

# V.Catholic viewpoint†

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*God's Calling*



# Mary The Good Listener



## The Bishop Speaks

Having just celebrated Easter we now move into the month of May – The month of Mary. It's common for parishes to have a daily recitation of the Rosary during May, and often to erect a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary. It's also a long-standing tradition to crown the statue of Mary during May. Often, the crown is made of beautiful flowers representing Mary's beauty and virtue. It's also a reminder to the faithful to strive to imitate our Blessed Mother's virtue in our own lives. Some individuals and families also make the effort to do these things in the home as well – a practice that I

heartily encourage.

For centuries, the Catholic Church has set aside the entire month of May to honour Mary, Mother of God. As a child I didn't give much thought as to why the month of May, I simply presumed it was because the names of May and Mary are so similar! But there is another reason.

In pre-Christian times the Ancient Greeks dedicated the month of May to Artemis, the virgin goddess of both chastity and childbirth and the patron and protector of young girls. In Ancient Rome, May was



Cover Photo Caption: Damien Locke celebrates his institution to the Ministry of Acolyte in Rome.

dedicated to Flora, the maiden goddess of flowers and spring.

You can probably already see the connections that made it an easy step for Christians to dedicate the month of May to Mary the virgin mother of God in whom also bloomed the fullness of grace and virtue. The custom among Christians became especially widespread during the nineteenth century and remains in practice today.

Just how did Mary become the Virgin Mother of God; the one in whom both the *Word* of God (God the Son) and the *words* of God found a true and fruitful home? I suggest it was because she *listened*.

Have you ever been talking to a friend or a group of people, perhaps telling them a story, only to realise half way through that nobody is listening anymore? Their attention has turned to something or somebody else. You stop, you retreat into yourself, you go quiet and 'dry up'. You might try again later to tell your story but you may very well choose just to give up and remain silent.

But when somebody listens intently to our story we open up and can quite easily go beyond our story and reveal a little more of ourselves than we were originally intending to. There is something remarkable happening when this occurs. The speaker and the listener connect and almost become one for a while. A spark is ignited. Many great friendships and even some marriages have begun this way! Everybody loves a good listener. So does God.

In Mary, God found a good listener! In the Scriptures we first meet Mary at the Annunciation where God had an announcement to make and Mary listened. She didn't just hear – she listened. And she listened so humbly and intently - so *obediently* - to the words of God that "the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." Saint Ephrem in the fourth century is credited to have said of Mary: "Through her ear the Word entered and dwelt secretly in the womb".

And Mary's listening continued; it never stopped. This attitude is expressed very well in the Scriptures when we are told that "Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart." When something significant occurred or something happened that she didn't fully understand, the Scriptures tell us that Mary kept 'listening' to those events in her heart to find their true and full meaning and to find the will of God in them for her.


As a good listener, Mary was not only attentive to

God but also to those around her. Good listeners notice things, and it was Mary who noticed that the bride and groom were running out of wine at the wedding feast in Cana. Being a good listener, she was able to do something to help them and save them embarrassment. She told her Son Jesus whom she knew would do something about it.

Mary always remains by her Son's side, listening, pondering, and obeying. We often see this attitude in Mary's physical posture as presented in so much iconography and other Christian art. Artists over the centuries have instinctively depicted Mary leaning forward in a posture of listening.

During the month of May as we venerate Mary the Mother of God, may we too incline unto our Lord, listen to him and obey him. Listening well to God and to others requires a little external silence as well as a little internal silence which I call calm. So let us try to carve out for ourselves a little silence and calm so that we can better listen to God and his Will and to our neighbours and their needs.



+   
**Most Reverend Michael Kennedy**  
Bishop of Armidale



## Psst! Did you hear what Pope Francis said about gossiping?

*Pope Francis delivers the homily during a Rome parish visit on Sunday*

Pope Francis has encouraged Catholics to stop gossiping and ruminating on the shortcomings of other people, and to instead focus on repenting of their own sins.

“The Lord wants to teach us not to go criticising others, not to look at the defects of others: look first at yours, your faults,” the Pope said in an unprepared homily on Sunday during a visit to a parish in Rome.

Imagining that someone might say to him, “But, Father, I do not have any [faults]!” he responded: “Ah, congratulations! I assure you that if you do not realise here that you have them, you will find them in Purgatory! Better to see them here.”

“We are specialists at finding the bad things of others, without seeing our own [faults],” he said, which often leads to gossip and speaking badly about others.

Gossip is not new, the Pope said, noting that it goes back all the way to the start of original sin. But gossip is also not just gossip, it goes further. It “sows discord, sows enmity, sows evil,” he warned.

“This is why Jesus says: ‘Before speaking badly of others, take a mirror and look at yourself; look at your faults and be ashamed of having them,’” he said.



The Pope referenced the arrival of Lent, which begins tomorrow, and advised people to use this time to reflect on how they treat others. “How do I behave with people? How is my heart in front of people? Am I a hypocrite, that faces with a smile and then from the back criticises and destroys with my tongue?” he asked.

If Catholics reach Easter having improved in this area – criticising others less, gossiping less, “the Resurrection of Jesus will be seen more beautiful, greater among us,” he said.

FULL STORY: CathNews Published: 05 March 2019

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# Lending a Hand

Prior to Christmas a storm described as, 'the worst storm in living memory' for the Walcha community, devastated the properties of landholders in the region. In February our student leaders travelled to Walcha to assist the affected landholders in an effort to clean and clear the properties of the debris from the storm. This visit was organised by alumni Damien and Simone Timbs. Eleven local property owners agreed to host groups from two to six willing workers, and it was up to each farmer to devise jobs and supervise their workers. The students worked hard and with great enthusiasm in clearing their allotted areas of the debris from the storm damaged trees. Our students were humbled by the experience and were in awe of the spirit of those affected

by the devastating storm. As the sunlight dwindled the exhausted crew of students and Walcha locals descended upon the Timbs' farm for refreshments and a BBQ. St Albert's College thanks Edwards Coaches, Jacksons Quality Meats, the Railway Hotel Armidale and 1879 Bistro for generously supporting this very worthy day.



*The crew of St Albert's students and Walcha locals descended upon the Timbs' farm for refreshments and a BBQ after their hard day of work.*

# Centenary Celebrations



*Everyone outside in front of the school (Photo by Lou Farina)*

St Joseph's School West Tamworth celebrated 100 years of Catholic Education. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Michael Kennedy with a number of Sisters of St Joseph in attendance. A school tour which included looking at memorabilia collected during the last 100 years was conducted, followed by morning tea. The day concluded with a formal luncheon held at West Tamworth Leagues Club.





# The Power of Love

We recently concluded our annual retreat here at the Beda. Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB from Aberdeen in Scotland presented a plethora of material across the course of the week which seemed to connect in very well with some thoughts and feelings I have been grappling with of late, namely some concerns about Mother Church and the prospect, God willing, of being ordained to serve in the diaconate and priestly ministry in the not too distant future.

There are plenty of reasons to take the 'glass half empty' approach when looking at the Body of Christ, the Church today – especially in places like Australia and much of Europe. As I pen this reflection, a historic summit on the hideous abuse of children and vulnerable adults is concluding here in Rome. More generally, our churches and cathedrals are not exactly teeming with faithful and much of the media is gunning to attack Mother Church at any opportunity. I admit that on some occasions over past months I have been tempted into settling for this approach myself, but it was a comment that the Bishop made in one of his conferences during the retreat that came like somewhat of a slap on the cheek for me: he said (words to the effect), imagine the Church to be like your elderly mother - wrinkled, tired and imperfect (at least on the outside) – yet, you cannot speak any ill of her despite her frailty and weakness. And why should we speak ill of her? Consider for a moment what she has done for us, in spite of her frailty and weakness. For a start she has provided me with the gift of this retreat: the opportunity to be still and quiet enough in the busyness of life to sit and challenge my thoughts and emotions; she exudes incredible works of charity and love – did you know that the Catholic Church manages more than one quarter of the entire world's health care facilities? And what about the incredible work of the Missionaries of Charity for whom I can personally testify do vast and indiscriminate works



of incredible love every single day. Then there are the enduring, though controversial struggles for human life and dignity which have become a vehement enemy of post-modern humanism and individualism – yet still our tired, wrinkled Mother stands her ground. Slowly, but very surely, the glass begins to turn to 'half full' again. But why does it waver, why does doubt creep in or worse, why do people turn away from the Church completely? What is it that tips us from glass 'half full' to glass 'half empty'?

The answer I think lies in a small, much over-used and very misunderstood word: LOVE. Many will agree that love

can be associated with powerful feelings between people and this is how I think the idea of love may have been distorted or at least diluted, particularly in today's world which is very transactional. Perhaps love has become a commodity which is traded but when the market falls through or the stakes become too high the deal is off. It is so sad when this happens on any level and I think this is what is happening in the Catholic Church today – thankfully not everywhere, but in many places.

We might say that there are three degrees of love:

**Tepid** love: if our love is tepid, the moment anything goes wrong or we do not like what we see, that's it – it's all over – we walk away

**Great** love: if our love is great, we will put up with a great deal, but at a certain point we reach our limit and we give up

**Infinite** love: if our love is infinite, we will endure anything because our love is limitless and unconditional. This does not mean that we will blindly accept absolutely everything or cease from trying to make the love more perfect, but we approach weakness in a constructive, solution-focused way

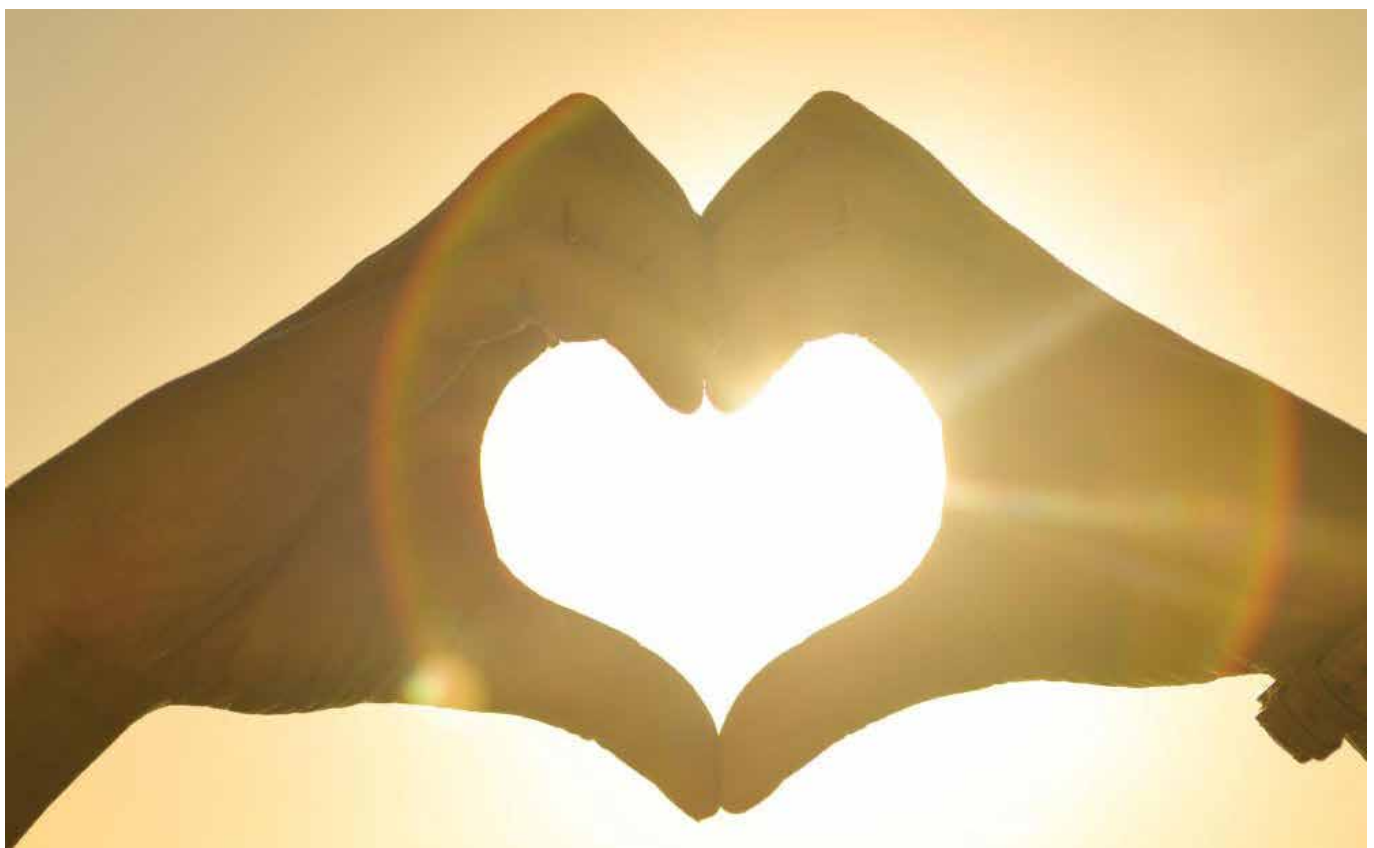
Perhaps our love for Mother Church is a direct reflection of the love we have for God. Our love for God is like an anchor point - no matter how concerned, frustrated, even angry we become at what we see happening in the Church, coming back to the question of how much we love God steadies us. And in stormy waters, that anchor point becomes particularly important. Bishop Hugh challenged us to never turn on Mother Church and I think the only way we are able to do this is by anchoring ourselves to God and loving him infinitely.

Arriving at this point then, the question may become, how do we foster our love for God so that it does not wane? I believe that this is the adventure of being a Christian – a true disciple of Christ. Jesus said, “if you know me, you will know my Father also” (John 14:7). Knowing somebody is about relationship and relationship demands time and energy. On a practical level, whenever I feel my relationship with God wavering, I consciously seek out a crucifix and meditate, just for a moment or two, on John chapter 15, verses 13 and 16: “no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” and “you did not choose me but I chose you.” Somehow, Christ's outstretched arms draw me back into God's infinite love, for me and everyone, and challenges me to reorient myself to the only fitting response, infinite love in return.

God knows that we will waiver because we have the freedom to do so, and that is ok. The crucifix can be a powerful image to anchor us back to God's love. When our relationship with God is bound in infinite love, then we strive for everything between us and God to be perfect, including our relationship with Mother Church.

As I continue with the ‘pushes and pulls’ of my own journey of discernment here in the seminary, I often call to mind some useful, practical advice from my own Bishop, Michael Kennedy, who said in a recent interview with Shalom World TV's Heart Talk, “just stay close to God and do your duty.” This advice re-centres me on the reality of Jesus' words in John 5:17: “my Father is working still, and I also am working”. So all I have to do is stay close to God, feeling his infinite love and doing my best to love him as fervently as I can in return.

*Damien Locke | February 2019 | Rome*





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## Welcome Grant Devine - our new CEO

ADIG has welcomed a new CEO into the family. Grant Devine brings over 25 years experience of senior management in the finance and banking sector. Grant has previously held roles as Business Development Manager, CEO, and also brings a vast knowledge of sales, marketing and management with him.

Grant hails from Brisbane and is married to Tanya. They have two adult sons, Jake and Brendon.

Grant will be based in the Armidale office and is looking forward to further growing ADIG into a strong and modern business.



## Thank you to the Board.

Recently, we have had to farewell some very important people from the ADIG family. Three ADIG board members have decided to resign after their long service to the company.

Joe Tonkin, John Perkins and Peter Lloyd have served on the ADIG board for a combined total of over 70 years with John Perkins serving for more than 32 years himself.

The three men were presented with medals from Bishop Kennedy in recognition of their dedication and service to the board.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank John, Joe and Peter for their hard work and time as ADIG Board members.

*Joe Tonkin (first from left), Peter Lloyd (third from left) and John Perkins (fourth from left) with Bishop Kennedy and the ADIG board at their last meeting.*



## Farewell Helen.

At the end of March, Helen Dawson, the General Manager of ADIG, decided that the time had come for her to move on and start enjoying the next phase of her life.

After joining us in 2015, Helen has seen ADIG through many changes and developments including the introduction of the APRA and ASIC changes, the building of the relationship between Armidale and Wilcannia-Forbes Dioceses and the implementation of a new Online system to name a few.

Helen will now be spending more time with her grandchildren while still being involved in a number of community groups.

We thank Helen for her service and dedication to the Armidale Diocesan Investment Group and wish her the best for the future.





# Easter Reflections

*Year 1 and 2 students from St Patrick's, Walcha share their feelings on Easter.*



My Dad's birthday is on Easter Monday so it is a special time for our family. Jesus came back to life for us at Easter. Jesus is always in our bodies. He cured sick people and he loves all the people on the world. I can't wait for Easter because we get treats. **Olivia**

Easter is when Jesus came back from when he died. That was so special because if you follow Jesus you can go to Heaven. I love Easter because the Easter bunny gives us chocolate. We also remember Jesus at Easter. **Mary**

I'm going to my Granny's at Easter. She lives in Port Macquarie. I'm going to go swimming at the beach and Granny said we also might be able to go to the pool. At Easter time we remember that Jesus came to life from the cross. I think he did that to save us from sin. **Georgina**

Me and my sisters and my cousins go on an Easter Eggs Hunt. If we find a blue and gold egg you get some money from our mummies. Jesus got killed on the cross because God wanted him to rise from the dead because he wanted to teach us about love. **Lilah**

One Easter my family and I went to Angus' house. All the kids needed to stay in the bedroom for an hour because all the adults were hiding the eggs. I did not find many eggs but it was so much fun. We remember that Jesus got killed on the cross and God rose him from the dead so that he could go up to heaven with God. Jesus came back to life so that all people can be good to everyone again. **Henry**

I love Easter because we get to spend time with our family. We remember Jesus. **Addison**

I love Easter because we get to look for eggs. Jesus showed us that you get a life in heaven. Jesus died at Easter time but he came back to life too. That's good because now people know that you get a life in heaven. **Charlie**

I love Easter because you get Easter eggs. You also get to go on an Easter Hunt. Jesus dies on the cross at Easter time and then he gets off the cross and gets puts in a cave. A huge rock gets put over the front of the cave. A few days later the ladies go and see if he is in there but he is not. He is out and he is alive. We remember to not be greedy at Easter time and to think of Jesus. **Lachie**



# ★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!



*Patricia Brown,  
Mary Brown  
(Niece) Margaret &  
Bob Blomfield with  
Fr Bernie Melville*

## Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Fr Melville

Father Bernie Melville OAM has spent more than 40 years at St Michael's Catholic Church in Manilla, now in retirement he is living at Manellae Lodge.

Sixty- five people gathered for a luncheon at the Manilla Services Club, where a delicious meal was enjoyed by all in attendance, in honour of Father Bernie's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Nine priests attended, apologies were received from Bishop Michael Kennedy, Monsignor Wilkes and many parishioners, friends and associates from local and

surrounding areas.

David Arneman, as MC, lead the speakers, Father Ron Perrett, Peter Gallagher, and David Ridgewell, as they reflected on Father Melville's lifelong work and shared interesting and humorous stories about his life and the connection with the community of Manilla as well as his great love of rugby, and devotion to the Balmain Tigers.

The highlight of the day was Thomas Cockings presentation of special memorabilia to Father Melville from the Balmain Tigers, which included a letter signed by some of the Tigers.

Many gifts were given to Father Melville from the church community and friends. He was very emotional and appreciative when thanking everyone for his gifts and gathering for the occasion.



## 'Come- Everything Is Ready' - World Day of Prayer Quirindi 2019



*Anne Scott, Val Fletcher, Helen Passfield, Fran Wallace, Pam Considine and Val Smyth*

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, which brings together Christian traditions for an annual day of worship and prayer. On the first Friday of March each year, more than three million people in 170 countries join in a service prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee of a different country to celebrate both our unity in Christ and our diversity in culture.

World Day of Prayer is a unique opportunity to celebrate Christian unity and love with the whole world, over the same 24-hour period. If we are to proclaim ourselves as followers of Jesus, we must stand together as one for our faith and demonstrate our unity through Him. This year the order of service has been prepared by the women of Slovenia.

The World Day of Prayer Service was held in St Brigid's Catholic Church Quirindi with approximately 35 in

attendance. We had readers from the Uniting, Catholic, Anglican, and Harvest Christian Churches. At the front of the Church, we had a table set up in red and white with embroidered cloths. On the table was a loaf of Potica (sweetbread), a heart shaped biscuit iced in red, white and brown, there were bowls of red and green grapes and a bowl of small heart shaped biscuits with red blue and white icing all to represent the food and colours of Slovenia. Our guest speaker Mark Elsley spoke on Slovenia. He also spoke about the Bible reading from Luke 14-15, 'come everything is ready'.

After the Service we took the items from the table in the church to the hall and with other food prepared by Catholic Women's League Members and Parishioners we invited all our guests to join us in a wonderful supper. There was lots of conversation, fun and laughter. It was a great evening, enjoyed by all.

*Kathy Murphy*



*Heather Roworth, Mark Elsley, Barry McNamara and John Kerklaan*



*Kay Porter, Jan Daniels, Gwen Gardner, Barb McNamara and Fay Gifford*

# Doing it tough?

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## A Diamond in our Rough!

The parishioners of St Joseph's Gunnedah honoured Sr Regina with morning tea after Mass in the chapel for her Diamond Jubilee Year. Sr Regina has been a Sister of Mercy for 60 years, received into the convent at Gunnedah in 1956, Sr Regina was professed on January 6, 1959. The eldest of five children, Regina was born in Sydney but spent most of her early life in Narrabri where her father was employed by the railways and both parents contributed to parish life.

The young Regina McInerney was educated by the Sisters of Mercy in Narrabri and Gunnedah and it was this connection with the Sisters that helped sow the seed of her vocation. Regina closely identified with the life of religious through her father's younger sister who had joined The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, an international congregation with a missionary orientation.

As a Sister of Mercy, Sr Regina's early ministry was as a teacher in Malabar and then in parts of the Armidale Diocese, including St Mary's College at Gunnedah. Sr Regina also took on other roles, with a number of years at St Patrick's Home, Armidale. After completing further study, Sr Regina became a social worker, initially in a Mercy school and then in a government agency for quite a few years. Sr Regina has retired from formal work and study but remains involved in St Joseph's Parish and the community where she is regarded as a "living treasure". She now has time for her leisure interests,



*Sr Regina McInerney*

reading, walking and gardening. "I am thankful for God's grace and to the Sisters of Mercy and all the others who have filled my life with richness," Sr Regina said.

## CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

Priest	Role	From
Fr Roel Llave	Parish Administrator, Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Parish Armidale	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Fr Sabu Pulimalayil	Parish Priest St Francis Xavier's Parish Narrabri	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Fr Francis Afu	Assistant Priest St Nicholas' Parish Tamworth	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Fr Jayaraj Gorantla	Assistant Priest Sacred Heart Parish Inverell	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Fr Joseph Armah	Parish Priest St Andrew's Parish Wee Waa	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Fr Thaddeus Ike	Parish Priest St Patrick's Parish Warialda	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Fr James Poovathinkal	Parish Priest Sacred Heart Parish Inverell	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Fr Vince Amaro	Assistant Priest Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Parish Armidale	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2019

# Good Works of the Catholic Immigration Office

St Edward's Parish South Tamworth and Father Paul Aguilar, Parish Priest, hosted a meeting of the Directors and Episcopal Vicars of the Australian Catholic Immigration Office (CIO) in February.

Bishop Max Davis of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services was present as the representative of the Australian Bishop's Conference. Among the delegates was Fr Maurizio Pettena, the Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO).

Father Maurizio explained that the role of the CIO is to shape policy and devise solutions to problems which arise for migrants and refugees. This involves determining their special needs and liaising with the appropriate people and agencies to bring about changes designed to meet these needs.



*(Front L-R) Brenda Hubber, Sr Kylie Cullen, Fr Vince Amaro, Bishop Max Davis, Fr Ciril Boži, Bishop Gerard Hanna, Jessica Laidler, Clyde Cosentino, (Back L-R) Fr Isidore Anantharaj, Rev Paul Manvell, Fr Maurizio Pettena, Fr Paul Aguilar, Fr Roel Llave, Fr Christopher Onuekwusi, Alison Burt, George Nulley-Valdes*

A long-term member of the office, Fr Ciril Boži, originally from Slovenia and about to return, was farewelled at Mass by retired Bishop Gerard Hanna. Bishop Hanna who had been the Bishop Delegate for Migrants and Refugees while Bishop of Wagga, spoke very highly of Father Boži who has an Order of Australia Medal for his work for migrants and refugees.

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*Everyone in for Tug-o-war!*

# Country Fun Fair

Gunnedah was the place to be this year when the Gunnedah combined catholic schools hosted their bi-annual Country Fun Fair. There was a great atmosphere with live music, chocolate wheel, rides, stalls & showbags. Jar-ar-ama was a popular store with 500 jars of goodies and a chance of getting a jar full of lollies or a rubber snake. The cake stall had some beautiful baked goods as well as some homemade wooden chopping boards and pottery dip dishes made from students from St Mary's College. The art auction was supplied by each class at St Xavier's, which consisted of some interesting and imaginative artwork and incorporated each class member into its final masterpiece.

This year with the drought the P and F committee focused on the social side of getting the community together and the kids to have some fun time, keeping costs down to making families have some time out from the farm.



*Service with a Smile from Kate Pinn and Sally Wilson!*



*Lachlan Smith riding the Bucking Bronco!*



# Around 'n About

## Farewell Fr Roel

It was with great sadness that we farewelled our Parish Priest Fr Roel Llave prior to his departure for his new post in Armidale. The farewell was held in the extended meeting room at the church, a space that came to fruition under Fr Roel's supervision a fitting reminder of his time with us.

During Mass our Filipino community presented Fr Roel with a certificate of appreciation. Long-time parishioner Brian Baldwin spoke on behalf of us all, extending our gratitude for his care of the parish and Mrs Jennie Monie presented him with a wallet of notes with the best wishes of parishioners. Fr Roel thanked those present for their kindness during his time in Inverell and for their attendance to say goodbye to him.

*Brian Baldwin, Mrs. Jennie Monie and Fr Roel at his farewell*



## 2019 Walcha Show

We are very proud of the children's effort & participation in the 2019 Walcha Show. Congratulations to all of the St Patrick's Walcha entries, I saw a lot of Highly Commended, First & Second Prizes on their entries. Well done to the Gardening Group for your First with the celery, Second with the beans & Second with the flowers in the Boot!

*Old shoe' entered by Bateson Pittman*

## Our Seminarians

We have two seminarians who are currently studying at Vianney College in Wagga Wagga. Peterpaul Chikezie, from Nigeria, commenced his 5th year of seminarian studies whilst Victor Athura, from Uganda, has commenced his 4th year. You may see them in your Parish from time to time when they are on pastoral placement, an important practical part of their training. Please keep them in your prayers.

*Peterpaul Chikezie (left) and Victor Atuhura at Vianney College, Wagga Wagga*







*PP5 Relay Team with their medals: Cameron Valks, Molly Rees, Claire Watt and Luke Grace-Hendrie.*

## Welcome Fr Samson!

Fr Samson Koyipurath, a Rogationist of the Heart of Jesus priest, has arrived in our Diocese. He comes from the same order of priests as Fr Sabu Pulimalayil in India, so we know we are in good hands. Fr Samson will stay in Armidale as Assistant Priest but you may see him in your parish in the future as he will be with us for at least the next four years. Please welcome him and make him feel at home.

*Fr Samson Koyipurath with Bishop Michael Kennedy*



## South Tamworth Young Leaders

The Year 6 Leaders from St Edward's Tamworth attended The Young Leaders' Day at the Sydney Convention Centre in Darling Harbour. The aim of this day was to educate young leaders to become better role models for their school and community. "The National Young Leaders' Day was an absolutely wonderful experience for us, as the leaders of the school. We are sure that we can take on the responsibilities and challenges that being captains will bring, both in and out of school. We would like to thank the parents who came along and Mrs Long who organised us to go."

*Back from left: Ariel Mettam, Bailey Bower, Jack Benjamin, Samuel Salvestrin, Madeline Studte,*

*Front from left: Emily Dietrich, Jessica Martin, Annabelle Stuart, Holly Beard.*





# Around 'n About

## Vietnamese Mass at St Edward's, South Tamworth

The Vietnamese community came together at St. Edward's Parish South Tamworth, to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Paul Aguilar, Parish Priest of the parish and Fr. Peter Thoi Nguyen, a Vietnamese priest based in Scone. Non-Christian members of the Vietnamese community regularly attend Mass, as there is no other temple providing a service for them. Following the Mass, the congregation assembled in the church hall to partake in a banquet of a wide variety of Vietnamese food with singing and festive activities. It was a great example of the human spirit dominating, to bring both English speaking and non-English speaking people together, through a common bond of faith, food and song.

*Fr Paul and Fr Peter, distributing Ang Pao - phong bao mừng tuổi (new year's luck money red envelope)*



## Quirindi sports stars

St Joseph's Quirindi annual twilight swimming carnival was a wonderful success and from this 7 students went on to represent their school at Diocesan level. We congratulate William Bartholomew who then went on to represent the Diocese at the Polding competition in Sydney. Congratulations also goes to Scarlett Slade and Lachlan Quigley on selection in their respective Diocesan teams. Scarlett was selected in the Opens soccer team and Lachlan in the 11yrs League side. Good luck to both who will compete for selection at the Polding trials in May. St Joseph's also had 4 students represent the school beautifully at the Willow Tree Horse sports this year. Congratulations to Seri McCulloch on achieving the Reserve Age Champion 11 Years Girl Rider 2019.

*Seri McCulloch - Reserve Age Champions 11 Years*

## United as one in Gunnedah!

Students and staff at St Mary's College Gunnedah and St Xavier's Primary School Gunnedah came together for the Opening School Mass in St Xavier's Hall, celebrated by Fr John. School leaders received their badges and St Mary's College principal Max Quirk paid tribute to the Sisters of Mercy who founded the schools in 1879. St Xavier's principal Jenny Honner thanked Fr John for his dedication and commitment to the students and staff at both schools.

*All together, united as one, for the Opening School Mass 2019*







## Blue Awards!

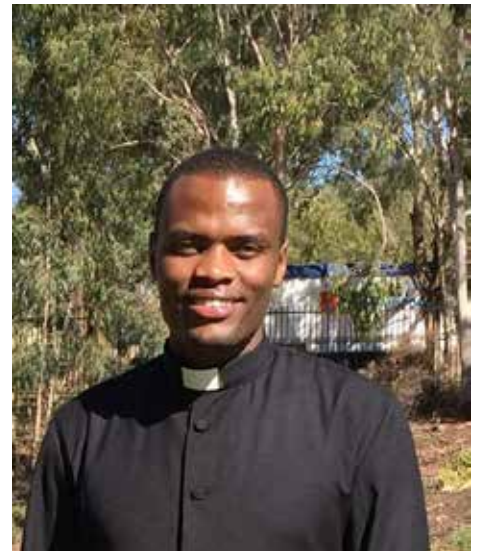
Congratulations to Nathan Cziner and Aiden Wicks for receiving Blues at the 2018 NSW Combined Catholic Colleges Blue Awards held at St Mary Star of the Sea College in Wollongong in February this year. They were the only representatives from the Diocese of Armidale to be awarded a Blue. Aiden received his award for outstanding services to hockey umpiring and Nathan received his for being an exceptional Hockey player. Well done boys!

*2018 NSW CCC Blue Awards recipients*

## Prospective Seminarian

Please welcome Francis Mbithi to the Diocese of Armidale. Francis comes to us from Kenya for a year of discernment. He will be spending time in parishes around the Diocese, accompanying the priests in their pastoral duties of home and hospital visits, experiencing Parish life and teaching catechetics.

*Francis Mbithi*



## Inverell is Looking After Our Neighbours in Need

The students at Holy Trinity School in Inverell dressed in red, yellow and orange to raise money for the people effected by the bushfires that happened in February in our local area. The students had a coin drop and raised \$1400 plus they brought in many donations to give to St Vincent de Paul for distribution. The day was organised by the Secondary and Primary Student Representative Councils, our Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul and our Mini Vinnies group.

*Holy Trinity Inverell in Bushfire colours*

# Around 'n About

## Armidale's Inspirational Mini Vinnies

The St Mary's Armidale Mini Vinnies were inspired by the work of the Firefighters and wanted to show them that they were appreciated. Many students from our school community wrote cards to thank these firefighters for protecting so many homes around the Tinga area during the bushfires.

Congratulations to our 2019 Mini Vinnies Leaders. This group and particularly our newly elected Leaders are a special group that have already put many suggestions forward towards making positive changes to our community. It is so invigorating and hopeful to work with such motivated and well minded students.



(L-R) Poppy McKay - Spiritual Advisor, Bridgett Diefenbach – Treasurer, Mia Lincoln – Secretary, Lang Toakley - Vice President & Freya Giles - President



## Investing in Time at Walgett

Instead of raising money during Lent, a group of students from St Joseph's Walgett decided to donate their time within the community. Eight students have made three visits to the Peg Cross Ward at Walgett Hospital. The girls have all greatly enjoyed getting to know the residents there, and entertaining them with songs, books and conversations. It has been beautiful to watch meaningful connections form, as both parties gain something out of the visits.

Mrs Betty Brouff, Ellie Beckwith & Amelia Kerr

## Gunnedah's 'Salt of the Earth' Catechists

St Joseph's Parish catechists were recommissioned at a Mass celebrated by Fr John in St Joseph's in February, followed by morning tea. Deacon Paul Manvell described the catechists as "salt of the Earth" for going out and igniting a small flame of faith in the lives of children attending state schools. Marie Mainey and Eva Grace were presented with certificates of appreciation for five years of devotion to their role as catechists.

Marie Mainey and Eva Grace with Fr John McHugh







## Director's Address at the 100th Anniversary Celebrations of St Joseph's West Tamworth



Celebrating  
**100**  
years  
1919 - 2019

Congratulations to Katie Hanes and the school community for your wonderful St Joseph's Day celebrations and the endless positive publicity you have brought to Catholic education in the city of Tamworth this week.

We all know that St Joseph's is the most common school name in the Diocese and that the Sisters still minister in our Diocese. We continue to be grateful for their work. Saint Mary MacKillop and her daughters lead a very egalitarian view of education reflecting their Catholic, Celtic and Australian context. She insisted that the standard of education would be exactly the same in the smallest bush school and the grandest city school. Their goal was to raise the lowest to the middle: the 4Rs mattered, equity was essential. A Preferential option for the poor was demonstrated in practice. The Josephites pioneered rural regional and remote Catholic education. St Joseph's West Tamworth continues the ministry to the poor and the well off in a system of 24 schools across the Diocese of Armidale.

There are now over 760,000 students in our Australian Catholic schools (1 in 5 Australian children), employing over 91,000 teachers and staff, making us the biggest non-government employer in the country and the biggest charity. In the Diocese of Armidale we educate just over 6,000 students and employ about 1000 staff in schools that range in size from 15 to almost 900 students.

This system is unique in the world as a high quality Catholic education system. A quality such that all want to come to our schools because of excellence in learning and teaching. We then have the opportunity to develop Catholic values to impact Australian politics and society which we have and will continue to do despite growing secularism. Saint Mary Mackillop would be pleased with our progress built on her foundation work.

The Catholic system of schools makes an enormous contribution to our Australian society. It relieves the state of considerable cost, ensures parental choice, and provides particular charisms of prayer, witness, catechesis and pastoral care.

Catholic schools today are the equal of other schools in Australia in facilities, pedagogies, and professionalism. Nevertheless, we need to protect funding for Catholic schools as mission and faith formation continues to be embedded in everything that we do. St Joseph's West Tamworth is about to commence an \$8M building project funded largely by the local parish, school community and the CSO with a contribution of \$1.5M from the Federal Government. Catholic parents, who are taxpayers, are continuing to carry a huge burden for funding capital development in our schools to ensure they remain the equal if not better than other schools.

St Joseph's School West Tamworth and St Patrick's Parish West Tamworth are becoming a future focussed model of a parish school that builds community through the collaboration of the Parish Priest and principal and supported by the Bishop and the CSO. We should acknowledge Bishop Michael, Father Anthony and Katie Hanes for their great work at ensuring a vibrant evangelising Catholic community into the future.

Saint Mary Mackillop and her Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart started the first 'system' of Catholic schools and we carry on their tradition of ensuring that the quality of human relationships always remains front and centre in schools for effective learning and faith formation to take place. We should all have great hope for a positive future for Catholic education at St Joseph's and across the Diocese of Armidale.

**Director of Schools, Chris Smyth**



Catholic Schools Office  
Diocese of Armidale



For 50 years St Albert's College has stood proudly as an Independent Catholic College within the University of New England. Humbly established in 1969, St Albert's doesn't compete with the age, sandstone and grandeur of University colleges in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Where St Albert's does exceed though is in it's community. Over the final weekend of March the broader St Albert's family continued this legacy by descending en masse upon the College to join the current students in celebrating the College's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In March 2019 we nervously closed off the bookings for the weekend and saw that we'd be playing host to just over one thousand people for the event. With nerves and excitement the College saw the beginnings of the 1050 attendees begin to trickle in on Friday for the weekend's opener; the St Albert's Rugby Club 50<sup>th</sup> celebration. In 1969 the College was established as an all male residential college which under the management and students saw the inauguration of the St Albert's Rugby Club. In paying tribute to this, the College opened it's doors to 700 alumni and students to commence the weekend in the recently upgraded dining hall. The excitement was palpable in the buzzing crowd as long time friends dating all the way back to 1969 through to the present, spread themselves across the facilities for what was a fitting tribute to St Albert's College's oldest club.

As the main event, the St Albert's team had planned for a Gala night to be held across the College grounds from the dining hall through to marquees and a dancefloor on

our lawns. The morning of the Gala Night the guests of the College were greeted by torrential rain which had organisers on edge and landholders dancing for joy. As the rain carried on into the early afternoon alumni sporting fixtures were cancelled, yet the St Albert's spirit was running on a high, and the College saw hundreds of visitors touring the College grounds, perusing the comprehensive archives exhibit and supporting the men and women of St Albert's rugby through the rain. The afternoon saw a dramatic weather shift with the sun cutting through the gloom and clear skies brought a collective sigh of relief from guests and organisers alike.

Despite mixed results in the rugby, the guest's and student's excitement was reaching fever point as the Gala evening commenced. With the grounds, facilities and marquees absolutely sparkling the event was humming from the go as PLC's outstanding string quartet signalled the beginning of a night to remember. The 1050 black tie clad crowd dispersed amongst the venue's many spectacularly arranged grazing tables and numerous bars. We were treated to St Albert's finest catering options circulated by an army of waiters overseen by the fantastic St Albert's Head Chef and his team.

The highlight of the night was the performance by Armidale and New England music legends 'Maxwell Street'. The 9 piece band brought together the crowd through nostalgia and energy with a fine selection of music from across the decades. To see members from the class of 1969 dancing side by side with 2019 first





year students, perfectly demonstrated the special sense of community and spirit that St Albert's has been built on over 50 years. The Gala evening was brought to a close late on Saturday night with a raucous rendition of the St Albert's war cry echoing across the grounds. Students and guests left the Gala event smiling and laughing which was all the St Albert's team could've ask for.

Come Sunday morning the College closed out the weekend by hosting the alumni for Mass and breakfast. Former College Master, Father Dennis Hallinan and Father Paul McCabe's celebration was well attended with students, alumni and friends overflowing out the chapel doors. St Albert's College was pleased to have hosted such a successful series of events and we look forward to catching up with our broader family in the future!



## Advertise with Viewpoint - Next issue due: 31st May 2019

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# Drought Assistance by St Vincent de Paul

Across the Diocese since August 2018, the St Vincent de Paul Society has distributed two tranches of funds. One tranche was from funds donated by the public, companies and farmer organisations across New South Wales and the second was the Commonwealth Government Drought Assistance Packages.

Using the first tranche of funds allocated to the Diocese, the Society assisted 226 farmers, using \$657,933 from the state-wide funds. The average assistance to farmers was \$3000. As an average, some farmers were assisted with more than \$3000 and some were assisted with less than that amount.

Using the second tranche of funds supplied by the Federal Government and receiving 300 Drought Assistance Packages, the Society has assisted 300 farmers to a total value of \$900,000. Each package was worth \$3000, made up of a Direct Cash Grant of \$2000 to the farmer and \$1000 as part of a Bill Payment component.

The Society has now conducted 526 interviews with farmers in the Diocese, since the 1st August, 2018.

Only about 15% (approx. 100) of farmers were assisted using funds from both tranches. The remaining 426 have

been assisted only the once from the two tranches of funds.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in the Armidale Diocese is hopeful to continue providing drought assistance as new funds become available.

The Society in NSW has also provided \$150,000 to the Society in Queensland towards its Flood Appeal and a further \$150,000 to the Society in Tasmania towards its Fire Appeal.



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# Catechist Blessings

St Joseph's Church parishioner Brenda Tunningley has been honoured with an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis recognising 40 years of dedication to teaching scripture in state schools. Fr John McHugh praised the dedication of Brenda and all catechists who help spread the faith to children attending public schools.

Brenda and her husband Don moved to Curlewis from Manilla in 1974. When their eldest son Tim started Kindergarten at Curlewis Public School, Brenda and two other mothers were asked by Fr John Willis to take on the role of teaching scripture at the village school. "The only room available was the shelter shed," Brenda recalled. "We had no lesson plan, just our own children's bibles and prayer books and our faith."

The 30-minute classes were held once a week and every term the group would combine with scripture teachers from other churches for a combined class. When her grandchildren Bonnie and Lily began their education at Curlewis School, Brenda was still sharing her faith with the little ones and also assisted other catechists at Gunnedah High School.

Brenda lost her husband Don just over two years ago and has now retired from teaching scripture but still has fond memories of her time as a catechist.



*Brenda Curlewis receiving her Papal Blessing from Fr John McHugh*

## Bishop's Award

Mr Stefan van Aanholt was the recipient of the Bishop's Award for his service and commitment to St Nicholas Parish. It recognises a member of a parish who has consistently demonstrated an active commitment and service to the parish and wider community. Stefan has been an active participant in the Catholic life of St Nicholas Parish, Tamworth. As a long-term parishioner, Stefan has been involved in a vast range of areas, including reading at Mass, being an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and taking on roles within the Parish Council. During his time as Principal of St Nicholas School, Stefan ensured that a strong relationship between the parish and school was fostered. Stefan stands out as a strong Catholic Leader in our Diocese. His commitment is an example to others and we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Stefan on receiving this award.

*Mr Stefan van Aanholt*







## Pilgrim's Highlights of WYD Panama 2019

A personal spiritual experience for me on this trip was talking to a young Catholic woman from Sydney and remarking on how similar our journeys back into lives of worship have been. These similarities ran all the way up to how we felt called to participate in the World Youth Day pilgrimage. Something she said really stuck with me, that "it seems like God speaks to you a lot through people". This one reflection has completely changed how I approach my relationships and helped me to consider a Christ-centric way of interacting with those around me. Following World Youth Day I have taken steps to be more involved in my local parish. I hope that by attending pastoral council meetings and taking active roles in ministry and service, I can inspire more young people in my area to participate more actively. My connection to my faith has been overwhelmingly deepened through this experience in realising that my actions can reflect my beliefs.

*Jonathan McCallum, St Philomena's School Moree*

I felt an overwhelming feeling of joy, love and inspiration whilst being in the presence of His Holiness, Pope Francis. World Youth Day was a spiritually uplifting experience and it opened my eyes to the various traditions and ways of worship of those from various cultures. The pilgrimage was an excellent opportunity for reflection, in particular reflecting on my relationship with God. World Youth Day filled me with hope for the future of the Catholic Church, with the passion and enthusiasm of the Catholic Youth of today the future is very promising.

*Danni McCusker, St Joseph's Barraba/St Nicholas' Tamworth*

Travelling through Mexico City to commence the pilgrimage, following the footsteps of Saint Juan Diego and understanding the struggles and strength of the Aztec people's faith was definitely the major highlight for me. Understanding what the Aztec people went through in forming such a magnificent faith through The Lady of Guadalupe was inspiring. WYD presents challenges and situations that, in different circumstances, you may walk away from. However, in the WYD context the challenges that are presented are there to help you grow, to make you realise that you are stronger than you believe. Stepping outside of your comfort zone and accepting each situation as it is and working through that situation allows you to develop as an individual, both personally and spiritually. God has an individualised plan for each and everyone of us, even if we are oblivious to it.

*Katie McMeniman, St Philoma's Moree*





The peak of the pilgrimage was taking part in the pilgrimage walk to the site of the Vigil and Final Mass. Again, I refer to the words of Pope Francis: “A disciple is not merely someone who arrives at a certain place, but one who sets out decisively, who is not afraid to take risks and keeps walking.” The walk was daunting; humidity, heat, distance, the weight of our packs, the crowds. The pilgrimage walk deeply instilled a sense of camaraderie and friendship within our already tight knit group, this feeling extended to groups of pilgrims from all over the world who embraced the discomfort, sang, danced and just kept walking.

*Emily Smith Glen Innes /Tenterfield*

My spiritual highlight of the trip was the journey to Our Lady of Guadalupe Basilica in Mexico City. The time spent celebrating Mass in the Basilica itself, as well as viewing the site of the apparition and Juan Diego’s cloak was humbling. I found it beneficial coming from a school with a strong Marian tradition to have this experience. I learnt so much about Mary in her role as the first Christian disciple, which I can apply to my own experience as a Catholic. My personal spiritual experience came on the night of the Vigil Mass. After completing the most gruelling aspect of the pilgrimage, being surrounded by thousands of young, passionate and grounded Catholics was a reminder that our Church continues to thrive. I have returned home with a renewed determination to bring young people in our Diocese to the Church through new and dynamic music and songs, many of which I learnt throughout my experience.

*Nikole Brooks, St Mary’s College Gunnedah*

quickly became a World 50 v 50. With this huge spirit of just getting involved and owning the experience of everyone attending WYD, including the locals honking their horns and starting conversations on the street, made for a truly heartwarming and memorable event. Above all it showed me the different lenses people from all around the world see God through. It’s taught me to be careful around a ‘tunnel visioned’ faith, to not be naive and think God will only work this particular way. Christianity is this big for a reason - God reaches us through his unique ways and I just need to trust in riding the wave.

*Isaac Selvey, O’Connor Catholic College Armidale*

Sario Mills, a Thursday Islander who came on the Armidale pilgrimage, was cluey enough to bring a soccer ball to one of the huge masses and we started up a game which



# Catholic Women's League Connections

Members of Catholic Women's League Australia throughout the Diocese have been looking at ways to continue with our work supporting the Clergy and Church.

Each branch has come up with different ways to do this, but one thing we all have in common, is the desire to continue our networking.

The internet has made it easier for us all to communicate, and it is remarkable how we are able to have so many friends with whom we can share important news both family and Church, and even catch up physically from time to time for special occasions. During the Easter Celebrations,



Back row (L – R) Maureen Armatage, Jean Brennan, Claire Keoghan, Jenny Pigram, Margaret Edgely, Robyn Judge, Seated - Maureen Smith and Margaret Milligan

members who were able to travel to Armidale for the Chrism Mass, met afterwards for lunch. Recently some of the Armidale Branch met at the Ex-Servies Club for coffee and cake.

## Extraordinary Women.

Thanks to God. Thanks to You.

ACNLMwa419

Photos © Piotr Wolski / ACN International

**//** I don't know if I would survive if the sisters were not here. They help me in everything: to find a house, they brought me to the hospital, they take my children to school and make sure we have something to eat...Probably I would die if the sisters weren't here. **//**

Mkasumi Mariana

The Pallotine sisters in Rwanda were founded by Saint Vincent Pallotti a very holy man, who helped the simple and poor people, the orphans and the sick.

The sisters in Masaka work in the health-centre. Their biggest challenge is tending to all the needs of the local community.

**Can you help the religious sisters who give their lives in order to be Christ to others?**

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# Clergy Assembly March 2019

The clergy of the Diocese of Armidale came together once again for their Clergy Assembly in March. Twice a year our priests meet with the Bishop to keep up to date with the latest requirements, discuss issues, pray and celebrate their vocation as one. At their latest Clergy Assembly, Mark Buhagiar, Director of the Office of Clergy Health and Wellbeing Diocese of Parramatta, presented provoking sessions on Clergy Health & Wellbeing which have challenged our priests to make sure

they are looking after themselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Sheree Limbrick, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) also spoke to our clergy about the work of CPSL, the safeguarding standards and the audit framework for Church authorities. In between these informative sessions the clergy are able to mingle, sharing meals, enjoying and respecting each other's company as priests of our Diocese.



*Front Row (L-R) Fr Frize, Fr Castelli, Fr Perrett, Bishop Kennedy, Fr Curran, Fr Gleeson, Fr Gorantla • 2<sup>nd</sup> Row (L-R) Fr Onuekwusi, Fr Leech, Fr Amaro, Fr Etoh, Fr Aguilar, Fr Llave, Monsignor Wilkes, Fr O'Brien, Fr Pulimalayil, Fr Dumayag, Fr Afu, Fr McHugh, Fr Ike, Fr Koppman • Back Row (L-R) Fr McCabe, Fr Poovathinkal, Mr Buhagiar, Mr Mbithi, Fr Armah, Deacon Manvell*

## St Mary of the Angels Guyra 1919-2019



You're invited to celebrate  
the centenary of  
St Mary of the Angels School  
Guyra, Saturday 22nd  
and Sunday 23rd June.

Dinner Saturday night at the Guyra Community Hall, doors open from 5pm with a 6pm dinner.

Sunday Mass at St Mary of the Angels Church at 9am, followed by morning tea, school tour, viewing of memorabilia and BBQ lunch.



For further information please contact the school office on 02 6779 1661 or [guyadmin@arm.catholic.edu.au](mailto:guyadmin@arm.catholic.edu.au)



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## National song contest to light up Extraordinary Missionary Month



Forget Eurovision. An international competition is challenging young people in Armidale and around Australia and the world to compose and perform their own songs for the upcoming Extraordinary Missionary Month in October 2019.

The contest, which is being run globally by the Pontifical Mission Societies, invites young people up to the age of 19 to “sing for mission” by writing and performing an entry, with the winning song being published on the Vatican’s Extraordinary Missionary Month website during October.

Pope Francis called for the Extraordinary Missionary Month in October 2017. It will coincide with the centenary of Pope Benedict XV’s apostolic exhortation, *Maximum ilud*, issued following the end of the first world war.

‘The Extraordinary Missionary Month is an opportunity for everyone to do something extraordinary for mission. For our young people around Australia, writing and singing is a wonderful creative outlet to do that,’ says Jacqueline Toakley, Diocesan Director for Catholic Mission in Armidale.

Songs for the competition can be written and performed by groups or individuals, but there is a set of criteria to follow; they must be suitable for

singing by congregations or groups and an emphasis will be placed on style and content, rather than production value.

Most importantly, the refrain must contain the international theme for the Extraordinary Missionary Month, ‘Baptised and Sent’. An exploration of that theme and some lyrical inspiration can be found on Catholic Mission’s website.

All entries will be uploaded online, with a winner chosen by an expert judging panel. ‘It’s a really exciting challenge for young people around the country, and we can’t wait to see the variety in the entries that come back from different dioceses,’ said Ms Toakley.

The last day to submit entries for the competition is Friday July 26, 2019. Entrants can send their audio files to the Catholic Mission Armidale office, with the winning entry progressing to the final round of judging.

The winning Australian song will be sent to Rome to be displayed on the Extraordinary Missionary Month website with others from around the world.

**For more information on how to submit, contact Jacqueline Toakley, Diocesan Director for Armidale, on 02 6771 8703 or visit [catholicmission.org.au](http://catholicmission.org.au).**



# Our past and Present

Staff at St Philomena's Moree had the opportunity to undertake a local cultural immersion. This program was designed to provide important information about the local area, and highlight the significant histories associated with Moree, specific to Aboriginal culture. Guided by Shirley Johnson, an Aboriginal Education Assistant at the school, a contingent of staff travelled around town, engaging with prominent sites from Moree's past and present. This experience was taken up by both staff new to the area, and those that have lived in the region for years. All attending staff reported that they received some exposure to elements of both Moree, and St Philomena's School, of which they were previously unaware.

*I have lived on Kamilaroi land for 22 years and unfortunately knew very little about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history of the area. I was able to change that somewhat after participating in the local cultural immersion. It was fascinating to hear about the development, movements, and stories of the traditional custodians of the Moree, Terry Hie Hie, and surrounding areas.*

*The drastic and oppressive rules and regulations that were imposed on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by non-Indigenous Australians put our lives today into perspective. There were some stories that were harder to hear than others, and a couple that offered some hope. Visiting the Dhiiyaan Centre particularly showcased the hard work of the community to preserve the history and heritage of the local Aboriginal people, and to share with all who live on Kamilaroi land today.*

**- Madelyn Picone - Educational Assistant - St Philomena's Moree**



**Shirley Johnson**



**St Philomena's staff visiting the 'Top Camp' memorial in Moree**



**'Top Camp' Memorial Plaque**



# Catholic Schools Week 2019 26 May–1 June



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# Don't give up chocolate for Lent

It's very easy to assume that Lent is simply about giving something up. When I was growing up, it was always chocolate that had to go, but on Easter Sunday we used to eat enough chocolate to make up for 40 days of fasting from it. I'm sure many Catholics have had a similar experience, and truthfully, on reflection it seems a little pointless. Curious, then, as to why we 'give something up' for Lent, I looked to the documents of the Church and this is what I found. Three pillars exist for Catholics to look to in order to fulfil the Lenten Observance; prayer, abstinence and almsgiving. Abstinence in and of itself is a kind of penance designed to pull us out of our comfortable lifestyle, encouraging growth in our spiritual lives. Penance is a personal act which has as its aim, love and surrender to God: fasting for the sake of God, not for the sake of one's own self. Lent is designated as a time for wholehearted surrender, prompting inner conversion and ultimately leading to a lasting change of heart. And I certainly can't speak on behalf of anyone else but me abstaining from chocolate for 40 days because that's what everyone else at school was doing for Lent, never prompted me to have an inner conversion and lasting change of heart. Rather than 'giving something up' just because, we are required to actively participate in whatever it is we decide to abstain from during Lent. Through self-denial, it is possible to cultivate the virtue of temperance. In this way, abstaining from meat or coffee or something else that has regular occurrence in your diet encourages you to actively deny yourself that which you physically desire. For example, you might have given up coffee, and you're the kind of person who drinks three or four coffees a day, in fact you're completely dependant on it. Denying yourself a coffee when you wake up is a really difficult thing to do. But every time you do it, you become less reliant upon it, and you slowly learn to self-regulate which in turn helps you to grow in temperance. Ultimately, we strive to grow in virtue not for our own selfish reasons, but to give glory to God, and to honour him by cultivating the gifts which he has given us. In this way, going without that coffee is actually not at all about 'me' but by

it being abstained from, you are offering that difficult self-denial to God. And if you can cultivate a spirit of self-control in temporal things, so grows your propensity for self-control in your spiritual life. Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Constitution entitled *'Paenitemini: On Fast and Abstinence'* outlines the church's teaching on the Lenten Fast and explains what it is actually supposed to achieve. True penitence involves our, "Whole being. Body and soul must participate actively in this religious act whereby the creature recognises divine holiness and majesty. The necessity of the mortification of the flesh



also stands clearly revealed if we consider the fragility of our nature, in which, since Adam's sin, flesh and spirit have contrasting desires." Through fasting and abstinence we are able to find liberation from these desires. So, if chocolate really is your weakness (just as mine is coffee!) then you may well be able to grow through abstaining from it during Lent. Ultimately, it is the mindset with which we possess during this period of fasting that allows us to experience a change of heart, all the while growing closer to Christ. **Rebecca Cooper**

A poster for the Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Armidale System Conference 2019. The poster has a light blue background. At the top, there is a logo for the Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Armidale. Below this, the text "SYSTEM CONFERENCE 2019" is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, "FOR ALL STAFF" is written in smaller white letters. In the center, there is a logo featuring a stylized flame or leaf shape in red and yellow, with the words "MISSION", "LEARN", and "CARE" stacked vertically to its right. Below this, the dates "11 &amp; 12 June" are written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath the dates, the location "Tamworth Regional Entertainment &amp; Conference Centre (TRECC)" is written in smaller white letters. At the bottom, there is a section titled "Proudly Supported by" in white. Below this title, there are four logos: Centacare, ADIG, msp photography, and RPMA.

## Paupers Banquet

O'Connor Catholic College Armidale students attended the 'Paupers Banquet' as a fund raiser for Project Compassion. This event involves students buying tickets to attend the banquet to be served a bowl of rice. Ten lucky students are drawn out of a hat to enjoy a lavish feast provided by the teachers. The rest of the attendees look on longingly as they enjoy their bowl of rice. Does this sound unfair? This event highlights to students the unequal distribution of wealth around the world today. Two more names (sponsored by teachers) are drawn out of the hat to join the feast highlighting that the work we do and the money we raise can make a difference. The event is organised every year by O'Connor's Vinnies Group to raise awareness of Catholic social teaching and the work of Caritas. It is also a lot of fun for O'Connor students.

*12 students got to 'feast' representing 10% of the world who have plenty to eat.*



## Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday

St Joseph's Warialda Stage 3 students prepared some delicious pancakes for Shrove Tuesday. Class teacher, Jennifer Cutcliffe, reminded the students of their Lenten obligations and Catholic tradition before school principal Joe Dimech supervised the students cooking the pancakes. Year 6 School Captains Darcy Woollett and Scarlett Smith together with Sports Captain Bree Dunnicliff and Sydnei Gunn, Year 5 student, served the pre-Lenten treats to fellow students.

*Sydnei Gunn, Darcy Woollett, Bree Dunnicliff & Scarlett Smith are serving up Pancakes to Luca Quarello, Izzy Smith, Shianne McKee-Walsh, Joel Smith, Lexi Turvey & Claire Smith*

## St Patrick's Green Day

St Patrick's Walcha celebrated St Patrick's Day in style, the children came dressed in 'green' and wow didn't they look fabulous! What a fantastic effort our children and families made with the GREEN theme clothing & food for morning tea. Thank you to all our families for your contributions and generosity towards Caritas with a gold coin donation.

*Jessica Healey, Belinda Burton, Kelly Walters from St Patrick's Walcha*



BACK COVER PHOTO: St Albert's College students; Damien Thomson, Angus Dingley, Millie Smith, Annika Spork, Charlie Smith, Katie Robinson, Jack Hely and Shannon Bow; cleaning up the debris from a devastating storm that hit Walcha just before Christmas.





*Crumbed fish and salad for lunch at Holy Trinity Inverell*

## Fish Friday

The students at Holy Trinity School Inverell supported Caritas' "Fish Friday." Our canteen supplied over 200 fish meals with a percentage of the days profit going to our Project Compassion fundraising.

## Harmony Day

National Harmony Day, a day for coming together to celebrate our rich cultural diversity. St Philomena's Moree used this day to come together in solidarity with people all over the world who do not have access to clean drinking water. Students from K-10 dressed in orange for the day. In the afternoon students worked in house teams to transport water from a central water source to locations dotted around the school. The hidden bonus buckets caused great excitement! Staff and students came together in such wonderful spirits raising awareness of the needs of others - giving Lent 100%.



*Philomena's Moree students working together to transport their water*



## Water Challenge

The students of St Mary's Armidale have been particularly moved by the story of Thandolwayo. As a 12 year old girl she walks seven kms each day to collect contaminated water for her family so we have been trying hard to save water! At the School Cross Country event students participated in the Solidarity walk and run to raise money through sponsorship, for Project Compassion. Students that participated had a water drop face painted on their cheek.

*12 year old girls ready for the Water Challenge Solidarity Walk/Run*

## Petting Zoo

The Petting Zoo was an exciting and original fundraising idea that St Joseph's Walgett hasn't seen before. It involved a large group of boys and three very generous families to pull off the thrilling event. A miniature pony, goat, diamond python, guinea pigs, rabbits, ducklings, and chicks were welcomed guests along with their handlers who shared their knowledge and fun facts with the students and teachers.

*Lily Enright, Willow Alexander, Tess Yeomans, Jye Sharpley, Tyreke Coleman, Maddie Hawke, Qunesha Suey, Frankie Loeve, Zane Manton, Riley Smith with 'Sheepyards' the goat.*





# Heroes after the Storm!

