

# V.Catholic Viewpoint†

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DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE



*Christ in you,  
Our Hope of Glory.*



# Year of Mercy: An Extraordinary Jubilee



## The Bishop Speaks

## Doing What God likes the Most

We are now a couple of months into the *Year of Mercy*. It is worthwhile for each of us to ask: “Beyond having nice thoughts about mercy have I actually *done* anything yet in response to Pope Francis’ invitation to be open to the God of surprises who loves nothing more than to have mercy on his children? And have I *done* anything yet to answer his plea that we each be instruments of God’s mercy to others?”

The Year of Mercy commenced in Rome on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8 last year), it was launched in dioceses around the world with the opening of the Cathedral Holy Doors on the Third Sunday of Advent (December 3 last year), and it will conclude on the Feast of Christ the King, November 20 this year.

During Old Testament times, in a Jubilee Year in ancient Israel all debts were to be forgiven, slaves set free, land restored to its original owner, and paddocks

left fallow. It was, if you like, a year for wiping the slate clean and starting over again, a time for pushing the reset button in our lives and relationships. In the year 1300, amidst rather turbulent and calamitous times for the Church and the world, Pope Boniface VIII declared a Jubilee Year for the Church to take stock of itself and focus on its mission. It was the first of the ‘modern’ jubilees in the Church which are generally held every twenty five or fifty years. Occasionally, seeing a particular need, a Pope will declare an Extraordinary Jubilee Year outside this regular timeframe. Pope Francis has done just this with the “Year of Mercy”. What is the particular need he sees?

On the Sunday in which the Year of Mercy Holy Doors were opened in dioceses all around the world the Mass Readings had this to say: “Rejoice in the Lord! ... Shout for joy! ... Exult with all your heart! ... I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord.



Parishioners eagerly make their way to the Cathedral to witness the official opening of the Holy doors.





Bishop Kennedy ceremoniously  
knocks on the Cathedral Holy Doors

I repeat, what I want is your happiness!” Perhaps Pope Francis had passages such as these on his mind when he said a couple of years ago that Christians must not be sourpusses! We all know he’s right, that as people who know we are loved by God and who love God in return we should be joyful. But we must be doing something wrong if many in the world do in fact see us as sourpusses and not as people of joy.

At his General Audience on the Wednesday before the Year of Mercy began Pope Francis explained why he convoked it. He said “In our times of profound change the Church is called upon to offer her special contribution, making visible the sign of God’s presence and closeness.” To do this he said that all of us in the Church must learn to choose “what God likes the most” And what does God like more than anything? “Forgiving his children and having mercy on them so that they in turn can forgive each other.” When we choose what God likes more than anything else – mercy – he says “we experience the sweet and gentle touch of God’s forgiveness and his presence and closeness especially in our moments of greatest need.”

Who in their right mind doesn’t want this? Who doesn’t want to feel the joy of being found by Jesus the Good Shepherd who seeks us out when we are lost and carries us back to the Father? I still recall the happiest moment of my life. It was a Saturday afternoon in Spring when as a 22 year old man,

moved by the grace of God and strengthened by the love of Mary the Mother of Mercy, after years of fairly “routine” confessions I overcame my fears and completely opened my heart to the priest in confession; I laid bare my life to Jesus, and I basked in the joy of his mercy. I felt found; I felt forgiven; I felt loved. All my burdens were gone and I felt as light as a feather. The memory of that day still brings me such peace and joy! My life has not been the same since.



I’m sure many of you have experienced something similar and I’m sure it’s what Pope Francis wants for all of us in this Year of Mercy: To know that God desires nothing more than to forgive us, to experience the joy of this forgiveness, and to have our lives changed by it. In his weekly audience Pope Francis also said that if we are to be strengthened in our certainty of Divine Mercy “we must first recognise that we are sinners.” You see, only sinners know they need mercy, only sinners *need* mercy, only sinners can *receive* mercy, and we all need mercy!

When John the Baptist was preparing people for the coming of the Lord they asked him “what must we do?” Not, “What should we think? What should we talk about? What should we feel?”, but “What should we *do*?” Mercy is not just something to think about and something to feel, it is something to *do*. To live and experience mercy fully we have to *do* something. In this Year of Mercy what must we *do*?





Parishioners pass through  
the Cathedral Holy Doors

Let's do what Pope Francis is urging us to do as he sets out in *Misericordiae Vultus*, the Bull of Indiction for this Jubilee of Mercy:

First, let's go to confession. The Pope urges us to place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre of our lives once more so that we can touch the grandeur of God's mercy with our own hands. He also reminds us that God's mercy is greater than any sin. (17)

Second, he encourages us to go on pilgrimage and pass through the Cathedral Holy Doors to receive the special plenary indulgence which he explains as mercy that "becomes *indulgent* on the part of the Father who through his Church reaches the pardoned sinner and frees him from every residue left by the consequences of sin". (22)


As great as these two things are which we can do in the Year of Mercy, they are incomplete without a third thing. These first two things benefit us, but what about others? Let's not forget Pope Francis' words that what God likes the most is forgiving his children and having mercy on us *so that we in turn can forgive each other*. We as the Church will not have the effect upon the world that God wants us to have unless we become people of mercy, people who forgive. In his homily for the opening of the Jubilee of Mercy Pope Francis said that before speaking of our sins being punished by God we must speak of them being *forgiven* by his mercy. "We have to put mercy before judgement" he says. If this is true of God our Father, if we are to be his children then it must be true of us too. When somebody hurts or offends me, and that's usually the people who are close to me, I must put mercy before judgement; I must forgive them not judge them, for this is the way of life for the children of God.

This is not always easy. As Pope Francis says "At

times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger ... and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully." (10) Jesus probably said it best: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

And being a person of mercy encompasses more than forgiveness. Pope Francis says that it is his "burning desire" that this Year of Mercy will reawaken in us both the corporal and the spiritual works of mercy: to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the stranger; heal the sick; visit the imprisoned; and bury the dead. To counsel the doubtful; instruct the ignorant; to warn sinners; comfort the afflicted; forgive offences; bear patiently those who do us ill; and pray for the living and the dead. The Pope gives a wonderful reflection on these works of mercy in number 15 of *Misericordiae Vultus*. I hope many will read it.

In these early months of the Year of Mercy let each of us in our own particular situation and circumstances come up with very concrete responses as to how we can be people of mercy to those around us so that together as a Church we offer our special contribution to our troubled world, making visible the sign of God's presence and closeness. The theme for the Year of Mercy is "Merciful like the Father", for it is in being merciful like the Father that we will be people of joy, not sourpusses, and that we will carry this joy to others.

  
**Most Reverend Michael Kennedy**  
Bishop of Armidale



Pope Francis washes the feet of the faithful

## Those Chosen Should Represent Entire People of God: Young and Old, Healthy and Sick

The Holy Father has written a letter to Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in which he decrees that from now on, the people chosen for the washing of the feet in the liturgy of Holy Thursday may be selected from all the People of God, and not only men and boys.

The Pope writes to the cardinal that he has for some time reflected on the “rite of the washing of the feet contained in the Liturgy of the Mass in Coena Domini, with the intention of improving the way in which it is performed so that it might express more fully the meaning of Jesus’ gesture in the Cenacle, His giving of Himself unto the end for the salvation of the world, His limitless charity”.

“After careful consideration”, he continues, “I have decided to make a change to the Roman Missal. I therefore decree that the section according to which those persons chosen for the Washing of the feet must be men or boys, so that from now on the Pastors of the Church may choose the participants in the rite from among all the members of the People of God. I also recommend that an adequate explanation of the rite itself be provided to those who are chosen”.

The Holy Father Francis has seen fit to change the rule by in the Roman Missal (p.300, No. 11) according to which the chosen men are accompanied by the ministers, which must therefore be modified as follows: ‘Those chosen from among the People of God are accompanied by the

ministers’ This group may consist of men and women, and ideally of the young and the old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated persons and laypeople.

This Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, by means of the faculties granted by the Supreme Pontiff, introduces this innovation in the liturgical books of the Roman Rite, recalling pastors of their duty to instruct adequately both the chosen faithful and others, so that they may participate in the rite consciously, actively and fruitfully”.

### The Human Touch

*‘tis the human touch in this  
world that counts,*

*The touch of your hand and mine,  
Which means far more to the fainting heart  
than shelter and bread and wine.*

*For shelter is gone when the night is o’er  
And bread lasts only a day,  
But the touch of the hand and the  
sound of the voice*

*Sing on in the soul always.*

**Spencer Michael Free**



## Kingsley Etoh – Looking to Diaconate Ordination

Kingsley Etoh is a final year seminarian at St John Vianney Seminary at Wagga. He has just completed several weeks of pastoral placement in the Diocese during which he worked in the Cathedral Parish with Father Richard Gleeson, in Moree with Father Paul McCabe, in Tenterfield with Father Barry Leech and in South Tamworth with Father Paul Aguilar.

Kingsley is a third generation Catholic from the southern regions of Nigeria. His mother, a brother and three sisters live in Nigeria. He attended his village primary school before attending a minor seminary for his secondary education. He completed his studies in Philosophy at the Seat of Wisdom Major Seminary in Nigeria. He then took a break from his priestly training and gained a Master's Degree in teaching at a Nigerian University before working for some time in Equatorial Guinea teaching English to Spanish speaking university students. Kingsley is fluent in both English and Spanish.



Henry Kingsley Etoh

Feeling the call to resume his studies for the priesthood, Kingsley was accepted by a religious order as a seminarian and he commenced his studies in Theology

at the Angelicum University in Rome. His order transferred him to St John Vianney seminary in Wagga but once in Australia he felt called to work as a diocesan priest in Australia. Bishop Kennedy accepted him as a student.

Kingsley will be ordained to the Diaconate in Mary Help of Christians Church, South Tamworth on March 19. He hopes to be ordained to the priesthood in Armidale later in the year.

Kingsley has been a very popular member of the parish community during his three weeks in South Tamworth. He wishes to thank the priests of the diocese, the parishioners in the four parishes in which he has served and Bishop Kennedy for their support, encouragement and example during his time in the Diocese.

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*Statue of Santo Nino, the Infant Jesus*

## Celebrating Filipino Style - Sinulog and Santo Nino Mass

Bishop Michael Kennedy blessed the new statue of the Infant Jesus, Santo Nino, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, Sunday at the 9:30 am Mass of Saint Nicholas Parish in Tamworth.

Attended by parishioners and the Filipino Community of Tamworth, the mass was preceded by Sinulog, a traditional Filipino religious dance, performed, especially in Cebu in Central Philippines, by devotees in honour of the Infant Jesus before the Mass.

The Bishop himself danced the Sinulog on the sanctuary after blessing the Infant Jesus.

The Filipino Community Choir of Tamworth sang at the Mass and the statue was crowned by Linda Allan who donated it. The Filipinos were asked to bring a plate of traditional Pinoy goodies for the salu-salo, morning tea, which followed the Mass.



*Bishop Kennedy dancing the Sinulog*



*Parishioners' Santo Nino statues waiting for the blessing*



# Missionary Priests arrive from Nigeria

After months of waiting for Visa's to be granted, Fr Christopher Onuekwusi and Fr Thaddeus Ike have arrived. We are very happy that they have come to share their experiences with us and learn our Australian ways here in the Diocese of Armidale.

## FR CHRISTOPHER ONUKEWUSI

**What part of Nigeria are you from? Where did you grow up and go to school?**

I came from a town called OGIDI in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambara State, Nigeria. I grew up in a city called Onitsha ( still in Anambara State) and I attended my Primary Education in Obianazonwu Memorial Primary School Onitsha, Secondary Education in All Hallows Seminary Onitsha, Philosophical and Theological Education in Bigard Memorial Seminary Enugu.

**Were your schools large? Did you wear a uniform? What sort of discipline/rules did you have?**

In all the schools I attended, there is always a uniform and rules for conduct. All Hallows seminary, which is the minor seminary, can accommodate a total population of 650 students, from junior secondary 1 to senior secondary 3 (a total of six years studies). The seminary rules and regulations are printed and given to every student. Sometimes exams are taken on the rules and regulations. Bigard Major seminary, is a senior seminary, which can accommodate a total population of 700 students in the two faculties of Philosophy and Theology (which takes 9 years to complete). In Bigard Memorial Seminary, every student wears white soutane. That is the official uniform in the senior seminary. Indeed, seminary rules and regulations are always strict, involving serious punitive measures which includes instant expulsion from the seminary.

**Can you share a fond or embarrassing memory of your schooling or seminary studies?**

One embarrassing memory that immediately came to my mind now was.....The day my parents visited me in the junior seminary with foods and beverages. Since it was not a visiting day, I was not allowed to see them, and what they brought were distributed to the students in the refectory.

**Do you have family back in Nigeria? Can you tell me about them?**

I came from a family of seven. Thus, I have four brothers and two sisters. My immediate elder brother is a Priest, working in the same diocese with me, and my three other brothers are all married, my two sisters are also married. Our parents are still alive and healthy. I also have two nieces and three nephews.

**What called you to become a priest?**

What attracted me to the Priesthood is the way the Priests around me conduct themselves: Their manner of dressing and their kindness.

**What about Australia has made the biggest impression on you thus far?**

The biggest impression Australia has made on me so far is..... The Egalitarian Nature of Australia. As an egalitarian society, I have noticed that no matter your social status, the rules in the society apply to everyone. Besides, irrespective of educational levels, everybody prefers being called by his or her first name.

**What are you most looking forward to learning about Australia?**

I am looking forward to learning about the Catholic faith in Australia and how to contribute to the increase of that faith.

**What are the differences between Nigerian and Australian Parishes/congregations?**

The difference between Parishes in Nigeria and Australia as I have observed so far are... the population of those who attend Mass and other parish activities, time spent in the celebration of the Eucharist, lively nature of Eucharistic celebrations, number of baptisms, wedding Masses, funeral Masses and the number that frequents the reception of the sacrament of penance. Indeed, from my observations in these mentioned points, Parishes in Nigeria are far more in number.

**What is the most interesting or strange thing you have experienced in Australia so far?**

The most interesting thing I have experienced so far in Australia is the level of patience people have on the roads. Since I came, I don't think I have heard anybody blowing the car horns.

**What are your leisure interests?**

My leisure interests are..... Watching movies, athletic events and reading

**Do you enjoy following/watching/playing any sports?**

I enjoy watching wrestling.



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*Welcome to Fr Christopher and Fr Thaddeus from Nigeria*

## FR THADDEUS IKE

### **What part of Nigeria are you from? Where did you grow up?**

I came from Archdiocese of Onitsha, Anambra State in Eastern part of Nigeria. Initially, I grew up under the tutelage of my parents, then the need arose to leave my parental home and live with a Priest at Amichi town still in Anambra State.

### **Do you have family back in Nigeria? Can you tell me about them?**

I have a lovely family indeed. I am a native of Awka Etiti in Idemili North Local Government Area, Anambra state. My parents, Chief & Mrs Stephen Muolokwu & Mary Ike. My father died barely one year after my Ordination on 10th July 2006. I am the 5th of the 10 siblings, four Boys and six girls. We are very fond of each other to the point that they expressed mixed feelings when I was preparing to come over here.

### **What called you to become a priest?**

I came from a staunch Catholic family that attend Masses very regularly. My other siblings were in various religious societies and I joined the Altar Servers. There and then, a priest now Msgr Pius N. Ilechukwu selected me among many other boys to live with him at a town called Amichi when he was made the parish Priest. While serving him as a little house boy, I was very close to the Altar, meeting so many priests, religious and seminarians, their ways of life impressed me. Then the call manifested.

### **Why did you choose to come to Australia?**

My coming to Australia was not a personal choice. I was the Parish Administrator of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Onitsha. I discovered and believed that my coming here was born out of the love the Bishop of Armidale, Most Rev Michael Kennedy has for his Flock and the Diocese that made him to passionately request my Archbishop, Most Rev Dr Val. M. Okeke to lend him a few Priests. Sequel to this, my Archbishop called me and said "Father, would you oblige me to go on mission to Australia"? And I responded "Your

Grace, your wish is my command, wherever you send me, I will go". He happily acknowledged my willingness and gave me some words of encouragement, then told me to anticipate other details. So, here am I in Australia not of my own but the Bishop's and the Holy Spirit.

### **What about Australia has made the biggest impression on you thus far?**

Everyone has been very welcoming even on the day the police stopped us for their routine checks, they found us worthy clergy and guiltless and happily bid us farewell and wished us a happy stay in Australia. This 'welcome welcome' meant much to me.

### **What are the differences between Nigeria and Australian Parishes/congregations?**

Hmmmm!!! I was in a Parish liturgy committee meeting when Fr John McHugh expressed his joy over the up to 70 number of the parishioners that attended Lenten Reconciliation. He asked me what the situation is like in Nigeria? Nigerians are religious inclined, and practice their faith with utmost commitment. Churches are always filled up to the brim on Sundays and in various occasions. It is very rare to bury a Christian without Mass. Some Parishes in the cities are celebrating regular morning and evening Masses with sizable and encouraging number of people, come rain come sunshine. Every Sunday evening, parishioners will gather in great number for catechesis and Benediction. How I wish and pray the Australians will challenge Nigeria in that aspect.

### **What are your leisure interests?**

I enjoy reading, badminton, listening to music, decorations, travelling, playing table tennis (though I'm not skillful enough)

### **Do you enjoy following/watching/playing any sports?**

Yes, I enjoy watching football games and volley ball games.



# Eucharist means mission

A juggling performance, the Japanese tsunami, street kids, business misadventures and life under China's communist regime seem odd subjects for a Congress centred around the Eucharist. However, they provided the background to moving testimonies of the importance of the Eucharist in individual lives given at the 51<sup>st</sup> International Eucharistic Congress. The Congress was held in Cebu, Philippines from 24<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

It was a nine day focus on the Eucharist with catechesis, testimonies and various entertainments. Mass was celebrated each day and on four occasions this was in a public venue with hundreds of thousands in attendance.

The Armidale Diocesan delegation was led by Bishop Michael Kennedy with Fathers Roel Llave and Ross O'Brien attending along with 10 lay people. In addition there were 2 people each from Broken Bay and Bathurst Dioceses joining the Armidale group.

Our delegation stayed at the official hotel for the Congress organisers, Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops. This provided a unique close up interaction at meals and around the hotel with these distinguished fellow guests.

Cardinal Tagle of the Philippines gave us powerful images of the Eucharist as the table at which the Church gathers similar to the way in which the family should gather each night for a family time of renewal. Cardinal Tagle challenged us to develop cultural intelligence to counter individualism and the throwaway culture. He told us that the Eucharist is the antidote to both these cultural trends. The Eucharist gathers people around the table, just like the family gathers (or should gather each night) around the family table for a meal. As in a family where this meal time is an important renewal of the family and its life, the Eucharistic table is where the people gather and renew as a Church community.



*Outdoor Mass to celebrate the closing of the 2016 International Eucharistic Congress.*



The Eucharist is also the antidote to the throwaway culture. On the night that Jesus instituted the Eucharist the world was conspiring to throw him away. But instead he lay down his life for others. We too, said Cardinal Tagle, need to lay our life down for others, to take the focus off ourselves.

For the delegation the experience was one which deepened our knowledge and love of the Eucharist and challenged us to go out as missionary disciples of the Eucharist. The personal nature of that challenge to each of us was reflected in the conference theme “Christ in you, our hope of Glory”. The Catechesis and testimonies stressed the understanding of the Eucharist as an encounter with the Lord that transforms and we too need to carry out Jesus’ mission to transform the world.



*Fr Ross O'Brien dancing Filipino style*



*Over 4000 First Communicants gather to make their First Holy Communion*





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Pope Francis

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# Lent



Lent a time of preparation:

## Fast – Pray – Share

### Fast

- one full meal only on Good Friday
- eating no meat on Good Friday
- also not eating meat during all Fridays in Lent as a reparation for sin of child abuse in the Church

### Pray

- attend daily Mass
- pray the Stations of the Cross
- Go to reconciliation
- Pray for Catechumens who are preparing for Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil
- Read in full the Pope's Lenten Message

### Share

- attend a Lenten group
- put up violet coloured decoration as a reminder that it is Lent
- support Project Compassion

## Mercy is the Lenten focus

Pope Francis in his 2016 Lenten message puts the focus on mercy in this Year of Mercy. Key messages include

- The season of Lent is to be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy
- Mercy expresses God's way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe
- God's mercy transforms human hearts: it enables us, through the experience of faithful love, to become merciful in turn
- In corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited
- In the spiritual works of mercy – counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer – we touch more directly our own sinfulness

The full text of the message can be found at [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151004\\_messaggio-quaresima2016.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20151004_messaggio-quaresima2016.html)



# ADIG

## Make a Difference

The Armidale Diocesan Investment Group would like to wish everyone a safe and holy 2016. Remember, ADIG is here for you and we only exist to help your local parishes and schools. Let us help you be a part of this great work throughout our community.

### ADIG welcomes Meg Lloyd

Helen Dawson, General Manager of ADIG, is pleased to announce the appointment of Meg Lloyd as the new Marketing Manager for ADIG.

The role has been vacant since 2012 following the departure of Adam Green. Jason Crocker will continue to assist in the marketing of ADIG's products and services.

Meg comes with a background in business and education. She is looking forward to meeting as many of ADIG's customers as possible in the coming months.

Meg and Jason will be delighted to assist you with any account and investment queries you may have.



*Jason Crocker, Helen Dawson, and Meg Lloyd*

### Christmas Club – it's for everyone!

We hope everyone had a happy and holy Christmas last year spent with family and friends. Did you overspend on festivities though? Do you have bills still coming in from Christmas? ADIG can help you with the Christmas spending this year with an ADIG Christmas Club account.

A Christmas Club account encourages saving throughout the year by putting your funds away until December. It is a great relief to know that this money is available to you again when the Christmas shopping time comes around again.

We can set up a direct debit into your Christmas Club account so a regular weekly or fortnightly amount is deposited. Just set it up and then watch the deposits add up.

<i><b>Deposit</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>	<i><b>Total in December</b></i>
\$10	Weekly	More than \$400
\$20	Weekly	More than \$800
\$25	Fortnightly	More than \$500
\$50	Fortnightly	<b>More than \$1000</b>
\$50	Monthly	More than \$550

Here is a table showing just how much you could have at Christmas by making regular deposits. This is based on opening your account in February and making regular deposits. This doesn't include your 6-monthly interest either!

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# Farewell Fr Ross



*Bishop Kennedy presents Fr Ross with a Cathedral Medallion for his service to the Diocese on his retirement*

*"Last Sunday was a great tribute to St Patrick's parishioners for the combined efforts you made in hosting such a wonderful community event to mark my retirement. I am deeply grateful to you all and consider myself privileged to have served you for so long as your parish priest. I leave at the end of the year with cherished memories. May God continue to bless us all is my prayer."*

*Fr Ross O'Brien*

We say farewell to Fr Ross, from the Parish of St Patrick's in West Tamworth, on his retirement. Saying Farewell, however, does not mean we say good bye.

Fr Ross was ordained as a priest in Armidale on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1961. He has spent his life of Service throughout the Diocese of Armidale, including Tenterfield, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Manilla, South and West Tamworth, Bundarra, Barraba, Inverell, Glen Innes and Armidale, in some capacity or another.

*An excerpt from parishoner, Daryl Martin's speech:*

*"Father Ross has never acted as a boss, someone who knows everything and just gives orders. Instead he is a true leader in every sense of the word, leading by example, sharing advice, giving direction and creating other leaders rather than followers.*

*His leadership really flows from his love for God and the parishioners of St Patrick's. We thank you Fr. Ross for your Truth and your courage to speak the truth. You are a compassionate man, a friend to all, but you stand strong on matters of principle. This is what I consider to be true integrity. Under Fr. Ross, the Church is a Church, it's not*

*a business. It lives and breathes the Grace of God. We shall never forget the love, gentleness and support which you have shown us; also not forgetting your tolerance and understanding.*

*In Fr. Ross, we find a model of someone who is sincerely tapped into the richness of the Catholic faith. He knows what life is about, its joys and struggles, because he is a man of prayer. He knows what God's love is about, full of mercy and hope, healing and filled with joy. It is because of this that he is such a great preacher. He knows God and knows people.*

*I am sure that Fr. Ross' good work will still live on even after he retires. We shall always remember his faithfulness and dedication to his calling and our Parish. This morning, we have an opportunity to celebrate Father's good work and to remember the great connections of friendship and love that he inspires throughout the school, parish and wider community. We know doubt will all miss you Father Ross, but we can take solace that he will only be living up the road. We ask God to bless Father as he begins a new chapter in his life...one of retirement."*



*Fr Ross receives a gift from Di Bolitho and Margaret Tarbet*

# Around and About

## A National Champion in our midst!!

Sallie Pilgrim, a kindergarten teacher from St Edwards, Tamworth, competed in the ABCRA Australian Bushman Campdraft and Rodeo Association Championships. Sallie was successful in the following events: Rookie Breakaway Roper; Rookie Allround Cowgirl; Rookie Steer Undecorator; Average Winner for the National Finals and Australian Steer Undecorating Title. We are very proud of you Miss Pilgrim and your amazing achievements!! Your hard work and dedication has paid off.



*Sallie Pilgrim*

## Cathedral Precinct Pancake Tuesday



*Helen Wicks, Tracey Hughes-Butters, Trevor Hayes & Lee Herden*

The Chancery Office hosted a Pancake Tuesday Morning Tea for the Cathedral Precinct and raised \$98 for Project Compassion. Everyone was grateful for the chance to enjoy the sunshine in the Torreggiani Courtyard, bringing the agencies together

## Carols in the Cathedral

What a celebration! There was a fabulous demonstration of Christmas Community spirit in the Cathedral when crowds of people came to share the readings and traditional carols of the Christmas story. Everyone was invited to stay for a sausage sizzle and mingle around the Gazebo after the Carols. Fr Gleeson & Fr Francis should be proud of their efforts towards organising Carols in the Cathedral last year. Bishop Kennedy was suitably impressed as he had been kept out of the organising loop in case of last minute changes, and, congratulated the congregation for their participation and involvement.



*A full Cathedral for Carols*



# Around and About



*Charlie Allen, Anthony Dubois, Brother John Pill, Bishop Michael Kennedy, Brother Pat McCarthy, Sister Mary Talty and Brother Garry Coyte gather to view the display in the College archives room. (courtesy of the Armidale Express)*

## Fabulous Forty!

O'Connor Catholic College in Armidale welcomed back many past staff and students to its 40th Birthday celebration over the weekend of 14th and 15th November 2015. O'Connor Catholic High School was formed in 1975 when the very long established Armidale schools, St Ursula's College for girls (est. 1882) and De La Salle College for boys (est. 1905) amalgamated. The name O'Connor was chosen to recognise the early educational focus of Bishop Patrick O'Connor, the third Catholic Bishop of Armidale (1904-1930) who also built the Catholic Cathedral in Armidale. After amalgamation, the school came under the jurisdiction of the Armidale Catholic Schools' Office as a systemic school in the Diocese of Armidale.

A highlight of the weekend was the return of all five past Principals - Brother John Pill (1975-1981) Brother Pat McCarthy (1982-1983), Brother Garry

Coyte (1984-1988), Sister Mary Talty (1989-1994) and the first lay Principal, Mr Anthony Dubois (1995-2007). Bishop Michael Kennedy, Father Francis Afu, Father Bernie Frize and Father Ron Perrett (a De La Salle Old Boy) attended the Birthday Celebration dinner. Fr Perrett and Fr Frize also concelebrated a Mass in the De La Salle Chapel on the Sunday morning.

The current Principal, Mr Charlie Allen, is deeply indebted to the Ursuline Sisters and the De La Salle Brothers for the college they have passed on. "The values and philosophy that lie behind the vision of the College allow us to continue to strive to look for the good in each and every student and to provide opportunities for growth and excellence in all areas of endeavour, whether it be spiritual, academic, artistic or physical". Mr Allen commented. "Our resolve is to maintain and build on these foundations for the next generation".



*Fr James, Fr Abmar, Bishop Kennedy & Fr Vic*

## Our Special Priests

Bishop Kennedy presented our La Salette Priests, Fr Vic Ignacio, Fr James Poovathinkal and Fr Abmar Dumayag, with Bishop Kennedy Medals as part of the Year of Consecrated Life at the last Clergy Assembly. He also recognised Fr Peter Lui's 60th Anniversary and Fr Barry Leech's 40th Anniversary of Ordination with Cathedral Medallions, celebrating their life's service to the Diocese. We truly have special priests among us.

# Around and About

## Too hot for school!

St Joseph's Mungindi students enjoyed an extra week of holidays for heat week. These students spent it down at the Barwon River enjoying their time before returning to school. With our extra week of holidays it gave students and teachers time to prepare for the new school year. Under the leadership of Deb Harrison we look forward to a wonderful 2016 at St Joseph's.

"Whatever we do, we do it well".



*St Joseph's students enjoying a swim in the heat of Mungindi.*



*Fr Vic Ignacio & Jacqui Remond*

## Our World Environment

The Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (On Care for our Common Home) has completely reframed the way that the Catholic community views the ecological and social crisis. So, at the last Clergy Assembly the priests of our Diocese participated in a ½ -day workshop presented by Jacqui Remond from Catholic Earthcare where she 'unpacked the Encyclical' and spoke about sustainability and the efficient use of resources in our everyday lives. Jacqui shared the video 'Take Action Today' ([www.catholicearthcare-.org.au/project/laudato-si-an-urgent-appeal-for-action](http://www.catholicearthcare-.org.au/project/laudato-si-an-urgent-appeal-for-action)) which features Bishop Kennedy. Fr Vic Ignacio also shared his experiences of sustainability from the Philippines.

## Leaders of St Edward's, Tamworth

A big congratulations to our 2016 leaders who were awarded their badges at our Captain Induction Ceremony last Friday. Well done to our School Captains: Thomas Littlejohns & Amelia Fauchon, Vice Captains: Michael Lewington & Avril Gardiner, Sports Captains: MacKillop Gold, Kyson Cooper & Mia Kennedy; Chisholm Red, Nathan Fox & Chloe Bates; Therry Blue, Bailey Hook & Chelsea O'Toole; Kennedy Green, Jackson Walton & Jessica Reabow. We look forward to a rewarding year with our students and families.



*Thomas Littlejohns receives his captain's badge with Mum and Dad, Jacqui and Gary*



# Around and About

## First Communion

Seven children made their First Communion at St Joseph's Parish, Uralla. Congratulations to Zoe Walters, Rumiya McGuiness-Bullock, Dominic Rowley-Michell, Isaac Rowley-Michell, Isabel Swift, Bailey Thackway and Courtney Shirdon on making this special sacrament and taking such an important step in your personal spiritual development. Family, friends and parishioners gathered to celebrate this beautiful and important Sacrament with the children and were invited back to the School Hall for a celebratory morning tea, including a large, lavish cake! The children were all excited to be receiving their First Communion and the sunny morning added to their joy.



*First Communicants' cut their Communion Cake*

## A New Year!

As 2016 begins St Joseph's Tamworth classrooms are already buzzing with activity. Children are settling quickly back into routine and our new Kindergarten are revelling in the many opportunities of 'Big School'. Clementine Monet & Breanna Lucky were announced School Captains, with Hannah Irwin and Ella Mitchell Sport Captains. We wish them a wonderful year in their respective leadership roles. We welcome many new families to St Joseph's for 2016 and look forward to many successes throughout the year.



*Isislyn Balqwin*

## Principal in the room!

Parents, students and staff at St Joseph's Uralla welcomed the new school year with the appointment of its new Principal, Mrs Judy Elks.

A passion for bringing out the best in each child lies at the heart of Judy's commendable career in teaching. She is committed to increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices within the classroom setting and thus Judy will be a regular face in the classrooms at St Joseph's as she takes the helm alongside the teaching staff in leading the delivery of an extensive curriculum to its students.



*Judy Elks with the kids from Kindergarten*

# Around and About



*U-Turn Youth Ministry Team engaging the students in action.*

## Discovery at Moree

We can all dream of discovering a treasure and how that discovery would change our lives. Treasures can be found in many places – family, trustworthy friends, an unexpected windfall or a quiet moment to yourself in a busy life!

The “discovery of a treasure” was made by way of St Philomena’s School at Moree when Trevor and Julie Hayes and Mary Hull from the Good Shepherd Fellowship, Armidale/Uralla and the U-Turn Youth Ministry Team from the Servants of Jesus Community, Sydney, travelled to Moree to hold an outreach there. The welcome could not have been warmer. The Principal, Karen Jager and Nerida Finlayson, the Religious Coordinator were very

encouraging, welcoming and helpful. The students were excellent. They were a great credit to their school.

Then U-Turn Youth Ministry Team spent the rest of the day presenting sessions for Years 5 to 10 at St Philomena’s School. U-Turn engaged with the students through skits, song, scripture and socialising. The students enjoyed the sessions and were enthusiastic about the idea of “Discovery”.

It is hoped that many young people, not only from Moree, will take the opportunity to attend the “Discovery Youth Camp” this year.

*Details of the “Discovery Youth Camp”, 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, can be found at [www.discovery.org.au](http://www.discovery.org.au)*



*Concluding the celebrations for the Year of Consecrated Life with cake!*

## The Year of Consecrated Life Concludes

The Year of Consecrated Life concluded on Tuesday, 2nd February with a Mass and celebratory luncheon held in the South Tamworth Parish. The chief celebrant of the Mass, the Vicar General, Monsignor Wilkes was assisted by twenty priests from across the Diocese. Retired Bishop Robin Crapp was in attendance as were about fifteen religious sisters representing the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Sisters of Nazareth.

The purpose of the Year of Consecrated Life was to acknowledge and give thanks for the work of priests and religious in the diocese and to pray for vocations. This was the theme of the Mass.



# Around and About



*Sam McKay, Olivia Adamo & Tim Keys enjoying St Albert's WiFi network and facilities*

St Albert's College (UNE) has an exciting year ahead with impressive upgrades to College facilities being completed in February. There are new events on the horizon which will reinforce the strong bond the college has with its stakeholders and the wider community. A new era has begun for the college and with it brings a great time of change and extraordinary opportunities to improve operations and experiences for all those involved at St Albert's.

At the end of 2015, the college farewelled Chaplain Fr John MacDonald, as he embarks on a new journey to the Parish of West Tamworth. The college now looks forward to working closely with Parish Administrator Fr Gleeson and Assistant Parish Priest Fr Francis to ensure the Catholic mission at St Albert's continues to grow. Reaffirming its commitment to the wellbeing of its student body, the college has also established a unique partnership with the charity Batyr which focuses on youth mental health.

St Albert's has appointed a dynamic leadership team amongst its student body including, former McCarthy Catholic College student, Richie Burke as President of the Junior Common Room. The staff continues to grow with the appointment of former St Albert's College student Alice Schmidt in the role of Director of Marketing and Public Relations. This exciting new role will focus on advancing the marketing activities at the college including the recruitment of students, promotion of Conference and Functions capabilities at the college and the maintenance of its valued relationship with college Alumni and Friends.

2016 is set to be a rewarding and exciting year for the college community with over 300 students ready to descend upon St Albert's for the start of the academic year. No doubt these students will bring an exciting energy, focused on achieving the goals set by the leadership team for the year ahead. ([www.stalbertscollege.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stalbertscollege.catholic.edu.au))



## WYD 2016 KRAKOW POLAND

18<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2016 TO 5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2016

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For more information contact Lee Herden

[lherden@arm.catholic.edu.au](mailto:lherden@arm.catholic.edu.au)

# Questions for reflection

- What false 'gods' do I place above God and people?
- After leaving Mass, do I continue to glorify God by the actions in my life?
- How have I failed to love others in my family, workplace or community?
- Do I hold any views that are prejudiced or biased or that perpetuate stereotypes?
- Have I responded to the needs of the poor and those whose rights are unfulfilled?
- Do my personal, economic, and public choices reflect a genuine concern for others and the common good?
- Have I stood up to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?
- Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions?
- Do my purchasing choices take into account the well-being of those producing what I buy?
- How do I protect and care for God's creation? Are there ways I could reduce consumption?

Through the Sacrament of Penance, God offers mercy and forgiveness. In response to this gift, we are called to become vehicles of Christ's love, making amends and restoring justice and the bonds that have been broken. Healed and forgiven, we are sent to work for peace, justice, and love in our world.

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# Officially Blessed

We are truly blessed to have such a beautiful and historic redevelopment of the Cathedral Precinct completed. The blessing of the buildings, grounds, offices and residence was a momentous celebration. Even the heavens blessed us with some rain but didn't dampen the community spirit that was alive in all present.



*Ursuline sisters: L-R Sr Maree Byron, Sr Peg Gallen, Sr Colleen Foley and Sr Gabriel Williams*



*Bishop Kennedy blesses the offices*



*CSO & ADIG staff and families fill the balcony*



*The Torreggiani Courtyard filled with parishioners, neighbours, officials and clergy to witness and participate in the opening and blessing of the Cathedral Precinct.*



## Prince Charles: Help Middle East Christians before it's too late

*"The impact that... unmentionable violence and cruelty has had on individual lives is utterly heart-breaking."*

HRH The Prince of Wales has delivered an impassioned appeal on behalf of persecuted Christians in the Middle East, saying that the growing crisis of extremism "threatens the very existence of Christianity in the land of its birth".

Pointing to the drastic decline of Christianity in the region especially Iraq, Prince Charles told a London gathering of Church leaders and Middle East Christians that the suffering inflicted by Islamist militants Daesh (ISIS) is "utterly heart-breaking".

In his speech given at the event on 17<sup>th</sup> December at Archbishop's House, Westminster, the Prince called for more "practical" help for persecuted Christians and went on to praise Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) as "a remarkable organisation". The charity, which has 140 projects ongoing in the Middle East, this week announced 30 extra emergency aid packages for Iraq and Syria.

Prince Charles spoke of three victims of persecution he met two months ago – Jesuit Father Ziad Hilal who has helped Christians in Homs, Syria, Father Douglas Bazi, kidnapped and tortured by Islamic extremists in Baghdad, Iraq, and 15-year-old Victoria Youhanna who escaped with her family from militants Boko Haram.



HRH The Prince of Wales speaking at the event with Cardinal Nichols in the background © Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

Describing the three as "remarkable people subjected to indescribable levels of barbaric horror", the Prince said: "The impact that... unmentionable violence and cruelty has had on individual lives is utterly heart-breaking."

Stressing the Middle East as the birthplace and original heartland of the Church, the Prince underlined the need for action to preserve this ancient culture and spirituality, warning that "this remarkable heritage is under threat as never before".

By John Pontifex ACN News; Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015

The link to this story can be found at <http://members4.boardhost.com/acnaus/msg/1450656944.html>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please tick the box below if you would like to receive the olive wood rosary\*.



### Donation form: SOS! ... Christianity in the Middle East ... SOS!



**Send to: Aid to the Church in Need PO Box 7246 Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153**

Tel No: (02) 9679-1929 Email: [info@aidtochurch.org](mailto:info@aidtochurch.org) Web: [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)

**I/We enclose \$..... to help keep Christianity alive in the Middle East**

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



☐ Yes please send me the olive wood rosary\*

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

Viewpoint

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**AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED...a Catholic charity dependent on the Holy See, providing pastoral relief to needy and oppressed Churches**



# Blessed Teresa of Calcutta to Be Made Canonized Saint



## **Mother Teresa's Order, Missionaries of Charity, Has Spread to More Than 130 Countries**

During a private audience with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in the Vatican yesterday, Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate a decree regarding a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Teresa, known as Mother Teresa around the world.

Born Aug. 26, 1910, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu would go on to found the Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity and the Missionaries of Charity. The order, which started in Calcutta and spread to more than 130 countries, ran hospices for those suffering from HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis. Known for her charitable works with

the poor and sick, the soon to be canonized saint, died on Sept. 5, 1997.

Immediately following her death in 1997, the Catholic Church began her process of beatification. She was beatified by St. John Paul II in 2002, following the recognition of the miraculous healing of an Indian woman suffering from a tumor in her abdomen. Yesterday, Pope Francis signed off on the second miracle needed, which, according to the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference, L'Avvenire, regarded a man in Brazil in 2008 who had multiple brain abscesses, and who, within a day of being in a coma, was cured.

*ZENIT December 18, 2015*

### Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Clothe the naked  
Shelter the homeless  
Visit the imprisoned  
Visit the sick  
Bury the dead

### Spiritual Works of Mercy

Instruct the ignorant  
Counsel the doubtful  
Admonish the sinner  
Bear wrongs patiently  
Forgive offenses willingly  
Comfort the sorrowful  
Pray for the living & dead





# Education *Excites*

## *Vocational Education and Training*

Supporting and providing quality Vocational Education and Training pathways for students across the diocese was the focus of a series of curriculum writing and reviewing days held with VET Teachers from the Armidale and Lismore Dioceses during Term 4 2015. VET teachers in schools have a series of additional requirements to meet in the delivery of industry recognised qualifications for students. Currently students in our Catholic schools can engage in a range of Certificate 2 subjects these include; Primary Industries, Business Services, Hospitality and Construction. Students are also supported through TVET courses at TAFE and SBAT traineeships and apprenticeships. Our young people have many opportunities in the senior years to explore career options, as we know they will go on to have many vocations across their lifetime. Some of these jobs are yet to be invented!



VET teachers, hard at work, in collaboration



students collaborate for combined performance

## *Innovation in HSC Chemistry*

A new and exciting approach to HSC Chemistry will start this year. Forty Students and teachers from St Mary's College, Gunnedah, McCarthy Catholic College, Tamworth and O'Connor Catholic College will join a virtual classroom once a week to learn HSC Chemistry together and for various ChemCamps during the year and a planned field trip to the Maritime Museum in Sydney. The program will be facilitated by the teachers, Malcolm Clarke, Brian Kells and Daniel Fittler in collaboration with Regina Menz from the CSO. The aim of this project is to build a sense of community across the schools and work together to achieve high student outcomes. We would be very interested in hearing from any of our readers who have expertise in this area with whom we could build future partnerships. Please contact Regina Menz at the Catholic Schools Office Armidale: 6772 7388, [cso@arm.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cso@arm.catholic.edu.au).



McCarthy, O'Connor & St Mary's students working together





## *HSC 2015 - Highlights*

Students in our Diocese were among these high achievers, making the BOSTES Merit lists. Here are some highlights from the 3 Secondary Schools in the Armidale Diocese. Congratulations to our students who achieved the following:

### **School Dux 2015**

**McCarthy Catholic College, Tamworth** - Lauren MacRae  
ATAR 95.5

**O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale** - Gabriella Gasbarri  
ATAR 92.7

**St Mary's College, Gunnedah** - Luke Zelinski ATAR 93.50  
including Band 6 results in Mathematics, Mathematics  
Extension 1 and Physics.

### **High Achievers**

**St Mary's College, Gunnedah** - Claudia Bryant placed 4th in  
NSW for Primary Industries.

**O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale** - Two Year 11 students;  
Laura Sharman and Tim Hanrahan who were accelerated in  
Mathematics achieved excellent results. They both received  
Band 6 in Mathematics Extension 1 and Mathematics  
Extension 2. Georgia Seymour, a PLC student who was a  
member of the O'Connor Year 12 Dance class, was chosen for  
Callback.

### **Distinguished Achievers List**

#### **McCarthy Catholic College, Tamworth**

Timothy Baldwin- PDHPE

Kate Byron- Studies of Religion 1

Lauren Challens- Studies of Religion 1

Ellen Flanagan -Modern History

Teanna Haywood -Studies of Religion 1

Lauren MacRae- Biology, Studies of Religion 1

Cara Paterson - PDHPE

Max Rixon- Visual Arts

Nicholas Sanderson- Business Studies, Geography, Visual Arts

Sophie Soles- PDHPE

#### **St Mary's College, Gunnedah**

Georgia Anderson- PDHPE

Claudia Bryant- Primary Industries

Emily Evans- Mathematics General 2

Lucy Jaeger - PDHPE, Studies of Religion 1

Emily Osmond- PDHPE

Luke Zelinski- Mathematics, HSC Mathematics Extension 1,  
Physics



*"Catholic schools  
educate students from  
all socioeconomic and  
academic levels, making  
results exceptional."*

*Ian Baker, NSW Catholic Education Commission*

## New Deputy Director- Dr Terry McCarthy



This year we welcome Dr Terry McCarthy as he starts his position as Deputy Director of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Armidale.

Terry has experience at a senior level in both government and Catholic schools and will bring

great knowledge and skills as he starts work with the Director, CSO staff, leaders, teachers and school communities.

As a practising Catholic, Terry has been actively involved in the life of his parish communities including ministry as a member of the Mersey-Leven Parish Council.

Terry has a Bachelor of Education and a Masters of Educational Studies from the University of Tasmania. He completed a PhD (2008) on school and system educational leadership using the lens of the great religions and philosophers of the world as a tool for reflection. His 17 years as a school principal in Tasmanian government schools focused on working within, and serving, some of Tasmania's most isolated and marginalised communities.

In the last 18 months, Terry was

employed as an external consultant to the CEO in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes and to Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) undertaking School Improvement Reviews and leadership appraisals. He was also a Commissioner on the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission.

Terry earlier worked for nine years as Head of Office (Chief of Staff), Principal Education Adviser or Senior Education Adviser to five Tasmanian Government Ministers (2005-2014) including the Premier of Tasmania.

Terry is married to Angela and has four adult children who have prospered through their education in Catholic schools. He looks forward to working within our Catholic Schools community and we wish him all the best on his new journey.

## New app from Our Sunday Visitor designed especially for the Year of Mercy

Our Sunday Visitor's **365 Days to Mercy** app, free in the **iTunes** and **Google Play** app stores, is designed to accompany you on a spiritual journey during the Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis. The official Year of Mercy is December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016, but daily inspiration, stories, and news began appearing in the app on November 20, 2015, giving you a full **365 Days to Mercy**.

The theme for the year is "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful," reflected in the elements of the app which draw upon resources from Our Sunday Visitor:

- An explanation of the Year of Mercy
- Daily Mercy reflections
- Everyday Scripture reflections
- Book excerpts
- Year of Mercy resources
- Daily Pope tweets
- Year of Mercy news stories
- Chaplet & Novena of Divine Mercy





# Faith, Reason and the Sciences

## A Short History Lesson in the Church's Contribution

### The Church and Scientists

In the Middle Ages, most, if not all, European scientists were Catholic priests, including Father Nicholas Copernicus, who confirmed the heliocentric theory, which states that Earth and the other planets revolve around the sun.

In addition, Jesuit Msgr. Georges Lemaître, not Albert Einstein, was the one who created the “Big Bang” theory in 1933. “There is no conflict between religion and science,” he said.

In addition, more than 40 of the moon's craters are named after Jesuit astronomers. These were named by the scientists who mapped the moon about 20 years after the Galileo trial.

It is one of the more tenacious “myths” of our epoch — indeed, one would say one of the well-established prejudices — that relations between science and the Church are bad and that faith and science exist, from ages past, in a kind of persistent conflict.

“Belief in God as the Creator is not an obstacle [to science]. Why should belief that the universe has a Creator stand in the way of science? Why should it in any way cause problems for science, if scientists understand their research, their discoveries and the theories they evolve, their comprehension of relationships as ‘studying the book of creation’?” stated Cardinal Christoph Schönborn in *Chance or Purpose?*

Even Louis Pasteur, “father of bacteriology,” said, “Science brings men nearer to God. The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the Creator's work.” The French chemist, epidemiologist and microbiologist created the rabies vaccine and the pasteurization process, and he developed the “germ theory of disease.” His research reduced mortality from puerperal fever. He was a devout Catholic and was particularly dedicated to the Rosary.

### Of Darwin and Mendel

As to the theory of evolution, despite what atheist-revisionists try to pass off, though Charles Darwin (1809-1882) presented an interesting theory as to the natural development of living creatures from simple

forms to more complex ones (which coincidentally mirrors nearly exactly the Genesis account), he was incapable of providing the mechanism by which information about an individual animal's survival is passed onto succeeding generations. Many generations of atheist-Darwinists blindly stumbled about in the dark, “knowing” that Darwin was right, but not knowing why.

After Darwin, then came along Abbot Gregor Mendel (1822-1884). When the Benedictine monk meticulously experimented with the inherited characteristics of 29,000 pea plants, he formulated the science of genetics, which lent legitimacy to evolutionary theory.

His research was crucial in the discovery of dominant and recessive genes and traits, genotype and phenotype and the concept of heterozygosity and homozygosity. Thus, the sweetest of ironies: Modern atheists owe their *raison d'être* to an Austrian Catholic monk, the “father of modern genetics,” and to a Belgian Catholic priest, the creator of the “Big Bang.”

As history attests, Catholics are among the world's greatest scientific researchers. St. Albert, pray for us!

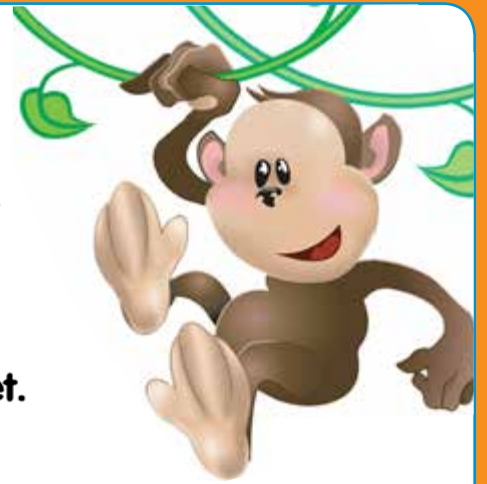
by Angelo Stagnaro

Read more: <http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/faith-reason-and-the-sciences/#ixzz3zG43GbGE>

‘there is no  
conflict between  
religion and  
science’



# Kids Kapers



## Jesus washes His friends' feet.

John 13:1-17

Jesus and His friends were getting ready to have a special dinner together. They spent the day talking and walking. The roads were hot and dusty. When Jesus and His friends came to the house for a special dinner, their feet were dirty. They needed to be washed! But no one wanted to wash other people's feet.

That was a job for a servant!

Jesus waited until the food was on the table. Then Jesus got up and wrapped a towel around His waist.

Jesus poured water into a large bowl and began to wash His friends' feet.

Peter felt embarrassed. Peter knew that he should have offered to wash Jesus' feet. But Jesus told Peter that he needed Jesus to wash his feet for him.

"Follow my example," Jesus said. He wanted them to help each other.







*Fr Armstrong writes*

### **The MARIAN and PETRINE PROFILES of the CHURCH**

Many think of the Catholic Church as being like a pyramid, with the pope at the top, followed by the bishops, then the consecrated religious and clergy, and finally the laity at the bottom. One of Christ's own images of the Church, however, and a centrally important one, is that of a house built on rock (Mat 7:24-25), which does not fall despite the pounding of winds, rains and floods - precisely because it is built on rock. This then illuminates our understanding of an important teaching on Peter and his successors, reported in Mat 16:18, 'You are Peter (Rock), and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The pope is therefore at the lowest point of the Church, not the highest.

On December 22, 1987, during the "Marian Year", Pope John Paul II, whom we now honour as saint, gave a lengthy address in which he spoke of the various images or profiles of the Church which were doing the rounds of the sometimes informed, sometimes less well informed, contemporary debates. Obviously, the "Petrine profile" of the Church, meaning the apostolic succession and the clergy, have a vital place in the life of the Church, which "is in the nature of a sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men". (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* 1). John Paul went on to suggest, however, that since Mary was

the first disciple of the Lord, she provides the most basic and foundational idea of all Christ's disciples. She gave her assent to the Incarnation, brought him forth, nourished him, and "in a wholly singular way cooperated with the Saviour in the work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is mother to us in the order of grace." (*Lumen gentium* 61). By bringing forth the Head of the Mystical Body, which is the Church, she is therefore the mother of the members of that Mystical Body. In her assumption she shows what awaits us as faithful followers of the Lord. The "Marian profile" gives a powerful indication of who we are as the disciples of Jesus, how we ought to follow him, and what constitutes our final destiny.

For this reason, the Polish pope observed, "the Marian profile is even more fundamental than the Petrine profile." Though the two cannot be divided, and ought not be set up against each other, the "Marian Church" precedes, makes possible, and explains the purpose of the "Petrine Church", which has no other task than that of working for the formation of the whole Church "in line with the ideal of sanctity already programmed and prefigured in Mary." The two profiles are therefore not in tension but complement each other. Nonetheless, the "Marian profile" is preeminent", and carries within it a richer meaning for all the baptised. Leon Bloy, a French writer at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote that our lives are a waste of time if we don't become saints. The Marian profile of the life of faith helps to remind us of this.



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**An instrument to empower all people with disabilities to live a good life**

The team at Centacare New England North West are supporting people with disabilities to be the best version of themselves through person centered community based services and supported living across the region.

Centacare NENW staff believe everyone has a right to choice and to be a valued member of our community. With an emphasis on active participation in the local community, locals can build and strengthen relationships, grow personal networks, boost confidence and realise their personal goals with the support of Centacare NENW.

Each person's rights and needs are considered to tailor a mix of one-to-one and small group support which may include programs around learning to do things for yourself; volunteering or work placements; Literacy and

Numeracy; Cultural, Music and Arts activities; sports and fitness activities; personal planning and problem solving; understanding current affairs and events; creating opportunities to make friends and increase social networks.

The team can support you to live life your way in your own home, by yourself, sharing with other participants, or if you're living with family or mates. Centacare NENW promotes, enables and strengthens community inclusion, independence, personal, social and community networks to assist you, and others with disabilities, to maintain meaningful, positive, rewarding and empowered lives.

Get in touch with the Centacare NENW team on 1800 372 826 to find out more.

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**Centacare**  
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## Understanding, compassion key to quality of mercy: Pope Francis

**Human beings should not be defined only by their sexual tendencies, the Pope says in a new book — *The Name of God is Mercy* — to be released in Rome today.**

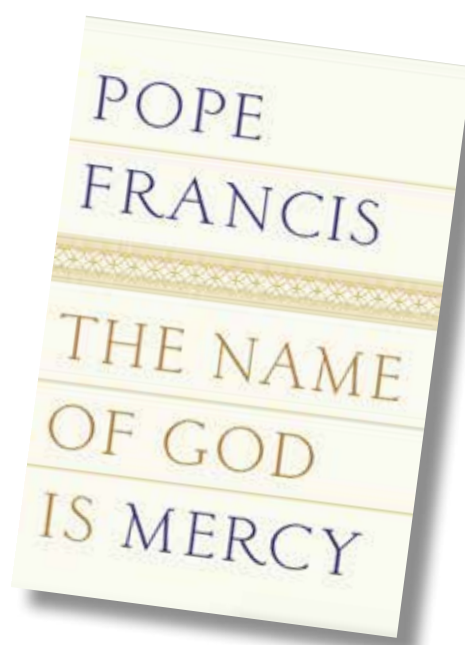
The book, produced in a question-and-answer style with veteran Vatican journalist Andrea Tornielli, calls for understanding and compassion for those who break rules or fall short of its ideals. “Let us not forget that God loves all his creatures and we are destined to receive his infinite love,” Francis wrote. “I prefer that homosexuals come to confession, that they stay close to the Lord and that we all pray together. You can advise them to pray, you can show goodwill, you can show them the way and accompany them along it.”

The book is being published for the Catholic Church’s Year of Mercy. Francis reveals his “special relationship” with people in prisons. “I have always been very attached to them, because of my awareness of being a sinner,” he writes. “Every time I go through the gates into a prison to celebrate mass or for a visit, I always think: why them and not me? I should be here. I deserve to be here. Their fall could have been mine. I do not feel superior to the people who stand before me ... I derive consolation from Peter: he betrayed Jesus, and even so he was chosen.”

The Pope also takes aim at “a few very rigid people” who “would do well to slip a little, so they could remember that they are sinners and thus meet Jesus”. Humanity, he writes, was deeply wounded — by poverty, social exclusion, relativism and “the many slaveries of the third

millennium”. In a fragile time, too many believed they had no chance of redemption, or a hand to raise them up, embrace them, forgive them and fill them “with infinite, patient, indulgent love to put them back on their feet”. Instead, many from every social class were seeking out “soothsayers and fortune-tellers”.

He urged priests not use confessionals as “torture chambers” but to listen, not interrogate penitents and offer advice delicately.



# A Brief Examination of Conscience

## *Based on the Ten Commandments*



### **I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.**

Have I treated people, events, or things as more important than God?

### **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?

### **Remember to keep holy the LORD's Day.**

Do I go to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Vigil) and on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1; the Ascension; Aug. 15; Nov. 1; Dec. 8; Dec. 25)? Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body? Do I look for ways to spend time with family or in service on Sunday?

### **Honor your father and your mother.**

Do I show my parents due respect? Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible? Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?

### **You shall not kill.**

Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?

### **You shall not commit adultery.**

Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?

### **You shall not steal.**

Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?

### **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.**

Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?

### **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?

### **Christ's Two Commandments**

How well do we love God and others? Do we love as Christ calls us to? In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ gives us Two Commandments: "He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments'" (Mt 22:37-40).

Not sure what love is? St. Paul describes it for us in his Letter to the Corinthians. Is this how you love God and others? "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:4-8).



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What is Lent? "Lent is a time when people give up fast food and eggs. They eat Pancakes (the day before) because it uses up all those ingredients and they want one more taste of those things" - Lydia, 7



"It's about getting ready for Easter. It's where you give up something." - Chelsea, 7

"To give up stuff so poor people get money. Every time that you do something that you gave up you put money in the Caritas box" - Jack, 7



# St Michael's Parish Centenary – A Proud History Alive

St Michael's Church, Dungowan was opened on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1915 by that significant building bishop of Armidale, Patrick Joseph O'Connor.

The generations who built this church were the incredible founders of so much of the deep faith still evident in long lines of communicants at Sunday worship and, as well, in the impressive built environment which is their legacy. All around Australia one can still find, even in almost deserted and often unexpected places, their achievements.

*An Excerpt from Bishop Kennedy's homily from the Centennial Mass celebration:*

“Do not rush away from this beautiful Church of Saint Michael's upon the conclusion of our Mass today, nor any Sunday for that matter. Look around both outside and inside and allow what you see to help you in your listening.

Notice how the marriage of architecture and artwork combine to gather us together as a people; to focus our attention on the altar and tabernacle where the Word of God made flesh comes to us and stays with us; and to simultaneously lift our gaze to Heaven where we long to dwell with the Holy Trinity and all the angels and saints.

Notice the crosses, the windows, the statues, the icons; notice the roof, the columns, the arches; notice this

ambo, the baptismal font, the confessional, the Stations of the Cross, the candles. Notice all these things, both as individual features and as an organic whole, and let your seeing help you in your listening, for all these things have been carefully and deliberately placed here so that they might speak to us of God.

I conclude by quoting a beautiful passage from the Centenary Booklet: “This worthy centenary celebration built around Saint Michael's Church reflects the greatest story ever told: that of human redemption through the saving action of Jesus Christ.” Reminders of this act of redemption surround us in this church; this once for always act of redemption is not repeated but is made present for us every Sunday in our Eucharistic celebration of the Mass. This greatest story ever told is what we need to hear and what we need to share with others. It is not the fairy-tale “once upon a time” but the true story of God's love, compassion, mercy, redemption, and friendship with every one of us.



Photos courtesy of Farina Photographics







Stained Glass Window of St Michael's Church Dungowan – courtesy of Farina Photographics