

CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT

JANUARY - MARCH 2022

*The Catholic Diocese
of Armidale
would like to wish
you a very Happy and
Holy Easter.*



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Image: Pope Francis burns incense in front of a Marian statue after consecrating the world and, in particular, Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary during a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican 25.03.22. (CNS/Vatican Media)

CONSECRATION OF HUMANITY



On Friday the 25th March, Pope Francis presided over the annual '24 Hours for the Lord' Lenten service in St Peter's Basilica as the Church marked the feast of the Annunciation. Toward the end of the liturgy, Pope Francis prayed the Act of Consecration of humanity, especially of Russia and Ukraine, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He prayed the Act in communion with all Catholic Bishops across the world. The prayer was sent by the Vatican to Bishops

around the world to pray in their own Diocese for the consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. An excerpt of the prayer can be found below while the full version is available on our website here.

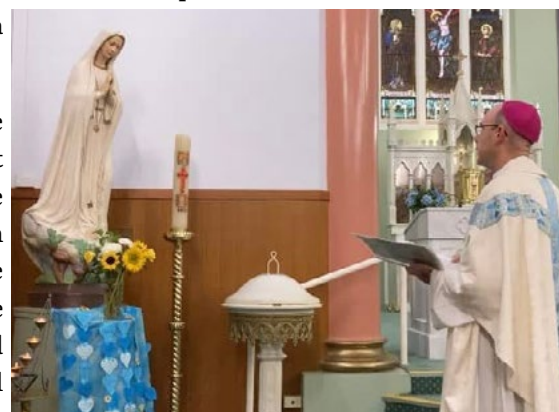
"Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that the war may end and peace spread throughout the world."

In our own Diocese Bishop Michael Kennedy prayed the Act of Consecration at the 5.30pm Friday Mass at Saint Joseph's church Gunnedah. The Mass was attended by many parishioners who joined in the Act of Consecration. In parish churches all around the diocese people gathered for Masses and rosaries and to pray the Act of Consecration to express our union with Pope Francis and our solidarity with the people of Ukraine and Russia.

Similar events took place at Cathedrals and parish churches across Australia and throughout the world.

Many people have noted that, according to the Church approved apparitions of the Virgin Mary at Fatima in 1917, Our Lady asked that the Pope and all the bishops of the world together with him, consecrate Russia to her immaculate heart. It is therefore interesting to note that Pope Francis chose to make the Act of Consecration in front of a statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

Bishop Kennedy noted that the statue of the Virgin Mary in Saint Joseph's church Gunnedah where he made the Act of Consecration is also Our Lady of Fatima. The Bishop is encouraging all people to continue to pray for peace and freedom in Ukraine and for all the people of Ukraine and Russia.



Bishop Michael Kennedy praying the Act of Consecration at the 5.30pm Mass on Friday 25th March at Saint Joseph's church Gunnedah.

LENTEN FEATURE

How to Meditate

CHRIS DA SILVA - DIRECTOR OF MISSION AND EVANGELISATION

In both Pope Francis and Bishop Kennedy's Lenten Pastoral Letters, we were encouraged once again to take on a little extra prayer, fasting, and good deeds this Lent. In this article, I'll focus on just one of these, the foundational and most important of the trifecta: prayer.

While vocal and repetitive prayers like litanies and chaplets have a place in every spirituality and charism, they form the skeleton of a flourishing prayer life. Deeper and more intimate forms of prayer like meditation and contemplation, on the other hand, make up the flesh and blood, giving new meaning to vocal prayer.

So, how do we meditate?

Both St Teresa of Avila and the Blessed Virgin Mary in her Church-approved apparitions to Sr Agnes Sasagawa at Akita recommended we begin with 15-minute meditations each day, but something is better than nothing, so if 5-10 minutes is what you can manage, then put your heart and soul into those 5-10 minutes!

There are two primary traditions of meditation, or mental prayer, in the Church. These are the way of St Bruno, better known as *Lectio Divina*, and the way popularised by both St Ignatius of Loyola and St Teresa of Avila, best referred to as imaginative prayer. Let's break down how we can begin incorporating these forms of meditation into our lives today:

MEDITATION IN THE METHOD OF ST BRUNO

Step 1: Lectio, or Careful Study

In this step, a passage of no more than half a chapter from the Gospel is selected. The best place to start would be the Gospel of the Mass of the day. Read it carefully, and slowly enough not to miss any of the details.

Step 2: Meditatio, or Hidden Treasure

Read through the passage again, with the intention and

expectation that the Holy Spirit will lead you toward a verse, phrase, or word.

Step 3: Oratio

Ask Our Lord for the grace to focus on the most important verse, phrase, or word during this time of meditation. Ask Him to reveal what it is He is trying to communicate to you today through His Word.

Step 4: Contemplatio, or Gaze of Love

This is the time for God to give you the gift of contemplating Him. Whether or not you experience consolation, use this time as a moment of complete inner stillness in which you can gaze upon the Heart of God, and allow Him to gaze upon your heart in turn.

Step 5: Operatio, or Gratitude

Strictly speaking, this is the time for which you ask God for a practical application of the scripture to your life today. More than that it should be a time where you can express your gratitude to God for the many blessings He has poured out.

MEDITATION IN THE METHOD OF STS TERESA AND IGNATIUS

Step 1: Selection of material and preparation of meditation

This will be the same as the first step of *Lectio Divina*

Step 2: Consideration

Here you are invited to fully immerse all of your senses into the Gospel scene using your imagination. For example, in the calming of the storm, imagine you are one of the apostles on the boat. Imagine the sounds of crashing waves and pelting rain and your fellow apostles yelling at each other in panicked voices; imagine the temperature of the air and the rain smacking against your face; imagine the feeling of the boat rocking beneath you while you cling on to some part of it for dear life.

Step 3: Conversation with Jesus

In this scene, where is Jesus? Where is He in relation to you? Does He look at you? What does He say to you? Ask the Holy Spirit what he wants to communicate to you through this scene. Be childlike and expectant. Jesus wants to speak to you today.

Step 4: Gratitude

Simply thank Jesus for the gift of being in His presence and for any other truths He revealed to you during this meditation.

If you're after a quick launching pad into meditation, consider using the audio-based meditation in the Hallow App, or the Amen App. Otherwise, simply open the Gospels and begin!

A JOURNEY TO AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP



Fathers Chris Onuekwusi & Thaddeus Ike

26.01.22 TAMWORTH & 10.02.2022 WARIALDA

FATHER CHRIS ONUEKWUSI



I am honoured to be an Australian Citizen. I have found Australia and its people so good and so welcoming, and hence, I desire to be part of this great nation, to uphold and share the democratic and cultural values of Australia.

The spirit of mateship, egalitarian view of life, hospitality, open-

minedness, tolerance, sportsmanship and hard work are among the values I have observed and want to identify with. So, I am really happy to be an Australian Citizen, and I could now say with every bit of pride, 'G'day mate!'

My biggest cultural shock was hearing all of the Australian kids call their parents by their first names. All my life as a Nigerian, and as a Priest, I have become used to hearing kids call their parents, 'Mum' or 'Dad'. Though it's not a sign of disrespect as I have come to know, it was, however, a big shock to me.

I'm grateful that Nigeria permits dual citizenship, so, becoming an Australian does not make me lose my identity. As such, my family and friends are very happy for me to become an Australian Citizen, so long as they will keep seeing and hearing from me.

My favourite Australian food is difficult to decide. Barramundi, Lamb Leg Roast, Fish and Chips and Barbecued snags. These are all my favourite Aussie foods. However, I can't go past a Lamb Leg Roast!



FATHER THADDEUS IKE



Becoming an Australian gives me the right to work and serve the people more effectively and join in the voting of candidates into public services.

There were a few cultural shocks once I moved here, almost everything was new, challenging, and interesting. I was faced with the shock of a new environment, separation

from my family, friends, and colleagues, meeting new people, adapting to a new form of English with an accent. The height of all the shocks was weather challenges and eating new food. I later found solace in rice and lasagne as my favourite foods.

My first winter in Australia hit me hard, I can't easily forget the initial experience, too cold and chilly. Back home, I enjoyed cold weather known as harmattan, which lasts from December to March, then followed by the rainy season on the coast from April to October. However, even the mildest seasons of the year have the lowest temperature of about 20°C!

In my culture, the church is predominantly full of people involved in different church activities happening at different times. Contrary to what I perceived here in such magnificent churches, I felt like asking, where is the congregation? Back home we sing and clap at Mass, it was always lively. But here, I was shocked to be playing liturgical music on a CD player, with the congregants joining by singing along or just listening to the music. There are also fewer young people compared to the aged adults. The Mass here is celebrated, then followed by morning tea which I enjoy as it never happened back home.

Australia is a lovely country with lovely people and a beautiful ambiance. My family and friends are very supportive of my becoming an Australian citizen. The struggle with getting to grips with the Australian lifestyle is still ongoing. I'm indebted to my Bishops, Archbishop Valerian Okeke, of Onitsha Archdiocese my home-based Diocese, Bishop Michael Kennedy of Armidale Diocese, and the entire presbyterate for their great support.



KINDERGARTEN & THE IMPORTANCE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

St Mary's Primary School

BELINDA BURTON - PRINCIPAL

Catholic education is an important foundation to learning. Religious education is introduced to Kindergarten students from the moment they start school at St Mary's Armidale.

Catholic education is an important foundation to learning, for our students, it sets the foundations of faith and is key to our learning and wellbeing as a school community.

Students are introduced to the Catholic principles and values from the moment they enter our school building. They are enriched in the teachings of Jesus Christ and lessons are planned from a Catholic perspective. Through everyday teaching, we expose our students to God's love and teach students about the importance of positive relationships with our neighbours.

Students are taught about the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person, rights, and responsibilities, and how we can be stewards of God's creation. Students are called to participate and support those who are vulnerable in our community, Australia, and the world. Students encounter the Sacredness of Relationships and Family.

In Kindergarten, our religion units often begin with storytelling. Students watch teachers as they replicate stories from the Bible. This fun, engaging and interactive model supports student understanding and allows students to respond to 'I wonder' thoughts and questions.

Our Kindergarten students have already learned this term about the significance of a prayer space, they have been on an exploratory walk identifying objects and places such as statues, crucifixes, religious art,

“*Students are introduced to the Catholic Principles and Values from the moment they enter our school building.*”

and symbols that remind us of God and of belonging to a Catholic school. They have participated in an opening school Mass and our Ash Wednesday Mass, and all classes have had classroom visits from our Priests.





Children of the Kindergarten class of St Mary's Primary School undertaking *The Good Shepherd* & *The Last Supper* Learning Units



CATHOLIC MENS GATHERING

McCarthy Catholic College, Tamworth

SATURDAY 19TH MARCH 2022

The Men's Gathering was held on Saturday 19th March and hosted by McCarthy Catholic College in Tamworth.

The Gathering was a great opportunity for men around the Diocese to come together and to be challenged, grow deeper in their faith, and renew their parishes.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the visiting speakers, Tim Davis and Kevin Bailey of Divine Renovation, Chris Da Silva Director of Mission and Evangelisation for the Diocese of Armidale, and to Bishop Michael Kennedy and several other local priests for being in attendance for the whole event and for those men behind the scenes who put hours and months of blood, sweat and tears into making the event a success. Special mentions must go to Patrick Mahony and Bruce Stewart of St Nicholas Parish, East Tamworth for being the real engine room behind the event.

If you're a man who wants to see more happening in your Parish, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will train, resource, and support you to grow a flourishing Men's Ministry!



From Left: Paul Hagley, Tim Davis, Kevin Bailey & Chris Da Silva



Tim Davis & Kevin Bailey



MASS FOR RELIGIOUS

St Joseph's Gunnedah Parish

15TH FEBRUARY 2022

On Tuesday 15th February, St Joseph's Gunnedah hosted the World Day of Consecrated Life of Women and Men with Bishop Michael Kennedy and approximately 50 priests and religious gathering in the church for a Mass of thanksgiving.

Now in its 25th year, Pope John Paul II introduced the celebration on February 2, 1997, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, 40 days after his birth.

The late Bishop Luc Matthys launched the celebration in the Armidale Diocese and every year the religious women and priests have celebrated the day in one of the parishes throughout the Diocese.

St Joseph's Parish was chosen this year giving parishioners an opportunity to catch up with former sisters and priests who have served in the area. Singing of the Latin Hymn *Salve Regina* concluded the celebration, with the blends of male and female voices filling the century old church.

Morning tea was held in the parish hall before Mass with those attending later enjoying lunch at Gunnedah Services & Bowling Club.

Narrabri's St Francis Xavier's Parish will host the day next year.



PROJECT COMPASSION

"For All Future Generations"

GEORGINA FRANKLIN, DIOCESAN DIRECTOR, CARITAS AUSTRALIA

Spanning across the six weeks of Lent each year, Project Compassion brings thousands of Australian schools, parishes, and supporters together to raise funds for people living in some of the most vulnerable communities across the world.

Project Compassion continues in 2022 with the theme, "For all Future Generations". This theme reminds us that the good we do today will extend and impact the lives of generations to come.

Parishes and Schools across the Diocese of Armidale have held fundraisers for Project Compassion in 2022 and I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone for their hard work and kind contributions throughout this Lenten period.

The Chancery Office held a Shrove Tuesday pancake morning tea Fundraiser attended by their own staff, ADIG, and the Catholic Schools Office on Tuesday 1st March. Their efforts, with just a gold coin donation asked, raised over \$180 on the day towards the cause. This is just a drop in the bucket of the total funds that will be raised throughout the Armidale Diocese during the campaign.

If you would like to find out more about Caritas, Project Compassion and the work they do, or would like to donate, please visit

caritas.org.au/project-compassion/



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