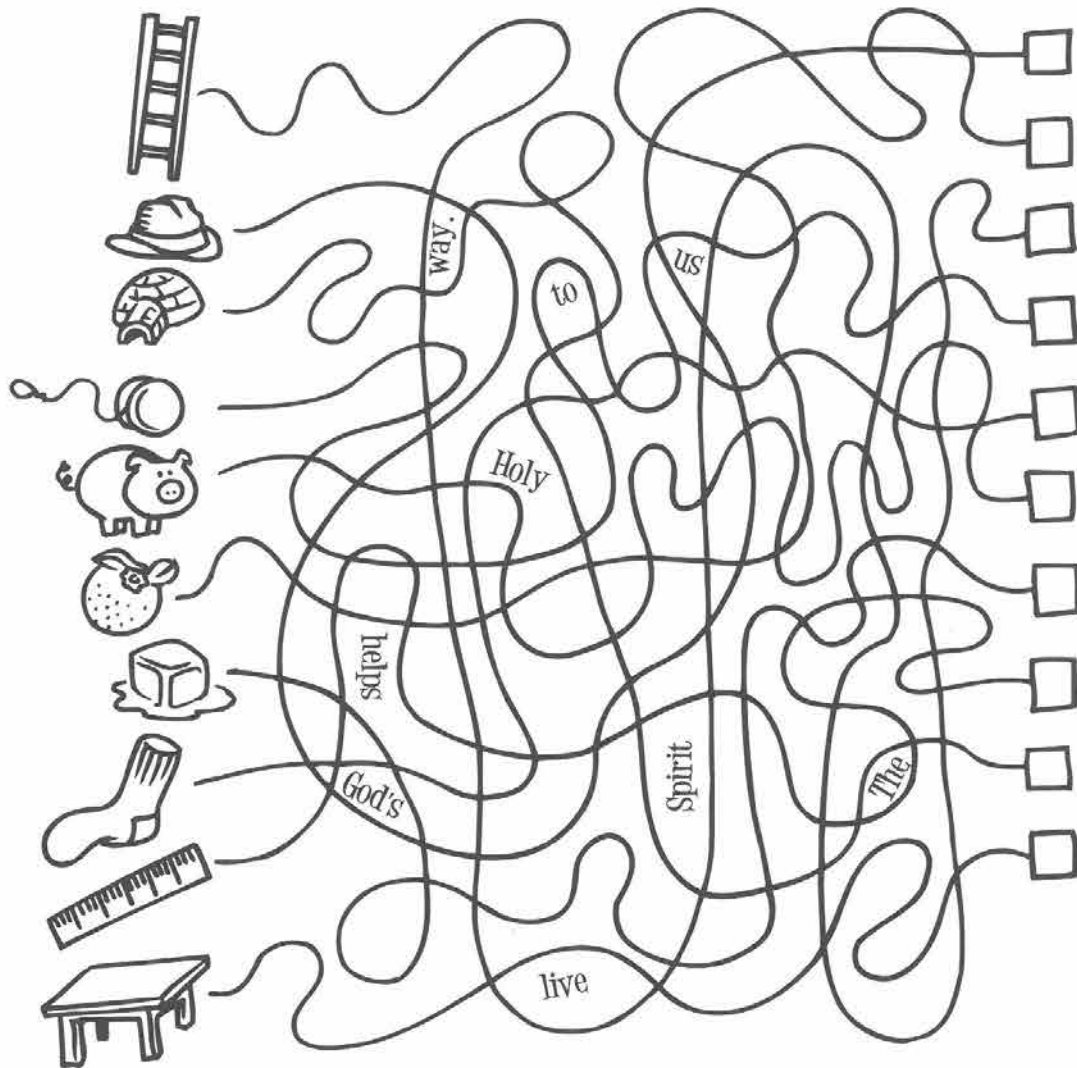


## JESUS—THE GIFTGIVER!

Acts 2:1-41

### The Challenge

Jesus said that after He went to heaven, His Father sent us a special gift. To discover what it was, determine the first letter of each object on the left, follow the path next to each object and put that letter in the box at the end of the path. Read down the column of squares to find out the name of your special gift from Jesus.



### The Super Challenge

Write the words from the squiggles on the line. Then put the words in order to make a sentence about the Holy Spirit.

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*Andrew Davy, Year 9 Year Coordinator, gets excited as Year 9 Students take aim at 'the boss'.*

## Cash for Caritas

During Lent 2016, McCarthy teachers headed off to Mentor Group each morning armed with the familiar Caritas box. This very low key Lenten observance, day in day out raised a total of \$2620.25. However some very creative teachers and generous students attracted additional funds through a few very entertaining and enjoyable activities.

Year 9 students, under the leadership of Mr Andrew Davy were especially creative and active in their Caritas fundraising. The first of their additional activities, was a lunchtime cricket event called 'Bowl over the Boss.' Year

7, 8 & 9 students were invited to bowl to staff members and try to 'knock' them over. The event raised \$72.00 in thirty minutes. A second Year 9 Caritas initiative was the 'Dance Battle' which brought in a further \$120.00. A very generous Mentor Group under the mentorship of Mrs Kate Godden chose to exercise their culinary skills by providing the staff with morning tea, which raised \$108.00.

A further \$369.70 was raised in two raffles, a staff raffle of consumable 'goodies' for the Easter Weekend and a student Easter egg raffle.

It was with a great sense of pride that we are able to forward a cheque for \$4,078.85 to Caritas this year.



*'bowl over the boss' - with Mr McManus, our 'boss'*



## Around 180 people enjoyed a twilight concert at Uralla's Why Whorry Wines.



The Centacare New England North West Rural Resilience team recently toured the region with jazz icon Vince Jones.

The tour took in Barraba, Woolbrook, Uralla, Breeza, Maules Creek, and Pallamallawa, giving locals the chance to have a night out and a night off.

Vince Jones said it was a treat to get out of city jazz clubs where he's been performing since the late 1970s and be sharing his music with regional communities. Many of Vince's original songs speak of caring for the land and respecting mother nature, a message that resonated strongly with farming communities who attended the shows. He is also beloved for his sensitive, and soulful interpretations of American Songbook classics.

His relaxing, yet thought-provoking style was the reason Centacare NENW drought support co-ordinator Emelia Saban invited him to the region, as part of the Australian government's drought support package.

"This is great opportunity for locals to come together close to home to see a world-class performer – and to see each other! Drought is a really busy time, and it's important to stay connected with your mates and find time to relax and accentuate the positive where you can."

"Better still, people can see Vince without having to

travel and take time away from the farm going to either Sydney or Brisbane for a show," Ms Saban said.

"Local Wongwibinda artist and People's Choice winner at the 2016 Tamworth Country Music Festival Busking Competition, Goldheist, opened for the quartet with her unique voice and thoughtful songs."

The family-friendly events also included kids' entertainment, and a free barbecue dinner. Ms Saban said she hoped the funding would continue to provide a chance for locals to catch a break and have something to look forward to.

For confidential support and assistance for you, your family, or someone else you know, contact the Centacare NENW team on 1800 372 826.



**Centacare**  
**New England North West**



*Fr McCabe 50 years of service*

*I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth*