

We are praying for Rain & helping in practical ways



A group of seven people, four men and three women, are standing behind a large stack of cardboard boxes. The boxes are labeled "DOING IT FOR OUR FARMERS" and contain various supplies for farmers, including plastic plates, toilet paper, soap, and food. The background is a wall with a cracked, dry earth pattern, symbolizing the need for rain. The text "We are praying for Rain & helping in practical ways" is overlaid on the top of the image.

Thank You Pope Paul VI



The Bishop Speaks

1968, the year I was born, was a turbulent year! Along with a few other notable years in world history it stands out as a “Year of Revolt”. Around the world there were massive strikes and protests by students, workers, and general citizens; there were political uprisings; the civil rights movement; and perhaps most significantly the cultural and sexual revolution which sought to reshape society free of sexual norms and restraints was in full swing. Change and revolution were in the air as people sensed a new era was dawning.

1968 was a turbulent year in the Church too, perhaps even a ‘Year of Revolt’. Fifty years ago on the 25th July 1968 at the height of the cultural and sexual revolution Blessed Pope Paul VI published his

encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*, “On the Regulation of Birth”. It instantly became the most vilified act of Papal Magisterium, of Papal teaching, in history.

In his letter Pope Paul VI speaks beautifully about the married love of husband and wife; of how it is total, faithful, exclusive, and fruitful. He encourages spouses to be aware of their mission of “responsible parenthood” either by the generous decision to raise a large family or the decision for a good reason to space or limit the number of their children. He discusses both the unitive and procreative aspects of married love and explains how and why they go together. And he clarified and reaffirmed the constant teaching and Tradition of the Church that only the use of the natural rhythms of



fertility to regulate births is in keeping with God's design and the true dignity of the human person, especially the unique dignity of women.

It was particularly against this last teaching which excluded artificial birth control that many Catholics objected. It wasn't just that many Catholics had difficulty accepting the teaching, it was that many influential Catholic academics, writers, theologians, and even some pastors rejected the Papal teaching outright and even vilified Paul VI. There was certainly a spirit of rebellion or "revolt" in 1968.

But I am more interested here in the average Catholic. Why did so many of them not accept Paul VI's beautiful teaching? Perhaps some didn't want to stand out as different to the world around them, so they did what they thought everybody else was doing. But Jesus' disciples are supposed to be different! Saint Paul said, "do not conform yourselves to this world." (Romans 12:2).

Perhaps others wanted to follow this moral teaching but found it difficult. I understand this, but I reflect that many disciples in the time of Jesus found his teachings on marriage and the Eucharist to be "hard teachings" too. This didn't make Jesus wrong! To confuse "hard" with "wrong" is a fundamental error which leads to many problems. Teachings that are "hard" require from us some extra effort and encourage us to seek and rely more on God's mercy and grace.

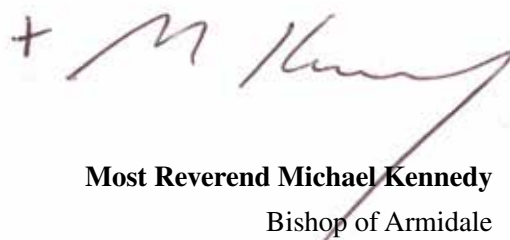
In *Humanae Vitae* Paul VI himself acknowledges the difficulties for married couples and encourages them to face up to the efforts needed supported by faith and hope; to implore divine assistance by persevering prayer and the Eucharist; and to seek God's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance should they falter. (Number 25)

Perhaps others rejected the teaching in *Humanae Vitae* because they were not properly supported by their bishops and priests. Some may have advised "you decide for yourself" while others may have demanded full conformity in order to remain a "good"

Catholic. Whatever mistakes may have been made in the past, the pastors of today must all take to heart the few words Paul VI addresses to them in *Humanae Vitae*: to properly explain the teaching; to be of the same mind and advice; to lead by the example of their own obedience to the Church; to accompany married couples with patience and goodness such as the Lord himself treated people; and to teach married couples not to be discouraged by their weakness when they falter. (Numbers 28-29)

In *Humanae Vitae* Paul VI warned of the consequences that would come to a world that embraced artificial birth control including: increased marital infidelity and break-up; a lowering of morality; and men losing respect for women. We realize how prophetic he was when we look at the world today.

I am deeply grateful to Blessed Paul VI for his insightful teaching and courageous witness to the truth about married love and sexuality in *Humanae Vitae*. I believe we find in it a key to strong and committed marriages and to happy and healthy family life. It is fitting that in this fiftieth anniversary year of this prophetic teaching its author Blessed Paul VI will be canonised a saint on October 14 by Pope Francis. Thank you Pope Paul VI!



Handwritten signature of Most Reverend Michael Kennedy in purple ink.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale

COVER: St Edward's Parish South Tamworth are 'Doing It For Our Farmers'

Catholics around us

Raphael and Meera have been visiting Tamworth. They are staying with their daughter who is a gynaecologist at the Tamworth Regional Hospital. They try to attend daily Mass wherever they are in the world. Today Grahame Tighe and I met them after Mass and over a cup of coffee learned a great deal from this delightful couple.

Sixty five year old Raphael was born in Kerala, Southern India and Meera in nearby Bangalore. Raphael's family have been Christians for hundreds of years, from the time of St Thomas, he speculates. They met at University while studying engineering. Their two older children are both engineers in the US.

Twenty seven years ago Raphael took a temporary job in the oil rich Persian Gulf Sultanate of Oman. Oman remains their home although their work takes them around the world. Raphael uses his engineering and management skills to assist business in developing countries. His next challenge is in East Africa where he has been asked to manage a Stanford University project which encourages local industry by making available low interest loans. Raphael's role will be to choose suitable recipients for small loans, to educate the loan recipients in the management of the finance and to assist in marketing their products. Raphael has seen such programs working



successfully in Asia and is confident that they will be successful in East Africa.

Though a passionate supporter of all things Indian, particularly their cricket team, Raphael is very proud of his adopted country, the Sultanate of Oman. He points out that under the moderate rule of the current Sultan, who has been in power since 1971, Oman has made dramatic progress without the extravagant expenditure seen in other oil rich states. He points out that Oman like most moderate Islamic countries is tolerant of diverse religions and has assisted the Catholic Diocese of Oman to meet the needs of the seven hundred thousand Filipino guest workers who now call Oman home. Oman is also home to about the same number of guest workers from India and as well as a quarter of a million from Bangladesh. There are two million Omanis.

**Burke & Hamilton**
FUNERALS
Personalise your loved one's Farewell
"Caring for our Catholic Families since 1986"

Finance available.
Servicing Tamworth & Districts.
45 Gunnedah Road. West Tamworth
Phone: 67653999
www.burkeandhamilton.com.au


BEVAN DOUGLAS
FUNERALS
For over 40 years we have been caring for your loved ones with the compassion, respect & dignity they deserve.

Servicing Tamworth & Districts
- 24 Hours -
02 67607471
Funeral Bonds & Pre-Paid Arrangements
info@bevandouglasfunerals.com.au
**1040 Gunnedah Road Tamworth**

Practising Catholic Staff,
Honouring Catholic Funeral Rituals.



Bishop Kennedy, Aunty Fay, John Phillips and the students of St Joseph's Walgett celebrate NAIDOC Week

Aunty Fay Honoured with Doctorate

Gamilaroi Elder Aunty Fay Green OAM was awarded the doctorate in Sydney on May 9 for her dedication to education in the community of Walgett and the establishment of the Aboriginal language program at St Joseph's Primary, Walgett.

Aunty Fay was nominated for the award by the inter-congregational group of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The establishment of this partnership in 2011 has enabled continued support for Aboriginal communities in places where individual religious congregations had previously ministered.

Good Samaritan Sister Clare Condon said during the group's time in Walgett, the religious came to realise what an incredible contribution Aunty Fay Green had made, and continues to make, to the education of young people in the Walgett region, especially through St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

"She has been a champion of transmitting culture to the young and maintaining their traditional language," Sr Clare said. "The ACU ceremony was a powerful symbol of the determination of one incredibly committed woman who never gave up on her endeavour to seek quality education for all."

Josephite Sisters Mary-Ellen Griffin and Mary Quinlan, who have worked closely with Aunty Fay, say she is a wonderful listener and a woman of great faith.

In an address at the ceremony, Aunty Fay said: "The day our language was officially introduced into the education system was the happiest day because for so long people did not want to know about our language and culture."

"Now, all children, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, at St Joseph's learn, speak and sing in our language."

FULL STORY: ACU honours a wise woman from Walgett
(The Good Oil)



Bishop Kennedy with Aunty Fay at St Joseph's School Walgett



Aunty Fay Green receives her doctorate from ACU Chancellor John Fahey (GFP Graduations)



Sr Coral, Sr Anita Vag, Sr Magdalen McDonald, Sr Anne Gibson, Sr Margaret Cusack, Sr Judy Breen, Sr Mary Quinlan, Sr Mary Ellen Griffin, Sr Jennifer Scally, Mr Joseph Dimech, Sr Petra Ries and Students, Luca and Gabbie Quarello

An Era Ends—Farewell to the Sisters of St Joseph Warialda

The weekend celebration to thank the Sisters of St Joseph for their 113 years of service in Warialda was a great success. St Joseph's students, Luca and Gabby Quarello presented the Sisters with table place mats and a cardboard figure of St Mary McKillop that the children had made especially for the celebration. The Sisters and parishioners celebrated Mass, shared a meal and visited residents at Naroo and patients at the hospital. Fr Paul McCabe made the point of Sr Mary McKillop being a prophet of her time, with a passion for helping the poor and under privileged. Sr Mary Ellen O'Donoghue, The NSW Regional Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, spoke about the future of the Order and thanked the people of Warialda for the wonderful support and care given over the 113 years.

*'the Warialda Convent School under the direction of the Sisters of St Joseph
will open on Monday 11 July'*

The Warialda Standard 28 June 1904

'It is both an honour and a sadness to say a few words on behalf of the Sisters of St Joseph as we take our leave of this Parish community where we have served for almost exactly 113 years.

Three Sisters, Srs Camillus, Berchmans and we think a postulant, arrived as the founding community and were followed down through the next century by a long line of Sisters who found a warm and caring community who supported them in all their endeavours in education and more recently in their pastoral outreach. I was deeply touched yesterday when I visited the cemetery to pray with Srs Camillus and Berchmans to discover how cared for their graves were, even to flowers being placed there even after over 100 years.

Life for the early Sisters offered many challenges with

the Church converted into the school Monday to Friday and then prepared for Mass and devotions at the weekend whenever these were scheduled. The Sisters were the public face of Church, with the Parish Priest travelling to Warialda from Bingara for Mass until 1938 when Warialda became a Parish in its own right. Much of the Parish visitation was conducted by the Sisters.

While the Sisters' diary entries sometimes refer to the privations, such as the cold, the lack of electricity, the need for tank water, kerosene lamps and log fires, they also speak of the graciousness and support of parishioners, who brought a load of wood or offered fresh milk when it was needed.

Like many of our pioneer communities, the Sisters, like many of the people they served were poor, so school

fees were often paid in kind with a pound of butter, a bucket of milk, some vegetables or a piece of meat. These periodic gifts enabled them to make ends meet. The people however were generous and when the Sisters went into Glen Innes for Retreat or the Christmas holidays they would return to a full pantry, a clean convent and a prepared meal. The Sisters held concerts, showcasing the talent of the students and the parishioners held raffles and chocolate wheels with the proceeds given to the Sisters towards their

living expenses or to help the wider Congregation. I noticed, for example, that the £4 collected in music fees had been sent to North Sydney for the support of the Sisters' Novitiate.

Over the last 113 years much has changed in our Church and society. Fewer vocations have led to a decrease in the numbers of Sisters available to take up ministry. In the spirit of St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, the Sisters of St Joseph have always lived simply, going wherever the needs of the Church have called. However, as our numbers have diminished we have found ourselves more and more needing to withdraw from places where we have lived for many years. This is a painful experience, especially when the withdrawal is from small rural communities, such as Warialda.

Down through the years the Sisters have shared in your lives, walked beside you in your joys and sorrows, and they too have been supported and encouraged by your generosity and friendship through the good times and the hard times. As the Sisters remember the past they are filled with profound gratitude to this parish community for not only providing us with a home but for being such an important part of our lives.



At the gravesides of the founding Sisters of St Joseph

While the Sisters, and many of you, are saddened to see the closure of the Convent, we need to *embrace the future with hope* and to see the hand of God in this event.

As we move into an unknown future, the Sisters of St Joseph would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Fr Joseph and all the priests, who have ministered to us and with us, and each member of the parish community with whom we have walked in friendship as we shared the good news of God's love. May God bless each of you and may St Mary MacKillop, continue to intercede for you so that your lives will always be filled with an abundance of God's love, peace and joy.'

Sr Mary Ellen O'Donoghue



Gail Smith and Anne Woollett



Srs Anne Gibson and Petra Ries

Sacred Heart Parish Inverell

Cordially invites

The Catholic Faithful of the Diocese

To join our Faith Community

In celebrating our 150th year as a Parish

14th till 21st October

Weeklong Celebration and Exhibition



- Parish Picnic: Sunday 14th October after the 9:00am Mass
- Priests and Religious Day: Thursday 18th October 11:00am Mass followed by lunch at the presbytery and the Parish grounds (by RSVP)
- Inverell Cemetery Walk: Saturday 20th October 9:00am
- Parish Thanksgiving: Saturday 20th October 5:00pm Mass with Bishop Kennedy
- Dinner Celebration: Saturday 20th October 6:30pm at the RSM Club (by RSVP)

RSVP by Monday 1st October 2018

02 6722 1103

inverellparish@armidale.catholic.org.au

How can we support you?



With a team of more than 100 locals across the New England North West, we understand where you are coming from.

Centacare NENW offers a range of services and support to individuals, couples, families and workplaces including:

- Mediation—Family Dispute Resolution; Property, finance & workplace mediation
- Information & education sessions around mental health & family relationships
- Case work support for individuals & families
- Aboriginal and CALD support services
- Counselling & psychological support
- Free Gambling Help Service for problem gamblers & their families
- Corporate/HR psychology & Employee Assistance Program
- Free Carers counselling (through Carers NSW)
- Disability support services
- Support for young people through headspace Tamworth

Call us to talk about the help that's right for you and your family.

1800 372 826

www.centacarenenw.com.au

Armidale, Gunnedah, Glen Innes, Inverell, Moree, Narrabri, Tamworth, Walgett & headspace Tamworth





St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

The 2nd International Youth Meeting of the Society of St Vincent de Paul is to be held in Salamanca, Spain, between 15th and 21st June, 2018, with the general theme: 'Young Vincentians as leaders of the present and the future of the SSVP'. Motivating this theme is the Bible reflection: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." (John 15, 16).

As an extension of this gathering, the International General Council has declared 2018 be the Vincentian 'International Thematic Year of Francois Lallier'. At 19 years of age, Francois Lallier was the youngest of the group of seven young men who formed the first

Conference of the Society in Paris in 1833. With this Catholic faith foundation, the young men of the first conference set in train a spiritual organization that put its faith into action to form a 'network of charity' around the world. The St Vincent de Paul Society now exists in 143 countries with almost one million members.

In the Armidale Diocese there are 25 Conferences of the Society, spread across seventeen towns and providing care and support to those in need. The Society also conducts retail operations in 19 outlets to support this care and support. The Society is always welcoming to receive new members to our Care and Support Conferences and new volunteers to operate our Vinnies shops, in support of the current 170 members and 480 volunteers.

Any enquiries can be made to the Armidale Diocesan Central Council Office in Armidale: (02) 5776 0200

Kerry Muir, North Eastern Regional President of the Society.



Evangelist – who me?

If we are to be effective evangelists, we must believe in what we say and communicate it with passion. Catholicism isn't simply one idea among many—we must confidently believe in it to the point that we are

willing to suffer and die for it if necessary.

Martyr means witness, and the martyrs are the ultimate evangelists (they are the seed of the Church) because they witness to the reality of Christ with suffering and blood.

We must have this kind of faith, and even if we are not called to lay down our lives for Christ, we must be *willing* to or our evangelism will ring hollow.

The Catholic Gentleman <https://www.catholicgentleman.net/>

Advertise with Viewpoint - Next issue due: 21 Sept 2018

Viewpoint is an A4 size, full colour, bi-monthly publication

- A wide distribution throughout the Diocese
- free of charge
- available in every parish and school in the diocese
- linked to the Diocesan website
- All advertisements will be full colour
- (note: front and back covers not available)
- 10% discount if you advertise for a full year – 6 issues



To know more:
talk to Naomi 02 6771 8700 or
email: catholicviewpoint@armidale.catholic.org.au

Werris Creek Celebrates 100 Years

Come aboard, 100 years, the journey goes on with the Lord

Come and join in the Community of Werris Creek as it celebrates 100 years
of the Parish of Saint Thomas More.

The main celebrations are on Sunday 7 October 2018

with the blessing of the new Parish Office

followed by Mass at 11:00am celebrated by Bishop Michael Kennedy

then lunch at the Werris Creek Golf Club at 1:00 for 1:30pm.

Lunch is \$25 per head, please RSVP with payment

to St Thomas More Parish Werris Creek, PO Box 7 Werris Creek, NSW, 2341.

Alternately please make payment to:

BSB: 082-105 Account Number: 001047872 with your surname as description

For catering purposes please RVSP by Friday 7 September 2018.

A Priceless Confidence... A Sacred Trust...

A devout and dignified observance of the funeral rites of the Church,
personally conducted by Shaun Hamilton, who has over 35 years' experience

- All funeral wishes attended to with reverence and understanding
- Compassionate Funeral Staff, always willing to be of assistance
at any time, day or night
- Pre-arranged and prepaid funeral bonds available



Shaun Hamilton Funerals Pty Ltd

Funeral Home & Head Office
Branch Office

125 Marius Street Tamworth
214 George Street Quirindi

6766 1966
6746 2222
ALL HOURS

Tamworth & Quirindi's only locally owned & operated funeral director


Tamworth, Quirindi, Werris Creek, Gunnedah, Manilla & Surrounding Districts



National Safeguarding Standards

The Catholic Church has already begun its work to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Some of those responses began during the course of the Royal Commission.

At the national level, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd has been working to produce consistent national safeguarding standards for the Church. The 10 standards are:

1		Committed leadership, governance and culture
2		Children are safe, informed and participate
3		Partnering with parents, carers and communities
4		Equity is promoted and diversity is respected
5		Robust human resource management
6		Effective complaints management
7		Ongoing education and training
8		Safe physical and online environments
9		Policies and procedures to support child safety
10		Regular improvement

More information on each of the standards can be obtained at <https://www.cpsltd.org.au/safe-church/national-catholic-safeguarding-standards/> - The Diocese of Armidale is committed to these standards and has commenced the necessary work to ensure they are implemented throughout all the Diocese.

Seal of Confession

The abolition of the seal of confession was part of the Royal Commission recommendations and some state governments are legislating to remove it.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference recently made these comments on the seal of confession.

“Regarding the issue of the seal of confession, the Catholic Church does not view the sacramental seal as incompatible with maintaining child safety.

The Church wants measures that will genuinely make environments safer for children. There has been no compelling evidence to suggest that legal abolition of

the seal of confession will help in that regard.

Protecting children and upholding the integrity of Catholic sacraments are not mutually exclusive and the Church wants to continue to work with government to ensure both can be achieved and maintained.”



Disability Inclusions

Keeping you at the centre of your life

Centacare NENW is a registered NDIS provider with a friendly, trained team ready to enrich the lives of all people with disabilities.

We encourage you to:

- Choose your own adventure and
- Live life your way, with freedom.

We involve you, and your family and carers; finding ways to assist you to achieve your goals.



Ask us about Plan Management, Coordination of Supports, Therapeutic Supports, Behaviour Support, and Counselling for you or your carer.



We also offer help with mediation, and family relationship information and education.

1800 372 826

Centacare NENW is a registered NDIS provider.

 **Centacare**
New England North West
Rural Resilience
THE SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

Wedding Crasher Gets Warm Welcome in Vatican Church



Pope Francis celebrates the Sacrament of Marriage

Swiss Guard and Soon-to-be Wife Surprised by Pope Francis

The wedding was a small affair, just a Swiss guard, his fiancé, and a few friends at the Church St Stephen of the Abyssinians in Vatican City on July 14, 2018. But as the group prepared for the ceremony with Brazilian priest Father Renato dos Santos, another well-known cleric entered the sacristy and said he would like to perform the ceremony. The unexpected guest celebrant: Pope Francis. Nobody present knew he was coming. “Never in



Pope Francis With Father Renato Dos Santos At The Wedding Ceremony In The Vatican On July 14, 2018 - © Vatican News

my life, never would I have thought of finding the Pope in a sacristy,” Fr. dos Santos told Vatican News. The Brazilian priest noted the people inside the church were so surprised they were wondering if it was really Pope Francis. “I saw him as a true parish priest who takes care for his own sheep in the parish,” Fr. dos Santos said. “He’s always done it this way. The Pope showed how dear to his heart marriage is,” Fr. dos Santos pointed out. “The Pope has great love for this sacrament which helps start a family and which wants to put God at the centre.”
zenit.org

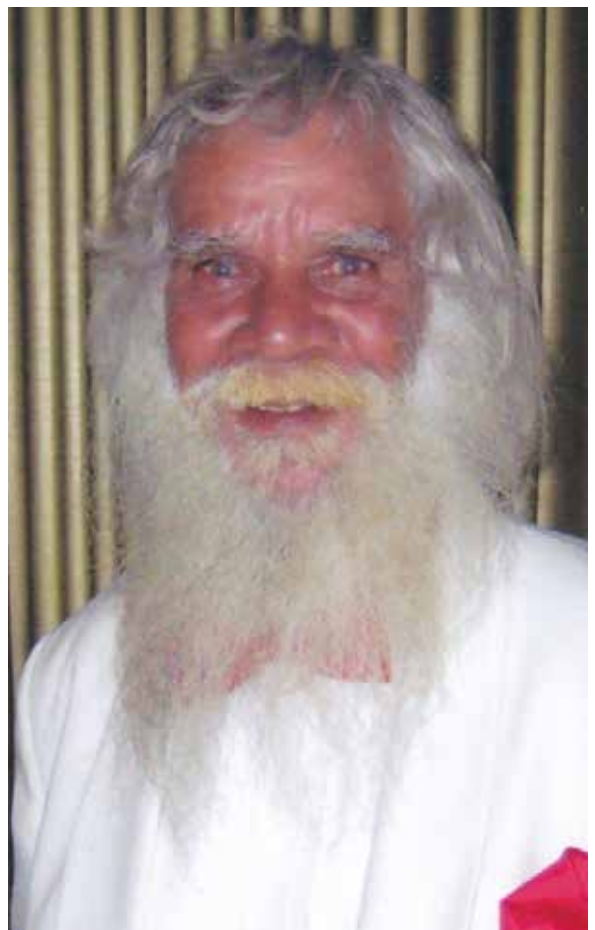
Richard Penrith

A memorial service was held in Mary Help of Christians Church, South Tamworth for a very special man who passed away recently. Richard Penrith was an Aboriginal man, born in Southern NSW where he worked for twelve years on the railways before following his wife and family to Tamworth where he worked in forestry for ten years. The large number of people in attendance came to pray for and pay their respects to a kind, gentle man who was loved by all who knew him.

Richard was a legend at the St Vincent de Paul Centre in South Tamworth with his flowing white beard and colourful hats. For twenty two years he was in attendance at the store every day that it was open. He’d arrive early to clean up around the bins and to sweep the store. As each volunteer arrived he would greet them with a smile and words of welcome. Customers sought him out as soon as they entered the store. He treated everyone with kindness and dignity. He was never heard to utter an unkind word or to complain. At the end of the day he was last to leave

His son Basil spoke about him as a great family man and a loyal member of the Aboriginal community. Mr Bill Makepeace speaking on behalf of the dozens of St Vincent de Paul volunteers referred to his generosity, his kindness to all, his good humour and his love of a cup of tea.

According to his wish Richard’s body was taken back to Tumut where it was laid to rest among his ancestors.





100 Years of St Joseph's Gunnedah

Grace was flowing like a river from St Joseph's Church in Gunnedah when the faithful gathered to celebrate the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone by Bishop JP O'Connor in 1918.

As the morning sunlight filtered through the magnificent stained-glass window above the altar, Bishop Michael Kennedy dedicated a new altar. The altar has the original communion rail gates incorporated into each end.

The Mass was concelebrated by Father John McHugh with the Sisters of St Joseph carrying a relic of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop to the altar for deposition during the dedication. In the congregation were descendants of many faithful parishioners who had contributed to the construction and furnishing of the church.

Bishop Kennedy congratulated Fr McHugh and the whole parish for their care of the historic building and remembrance of soldiers. After Mass, the Bishop unveiled a commemorative plaque and planted a tree and cut the centenary cake. Special awards were presented to John Perkins, Val McCann and Deirdre Andren, who have contributed enormously to the Parish in a voluntary capacity over many years. 100-year-old Eileen Egan received a Papal Blessing from Pope Francis and newborn George Plevy received a memento from Fr McHugh. The Sisters of Mercy were honoured for their ongoing contribution to the Parish and the Knights of the Southern Cross were also commended.

Everyone gathered on the lawns over a sausage sizzle lunch and a browse through Parish scrapbooks. Parishioners were delighted to catch up with many former resident priests who had cared for them over many years. Fr McHugh offered his grateful thanks to everyone involved and who have contributed since planning began three years ago.

The celebrations concluded on the Wednesday with Mass and a gathering of 28 clergy from the Diocese and beyond, including Bishop Gerard Hanna. Fr John Curran reflected on his years in the parish. Fr Paul McCabe paid tribute to the amazing strength and faith of the early clergy and religious of Gunnedah and the enormous contribution of the Catholic faithful since 1875 when the first Parish Priest was appointed.

Sr Gabrielle Foley spoke about the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in 1879 and their selfless work in setting up schools, a business college and aged care facilities. St Joseph's archivist Marie Hobson presented an insight into the dedicated life of Fr Daniel Keane who was Parish Priest in 1918-19.

In the words of Fr John: "May God, under the protection of St Joseph, continue to watch over our parish, and guide us in the way of the Gospel."

A booklet, celebrating 100 Years of St Joseph's Church in Gunnedah is available from the Presbytery for \$10. Please call 6742 0200 if interested.



Patsy Spradbrow, her mother Hazel Tailby donated the tabernacle in memory of her father Charlie Tailby



Bishop Kennedy plants a tree in memory of the 100 year celebration



Bishop Kennedy, Noreen Kennedy and Fr John McHugh unveiling the commemorative plaque



St Joseph's Congregation at the 100yrs celebration Mass



The priests present at the laying of the foundation stone in 1918

Around 'n About

Doing It For Our Farmers

Parishioners and students at St Edward's Parish, South Tamworth are very aware of the damage being done to the environment, farm animals, native wildlife and most importantly, to the farmers by the current drought. Aware that it would be impossible for the parishioners to make a meaningful contribution to the farmers by means of a cash or hay contribution, it was decided to become involved in a toiletries drive. Proving small but useful items which farmers might not buy for themselves is both symbolic and practical.

Parishioners and students have responded by filling boxes each week end with small household items such as toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and nappies. All items donated must be new and unopened. As the boxes are filled they are dispatched to the Doing it For Our Farmers organisers for immediate distribution.



Grahame Tighe, Denise Sullivan, Helen Oades, Judy Milne, Jeanette Frewin, Janet MacRae



First Holy Communion

The First Holy Communion recipients from the Sunday Mass.

The children of St Nicholas' Parish Tamworth received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion on the Solemnity of John the Baptist feast day. The candidates were 68 in number, and they were divided into two, because the church will not contain all of them in one Mass. The first group attended 6pm Mass on Saturday, and the second group attended 9.30 Mass on Sunday. Congratulations to all the candidates.

St Patrick's West Tamworth Confirmation

The children of St Patrick's Parish received the Sacrament of confirmation. The Friday before, Bishop Kennedy visited all our classrooms and spoke to the children. He was very pleased with how well prepared the children were for Confirmation. It was wonderful to see so many parents, family members and friends joining us for this special occasion. Special thanks to Fr Anthony Koppman and the teachers and catechists for preparing and supporting the children. The children were a credit to their parents, the Parish and the school.

Photo: The Confirmation candidates with Bishop Kennedy, Fr Anthony Koppman and their certificates





Lunch on the Lawn

To celebrate Catholic Schools Week St Francis Xavier's Narrabri invited parents to a school assembly with performances by several classes. Assembly was followed by lunch on the lawn with parents, grandparents and friends.

Photo: Paul Lehmann with Oliver and Ebony Lehmann

New Altar Servers South Tamworth

St Edward's Parish South Tamworth installed new altar servers for their parish in Mary Help of Christians Church. The children are a credit to the Parish putting their 'service to others' into action.

Front row: Taylah Evans, Eva Maloney, Nichola Ferrer, Georgia Errington, Grace Goodfellow, Riley Bellenger, Matthew Frost

Second row: Khyle Orobias, Nathan Nunag, AJ Uy, Harrison Ritz, CJ Uy, Francis Cabrera, Ralph Barril

Third row: Bailey Evans, Fr Paul Aguilar, Rev Paul Manvell



Philippine National Day Celebrations

The Philippine National Day, marking the 120th anniversary of the proclamation of independence of the Republic of the Philippines was celebrated in the Parish of South Tamworth on Sunday, 10th June. The celebrations began with a concelebrated Mass presided by Bishop Michael Kennedy and priests from around the Diocese in St Edward's Church. The church was full to capacity and the Tamworth Filipino Community Choir was magnificent. Cr Russell Webb spoke of the great contribution being made by Filipinos to society through their hard work, their willingness to participate in cultural activities and their long term commitment to the development of the region.

Photo: Tamworth Filipinos dancing Cariñosa (traditional courting dance)

Around 'n About

First Holy Communion celebrated with Cake

Congratulations to the 23 children who received the sacrament of First Holy Communion in a very prayerful Mass at St. Francis Xavier's Church Narrabri. Teachers Mrs Amanda Hardy and Mrs Sally Foster with Catechist Aimee Redding prepared the children and St. Francis Xavier's Parish Priest Father James Poovathinkal celebrated the Mass.

The Communion cake was made and beautifully decorated by Mrs Kristy Faris.



St Francis Xavier's Narrabri passing the Year of Youth Cross on to St Joseph's Wee Waa. Marty Hatton, Alison Hatton, Paige Hatton, Fr James Poovathinkal, Poppy Penberthy, Michael Ball, Tom Leitch, Maree Holland, Judy Rily

Year of Youth Cross visits Narrabri

St. Francis Xavier's School Narrabri were privileged to have the Year of Youth Cross in our school for the last week of Term 2. Each class participated in a lesson on the purpose, significance and meaning of the cross. The children were amazed at the beautiful detail in the carvings. The following comments from two students reflects the general attitude of all the students: "I love the symbolism and the detail and its relevance to our area". "Looking at it makes me feel calm and full of peace".

"Serve, Learn, Lead" - St Mary's College, Gunnedah

To celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2018 and the Year of Youth, the SRC and Senior Council of St Mary's College organised a BBQ and bake sale. The funds raised were donated to Mercy Connect and would be used to fund teachers and educational resources for refugee children to assist their integration into Australian society. We emphasised the "Serve" aspect of the motto for Catholic Schools Week - all leaders brought in sausages, bread, sauce and baked goods as our donation and all members of the leadership team were involved in either setting up, cooking, serving, advertising or packing up. We ended up running out of bread, so the student body simply bought the sausages from us. It was great to see St Mary's students and staff get behind our fundraiser. In total, we raised \$374 for Mercy Connect, and plan on adding to this total in Week 9 when we hold our School Social.



The SRC and Senior Council of St Mary's College



St Vincent de Paul representative, Michael O'Kane with the St Mary's Mini Vinnies team: Heather Bassett - President, Alexis Cook - Vice President, Abigail Shephard - Spiritual Advisor, Aaliyah Walsh - Secretary & Breanna Naden

Helping to Fight the Cold- St Mary's Catholic Primary School Armidale

During last term, as Armidale suffered very cold conditions, St Mary's Mini Vinnie's team worked together with their school community to make donations to the St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal. Students wore their 'winter woolies' to school one day during the term and donated coins as part of this. The school community were also asked to send in blankets and were very generous. In total the school was able to present one hundred and four blankets as well as a cheque for over \$400 to their local St Vincent de Paul store.

Science Activities challenge Grandparents

To coincide with the celebrations associated with Catholic Schools Week last term, Sacred Heart Primary Boggabri held its annual House/Grandparents Day. This day allowed the two houses: Cox and Namoi to continue their rivalry in a number of science-based challenges supported by a large crowd of parents and grandparents. The various challenges included: programming a sphero to complete a course, creating the highest tower from balloons, making volcanic eruptions and many others. After these activities were conducted the day concluded with a trivia challenge with questions covering a large range of topics. At the end of the day, the Cox House was victorious by half a point!

Hunter Rigelsford, Mackenzie Price and Hallie Thomson coding their sphero through the course



The Holy Spirit comes to Narrabri

Thirty-four children from Narrabri Parish received the Sacrament of Confirmation from The Most Reverend Bishop Michael Kennedy in a beautiful ceremony in June. The Confirmation candidates met with Bishop Kennedy on Friday prior to receiving the Sacrament to discuss the sacrament and their knowledge. He was very impressed with their ability to share their understandings.

The children who were confirmed with Bishop Michael Kennedy, Parish Priest Fr. James Poovathinkal, Principal Michael Ball, Year 5/6 Teacher Mrs Michelle O'Connor, Catechist Mrs Aimee Redding and REC Mrs Judy Rily.



Part of your Parishes Part of your Schools Part of your Community

Thank you to our agencies

Armidale Diocesan Investment Group (ADIG) has been fortunate to have agencies who have allowed clients to engage with ADIG within their own towns offering friendly assistance when needed.

Due to the new regulations introduced on January 1, ADIG is no longer able to have these fantastic businesses and staff as agencies. Many of these agencies have been a part of the ADIG family for many years and as such, in

recognition, ADIG recently presented each agency with a small token of gratitude.

You can still be a part of ADIG knowing that your investment will continue to help the works of the Diocese. We also offer online banking so you will always be able to keep in touch with your finances anytime, anywhere. You can still see your savings grow and help your Catholic community while benefiting from competitive interest rates.



Clockwise from top: Jane Newsome, Roberts & Morrow Glen Innes; Fr Abmar and Basil Downes, Webb & Boland Moree; Sandra Lane and Lisa Hagley, Gunnedah Discount Drug Store; Fr James, Louise Gett, C & W Financial Services Narrabri and Cynthia Wilson; Ian & Michelle Rees, Inverell Furniture Court and Fr Leech and Jeff Holland Jeff Holland's Sports Store Tenterfield.

For exceptional customer service, convenience, competitive rates and friendly faces, look to ADIG.

Call us on 1800 040 903 or 1800 803 194.





*Deputy Master Areti Metuamate,
Shelby Glavocih and Sean Skinner*



St Albert's College sent three representatives to the Chosen Conference in Melbourne this year.

Deputy Master Areti Metuamate and students, Shelby Glavocih and Sean Skinner. Shelby shares her experience with us:

The 2018 Chosen Conference was definitely different to what we were expecting. The 4-day Conference, held in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, allowed us to meet people, listen to keynote speakers, dance, sing and experience catholic culture. We learnt that 2018 is the official 'Year of Youth' and how to help young people encounter Jesus in an encouraging way. This allowed Ari, Sean and myself to discuss ways of making our College life and experience better, through various activities and initiatives. Overall, the conference was an amazing experience and we are so grateful to have had such an opportunity to attend. *Shelby Glavocih*

The "Chosen" Conference" of the Australian Branch of the "Jesus Youth" drew almost 200 tertiary students and young alumni to Mannix College, Monash University, Melbourne on the weekend of the 12 – 15 July 2018 for a stunningly successful Young Adult Catholic experience.

The Jesus Youth were founded in Kerala in southern

India, the most Christian (and Catholic) state in the sub-continent and is a worldwide movement with an Australian Branch which draws most of its support from Catholic young men and women (and their friends) from India, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh and Pakistan. The Jesus Youth were brought to Australia around fifteen years ago (2004) and are organised in all the state capital cities plus Alice Springs!

"Jesus Youth Australia is a dynamic movement of the Holy Spirit in our times. I've had much to do with this Movement over the years, both nationally and internationally. I can assure you that the Jesus Youth is a movement at the very heart of the Catholic Church's call for a new evangelisation in our times." *Archbishop Chris Prowse of Canberra-Goulburn*





At the recent Principals' Forum in Armidale we joined with the Bishop and clergy of the Diocese for some workshops. The purpose of one of the workshops during the Forum was to consider how we increase the enrolment of Catholic students in our schools. As a stimulus to this conversation, I presented some thoughts to the group taken from a presentation by Archbishop Angelo Zani, Secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education, who recently visited Australia.

Archbishop Zani shared the thoughts of Pope Francis on Catholic education. He said Pope Francis sees four "Pillars" on which to base the future of Catholic Education.

- "Catholic Schools open to all"
- A strong sense of Catholic community
- Ongoing "formation" of teachers
- Respond to the challenges of the present day.

We considered the many challenges we face in the context of today's society and the place of the Catholic Church in Australia at the moment. We are encouraged

by Pope Francis to meet the current challenges by considering the following advice:

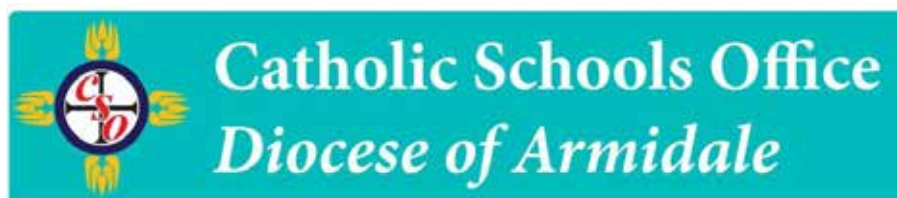
- "Don't be afraid to take risks"
- Be people of honest dialogue
- Learning must combine the mind, heart and head or it is wasted
- "Seeking out those who have been excluded for whatever reason".

Catholic education faces many challenges in these current times but we must accept the way forward and respond to Pope Francis's strongest advice which is:

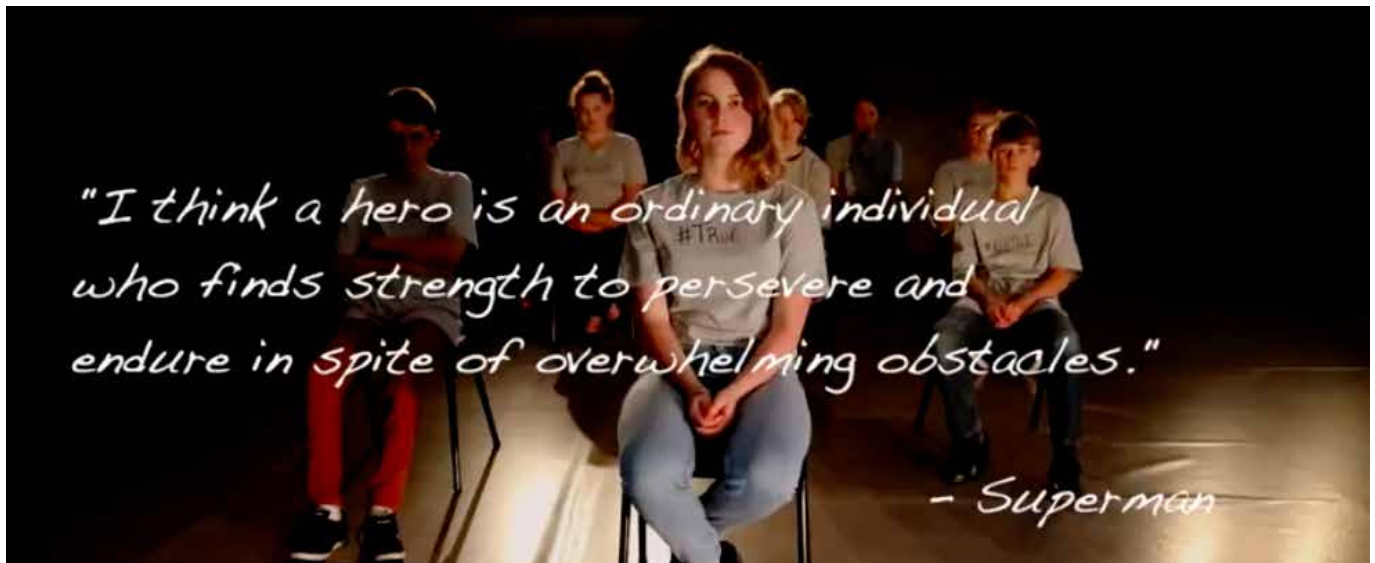
- "Whoever does not respond to challenges is not living"
- "Education cannot be confined to the safety zone".

We will report in the near future on some of the strategies emerging from the Clergy and Principal Forum which demonstrate our will to respond to the challenge.

Chris Smyth, Director of Schools



O'Connor Catholic College Armidale finalists in Short Film Festival



The film is able to be viewed using this link [https://www.focusonability.com.au/FOA/films/No Ordinary Hero 1469.html](https://www.focusonability.com.au/FOA/films/No_Ordinary_Hero_1469.html)

or search the internet for *Focus on Ability* and click on 2018 Films, School Entrant Documentaries.

O'Connor Catholic College held a film premiere evening on 26 June where the students involved got to walk the red carpet. They were able to invite family and friends, and many O'Connor and Catholic Schools Office staff also attended. With over 50 people present they were able to celebrate the huge impact and success of the film as a community. The students were so proud...it was very emotional and uplifting! The judges will announce their decision on 5 September.

O'Connor Catholic College's entry *No Ordinary Hero* is a finalist in the NOVA Employment 2018 Focus On Ability Short Film Awards. Celebrating ten years this year, the Focus on Ability Awards are designed to encourage filmmakers to focus on the ability of people with disability.

This year's Focus on Ability competition hit a record number of 297 entries, including 131 school entries and 63 international films. Following successful screenings last year in New Zealand, New York and Zimbabwe, this year the competition received entries from a record number of countries (26), including Pakistan, Iran, Tunisia and Hong Kong.

Eight O'Connor students who either have a disability themselves, or have

a close family member with one, participated in the planning and filming of the documentary. They wanted to tell others about the daily struggles of living with a disability, and in particular wanted to focus on their ability qualities. In the meetings, the students came up with the idea of superheroes who persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles, which is the theme of their short film *No Ordinary Hero*.

The students hope that the documentary will encourage people to be more empathetic and understanding, not only of them but of all people who live with a disability.



Cast and Crew - Amy Showell, Molly Hardey, Airlie Whan, Ryan van der Veer, Sarah Watson, Melissa Killen, Daniel Murrell, Blake Tricker, Cody Wright, Jenny Roff. (absent Sharnaya Abdul-Majid)

New Retirement Village Grand Opening

Oak Tree Retirement Village Taylor Street is finally here and we would like to invite everyone to join us to celebrate our Grand Opening on Friday 24th August and Saturday 25th August between 10am and 2pm.

This will provide a welcomed chance to meet the Oak Tree team, including Directors Mark Bindon and Franco De Pasquale, New England Area Manager Kate Pigram and local Village Manager Diana Gordon.

The village is located at the southern end of Taylor Street, Armidale. While you're there, take a look at the modern villas with their open plan living and outdoor patio areas. The village is located at Taylor Street, Armidale.

Oak Tree has villas priced to suit most budgets, with many buyers able to sell their homes and have savings in the bank to spend on new furniture, a car, holiday or the family. Plus with no stamp duty and a single weekly fee to cover expenses (such as council rates, water, sewerage, waste, internal maintenance, building and facilities insurance, and external cleaning), finances are more easily managed.

As a resident of Oak Tree, you will be able to relax in a modern independent living retirement village which will have a beautifully appointed Village Centre,

which like the villas, are designed and built with your safety, comfort and future well-being in mind.

The facilities will include a bowling green, library and lounge area for reading and movie watching, hairdressing salon, gym equipment and barbeque areas for gathering with neighbours, family and friends.

Physical work around the home will become a thing of the past as Village Manager Kate Pigram will oversee all the maintenance of the village including gardens, building externals, gutters and paths, plus the management of the recreational facilities.

For additional peace of mind, Oak Tree villages have an on-site Village Manager, are gated with full perimeter fencing and they can assist with the co-ordination of in-home care support when you need it.

Make the decision today to enjoy your retirement years and join a community of other like-minded seniors who have chosen to retire in relaxing style at Oak Tree Taylor Street retirement village.

Call the Oak Tree team today on 1300 367 155 or visit www.oaktreegroup.com.au



Register your interest today.

Call Village Manager Kate on

0407 333 453.



OAK TREE
RETIREMENT VILLAGES



Cardinal Bo thanks Australia

Myanmar's first Cardinal, Charles Maung Bo S.D.B., used a recent Australian visit to promote support for education and peace in Myanmar, and to urge understanding about his country's delicate situation.

The Archbishop of Yangon spent just over a week touring Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth as a guest of Catholic Mission, whose Church Appeal (to be held across the Armidale diocese in October) is supporting children's education programmes in Myanmar. His words were heard across the country and even by overseas audiences.

Speaking in Masses, community events and private functions during his visit, Cardinal Bo touched on conflict and political turmoil in Myanmar, which has received extensive media coverage over the past two years, but focused on the Church's work to heal and build the nation.

'We have opened schools in remote areas. We have built churches where there was none. We have educated our poor seminarians and sent them back to remote areas,' the Cardinal said during a Solemn Mass at Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral, which was webcast to a worldwide audience.

He took the opportunity to thank Australians for their generous commitment to supporting vulnerable people in Myanmar. 'Australian people, through Catholic Mission, have stood shoulder to shoulder in our

struggle to bring dignity to our poor youth,' he said. 'You have shared the bread of compassion.'

Between engagements in the three capital cities, Cardinal Bo also spoke to local and national media, eager to temper what he said were unrealistic expectations of high profile State Counsellor and Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

'Her power is very limited and she plays a delicate role but at this moment I believe that she is the only person who is capable of leading the country to democracy,' he told *The Catholic Weekly*.

Cardinal Bo urged Australians to continue their support of education in Myanmar through Catholic Mission, linking it directly to the prospect of peace. 'With the cooperation of people in Australia we would like to work harder, especially in the field of education,' he said. 'With courage and resilience, we must carry on in the future.'

To support crucial education programs in Myanmar, or to watch Cardinal Bo's video message, head to catholicmission.org.au/Myanmar.



Reach out. Give life.



4 “Marks” of a Catholic Family

1 *Catholic Families Worship Together*—The Eucharist is the source of our love and the sign of the intimacy to which we are called. Therefore, as a family, we attend Sunday mass weekly (and Holy Days and at other times as we are able) and we actively participate in parish life—our spiritual home away from home.

2 *Catholic Families Pray Together*—As “domestic church” we recognize that we cannot love one another as God loves us unless we ask him, *together*, to teach us what this means. Therefore, in addition to our individual prayer life, *we gather together as husband and wife and also as a family for prayer each day*.

3 *Catholic Families are Called to Intimacy*—The Christian life is first and foremost a call to intimate communion. We recognize that families are “Schools of Love.” Therefore, as a family, we constantly

challenge ourselves to seek to discover new ways to be even more open with and loving to each other as husband and wife, parents and children.

4 *Catholic Families Put Family First*—To protect the intimacy we are called to cultivate as the domestic church, we recognize the importance of regular family rituals *and* we are intentional about creating and protecting those activities such as family dinner, family prayer and worship, a game night and/or “family day”, and regular time for one-on-one communication and relationship-building. We hold these activities as sacred rituals of the domestic church and value them over all other activities that would seek to compete with them.

Manus Island: Five years on

In these five years, we have seen riots take place and have seen the death of seven asylum seekers on Manus Island -- with some taking their own life. The deteriorating mental health of these men is of the utmost importance. Inadequate access to healthcare as well as substandard living conditions have all added to the hardships endured by these men. The indefinite nature of their situation continues to negatively impact their mental wellbeing.

The Catholic Church has always advocated for and insisted on the importance of taking a holistic and integrated approach, focusing on the dignity of the human person. The human rights and dignity of these refugees must always be respected, and be the first consideration, for decision-makers. Australia must also look at adopting national policies that prefer alternatives to detention.

Pope Francis echoes the words of the Gospel: “Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the



welcomed and rejected strangers of every age”. (*Matthew 25:35-43*)

The Holy Father qualifies this “encounter” with four verbs and actions: “Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees and calls on all people to promote the culture of the encounter.

Edited from an article by Fr Maurizio Pettena, CS Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office.

The full article can be found at <https://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/acmro-media/media-release/2018>



The rules don't make sense when you forget what they are protecting

You aren't allowed to use contraception. It's morally wrong. Condoms aren't allowed and promote moral decay. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is really wrong, a gravely immoral act. Abortion is murder. As a Catholic, I got this message. And as a teenager, I couldn't care less.

In fact, I heard a lot of rules, most of which I completely ignored. I wasn't a bad kid. I was involved in the community and went to church. I was known as a Christian and I liked that reputation.

I also grew up in the real world and got a state education, so I learnt about all sorts of things as if they were just normal, especially when it came to sexual behaviour. A child of the internet, pornography was normal and you were expected to have sex whenever you had the opportunity.

I thank God every day that I never had the opportunity. Against the backdrop of this sexual formation, I ignored the rules not because I rejected them, but because they simply didn't make any sense. I just didn't understand what they were protecting.

When I got married, my wife gave me a card that she had got at a youth rally in New Zealand. It read: "I commit to wait for marriage". She had signed and dated it. At the time, I didn't really comprehend the significance of this. But it did challenge me. Although I could reciprocate the gift, I didn't have a certificate to prove it; I hadn't done so intentionally. I was challenged to look deeper into the 'why' of the rules. What was the treasure inside? Because I had married a "good Catholic girl", I was introduced to natural family planning (NFP), which I had never heard of. Once again, it was in observance of these "rules" that the meaning became clear. I got involved in the ministry of NFP and became a Family Life Educator. I was finally exposed to the reasons; my eyes were opening.

Humanae Vitae was a document I knew nothing about – except for that it ruled out contraception. With the new backdrop of my wife's intentional gift, NFP and having my first child, the rules in *Humanae Vitae* disappeared and what remained was: "Human life is sacred... From its very inception, it reveals the creating hand of God... [nothing] is acceptable which does violence to man's essential dignity.... For man cannot attain that true happiness for which he yearns with all the strength of his spirit, unless he keeps the laws which the Most High God has engraved in his very nature."

So what are the rules protecting? Well, quite simply: me, you, my children, the meaning of our existence, our dignity, our essential value as human beings, the understanding of which is the means of our true happiness, contentment, purpose, maturity and of truly living. The rules make sense – but now I don't need them because I have absolutely no desire to do anything that does violence to human dignity. But the rules stand as a signpost to something greater – the dignity of our humanity made in the image and likeness of God.

My wife and I now have five wonderful children – cue the laughing. I love the irony in the fact that NFP families often have lots of kids. I love it because I know why and I know what it looks like; NFP works! It is really efficient at avoiding and achieving pregnancy. However, it really works because of the maturity it brings and the way it can open your eyes to the beauty and sacredness of life and the profoundly humbling understanding that in saying yes to each other a brand new human being exists.

God is awesome. Thank God for *Humanae Vitae* and the rules it proclaimed because, with it, God saved me and brought me to life, and five new beautiful human beings exist. This is living!

John Shay, Chairman of Fertility Education Australia.

Pope compares abortion to Nazi eugenics program



Pope Francis meets with the Forum of Family Associations

Pope Francis has denounced abortion as the “white glove” equivalent of the Nazi-era eugenics program and urged families to accept the children that God gives them.

Pope Francis made the off-the-cuff remarks to a meeting of an Italian family association.

“Last century, the whole world was scandalised by what the Nazis did to purify the race. Today, we do the same thing but with white gloves,” Pope Francis was quoted as saying. The Pope urged families to accept children “as God gives them to us”.

Pope Francis has repeated the strict anti-abortion stance of his predecessors and integrated it into his broader condemnation of what he calls today’s “throw-away culture.” He has frequently lamented how the sick, the poor, the elderly and the unborn are considered unworthy of protection and dignity by a society that prizes instead individual prowess.

He has also decried how women are often considered part of this “throw-away culture,” sometimes forced to prostitute themselves. “How many of you pray for these women who are thrown away, for these women who are used, for these girls who have to sell their own dignity to have a job?” Pope Francis asked during his morning homily.

Pope Francis has dedicated much of his pontificate to preaching about families, marriage and the problems that families today encounter. He is expected to highlight these issues during his August trip to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families.



Family Prayer

God, our father, we are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son, one family, in the Spirit of your love. Bless us with the joy of love. Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need. Help us to live your forgiveness and peace. Protect all families with your loving care, especially those for whom we now pray: (we pause and remember family members and others by name). Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love, make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share, This we ask, through Christ our Lord, Amen. Mary, mother and guide, pray for us. Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us. Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us. Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, pray for us.



Meet a True Story



Technology feeds our insatiable hunger for stories, but fails to satisfy our need for human connection. A boom in live storytelling could be changing that.

When I moved to Ireland for graduate school in 2012, Pádraig Ó Tuama, a leader of the Corrymeela Community, was the first person I met. As he drove me into the city from the airport, he invited me to the monthly storytelling event he and Paul Doran ran known as Tenx9 (pronounced “ten by nine”), where nine people had ten minutes each to tell a real story from their lives, based on a theme.

In the months I lived in Belfast, I attended every Tenx9, and when I returned to Nashville, I asked Pádraig and Paul if I could start a chapter back home. They agreed, and I ran the first event in September 2013, with another following every month since.

It didn’t take long before people began noticing how popular live storytelling events were becoming. Events like Tenx9 have popped up around town and around the country. People want storytelling, in part because of a longing for human connection. In this technological age, we’ve become increasingly digitally connected and simultaneously locally estranged. We’re losing much of the intimacy of intentional human connection, trading it for constant connectivity, availability, and impersonal comments sent to “someone” “somewhere else.”

At Tenx9, we try to cultivate human connection by being a place where ordinary people tell ordinary stories. Alongside silly and delightful stories, you can hear stories of pain and struggle. At the first Nashville event,

the theme was “Journey,” and a friend of mine shared a story about an incredible biking adventure he took with his dad. The audience smiled and laughed and relaxed. The very next story was also about a father, but one quite different. The storyteller told of her turbulent relationship with her dad, of always wanting to feel loved by him. She told how that longing began to mask itself with anger. And then she shared about the day she got a call that her father had been found dead in his garage, car exhaust filling his vehicle, and a goodbye note left behind – for her.

An Irish proverb says, “It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.” We can give shelter to each other by telling stories of what it means to be human, and by listening generously. I’ve worked in prisons, in education, and in healthcare advocacy. In all these contexts, one of the clearest dilemmas facing people is the inability to listen to and empathize with others who see the world differently. We are quick to unfriend, unfollow, and police anyone who creates dissonance in our echo chambers; we’re like hawks, soaring over the landscape of social discourse to look for anything and anyone we need to swoop down and silence. We seem to be listening only for variations on anthems we already love or for the choruses of songs we hope to mute. Listening with patience, listening for the sake of learning, is becoming a lost art.

FULL ARTICLE: Michael T. McRay, Plough Quarterly, Winter 2018

KIDS KAPERS



THREE-RING CIRCUS!

Mark 12:30

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

The Challenge

As you go through the maze, pass the four things with which you can love God in the order they are in the verse. You cannot cross or retrace your path. Finish where you started.



Path to grace



Coming to the Catholic Church and discovering for the first time what was being offered in the Sacrament of Penance, I could scarcely believe something so wonderful could be true. You go into a little room, pour out your guts as you've longed to do and purge yourself of all the shame, sin and pain you've been lugging around like a lead weight for all those years — and when it's all over you don't get a lecture on what a jerk you are, or shocked silence (these priests have, after all, heard it all before a zillion times).

No, you get gentle counsel, accepting love, and words of absolution, spoken by Jesus Christ himself in the person of the priest. Then you walk out of there, not only with your sins thrown as far away as the east is from the west, but with grace to be a completely new creation! You're a new man! And it doesn't even cost anything!

Now, you'd think that people would be beating down the doors to take such an offer. But the weird thing is that, in the late 20th century and early 21st, confessions have dropped off sharply.

Somehow, we Catholics examined the evidence for the monstrous evil of which ordinary people are capable and concluded: "We're OK. Sin is just manipulative guilt mongering. Feeling good about myself is the No. 1 priority. I can get along fine without all the tedious examinations of conscience and other gloomy stuff." And so we thought we'd put all that dark pre-Vatican II stuff about confession behind us.

But it ain't so. For the curious thing is that, as Bishop Robert Barron has pointed out, as our civilization continues with the shattering process that began with the Reformation, it's not that Catholic truths merely get rejected. Rather, it's that once they are rejected, they violently reassert themselves in destructive ways someplace else. It's as though Christendom exploded like a great volcano and now chunks of Catholicism are

raining down here and there in the cultural landscape where people build little shrines around them.

So, for instance, our culture rejects the Catholic notion of sacrificial penance and spiritual discipline in order to perfect the soul. Boom! We blow it sky high and that chunk of the Faith comes hurtling back to earth in the arena of "personal fitness." So, a culture that regards with horror a monk who fasts develops a fascination with purging, the Stairmaster, tofu diets and water fasts, and sundry checkout-stand magazine miracle weight-loss formulas in order to perfect the body with a rigor that would have mystified ascetics of old.

And we reject the Sacrament of Penance and then come up with things like this little application

"Penance, an application released for the iPhone in early December, allows users to absolve one another's sins. After passing the application's obligatory security PIN system (conventional online security measures are the app's primary faith-orientation), you come to an interface resembling a confessional booth. Through the left door you can 'confess,' offering your sins to whoever is listening; behind the closed door you can 'absolve' any sins received; and at the far side you can 'reflect,' considering the shared confessions of others, conveniently arranged like a pinball machine's top-ten list."

So now, instead of confessing your sins in the safety of a sacrament where a priest trained to guide you in the riches of the Catholic tradition is bound by an oath that will excommunicate him should he ever breathe a word, you can now confess by blabbing your sins to random strangers in cyberspace, And you have to pay for it.

Mark O'Shea - The full article can be found at: <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/InFocus/Article/TabId/721/ArtMID/13629/ArticleID/8280/Rediscovering-the-riches-of-reconciliation.aspx>



Robert
Kennedy
Michael
Bishop



*A welcome gift for Bishop Kennedy from Monique Paul
(Year 1, St Joseph's School Walgett)*