

# V.Catholic iewpoint†

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DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

# LIFE



Worth marching for

# Homily: Dedication Centenary of the Cathedral of Saints Mary and Joseph



## The Bishop Speaks

Celebrating the centenary of our Cathedrals consecration and dedication to God we are in a sense celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Cathedral's "baptism". At our own baptism we are anointed with sacred chrism and thereby consecrated or set apart for the glory of God and are made a priestly people to offer sacrifice to the one true living God. So too, one hundred years ago today the magnificent high altar of our Cathedral was anointed with chrism - along with the 12 spots on the Cathedral walls marked now by burning candles - and by this anointing was consecrated. From that day forward it has been set apart for the glory of God and for the offering of the perfect sacrifice to the one true living God. Fittingly then, today's Liturgy of the Eucharist will be offered on the high Altar whose consecration we celebrate.

In today's liturgy, it is natural that we look back to the past, give thanks for the present, and look forward to the future.

**The Past:** When this Cathedral, designed by the Architects Sheerin and Hennessy and constructed by Mr. George Nott opened in 1912, reports spoke glowingly of this great accomplishment for the Catholics of Armidale and for their Bishop, Patrick Joseph O'Connor.

Then, as is so often the case in this veil of tears, with the Cathedral open and preparations readying for its consecration, tragically, overnight, the world was thrust into the Great War beginning in 1914. So many young souls were lost, including many from this town, and the altar intended for our cathedral on its way from Europe was sunk to the bottom of the ocean. As death and destruction raged in our world, this was no time to celebrate. When, finally, the dedication to God of this fine structure was able to be made on this day in 1919, it was as if the entire world had shifted. The supposed "War to end all wars" had ended. For those present there was much reason to celebrate and to praise God.

There is something of that same spirit here with us today 100 years later. In some ways our society is still at war – at least with God and believing Christians at times – but like 100 years ago, we draw



strength, courage, and faith from the dedication and commitment of our forebears who wanted to create a place – awesome and venerable – in Armidale where God would be worshipped, and seen to be so.

A one-hundred-year anniversary is a magnificent milestone, but the ceremonies celebrated here on that day were far older, steeped in history. The ritual speaks of an effective baptism of the building, a complete dedication of stone, brick and wood to the purposes of Almighty God. In fact, many of the ceremonies looked back to the ritual referred to in the first reading.

In that liturgy of consecration 100 years ago, but also today, the Bishop acts in the person of Jesus Christ who has come to dwell with sinners, to save sinners. Indeed, in this place, sinners are to be welcomed. Our Lord, like for the Samaritan woman, wants to invite





*Bishop Kennedy and some of the priests of the Diocese concelebrate the Centenary Mass on the High Altar, which was consecrated on 12th December, 1919*

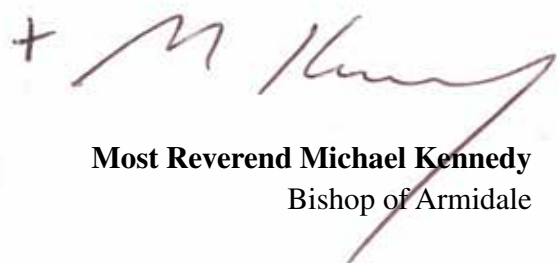
all to come to the fountains of living water that can be found where Christ is, and nowhere is that more the case than in a Catholic Church. Knowing this, we do so much want to go “rejoicing to the house of the Lord”!

**The Present:** With all of this historical reflection we must not overlook that which happens today, and every day, in this wonderful cathedral dedicated to God. We must not overlook its most precious possession: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Catholic liturgy of the Mass is the re-presentation of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Saint Paul in the second reading reminds us of this, the most precious gift in any Catholic church: *“The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ.”*

**The Future:** So then, what of the future? Just as the liturgical rites of 100 years ago placed the saints relics under the altar, and the incense burnt and filled the entire space, so the liturgical wording and rites point to that heavenly liturgy which is our final aim and destination. Our Liturgy is *supposed* to raise our minds out of the commonplace, to have us, through beauty and symbol, contemplate the glory that is our

eternal reward. In a world that is sometimes dreary and where circumstances, be they drought or fire, or simply the ups and downs of life can give us heavy hearts, our liturgy is supposed to strengthen us and give us hope as we all together look expectantly to Christ who has come, who still comes, and who will come again. I hope today’s liturgy helps us in this regard.

This, dear friends, is what our Cathedral is intending to point our minds towards: to past, present and future. It has done this very well for 100 years. Let us pray, that under the continued loving gaze and patronage of Our Blessed Mother and of Saint Joseph, it will continue to do so for another 100 years, or until that time when Christ comes again, to make all things new.

  
**Most Reverend Michael Kennedy**  
 Bishop of Armidale



# Life: worth marching for



*Bishop Richard Umbers with the Australian marchers*

The March for Life began in Washington, D.C., as a small demonstration and rapidly grew to be the largest pro-life event in the world. The peaceful demonstration that has followed on the sombre anniversary of Roe v. Wade every year since 1973 is a witness to the truth concerning the greatest human rights violation of our time, legalized abortion on demand.

A group of Australians, lead by Bishop Richard Umbers of the Archdiocese of Sydney, marched this year.

Here is an eyewitness report from a participant of the 2020 March for Life

"Washington DC's March for Life was truly amazing. It's always hard to gauge numbers, but I'd say 250,000 people - mainly young people - came from all over the US and beyond to stand in solidarity with the unborn.

It was so peaceful, joyful, hopeful and inspiring. In Trump it was great to have a world leader attend and, once more speak so eloquently and beautifully about the dignity of every human person.

But that was a bonus, not the focus. The focus was young people choosing to do what young people do best when helped to: shine with simple joy and vitality in the name of love and truth. Backed up by common sense.

- How can we get excited about bacteria as life on Mars and ignore life in the womb?
- How can we spend so much more energy on saving the panda than the unborn human?
- How can we kill female babies in the name of women's rights?

- If abortion is a genuine solution, how come no one ever is disappointed that they weren't aborted?

So many placards calmly, rationally posed these and other questions. There was no crescendo as the March reached the Capitol, there was no 'Rocky III' moment of 'right, the fight back is on'. We simply dissipated in a peaceful joy that only faith and truth can give: knowing Life wins."



*Thousands at the March for Life in Washington*



# Vernon Turner – Order of Australia medal

A lifetime dedicated to hockey, as well as contribution to education, has seen Cathedral Parish parishioner Vernon Turner awarded the Order of Australia medal.

Born in 1924, Turner started playing hockey in his teenage years at the Glebe Hockey Club. He developed quickly as a player and rose quickly through the ranks. He played in the Sydney Senior Representative Men's team from 1944 to 1957 and in the NSW Senior Representative team from 1947 to 1955. He captained the NSW team for six of the nine years he was part of it and is proud that he was able to help other players to develop their skills, some of whom went on to play for Australia. He retired from hockey when he was 84!

While coaching hockey, Turner discovered he had a love for teaching and graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts (honours) in 1954. He also received a Master's in Education in 1973, and a Master of Arts from the University of New England in 1980.

Vernon and his wife Teresa have three children Joseph, Kathleen and Damien. Vernon and Teresa are parishioners of the Cathedral Parish and have been actively involved in Parish



*Vernon plays hockey with his grandson Joshua*

activities. They are a familiar sight at Mass each day. On weekends they are joined at Mass by Joseph, his wife Janine and their children Joshua 5 years old and Teresa 2 years old.

Whilst Vernon is the one who has been honoured with the OAM he has been supported by Teresa in all his endeavors for the past 46 years. Congratulation Vernon and Teresa!



## Citizen of the Year

Trish Keightley was named 2020 Inverell Citizen of the Year. During the ceremony, Inverell Shire Council mayor Paul Harmon spoke a little more about the great work Trish does with the support group, whilst balancing her own employment and assisting her husband Tony with his businesses.

Holding the volunteer role of Inverell Breast Cancer Support Group president for the past two years, Trish has been pivotal to a number of fundraising activities. In 2019, the Inverell Breast Cancer Support Group donated \$10,000 to Inala House in Tamworth. Statistics have shown Inverell to be the highest users of Inala House, seeking temporary accommodation during radiation.

Prior to taking up the president's position Trish was the group's treasurer. Each month Trish organises bus tours and annually, she plans a Pink Ribbon Day fundraiser and a Mother's Day, and Christmas Day luncheon.

Trish is a popular and friendly host which is reflected in the hundreds when women who attend these events speak glowingly of her dedication. The monthly bus tours have become a popular social outing for dozens of women. The event brings women together for a day out, a chance to enjoy our beautiful region and network, built friendships and raise funds.

Trish is a member of the Sacred Heart Parish Inverell team which assists with Mass and Holy Communion at the McLean Nursing home.

*Trish is all smiles with her Award certificate*

# Experience of a lifetime

Students from the Diocese joined Bishop Kennedy and teachers  
at Australian Catholic Youth Festival



2 More students make the Y

## Richer for experience

For months leading up to ACYF 2019, 13 pilgrims gathered and prepared for an experience none had had, nor possibly will ever have again. Year 9 & 10 students travelled together marveling at the fact that they had been on a train, bus, tram, ferry, plane and coach all within 24 hours! Arriving in Perth to join 5,500 young people, unsure exactly of what to expect.

The musical performances, presentations, celebrations soon had us completely captivated. Challenged to think about what God is asking of us as young Catholics, the theme of *Listening to the Spirit* culminated with the pilgrimage walk to the final Mass. With weary eyes wide open we commenced the long journey home, all the richer for our experience.

During my time at Australian Catholic Youth Festival I attended a variety of workshops and listened to many interesting keynote speakers who shared their experiences and love of God.

It was an amazing experience to be in one place with so many people who love God as much as you do. It was a fantastic opportunity to be able to participate in. I would definitely recommend you to attend the next Australian Catholic Youth Festival. I certainly hope to.

*Madeline McLeod (Teacher: Holy Trinity School, Inverell)*



McCarthy Catholic College, Tamworth



# Experience of a lifetime

Australian Catholic Youth Festival was an experience of a lifetime not just for the students who attended also the adults.

‘Whether for religious fulfilment or otherwise, The Australian Catholic Youth Festival was a worthwhile experience. It was steadfast in its ideas while still being remarkably inclusive of other religions and beliefs. Though there were presentations that revolved around faith and religion, the majority of talks were focused around social injustice and how common morals and goodwill could be used to solve these issues as opposed to complacency and the belief that the issues would solve themselves. All in all I would recommend the Australian Catholic Youth festival to all youth (religious or not) as it is a rich experience that would be valuable to anyone as means of at least exposure if not content.’

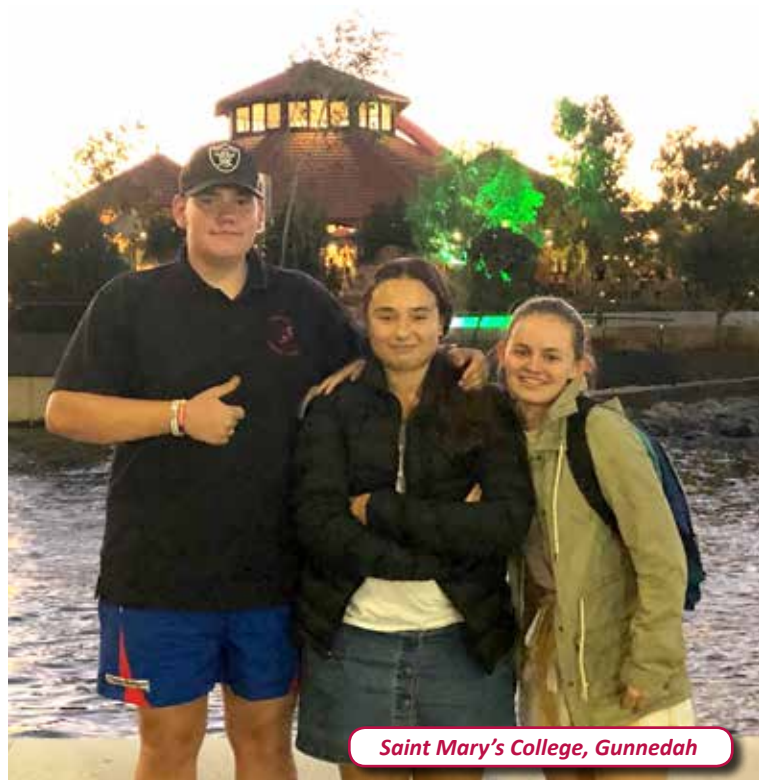
**Luke Bryant:** (Student Holy Trinity School, Inverell)



St Mary's College Gunnedah students Imogen Taylor, Lily Jensen and Thomas Bush joined me in attending the Festival. The Festival theme 'Listen to What the Spirit is Saying' encouraged all young people to stop, listen and reflect on their faith and faith journey. It had them consider things they may not have before and understand their faith more deeply. The Festival was amazing as were the students from Gunnedah and across the Diocese.

We acknowledge the huge support in assisting the student travel to Perth from the Gunnedah Saint Joseph's Parish and Sisters of Mercy.

*Nikole Brooks (Teacher: Saint Mary's College, Gunnedah)*





# Reaching out with practical support

Many donations have been received, from within the Diocese and from groups, Parishes and individuals, to help give practical support to those who have been impacted by the drought and bushfires.

Recently Bishop Kennedy was able to provide donations to Guyra, Glen Innes and Tenterfield Parishes with a cash donation to assist them in the response to the bushfires. Bishop Kennedy said "I was delighted to have received a number of donations and was able to top this up with a Diocesan contribution. My request of the Parish Priests was to ensure that those most in need were assisted in meaningful ways".

From all Parish communities support is being given. Some of the many ways are:

- Provision of shower and laundry facilities
- Food and pamper parcels
- Gift cards and cash support
- Providing essential items
- Food pantries
- Payment of invoices
- Support of Saint Vincent de Paul Society bushfire response

Bishop Kennedy expressed his gratitude for all that is being done "Thank you to everyone who has helped in any way. Please continue to pray for rain and relief for those affected by the drought and fires"



*Bishop Kennedy with ADIG and Chancery staff came together to pray for rain*

O God,  
In whom we live and move and have our being,  
grant us sufficient rain,  
and protect us from floods.  
So that being supplied with  
what sustains us in this present life,  
we may seek more confidently  
what sustains us for eternity.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen



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## From little things...

The first Catholic Development Fund (CDF) was established in Melbourne in 1956 for the purpose of raising capital to build Catholic schools. It was originally called the Schools Provident Fund. In a city like Melbourne experiencing a post-war population boom, the Church built the Fund on the support of the Catholic community, to whom the education of their children was of vital importance. Set up on a co-operative basis, the Fund allowed Catholics living in the more settled parishes to assist schools in the developing areas.

Its success led to a movement which saw the start of similar Funds throughout Australia and New Zealand. Across Australia there are 23 Development Funds, funding a wide range of Catholic infrastructure beyond schools to better serve both the Catholic and wider community.



In 1974, the Armidale Diocesan Investment Group (ADIG) was formed to assist the Wee Waa parish to obtain competitive funding to the replace the roof on St Andrew's church. Since then ADIG has supported the provision of a range of religious, social welfare, education and pastoral services within the Catholic Church context.

From humble beginnings 46 years ago, the ADIG has grown to hold assets of \$334 million and continues to differentiate itself from the traditional Catholic Development Funds through a more diversified investment portfolio. The ADIG has assets allocated into cash investments, commercial property assets as well as ethical equity investments allowing for diversification in an ever-changing market.

The ADIG footprint has also grown to include joint ventures with the Bathurst and Forbes Wilcannia Dioceses which has increased asset holdings and our ability to take investment opportunities and allowed ADIGs prudent investment capability to support Diocese's external to Armidale.

Investment in the ADIG from Diocesan entities such as the Catholic Schools Office and Centacare as well as from individual investors ensure that the ADIG can achieve sustainable growth in reserves and retained profits, which now equal \$35.85 million.

A strong and sustainable business ensures stable and growing distributions into Parishes. In 2018/19 the Armidale Diocese distributed to \$2,185,000 into supporting parishes. This is a direct injection of monies that is spent within the communities that we live in, with real and tangible outcomes socially, educationally and for community good.

ADIG performed extremely well against its peers in the finding of a recent CDF benchmark report completed across the sector during 2018. Highlights include the strong support of investors external to direct Diocesan investment which account for in excess of 40% of our investor funds. The ADIG also held the second highest level of liquidity when compared to the peer group ensuring that the business maintains flexibility whilst looking to maximise return. In addition, the ADIG business was able to achieve the third highest investment yield of the peer group whilst maintaining a diversified portfolio.

ADIG is currently working upon a marketing plan which includes the revitalisation of marketing material including an updated website. The outcome is to make it easier for existing and new clients to continue the support and growth of the ADIG operation.

ADIG's strength is directly related to the support shown by our investors, who not only receive market leading returns, they also enable ADIG to provide funds to support the broader Diocese and Community.

**Visit [www.adig.com.au](http://www.adig.com.au)**

**Ph: 1800 803 194 or 1800 040 903**



# Les Smith clocks 100

Les Smith, a staunch member of St Francis Xavier Parish Moree, celebrated his 100th birthday recently.

This was not an ordinary feat, so family, friends and parishioners made sure it was a memorable event.

In the church that day, those who attended Mass with Les sang "Happy Birthday" to him. In appreciation to that and to the surprise of all, he recited from memory a poem which lasted nearly ten minutes.

Les Smith is indeed an exceptional personality. In a time where people use every little incident to remove religion from the equation of their lives, he on the contrary takes his Catholic faith seriously. This is why he never misses Mass on Sunday.

He is also gifted with a superb memory and imagination. And he has made use of this by writing poems which can compare and compete with the best out there in the market. Interestingly, despite his age, his eyesight has remained intact. To the envy of those younger than him, he still drives himself around.

Almost everyone in Moree knows him for maintaining a simple routine. He goes to his favourite coffee shop every day, at the same time, to take his favourite coffee.

We all have a great deal to learn from Les Smith. It is said that:

*Our span of life is seventy,  
and eighty for those who are strong.*

*If we stick to the simple things in life,  
we shall get to ninety,  
and if we trust in God's benevolence,  
hundred would be ours*

## Happy Centennial birthday to Les Smith!



*Les Smith with Father Kingsley Etoh after Mass at Moree*



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## We welcome staff members to their new Catholic Schools Office roles

*Back Row: Kristy Curry (Subject Matter Expert SME: Inclusion), Gary Burdett (Deputy Director), Alicia Pringle (SME: Literacy & Learning Innovation), Bernadette Yeo (Professional Officer: Speech Pathologist), Millie Woolaston (Educational Officer: Performance and Development), Heidi Hardaker (Coordinator: Sport & CAPA), Chris Smyth (Director of Schools).*

*Front Row: Kate Kenny (Senior Manager Employee Services), Justin Matthews (School Performance Leader), Rod Whelan (School Performance Leader), Jason Hanrahan (School Performance Leader).*

## Seminarian update

**Peterpaul Chikeze:** In 2019 Peterpaul was been installed as a Lector (in January) and an Acolyte (in December) by Bishop Kennedy. He completed a pastoral placement at the Cathedral Parish and returned for his third year at Vianney College.

**Victor Atuhura:** 2019 was Victor's first year at Vianney College. In January 2020 Bishop Kennedy admitted Victor to Candidacy for the Priesthood. Victor's pastoral placement was in the Narrabri Parish.

**Damien Locke:** Damien was installed as an acolyte in April 2019 as part of his 2<sup>nd</sup> year programme. Damien entered 3<sup>rd</sup> year in September 2019 and was admitted to Candidacy for the Priesthood in November. His pastoral placement was at Moree Parish.

**About the formation programmes:** The timing of Admission to Candidacy differs between Vianney College (Wagga Wagga) and Beda College (Rome). At Vianney College this is usually done in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of formation whereas at Beda it is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. After installation as Lector, Acolyte and Admission to Candidacy the next steps are Ordination as a Deacon followed by Ordination to the Priesthood.





# Damien Locke on Australia Day Mass in Rome

On Australia Day, a large contingent of Australians who are currently living in Rome gathered at Saint Peter Chanel Chapel at Domus Australia for what has become an annual event co-hosted by the Domus Australia and the Australian Embassy to the Holy See. It was a mix of people ranging from clergy, religious and seminarians through to diplomatic staff and Australian expatriates as well as a number of guests who had chosen Domus as their base for exploring Rome. With two fellow Australian seminarians (from the Archdiocese of Melbourne) at the Pontifical Bede College we had been heavily involved in the planning of the Mass for several weeks in advance and eagerly set off using the city's metro system early on Sunday morning.

The Rector of Domus Australia, Monsignor John Boyle (a priest from the Diocese of Parramatta) invited me to be the Master of Ceremonies for the Mass, working with a team of about a dozen seminarians and deacons from across Rome. Presiding at Mass was Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP who was in Rome for a number of engagements.

It is always a most interesting exercise coordinating a liturgy with such diversity in those serving at the Altar and with a presider that one is not familiar with but, by the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit it was a most beautiful Mass, both of thanksgiving for God's abundant blessings on us and our nation, but also of deep prayerfulness for our peoples and our land which has, and continues to experience such devastation at this time.

Archbishop Fisher painted a very vivid picture for us about the impact of the drought and the bushfires, but also about the remarkable resilience of the Australian people and encouraged us to continue to place our hope and our trust in the Lord. He also spoke of how moved he had been by people's concern for Australia throughout his travels abroad. There is most certainly a very deep and sincere admiration for Australia which I can attest to from my own interactions here in Rome.

Following the celebration of Mass, morning tea was offered, and we were addressed by Monsignor Boyle who concludes his term as Rector of Domus Australia later this year and the newly appointed Australian Charge d' Affaires to the Holy See, Mr Matthew Wise.

Since arriving in Rome three years ago now, I have been most impressed by the spirit of comradery among the Australian and New Zealand communities here. In fact, there is a group of clergy, religious and seminarians, 'the ANZACS' of Rome, who meet once a month for afternoon tea and a catch-up. The various members take turns in hosting the monthly event, including us here at the Bede. It is a great opportunity to build friendships and share stories but it is also a wonderful way of remembering everyone back home.

Please be assured of my prayers from the Eternal City and please remember me in your prayers as I continue to work toward returning to be of service to you.

*Damien Locke*



# Around 'n About

## Bringing a country music flavour

This year Country Music singer, Johnny Doyle, performed during Country Music Week for the 37th consecutive year. As a boy he came with his parents, brother and sister with the family performing at venues around town as the Doyle Family Singers. They attended Mass at Saint Edward's Parish Tamworth where the parishioners appreciated their country versions of traditional hymns. The Doyles are dairy farmers from Cohuna, near Swan Hill in Victoria. Their cows generally thrive in irrigated pasture, but their water allocation has been halved and so this year, due to the drought, Johnny came up by himself. He sang a variety of Australian songs during the Australia Day luncheon. We look forward to his return next year.



*Johnny Doyle at Saint Edward's Parish*



*Brendan Murtagh with the O'Connor College leaders at the College Cross ceremony*

## Handing over the College Cross

O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale participated in a Liturgy to hand over of the College Cross to the 2020 College leaders. Each plaque is inscribed with the names of the Senior School Leaders. The Ceremony gives the new Captains the opportunity to introduce themselves, speak to the student body. This year the school theme is "2020 Win:Win". The theme centres around the concept of choosing options that will not only benefit ourselves but also be of benefit to those around us. A win for ourselves and a win for others. Ex-student Brendan Murtagh in attendance as the guest speaker for the Ceremony, taking time out from his valuable work in the Army Reserves helping in the bushfire recovery process.

## Parish comes to Bupa Tamworth residents

The residents of Bupa Nursing Home in Tamworth recently expressed their gratitude to the Saint Nicholas Parish for the ongoing pastoral care they receive. Like the other Nursing Homes in Tamworth, Mass is said monthly at the facility and Communion is taken to the residents weekly.

"It is such a blessing to be surrounded by loving people like these," said Anne Bowden on receiving a special gift on behalf of the Parish of a Christmas decoration. The beautiful hand-made Christmas decoration is based on a pattern which won second place at the Tamworth Show earlier in the year.



*May Denton, Anne Bowden and Iris White hold the Christmas decoration*





*Dancers, carrying their Child Jesus statues, enter the Church*

## The Feast of Santo Niño

South Tamworth Church was filled to capacity for a Mass which highlighted The Feast of Santo Niño, Australia Day and the Lunar New Year. The large Filipino community in Tamworth gathered for the Santo Nino Festival, an annual cultural and religious festival. A feature was the Sinulog Dance. To the rhythm of drums and glockenspiel, dancers clad in traditional dress, each bearing a small statue of the Child Jesus danced their way into the church with a traditional two steps forward, one step backwards movement. The Filipino Choir under the direction of Niño Dizon led the singing. Prayers and hymns acknowledged the multi-cultural nature of our society with prayers and thanksgiving for Australia Day and the Lunar New Year.

## Welcome back Father Paul Chandler

Father Paul Chandler spent time in the Diocese in 2016 whilst completing his PhD on the Christian anthropology of Saint John Paul II and a theological understanding of masculinity. Whilst in Armidale he also assisted in the Parish and was part of the initiative to establish Eucharistic Adoration from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm one day per week. After spending the past 2 years in the Archdioceses of Brisbane and Melbourne, Father Chandler has returned to an appointment in the Cathedral Parish in Armidale. As well as assisting in the Parish he will be providing supply in other Parishes as their priest takes a well deserved break. We warmly welcome him back to the Diocese.



*Father Paul Chandler outside Ss Mary & Joseph Cathedral*

## Catechists go to school

Catechists across the Diocese have been updating their training in order to comply with NSW Department of Education guidelines for teaching Special Religious Education, also known as catechetics, in State Schools. The training programme includes units in Child Protection, Classroom Management, Curriculum Use and Lesson Planning, Teaching Authority of the Church, Introduction to the Bible, Child Development, Mission and Ministry of the Catechist and Classroom Skills/ Questioning We are most grateful to our amazingly dedicated and generous Catechists across the Diocese who have put in time undertaking this training and in being prepared to provide valuable faith education to school students. Margaret Martin and Heather Martin were recently presented with Accreditation Certificates by Father John McHugh at Mullaley.



*Heather Martin, Margaret Martin and Father McHugh*

# Around 'n About

## Father Vic turns .....?

A great crowd of Werris Creek parishioners enjoyed a barbecue to help our priest, Father Vic Ignacio celebrate his birthday recently. Father was presented with a white stole which included our Werris Creek Parish tartan and (to honour his recent Australian citizenship) some sprigs of wattle embroidered on each end. He told us all he loved it!

Thanks to some parishioners whose talents enabled them to make this for him. During the evening Father Vic thanked Mrs Betty Bradshaw for her years of continuous work for our parish. He made a presentation to her in thanks. A special thanks to Ian and Barbara Phillips for all the work they did to make the evening such a success.



*Father Vic happily models his new stole*



*Naomi enjoying her last days at her desk*

## Naomi's new challenges

Naomi D'Arcy has worked in the Catholic Chancery Office since 2015. Among her duties was preparing Catholic Viewpoint for publication. She also had special responsibility for preparing visa applications for priests and seminarians along with various other administrative tasks. She was the bright smiling face at the reception desk and welcoming voice on the phone. 2020 sees Naomi in a different setting as she has resumed her teaching career at Saint Patrick's Primary School, Walcha. Naomi had taken a break from teaching whilst her daughters Heather and Lydia were younger. Now the students at Saint Patrick's will be blessed with her presence in their school community.

## O'Connor in the hay

As an early Australia Day present over 150 trucks travelled to Armidale in the latest Burrumbuttock Hay Run. They brought with them hundreds of bales of hay to be distributed around the community heavily hit by drought and bushfires. The hay had been donated to Need for Feed Disaster Relief and it took 2 days for the convoy to reach Armidale. Among those to benefit from the delivery was O'Connor Catholic College Devon Stud. Like many stock owners the school has had to sell some of the breeding stock to ensure the wellbeing of their stock. Feed has been difficult to source and very expensive.

*The cattle couldn't wait for the bales to be taken off the back of the truck before they tucked in!*







*Greg & Trish Stephen and children following the presentations*

## Vale Gregory John Stephen

Gregory Stephen, an Armidale parishioner, recently passed away following a long illness. Greg was the youngest son of Joseph and Barbara Stephen. Greg married Patricia Essey and they had four children Arthur, Simon, Suzanne and Josephine. As well as involvement in the Armidale business community, Greg was active in the Cathedral Parish and at Saint Albert's College. Greg was an Albies Fresher in 1979 and remained in support of the College, rarely missing a rugby game from the sideline and holding numerous roles in the Senior Common Room. Paul Campbell and Jason Lincoln from the College presented Greg and Trish with Life Membership of the Senior Common Room and Honorary Fellowship of the College, just before Christmas.

## Orders of Magnitude

Sister Andrea and Sister Roseann are an Order of two living in Glasgow. The nuns live in full Christian community, sharing a life of prayer and running a centre that provides counselling and practical support for women with unexpected pregnancies who want an alternative to abortion.

Though several others have considered a vocation with this order, the sisters are still waiting for someone to join them. This has not discouraged them, they say. As they continue to advocate for women, network with others doing similar work and witness to the possibility of radical Christian community, they remind themselves of Jesus' promise, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."



*Sister Roseann*

## Sister Monica Cavanagh rsj OAM

Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Sister Monica Cavanagh rsj was been awarded an Order of Australia Medal on Australia Day for Services to the Catholic Church.

Sister Monica has been part of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph for nearly 50 years, having joined the Congregation in 1970. Having initially trained in education and working as a primary school teacher, Sister Monica has a natural passion for education. She continued her work in education across a variety of Parishes and Dioceses in Australia, working with adults in faith formation and lay leadership. Sister Monica worked tirelessly at the time of Mary MacKillop's canonisation in preparing Australians for this important moment.



*Sister Monica Cavanagh*



# 2019 was a Year of Martyrs

For Thomas Heine-Geldern, President of the pontifical foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), “2019 was a year of martyrs, one of the bloodiest for Christians in history. It culminated in the attacks on three churches in Sri Lanka that cost more than 250 people their lives. We are also very concerned about the situation in China and India.”

On a positive note, “politicians and opinion leaders in Western Europe are talking about religious freedom much more frequently now.” As a particularly encouraging example, Heine-Geldern mentioned the video message recorded by the British heir apparent, Prince Charles, for Aid to the Church in Need at Christmas. In this video, Prince Charles refers to the growing suffering and persecution of Christians all over the world and calls for solidarity.

Looking towards Africa, the president of ACN expressed his deep concern for the situation of Christians in Nigeria, where Islamic terrorists of Boko Haram have been keeping the North and the area along the border to Cameroon in a state of fear

According to Heine-Geldern, 2019 was also a disastrous year for Christians in Burkina Faso. “Our sources have reported at least seven attacks on Catholic and Protestant communities that have led to the deaths of 34 Christians – among them two priests and two pastors. Our project partners talk about attempts to destabilize the country, foment religious conflict and stir up violence.”

The situation of the Christians in the Near East is always in his thoughts and prayers. In this context, Heine-Geldern quoted the words of the Archbishop of Erbil, Bashar Matti Warda, which drew attention to the dangers and situation of the Christians in Iraq: the invasion of the terrorist Islamic State was only “one of many attacks on this community of Christians”. The bishop had further said that the invasion had been preceded by a number of other attacks in the history “and with every attack, the number of Christians in Iraq – and Syria – is reduced dramatically.” According to the bishop, the escalating crisis in Lebanon exacerbates the situation of the Christians in the country and at the same time has the side effect that it creates many obstacles for providing aid to Syria.

Nevertheless, Heine-Geldern looks back at the year with gratitude. “The beauty of our work is that, in addition to the cross and the suffering, we can also experience at first hand the deep devotion and love of a large number of people. Take Syria as an example. A country that de facto is still at war and is suffering from the repercussions of war. Over the past few years, we have visited the country several times and it is awe-inspiring how everyone – dedicated lay people, religious sisters, priests and bishops, supported by the generosity of our benefactors – is doing everything possible and impossible to alleviate the spiritual and material hardships of the people.”

*Edited from Zenit article <https://zenit.org/articles/president-of-acn-2019-was-a-year-of-martyrs/>*



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The rosary is a fortress against evil.  
It is a sign to Satan that you  
belong to Our Lady...  
St. Dominic



## A Little Piece on Mindfulness

Life today is fast. It is so fast, that human beings are finding it very hard to keep up! We have lost our sense of self and have become to feel like a cog in a wheel, just going round and round and we cannot stop. This results in the deterioration of our mental and physical health, and we turn to medication to prop us up and, somehow, help us to cope.

Our health sectors have noticed this and offer us advice on what we should do to keep it together. We need to keep physically active. Join a fitness club, go to a gym or take a brisk walk.

Maybe we don't have time because of all the demands on our lives. Mindfulness is a relatively new solution to the demanding lifestyle. To live in the moment. That can help us.

Has anyone mentioned saying The Rosary? This powerful prayer, that takes about 20 minutes to say, is the

most powerful prayer there is. It can offer everything that "Mindfulness" offers, and more. It is a meditative prayer where you can connect with the Mother of God. Mary, through the Mysteries of the Rosary lets us know that she went through all the human joys and sufferings that we experience in this life, so she knows and understands what each and every one of us is going through. If you pray the Rosary, you are making a deep connection with the Mother of Jesus.

You can leave your worries and anxieties in her hands. You are not alone. Our Lady will take your worries and request her Son to ease your burden and give you the strength to deal with your problems.

We all strive for emotional and mental well-being, good health, stability and happiness within our lives. Pray the Rosary and put your trust in Mary, the mother of Jesus, and she will intercede for us. Good days will automatically happen.

*Catherine Prendeville originally published in Shalom Tidings Magazine*



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# You're beautiful

When we understand our true beauty, we cooperate with it and become more beautiful. When we panic into settling for second best, we sell ourselves short and tarnish our beauty.

James Blunt has a hit song called "You're beautiful" and he is right! You are beautiful. But it is sometimes hard for us to believe it. We are made with an antenna for the truth, and for what is important, and the truth is that you are important and you are beautiful because you are loved. You are not loved because you are important.

We can so easily be trapped by a very defined beauty – high cheek bones, slim figure, the 'right' vital statistics, followed by the right accessories – clothes, jewellery, possessions. The trouble is, by this measure no one ever feels truly beautiful. They are always more aware of their imperfections. And being told simply that you are physically beautiful doesn't hit the mark anyway, because your deeper longing is for something more. If we don't feel beautiful, we find it harder to feel loved. And so we start to try and control. What happens when people are trying to be beautiful, but still don't think they are? Maybe you start buying more and more 'stuff' to make you more beautiful. Perhaps you dress differently to how you used to, to force people to notice you. Nearly always, it begins to get competitive.

To understand how beautiful we are, we must focus on the whole person: the physical communicates with the spiritual beauty of a person. How can eyes be so amazingly beautiful, if it was just down to physical beauty? Yet, somehow they can communicate something of the depth of the person.

When people appreciate our inner beauty, then that appreciation sinks in, because deep down we know it is true and important, and so it stays with us much longer, if not forever.

The more we realise so much of our beauty is given us, the more we relax and be, rather than trying to force ourselves to be beautiful. If we have the patience to develop and appreciate our inner beauty, so many pitfalls of life disappear.

In the words of the Psalmist (Psalm 139:14):

***You are beautiful because you are fearfully and wonderfully made***

*This reflection is based on the religious education resources **A Fertile Heart** which are newly developed resources for Catholic and other faith schools to assist in the provision of relationships and sex education. More can be found at <https://www.fertileheart.org.uk/>*



*'I was a prisoner and you visited me,' Matthew 25:36*

The wind is lightly rustling through the cashew nut trees as we stand on red soil in front of the large blue gate of Rattanakiri Prison. I have never stood inside a prison in Australia or indeed anywhere else. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't slightly nervous at the thought of doing so in Cambodia.

As the gate opened and we stepped through a second fence of barbed wire a world within our world slowly revealed itself. The Prison Director had explained that this prison was once a dark and depressing place. Where cells had no windows and the inmates were numbers not people. It was a place in which people would lose hope, get sick and give up.

And yet if you looked beyond the orange and blue jumpsuits, the locks and the fences what greeted us was something completely different. This was a hive of activity. This was a place where people clearly had purpose. They were getting their haircut, visiting the health post, learning to fix a motor bike. They were learning to sew, doing exercises and attending literacy classes.

So much of this "hope filled" activity was the result of

our partnerships with Caritas Cambodia, the various government ministries and the prison. So much of the conversation was dotted with the same narrative- this was the first time these inmates had ever been encouraged to learn anything or to contribute to a community.

I found myself with tears in my eyes at the end of the day when we were interviewing an inmate who was being released that day. I wondered later if it was because her story in some ways mirrored mine- she was a mum of a little boy about the same age.

Or perhaps it was because of all of the suffering that was compacted in that one prison. So many of the inmates said that this was the first time that they had ever experienced compassion or even love.

Regardless of the reason I was left with the overwhelming feeling that it was places like this that Caritas was called to be. With people that have been forgotten. In the darkest parts of humanity. Our tag line "uphold dignity" is a much harder challenge in a place like this and yet the results are truly transformational.

*Kirsty Robertson*

*CEO, Caritas Australia*

## PRAYER

God of all peoples and nations,

As you accompany us on  
our Lenten journey,

May our fasting strengthen our  
commitment to live in solidarity,

Our almsgiving be an act of justice,

And our prayers anchor us  
in love and compassion.

Awaken our hearts and minds that  
we may be one human family

As we all go further together.

We ask this in Jesus' name,

Amen

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# Pope Francis: Catechesis on the Beatitudes

Today we begin a series of catechesis about the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew (5:1-11). This text that opens the "the Sermon on the Mountain" and that has enlightened the lives of believers and also of many non-believers. It is difficult not to be touched by these words of Jesus, and it is right that we must understand them and to welcome them more and more fully. The Beatitudes contain the Christian 'identity card' - this is our identity card - because they outline the face of Jesus Himself, His way of life.

Now let us frame these words of Jesus in a global way; in the next catechesis we will comment on the individual Beatitudes, one by one.

First of all, it is important how the proclamation of this message came about: Jesus, seeing the crowds that follow him, climbs the gentle slope that surrounds the lake of Galilee, sits down and, turning to the disciples, announces the Beatitudes. So the message is addressed to the disciples, but on the horizon there are crowds, that is, all humanity. It's a message to all of humanity.

In addition, the "mountain" refers to Sinai, where God gave Moses the Commandments. Jesus begins to teach a new law: to be poor, to be meek, to be merciful. These "new commandments" are more than standards. In fact, Jesus does not impose anything, but reveals the way to happiness – His way – repeating the word "blessed" eight times.

Each Beatitude consists of three parts. At first there is always the word "blessed"; then comes the situation in which the blessed find themselves: the poverty of spirit, mourning, hunger and the thirst for justice, and so on; finally there is the reason for being blessed, introduced by the conjunction "why": "Blessed are these because, why those are blessed ..." So there are the eight Beatitudes and it would be nice to learn them by heart to repeat them, to have in our minds and hearts this law that Jesus gave us.

Let us pay attention to this fact: the reason for bliss is not the current situation but the new condition that the blessed receive as a gift from God: "because for them is the kingdom of heaven", "because they will be consoled", "because they will inherit the earth", and so on.

In the third element, which is precisely the reason for happiness, Jesus often uses a passive future: "they will be comforted", "they will inherit the earth", "they will be satisfied", "they will be forgiven", "they will be called children of God".

But what does the word "blessed" mean? Why does each of the eight Blessings begin with the word "blessed"? The original Greek term does not indicate one who has a full belly or is doing well, but he is a person who is in

<b>Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</b>	<b>Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.</b>
<b>Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.</b>	<b>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.</b>
<b>Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.</b>	<b>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.</b>
<b>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.</b>	<b>Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</b>

a state of grace, who progresses in the grace of God and who progresses on the path of God: patience, poverty, service to others, consolation ... Those who progress in these things are happy and will be blessed.

God, in order to give Himself to us, often chooses unthinkable paths, perhaps those of our limitations, of our tears, of our defeats. It is the Easter joy of which the Eastern brothers speak, the one who has the stigmata but is alive, has gone through death and has experienced the power of God. The Beatitudes always lead you to joy; are the way to joy. It will do us good to take the Gospel of Matthew today, chapter five, verses from one to eleven and read the Beatitudes - perhaps a few more times, during the week - to understand this beautiful way, this secure way to the happiness that the Lord gives to us.

*Pope Francis General Audience on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 in Paul VI Audience Hall*

# Welcome to 2020 from the Director of Catholic Schools



CSO Staff Team Day

Welcome to the beginning of the 2020 school year. A special welcome to new employees in the CSO office and in our schools (especially our beginning teachers); and a special welcome to our new CSO and school leaders for accepting the challenge of Catholic school leadership.

When we refer to 'the system' we are referring to the CSO and the schools. We exist as a faith-based organisation in very challenging times. As the dust from the process of CSO restructure settles, we need to be clear about the way we do things in a world that is rapidly changing for the church and the whole of society. We need to be clear about the big ideas that connect us all as a system of Catholic schools.

The face of the family, the Church and education is being challenged, and we need to be evolving our response. As an organisation we need to rise above the politics of church and education and be people of hope and love who are committed to providing the best possible community for our young people and staff to grow in their faith and be inspired to discover their passion for lifelong learning.

We are fortunate to have in the Diocese of Armidale, and in Bishop Michael, a leader who believes in Catholic education as a vehicle for evangelisation and enabling young people and their families to know Jesus Christ and the values of God's church.

The leaders of our school system, those in schools and at the CSO, must be clear about the big ideas that connect us all as a system:

- For our schools to 'always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel' (EGn. 134); to be counter cultural when they need to be!
- For our CSO and schools to be Catholic Professional Learning Communities that strive for all students to achieve their best faith and learning outcomes, and for all of their staff to achieve professional satisfaction in their working lives.
- For our CSO and schools to be places that accept that this is 'not merely an era of change but a change of era' (Pope Francis) for church and education. Our future church will look different. Our CSO and schools already look different and must continue to change.

Our schools must continue to be as concerned about the success of their own school as they are about the success of the other schools in the system. The CSO must also be concerned about the success of all of our schools and constantly be of service to those schools.

I look forward to working with you as we rise to, and above, these challenges.

Thanks for all that you do in the support of Catholic education in the Diocese of Armidale.



**Director of Schools,  
Chris Smyth**



Catholic Schools Office  
Diocese of Armidale



# Building up a “Love Account”

Sitting in his living room one night four years ago, Brian Peterson heard the screams of a man on the street below. Two days later Peterson, a car designer for Kia Motors who had recently moved to California with his wife, Vanessa, found himself sitting by that man on the pavement and asking him for permission to paint his portrait.

Dozens of portraits later, Peterson’s non-profit – Faces of Santa Ana, is changing lives and growing rapidly. The basic process: Peterson befriends a person experiencing homelessness, paints his or her portrait and puts fifty percent of the proceeds from the painting’s sale into a “love account”, to be used however the subject wishes: for food, medicine or art projects. While helping those in need, the project also inspires those who purchase the artwork. Peterson says, “They’re investing in a life, in someone who is living and breathing and hoping and looking for love and looking for change.” In some cases, the painting’s subject and purchaser develop a lasting friendship.

More recently, Peterson’s work has expanding to creating murals and involving local teenage students in painting portraits; the non-profit has been spreading to other cities



*Brian Peterson working on a portrait*


as well. In November 2019 Peterson resigned from his job to pursue Faces of Santa-Ana full time. Support the project at [www.facesofsantaana.com](http://www.facesofsantaana.com)

*Article originally published in the Plough Quarterly Magazine*


## A place to be yourself

**headspace** can help if you feel stressed, worried or just down. If you are having difficulty with something in your life or feel bullied, hurt or harassed.

**headspace** can help if you are concerned about school, parents, friends, your health, drugs, or alcohol.



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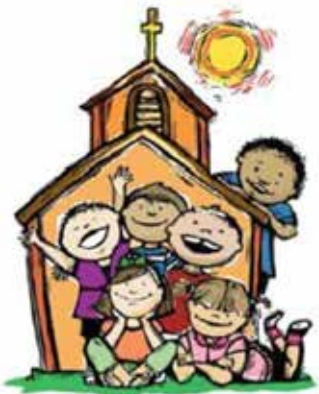
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*St Joseph's Primary School West Tamworth's kindergarten class of 24 students have started school with lots of smiling faces ready to start a new chapter in their life*

## Child Safe Parish Communities



### Working With Children Checks – Important facts

1. A key element of maintaining a Child Safe Parish Community is to ensure that all employees and volunteers engaged in child related activities have a current and verified Working with Children Check (WWCC).
2. There is no cost for a volunteer to obtain a WWCC
3. A Parish must have a register of those with a WWCC and this must be verified online at the Office of Children's Guardian website.

4. If the WWCC is revoked the Parish will be advised and the person must stop being involved in child related activities
5. WWCC's are one way of minimising risk to children and vulnerable adults

### Parish Child related activities

Among child related activities in a Parish are

- Children's Liturgy
- Altar servers
- Choirs and music ministry
- Junior Vinnies
- Youth groups
- Catechetics (SRE)

Check in your own Parish – there may be other child related activities

### Top Hint:

Remember the 2 adult rule – always have at least 2 adults present and NEVER have just one person alone with children





## What is Episcopal Visitation?

An Episcopal Visitation is a Bishop's official pastoral visit to a Parish of the Diocese. Canon Law requires every Diocesan Bishop to visit every congregation in his diocese at least once every 5 years. In our Diocese visitation is often timed with the parish celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Bishop arrives on Friday and stays through the weekend leaving Sunday.

The Parish Priest usually arranges a program for the Bishop's visitation which would include activities such as visiting some of the homebound or sick parishioners; visiting and distributing communion to the elderly at Nursing Homes and hospitals, visiting local Catholic Schools where he will spend time in each classroom and have morning tea or lunch with school staff. He will also meet with Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council members, go over Parish registers with Parish Priest. He also celebrates Masses and meets as many parishioners as possible.

*These photos are from the recent Glen Innes visitation.*







*Enjoying a meal together*



*Inspecting Emmaville Catholic cemetery*



# Simulog dancers at South Tammworth

























