

V.Catholic Viewpoint†

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Mission • Learn • Care



The fire of His love



The Bishop Speaks

Pentecost is one of our three great annual feasts and celebrations in the Church: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The birth of our Lord Jesus, his resurrection from the Dead, and his gift of the Holy Spirit. But unlike Christmas and Easter, Pentecost does not grab our attention so much; it has not entered our consciousness, our imagination, and our culture in the same way that Christmas and Easter have. We make special plans each year for Christmas and Easter, but we often approach Pentecost no differently to any other Sunday of the year. Why is that?

I think it's partly because Pentecost has not been commercialised. Our supermarkets and department stores have not yet worked out a way to market Pentecost and make money out of us. On the bright side, whilst at Christmas the child Jesus has to compete for our attention with Santa, and at Easter Christ crucified and risen has to compete with the Easter Bunny, at Pentecost the Holy Spirit has no competitors. I think we Catholics *ourselves* have to ask whether we give due attention to Pentecost Sunday.

Why do we pay more attention to Christmas and Easter than to Pentecost? It's worth each of us asking ourselves whether we are, in fact, more influenced by the commercial world than we are by our faith and our Church. And I'm not just talking here about Pentecost. I'm talking about our attitudes to a whole range of issues and problems. Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit to guide us, his Church, in the ways of truth and love. Yet in recent years the attitude of most Catholics to a whole range of moral and social issues is more aligned with pop culture, the mass media, and social media than to the teachings of Jesus, his Gospel, and his Church.

Saint Paul says to us in the Second Reading, "Your

interests are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you." It is something that we all must ask ourselves from time to time, and Pentecost Sunday is as good a time as any: Am I guided in my life by the Holy Spirit, by the "Advocate" that Jesus promised, by the Spirit who makes me a child of God and who will raise me from the dead? Or am I guided and led by the nose by the popular opinions of the day?

The name for today's feast is very interesting. The word "Pentecost" simply means fifty. Even before the time of Jesus, the Jews already celebrated Pentecost as the fiftieth day after their most important feast of Passover. It was also the time of year that they were beginning to harvest their crops, so at Pentecost they would bring the first fruits of their harvest and offer them to God in gratitude, not only for their crops but for everything he provided. So, when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles on the day of Pentecost, which was also fifty days after his resurrection the early Christians understood what this meant.

It meant that it was time to present the fruits of their labour to God. Jesus had often spoken to his disciples about the need to bear good fruit by their lives and actions. But since his death and resurrection his disciples have not yet born him any fruit: they have not yet spread the good news of God's love and Jesus' salvation; they have not yet shared their faith in Jesus with anybody!

Although Jesus' followers believed in Him, they were still afraid to teach him publicly and to proclaim him to all the nations. They had to wait for the Holy Spirit to take hold of them and give them courage in the face of ridicule and rejection.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, they not only understood that now was the

FRONT COVER: Mrs Belinda Burton leads the procession for the Liturgy of the Word at the Catholic Schools Office System Conference 2019



Bishop Michael Kennedy, Fr Roel Llave, Fr Paul Aguilar, Deacon Paul Manvell, Fr Vicente Amaro, Fr James Poovathinkal & Fr Sabu Pulimalayil joined Fr Vic Ignacio for the 121st Philippine Independence Day celebration held Quirindi on Pentecost Sunday

time to start their mission and present the fruits of their labour to God, they also understood that in the gift of the Holy Spirit God had given them the ability, the power, the grace to be able to do it!

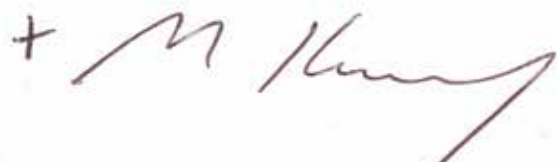
Many of us are also shy about proclaiming our faith in the Lord Jesus. But, like the Apostles and early Christians, we too have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is time for us to share our faith with others by our words and our actions.

I bet we have all heard of Israel Folau and are reasonably familiar with the details of his case with Rugby Australia. Whatever the pros or cons of *how* Israel went about publicly expressing his Christian faith, he is a young man who has impressed me enormously. He has stood by his statement that the only way for *any* sinner to be saved is by Jesus Christ. In the face of enormous pressure, he has publicly put God and his faith ahead of his career and a four-million-dollar contract. It's hard to imagine him or anybody being able to do this without the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps today, fifty days after Easter is the time for

us to present the fruits of our labour to the Lord. You and I can pray that the gift of God's Holy Spirit does not lie dormant within us; that we will always have the wisdom to put God first and the courage to share our faith with others.

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love!


Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
 Bishop of Armidale

Edited version of Bishop Kennedy's Pentecost Sunday Homily

Happy Anniversary

Fr Roel Llave and Fr Paul Aguilar celebrate 10 years of priesthood this year. Fr Roel shares some thoughts on his vocation.

Fr Roel Llave

Why did you become a priest?

I really wanted to become a priest from an early age but was not given or not had the opportunity to explore more. When I reached high school, I forgot all about it. Most of my friends were born again Christians and I used to attend prayer meetings and bible sharing with them but on a weekend I would always go to Mass. Then I worked for 16 years in the precious metal industry. I thought of having a family of my own, but it didn't happen. This led me to the realisation that God may be calling me to another vocation. Then I had a dream of myself when I was a kid wanting to become a priest and then thereafter, everything fell into place when I decided to see if priesthood was what God wanted me to pursue. It has now been 20 years since I entered the seminary and now 10 years as a priest, I honestly believe that this is what God wants me to be.



Fr Paul Aguilar & Fr Roel Llave

Being a priest, like any other vocation, is not a bed of roses. But what I enjoy most about being a priest is the fact that the rewards are not in this life but in the next. By God's grace I do hope and pray and try my best to be the true priest of Jesus Christ in every sense of the word. In all my words and deeds. God is my strength to accomplish that. 10 years of priesthood is such a gift, a great blessing. It is the Lord, not me. It is for the greater glory of God, not me. So help me God.



Yr 5 students Nicholas Miller, Luke Schmude, Chloe Clarke, Lydia Bassett & Elizabeth Shephard from St Mary's Armidale

Justice Leadership Days

Our Diocese was blessed to have a visit from Chris Nolan, the Caritas Justice Educator for NSW. He visited St Philomena's Moree, Holy Trinity Inverell, St Mary's Armidale & O'Connor Catholic College Armidale to engage the students by informing and activating them about their faith-call to support the most vulnerable and marginalised people on Earth.

The Mini Vinnies Students from Stage 2 and 3 of St Philomena's Moree attended a leadership workshop with students from St Joseph's Wialda and St Joseph's Mungindi. The students worked together with Chris Nolan and focused on ending poverty and promoting justice, all while upholding the dignity of those we are reaching out to. Chris Nolan, presented the SEE, JUDGE, ACT process to the students and explained Catholic Social Teaching using real world examples. The weekly Project Compassion stories were used to provide these concrete examples of charity and Chris emphasised that the word «Caritas» means «love». Students were treated with a visual representation of the Earth's resources, represented with M'n'M's, where one of the five students held 94% of the Earth's resources. Students also had an opportunity to carry 5 litres of water through the hall to gain an understanding of the hardships faced by children who walk up to 2km each day to collect water, empathizing with Thandolwayo from Zimbabwe. At the end of the day the students worked together to think of new ways to work together to raise funds and awareness.

Happy Anniversary

Fr Vic Ignacio celebrates 30 years of priesthood this year! Any anniversary is a milestone in our lives but what a blessing the Lord has sent to us in Fr Vic. Thank you Fr Vic for serving in our Diocese and guiding us on our journeys. May we continue to be blessed for another 30 years! Fr Vic's thoughts on priesthood follow:

1. When did you know that priesthood was what God wanted for you?

I was in my early religious formation at La Salette Seminary in the Philippines, when my mother told a story that she kept to herself for many years. She said that when she was pregnant, the doctor told her that her life and the baby were in danger of death because of pregnancy complications. She was shocked of the disturbing news but being a woman of faith, crying and desperate, she went straight to St. Matthew's Catholic Church to pray and ask the Lord for help and even offered the baby to God. She said that I was that baby and God listened to her humble prayers. I realised then that my vocation is not only my personal response to God but also an answer to the prayers of my loved ones.

2. What do you enjoy most about being a priest?

I just enjoy being a religious priest and the duty that accompanies it, even though it is challenging in many ways, but the consolation is "out of this world!". I pray through the intercession of Our Lady of La Salette that the people that I have served and still serving will all be blessed according to God's providence and mercy.

3. Can you share an experience of meeting God in your life?

In my thirty years as a religious priest, I have had several



Fr Vic Ignacio – Thirty years a priest

encounters with God and many of it are not because I feel Him but I know that He is here with me and for me. Every time I celebrate the Mass or in front of the tabernacle or inside the church or praying and meditating about His Holy Words, I know that He is listening and allowing me to open my heart and mind to Him. It is an experience of inner peace, knowing that God is listening and making His presence known in a gentle way. My encounter with God through people varies according to the impact of His presence to them. Sometimes, it is in the midst of trials and sacrifice that I experience God because of His love and mercy.



Fr Vic with parishioners of St Brigid's Parish Quirindi


Pope's procedures for dealing with sex abuse




Pope Francis has established a new procedure for reporting abuse and violence. The document called “Vos estis lux mundi” was issued on 9th May, 2019 and became effective on 1st June, 2019. In summary the new norms now provide:

- Procedures for the investigation of all Church officials
- Leaders will be held accountable not only with suspected cases of committing abuse themselves, but also accusations of having interfered with, covered up or failed to address abuse accusations they were aware of. When the accused individual is a Bishop, the metropolitan will receive a mandate from the Holy See to investigate or delegate a person in charge of the preliminary investigation. A status report must be sent to the Holy See every 30 days, and the investigation completed with 90 days with some exceptions. Vatican offices are also held to specific timeframes and prompt action.
- By June 2020, every Diocese in the world must create an office or “public, stable and easily accessible systems” for reporting suspected abuse against a minor or vulnerable person, failure of compliance of abuse guidelines by Bishops or superiors, and cases of interference or cover-ups in either a civil or canonical investigation of suspected abuse.
- All priests and religious that become aware of abuse or its cover-up must alert their Bishop or religious superior promptly.
- A minor is anyone under the age of 18 and a vulnerable person is “any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want to otherwise resist the offense.”
- Bishops and religious superiors will be accountable not just for protecting minors

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against abuse but also for protecting seminarians, novices and members of religious orders from violence and sexual abuse stemming from an abuse of power.

- Those who report abuse cannot be subjected to pressure, retaliation and discrimination or told to keep silent. The seal of confession, however, remains inviolable and is not affected by the new norms.
- If, after investigation, a Bishop considers an accusation is unfounded, the Papal Nuncio is informed.
- When the investigation is complete, the Bishop sends the results to the proper Vatican office, which then follows existing canon law.
- The obligation to respect civil laws regarding mandatory reporting continues.
- Those who reported suspected abuse or cover-up will be told of the outcome of the investigation if they request to be informed.
- A fund can be set up by bishops' conferences, synods and church provinces to cover the costs of investigations.

In responding to the norms, Bishop Michael Kennedy stated that many of the procedures were already operational in the Diocese however, some of the requirements will need further development. In particular, updating policies and procedures to include seminarians, novices and members of religious orders.

The Diocese of Armidale has had a safeguarding office in place for over 5 years. Diocesan policies are available from the Chancery Office and are on the Diocesan website. Mandatory reporting of abuse is undertaken and all civil requirements for reporting are complied with.

Bishop Kennedy stated "The Diocesan Professional Standards Advisory Panel will undertake a comprehensive review of the current policies and procedures and will have oversight of their update to bring them into line with the new norms."

He said "I am pleased with the way this Panel, the priests, Parish communities and Diocesan agencies are responding to my call to make everywhere in the Diocese places where children can be safe and happy. As I move around the Diocese I am seeing significant changes which are intended to support a child safe culture and this will continue based around the norms provided by the Holy Father."



Confirmation recipients from Sts Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Parish (above) and Holy Trinity Inverell Parish (left)

Confirmation

The sacrament of Confirmation was received by the candidates of both Holy Trinity Parish Inverell and St Mary & Joseph's Cathedral Parish recently. Both parishes experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit and their celebrations were filled with reverence, joy and smiles shared amongst family and friends. Bishop Kennedy referred to the meeting he had with the students the day prior in his homily. The children were proud that their faith filled answers were shared with their families and the parish community.

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Life from the Sidelines

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The group of teachers and trainees at Mulgoa

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Thirty-four Billings Ovulation Method® teachers and trainees from across the country descended on the Mount Schoenstatt Spirituality Centre in Mulgoa NSW for their biannual National Teachers' Weekend. This year the theme for the weekend was 'The Beauty of Womanhood'. Prof Isabell Naumann ISSM THD/STD opened the weekend with a wonderful presentation.

As well as inspiring teachers to return to their work with renewed vigour, the weekend is a time for focusing on improving teaching skills and understanding the scientific basis that underpins the Method. Presentations covered all uses of the Billings Method, including post chemical contraceptives and breastfeeding and postpartum situations.

On Sunday evening, teachers were treated to a viewing of the film *"The Sexual Revolution – 50 Years Since Humanae Vitae"*. This recent documentary chronicles the prophetic nature of Pope Paul VI's encyclical and his call to scientists. He implored men and women of science to

work to find an answer in nature to the problems faced by couples wishing to regulate the size of their families while remaining faithful to the Church's magisterium. Drs John and Evelyn Billings were two such scientists. People who have seen this film have been amazed that Pope Paul VI's vision of the future has come to fruition so accurately. This is plain to see in society today.

Most of the teachers stayed on after the weekend for a two-day advanced training course titled *"The Common Sense Method."* This course focused on the changing patterns of hormones made visible through the woman's chart.

The original development of the method was done so rigorously that the 4 simple rules that were developed in the late 1950's still apply today. Developments in science since then have only helped to validate the original findings of Dr John Billings.

At present the Armidale Diocese has a trainee teacher, Dr. Laura Townsend, working towards accreditation. We are sure she will be great addition to our team.

To contact your local teacher or for information on the Billings Method and becoming a teacher please call us tollfree on 1800 335 860.

Australians All Let us Rejoice for we are Young and Free But for How Long?



It's rather ironic that in Australia where sport is our 'second religion' it is sport that has highlighted deep underlying issues that are worrying for Catholics and other people of faith in our great and free nation.

I am sure we are all reasonably familiar with the details of the case of Israel Folau and Rugby Australia. Whatever the pros or cons of how Israel went about publicly expressing his Christian faith, in the end it was the fact that he did publicly express his Christian faith that resulted in him being sacked by Rugby Australia.

It is with a certain hesitation that I even mention this case. Such is the state of public discourse now in Australia that even mentioning certain things or defending certain people can get one into a lot of hot water. Two AFL footballers found themselves being hounded by the media and chased by the "thought police" simply for "liking" Israel's tweet. We as Catholics, Christians, and people of good will need to be alert to 'the signs of the times'.

Alan Jones in a recent article in the Australian commented: "We seem to be in a situation where conflict between religious and other views, on certain issues, has spiralled out of control. Express a religious view on issues that others find 'offensive' and there are cascading and immediate demands that someone be sacked." How did things get to be like this in our country of 'the fair go'?

The discussion on religious freedom in this country is one that has not really been properly examined or discussed. Yet there are important questions that need answering: Will Christians be free to voice their beliefs publicly or in the workplace and not live in fear of losing their jobs? Will Christian schools be free to teach children in accordance with their faith? Will Christian employers and business owners be free to make decisions of conscience and not be dragged before the courts?

As many of us feared at the time, the result of the legalisation of same sex marriage is becoming the 'litmus test' for how the question of religious freedom will play out in our country. Paul Kelly described it well when he said, "What is happening now is the inevitable ramification for religious freedom of the passage of same-sex marriage that meant the law of the state and the law of the church (most churches) came into conflict." People who profess traditional Christian faith, particularly in regard to sexuality, are now branded as the new bigots and racists.

These are some of the worrying signs for us in our society which once espoused great tolerance of differing



religious perspectives. Rob Dreher, a visiting academic and author, best known for his book “The Benedict Option” commented that progressives, while proclaiming tolerance, are attacking the liberal values they seek to espouse when they attack Christians, now considered ‘fair game’. “This kind of anti-Christian bigotry is undermining the legitimacy of liberal democracy. And the fools can’t even see what they’re doing.”

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan had noticed this tendency in the USA as early as 1984. In an address to an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast in Dallas he said: “the frustrating thing is that those who are attacking religion claim they are doing it in the name of tolerance, freedom and open-mindedness.

Isn’t the real truth that they are intolerant of religion? ... I submit to you that those who claim to be fighting for tolerance on this issue may not be tolerant at all.” He went on to say “All are free to believe or not believe; all are free to practice a faith or not. But those who believe must be free to speak of and act on their belief, to apply moral teaching to public questions.”

Our Lord Jesus reminded us that “Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves” (Mt 10:16). Increasingly in Australia we are going to be called out for what we

believe, challenged for beliefs that were once commonly held. There is great opportunity here for us to bear witness, but it will require us to be prepared. How well do I know my faith? Do I ever stand up for my faith and try to explain it to others? As we look ahead, perhaps we can all commit to increased prayer, but also to deeper formation in the truths of the faith, and to a willingness to stand by it. In this way, in an increasingly worrying world, we can continue to be beacons of light and hope.

It is time for us all to pray for our fair nation and to be prepared to stand up for our beliefs.

Bishop Michael Kennedy



1 Alan Jones, ‘The Board should fall on its sword’ in *The Australian* 17 May 2019 online edition: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/rugby-union/rugby-australia-board-has-failed-on-folau-and-should-fall-on-its-sword/news-story/a781220a324052547a2e6a599ba7e7da>

2 Paul Kelly, ‘Nation in denial on religious revolution’ in *The Australian newspaper* 16 May 2019 online edition: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/nation-in-denial-on-religious-revolution/news-story/8c9ded61508fb250db04d3f450f2443c>

3 Tess Livingstone, “‘Dangerous precedent’ set by putting PM’s faith centre stage’ in *The Australian newspaper* 16 May 2019 online edition: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/dangerous-precedent-set-by-putting-pms-faith-centre-stage/news-story/dccff7650b05e-32f94ac65aab7dcaf3b>



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Our new CFO - Andrew Draney

ADIG welcomes a new Chief Financial Officer into the ADIG family. Andrew Draney has been based in Armidale for a few years now after moving from Sydney for a "tree-change".

Andrew brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience having previously worked in a number of strategic and financial management roles with NAB and CBA, and more recently with General Property Trust for a number of years.

Andrew has a number of community involvements as well as a passion for Ancient History. He will be based in our Armidale office.

Philippine Consular Outreach Mission

ADIG was proud to once again be a sponsor of the Philippine Consular General Sydney visit to Tamworth recently. Organised by Father Paul Aguilar, this visit by consulate staff allows members of the Filipino community to renew passports, organise police checks, report births and marriages to the Philippine Government and information and for those wishing to reacquire dual citizenship and notarising of documents.

This mission means that Filipino nationals have the opportunity to meet with consular officials locally and not have to travel to Sydney. People still travelled from Port Macquarie, Goondiwindi, Brisbane, Coffs Harbour and even the Gold Coast as well as throughout our own Diocese to attend.

L-R: ADIG Relationship Officer Jason Crocker meets with Consular Assistant Ms Regina Perol (Office of Consular Affairs), Fr Paul Aguilar and Mrs Zhai Baga (VP of Filipino Association of Tamworth).



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The Beauty of Rules... I know. Hear me out.



Pardon me for making such a sweeping statement, but no one really likes 'the rules.' In schools across the country today, kids whinge about the school rules being implemented by their teachers. Why should you have to wear a hat at lunch time? At my university, there is a hefty restriction on alcohol consumption, particularly spirits. Why on earth do we have restrictions on alcoholic spirits at the university I attend? I often find myself being perpetually frustrated with rules like these, that govern my everyday actions. At the core of this frustration is probably the feeling that I don't like being told what to do - no one likes to feel like they are ultimately governed by someone else. We're in charge of ourselves, leave me to act like a sensible person! Right!

If only life worked like that. But I think it goes without saying that society would fall into utter disarray if we neglected the rules altogether.

How does this apply to the 'rules' implemented by the Catholic Church? Well firstly, we can help ourselves by using terminology with positive rather than negative connotations. Rather than look at the teachings of the Magisterium as 'rules' that govern our every action, they can also be described as guidelines, (that, sure, come in the form of doctrine) for how to live a life oriented towards Christ. I really mean it when I say that ultimate liberation comes from Christ, and so to follow those guidelines that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, has made manifest in the teachings of the Church - is to set yourself so absolutely free.

Free from worldly desires that trap us into thinking that money, popularity, status and achievements are all we are cut out for. The very fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God exemplifies that we are made for more - to live virtuously, and to share in the infinite love of Christ. But how do you actually do that? Especially when we have to exist in a society that is so obsessed with secularism.

Through understanding the rules, and abiding by them, we are set free. These rules push us to pursue lives of virtue, and to extract ourselves from our worldly desires which often leave us in a tangled mess. A very simple example that most can probably relate to would be our everyday use of technology. It is so EASY to get addicted to

technology - endless scrolling on social media apps, creating Facebook profiles, watching Youtube videos for hours, not to mention Netflix. We have the entire internet at our fingertips.

But having no self-control with technology can lead to greed, laziness, envy and pride. That is, you're not really following the teachings of the Church by sitting on your phone all day - but who has the audacity to tell you that you have to get off your phone?! In a recent visit to a high school, Pope Francis implored the young people to "Free yourself from dependence on your mobile phone, please! You have certainly heard of the drama of addiction ... This one is very subtle" for while mobile phones can be a valuable tool for communication, they can also reduce our freedom and present an obstacle to true dialogue.

So your mum telling you to hop on your phone, is actually supposed to help you from becoming addicted - it's supposed to free you from your dependency on technology. In the same way that the Church rules laziness to be a sin, this is designed to push you to break out of lazy habits and instead to cultivate the virtue of self-control. This in turn orients you towards Christ, rather than towards sin, and through this we can find the true liberation I mentioned earlier. Those teachings, the 'rules' free you from your own tendency to choose mediocrity, which we all have because we are concupiscent human beings. How incredible is that. Next time those rules frustrate you, think about why they are there, and how they are really pushing you towards virtue, towards Christ.

Rebecca Cooper



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St Nicholas Parish Invigorated After Visit From The Catholic Guy!



Bruce Downes shares his journey

A Mission Event, held in St Nicholas Parish recently, was a positive experience for the many people from across all the parishes in Tamworth, as well as surrounding parishes, who attended. St Nicholas' Parish Priest, Fr Chris Onuekwusi, had experienced such a Mission Event in the past and was convinced that The Catholic Guy team needed to be brought to Tamworth. This was not without difficulty as The Catholic Guy is in high demand and they spend most of the year in the USA.

The Catholic Guy ministry uses 'a new voice and sound' that connects with people in our time in a manner that is 'relevant and exhorts them to respond.' The use of music and lighting is one way this is achieved.

The Mission Event ran for 4 consecutive days with two sessions being held each day-the evening session being a repeat of that held in the morning. There was no set theme but each day built on the previous one. Those who attended were taken on a spiritual journey with the first day centred on our ability to hear the voice of God, made possible by faith. Day two covered the many barriers that can stand between us and God. Day three was a thought

provoking look at forgiveness and the necessity of being able to forgive in order to love God and each other. The final day covered the challenge of surrendering our lives to God.

Bruce Downes, the founder of The Catholic Guy, presented the sessions in a down to earth engaging manner, recounting much of his own story and his path to God. His emphasis was that we spend much of our time improving many aspects of our lives but often very little time on our faith development. His motivation is to provide something for everyone, wherever they are on their faith journey but he is particularly keen to connect with those who may feel disconnected from the church.

Before leaving Tamworth, a special session especially for women, was presented by Bruce Downes' wife Rosemary, on Saturday. She was inspirational in expressing the love of her faith. She encouraged women to connect and support each other on their faith journey.

"A very worthwhile experience"! A statement repeated throughout the Mission Event week and expressed the views of many who had braved the cold mornings and evenings to get to know The Catholic Guy!



Participants light candles during the forgiveness session

Around 'n About

Mother's Day Breakfast

St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Manilla celebrated Mother's day with our annual Mother's Day Breakfast. It was lovely to see many mums, nans, grandmothers and students enjoying this special occasion together. Our lucky door prize was won by Mrs Shepherd. Congratulations to Cathy we hope you enjoyed your bag of goodies. A special thanks to the Staff, Parents and Year 5/6 students that assisted with the setup, shopping, cooking, serving and cleaning up. Also thanks to the mums and dads who got these students to school super early to assist. We hope everyone enjoyed their Mother's day celebrations.

Front sitting -Cathy Shepherd, Connor Shepherd, Lilly Walker & Melanie Walker. tanding - Wylie Smith, Patricia Smith, Crystal Costello, Rheagan Costello, Angus Thurn & Sarah Thurn



Elizabeth Shephard with her artwork and Mrs Megan Wooster

Operation Art

The St Mary's School Armidale Art Show was fortunate to have Mrs Megan Wooster from O'Connor Catholic College as our guest judge. Our wonderful P&F supplied nibbles and refreshments and we were treated to a choral performance by students and Ms McNeill. Congratulations to the Primary Winner - Elizabeth Shephard & the Infants Winner - Will Douglas-Menzies. Their art work will now be entered in the Operation Art Competition, an initiative of The Children's Hospital at Westmead in association with the New South Wales Department of Education. The Operation Art program provides a forum for schools and students to demonstrate their visual arts achievements through exhibitions at the Armory Gallery, Sydney Olympic Park and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

A welcome visit from Nigeria

Archbishop Valerian Okeke is the Archbishop of Onitsha Archdiocese which is located in Anambra State, Nigeria. He visited Australia in March and April, on the invitation of Bishop Greg Homeming, the Bishop of Lismore Diocese. He was warmly received in Lismore, where he stayed for two days. During his visit to Australia he Celebrated Mass for the Nigerian Catholic Community in Sydney, at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Greystanes. The Mass was well attended by a very good number of Nigerians living in Sydney and Parramatta. He also met with five of his Priests, who are on loan to the Dioceses of Armidale, Lismore, Tasmania, and Archdiocese of Sydney. Two of his Priests working in the Diocese of Armidale are: Father Christopher Onuekwusi in Tamworth, and Father Thaddeus Ike in Warialda and Bingara.

(From L-R)Fr. Felix Ekeh, Fr. Jude Onwukwe, Archbishop Valerian Okeke, Fr. Chris. Onuekwusi, Fr. Alex Obiorah and Fr. Thaddeus Ike





Jayden Moroney of Year 2 who is very determined to read 100 books for the Premier's Reading Challenge.

Pi Day at O'Connor Catholic College

O'Connor students gathered in the library at lunchtime to compete in a pi recital competition. Pi is a number that gives how many times the diameter of a circle fits around its circumference. Three and a bit! It goes on forever without a pattern. The competition was part of Catholic Schools Week at O'Connor. The winner was Alex McMahon from Year 10 who recited an amazing 135 digits! Second was Year 7 student John Harris with 111 digits. Equal third was Angus Scrivener (Yr 9) and Georgia McMahon (Year 11).

Alex McMahon reciting Pi with Mr Chapman recording

The Challenge Is On.... 100 Books The Target

St Joseph's School Glen Innes is a Premier Reading Challenge school which is supported by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian in the hope of encouraging a love of reading in NSW school children. According to Librarian Mrs Adams, Year 2 student Jayden Moroney has committed himself to this task. He comes to the library at lunch time and will read to anyone who wants to listen, she said. The Reading Challenge started on March 4 and will finish on August 30 this year. Each student is required to complete a personal reading log of the books they have completed. At the end of the year the students who have participated will receive a certificate congratulating them on their dedication to reading.



Mass in the Cathedral

St Patrick's Walcha School had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Armidale for Mass in the Cathedral with eight other schools in our Deanery in May. Ella Lynch proclaimed the First Reading perfectly to the 500 people gathered for Mass. After Mass the school joined the Bishop, Priests and the other schools who travelled to Armidale for lunch. Thank you to the Diocese for hosting lunch! The children made the following comments: *I loved the beautiful Altar; I loved when the Bishop held up the Eucharist how big it was!; How do they change the lights?; I saw the Bishop's chair; We knew the hymns; We had that Cross at our school; Did you see how big the candles were?*

The students and staff of St Patrick's Walcha at Mass in the Cathedral

Around 'n About

Stepping Up at O'Connor Catholic College

Year 5 students from the four Catholic feeder primary schools to O'Connor Catholic College in Armidale attended STEP (Stage Three Enrichment Program) in Term 2 for a day of fun learning activities.

Over 60 students from St. Mary of the Angels Guyra, St. Patrick's Walcha, St. Joseph's Uralla and St. Mary's Armidale were able to experience and learn about Agriculture, Music and Physical Education.

The STEP program is well established at the College and not only provides the students with an experience of high school, but also engages them and provides a variety of enrichment opportunities. Under the watchful eye of specialist teachers and Year 11 La Sallian Youth Leaders, the O'Connor Catholic College motto can be lived out..."Founded on Faith, Focused on Learning".

The children form close bonds with the senior students,



Yr 5 students with the O'Connor seniors experiencing Agriculture

as well as with the three La Sallian Youth Ministers who are based at the College. Year 6 students have already attended one STEP day in Term 1 and will experience another two sessions later in the year in preparation for high school in 2020.



Creative Genius in the Making

On our way home from Armidale St Patrick's Walcha staff and Students called into NERAM and looked at the three exhibitions that are currently on show. Howard Hinton Collection, Art Express & Colour Circle. Then children in Stage 3 enjoyed looking at the HSC artwork from around NSW. Possibly one day their art will be in Art Express!

St Patrick's Walcha K-2 students enjoying an interactive artwork at NERAM

Sherpa Kids in Uralla

All families in the Uralla area now have access to an out-of-school-hours care service for their primary school children based at St Joseph's School, Wood Street Uralla. Sherpa Kids is a well-established Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service with ten other services around the state. This service is available to ALL school aged children from Kindergarten to Year 6 and will operate Monday to Friday from 7:00am – 9:00am and 3:00pm – 6:00pm. Afternoon tea and activities will be provided. A bus service will operate between Uralla Central School and St Joseph's School AT NO COST to those families using the Sherpa Kids service. These bus fares will be absorbed by Sherpa Kids. Bookings are now open with applications available online at www.sherpa-kids.com.au.



Principal of St Joseph's Uralla Judy Elks and local MP dam Marshall

De La Salle Sydney Tercentenary Mass

1200 Lasallians gathered from every walk of life, from Brothers, students, volunteers, alumni, parents and staff at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, to celebrate 300 years since the death of their Founder, St John Baptist de La Salle.



The Procession of Flags opened the gathering with unity and pride from every Lasallian Sydney school including the flags of each country of the District (Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea). College Captains and leaders led the procession, standing their flags at the altar. A display of colours, values and pride, bordered the incredible altar at which Bishops from Sydney, Bathurst, Parramatta and New Zealand celebrated the Mass. Voices of many students from different schools filled the choir that harmoniously sang the Founder's Hymn, beside an orchestra and organ to praise the name of De La Salle and open the incredible celebration.

Most Rev. Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, gave a homily reflecting on the impact of the work of Lasallians, particularly teachers and Brothers. He pronounced, *"A good teacher makes such a difference in their own schools, to so many hundreds and thousands of young people whose hands are grounded on Christian hope"*.

Julia Goonan, Lasallian Mission Services

Life and Works of St John Baptist de la Salle (1651 - 1719)

Edited from Most Rev. Richard Umbers Homily

In the case of St John Baptist we meet a man who had a good head start in life, born to wealthy parents in France and assured of his future situation by the time he hit 16 by joining the seminary. It was when both his parents died, four years later, that he had to leave the Cathedral to look after all his siblings and manage his family's affairs. This was particularly hard for John Baptist who really believed

God had been calling him to the Seminary and to become a priest. He seemed to suffer from a deep uncertainty about God's call for his life – a path that seemed so clear to him, was obscured by family responsibilities and troubles. This will be true for all of you too. Along with your dreams comes the reality of everyday difficulties that we should face up to with prayer, wise counsel and, above all, the endurance to stick it out.

With the support of many great spiritual advisors, and his own persistence in prayer and work for others, St John Baptist de la Salle found the strength and insight to cope with the circumstances of his situation and grow in his understanding of God.

He was finally able to be ordained a priest and by age 30 received a doctorate in theology. With all that God had given him, he used his talents to found a brotherhood of lay men who lived their lives in service of the Christian education of poor boys. De La Salle's 'Christian schools' were free and open to all, especially the poor. The school's atmosphere of firmness and kindness instilled a sense of purpose into the lives of young people so accustomed to roaming the streets in poverty.

In speaking to the Brothers, Pope Francis said: "Never tire of seeking those who find themselves in the modern 'graves' of bewilderment, degradation, discomfort, and poverty, to offer hope for a new life."



Grahame Tighe Receives a Papal Medal

Bishop Kennedy presented Grahame Tighe with a Papal Medal: Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (for the Church and the Pope) during Mass at St Edward's Parish South Tamworth

Father Paul Aguilar read details of Grahame's sixty years of service to the church beginning when he was a nine year old altar server at St Brigid's Church Marrickville. At age twenty-one he joined the St Vincent de Paul Society as a member of the youth conference, Ozanam Youth at Burwood. After marrying Trish in 1976 they moved to Cambridge Park where he became a member of the Kingswood Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society. In 1978 he began a two year term as secretary of the National Council of the Society.

In 1985 Trish and Grahame moved to Tamworth where he established the first Regional Branch of the NRMA in the North and North West. They bought a house in the South Tamworth Parish and immediately became involved in parish life. He joined the St Edward's Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society and later became Conference President and eventually Regional President.

Trish and Grahame's involvement in the parish includes being part of the RCIA team and a twenty-six year involvement in the Passionist Family Group Movement as members, group leaders and eventually, Parish Co-ordinators. Grahame's other parish involvement includes, being on the reading, counting and banking roster and being on the Parish Council. He is currently the Chairman

of the Parish Council, Grahame is also a tutor in a very successful parish initiative to assist Vietnamese people improve their spoken English.

Graham and Trish have two children and five grandchildren. Grahame is generous with his time and is always available to assist his family and anyone who needs assistance. He is a worthy recipient of the Papal Medal.



Bishop Michael Kennedy presents Mr Grahame Tighe with his Papal Medal

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Euthanasia – we can live without it

It is with good reason that anyone who has experienced palliative care – either for themselves or for a loved one – is very appreciative... Many even have positive and life-giving, though often incredibly sorrowful, memories of it. Whilst it still remains deeply misunderstood in the community, the contribution it makes to vulnerable, terminally ill patients at the end of their lives is incalculable.

As Dr Natasha Michael describes:

Palliative Care Week celebrates the simple but authentic and meaningful work undertaken by many palliative care services. This goes beyond the management of pain and symptoms to include providing biography services, life reviews through dignity therapy, music and art therapy that forms memory-making and allows for legacy-leaving, the pastoral provision of prayer, sacraments, reflections, meditations, the facilitation of family therapy sessions that allow for discourse, disclosure and closure. The efforts made to achieve the bucket list of travels, holidays, hot-air balloon rides, swims in the sea, weddings and Christening and Passover meals in a hospice or palliative care facility recognise the high human meaning and significance of giving thanks.

The more that the community understands the true nature of what is involved in palliative care, and its compassionate focus on the individual and their needs, the more people will recognise that this is exactly where government resources should be focused. Sadly, there is an alarming trend occurring in Australia, which is that state governments, whilst recognising the deficit in palliative care funding in their jurisdictions, are choosing

to focus on euthanasia and assisted suicide as the way forward, rather than prioritising adequate funding of palliative care.

It's safe to say we have a culture crisis in our nation when, instead of doing all they can to ensure the most vulnerable Australians – the elderly, the sick – are able to receive the best palliative care available, no matter where they live or how much they earn, our governments are pouring their time, effort and soon-to-be-funding into killing them. One can only hope this hasn't got everything to do with the fact that the latter is infinitely cheaper.

During this, National Palliative Care Week 2019, these state governments would do well to heed the words of Australian Palliative Medicine professionals:

It would be unethical for any state jurisdiction in Australia to move to legalise for assisted suicide or euthanasia whilst many ill, aged and disabled Australians cannot yet access the support that they need. Such a move would not enhance choice, but instead reduce choice around the care and support for those in real need.

This week serves as a reminder of the incredible care provided by thousands of palliative care professionals around the country, and how vital it is that adequate funding and universal access is the priority, not death on demand.

FULL ARTICLE – HOPE (Preventing Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide) www.no euthanasia.org.au

CSO NEWS

Heading to Tasmania

Chris Smyth, Director of the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale, announced the appointment of Dr Terry McCarthy to the position of Assistant Director: Government, Policy and Strategy within the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office.

Terry has been the Deputy Director of Schools in the Diocese of Armidale since the beginning of 2016. During the last 3 years, Terry has made a significant contribution to the leadership of the Catholic Schools Office.

We congratulate Terry on his successful appointment and thank him for his contributions to the Diocese of Armidale. We wish Terry, Angela and their family every success and happiness for the future.

*Carmel Heagney, Terry McCarthy,
Bishop Kennedy & Chris Smyth*



West Tamworth Developments

Officially signing the contract for the redevelopment of St Joseph's Primary West Tamworth. Stage 1 will see four new classrooms, a new library and canteen as well as the refurbishment of the school hall. Stage 2 will commence the refurbishment of the BER classroom block. Shay Brennan Constructions have commenced work and everything is running smoothly. Exciting times ahead for the new building works!

Fr Anthony Koppman (Parish Priest), Katie Hanes (Principal), Chris Smyth (Director of Schools), Neil Manglesdorf (Regional Project Managers Australia), Bishop Michael Kennedy, Shay Brennan (Shay Brennan Constructions Tamworth).





CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK CELEBRATED ACROSS THE DIOCESE

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Armidale celebrated Catholic Schools Week from the 26th May–1st June. The 2019 Catholic Schools Week theme of ‘Mission, Learn, Care’ reflects the quality learning and teaching that is underpinned by strong pastoral care for all our staff and students.

Catholic Schools Week is an opportunity to celebrate our Catholic Professional Learning Communities that focus on learning, collaboration and results. Our schools’ emphasis on strong foundations in literacy and numeracy—whilst ensuring that the capabilities of communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking are well developed—is preparing students for their future world.

The success of the schools resides in their strong commitment to academic excellence and pastoral care. The quality pastoral care is based on the core values of the Catholic faith community. The positive relationships between students and teachers supports the learning outcomes for all students.

Three Deanery Masses were celebrated in Moree, Armidale and Tamworth with staff and student representatives attending. By coming together as communities of faith we are enabling our students, teachers and parents to be reminded of the core purpose of Catholic education in forming disciples, celebrating together the great gift of Catholic education to Australian society and nurturing our faith through Eucharistic celebration. The masses also allowed for an opportunity to thank our God for the many blessings we receive in being part of these vibrant Catholic parish school communities and the wider system of schools in the Diocese of Armidale.

My thanks to Bishop Michael Kennedy, the Deans and the parish priests for leading our masses and for the religious and pastoral leadership they so generously provide to the system of Catholic schools across the Diocese. We pray for an enjoyable and successful year of learning for our students and a professionally satisfying year for our teachers and support staff.



Director of Schools, Chris Smyth



**Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Armidale**

Being drawn to God

For centuries, the Catholic Church has been a place of prayer and recollection, deep reading and peaceful communion.

It has been a place of limited social interaction, where the mind can wander and the nerves relax; a quiet place, far from the noise and incessant demands of the world. It has been a place where the poor have had access to certain luxury goods of the rich: great art and music, spaciousness and silence.

If the rich have always taken expensive, unplugged vacations in remote, unspoiled places, in our churches the poor, too, have had a place of retreat from the world.

The church's thick walls and subdued lighting, her "precisely-paced" liturgies and the narrowing sight lines of her nave, drawing the eye to the altar and the tabernacle behind it—everything in the church is designed to ward off distractions and render man "still and listening." Everything is there to draw him into the Church's maternal embrace, so she can fill him with God.

Besides this way of prayer and contemplation that has been described as a mutual gaze ("I look at him; he looks at me"), there is a second path to God, equally

enjoined by the Church, and that is the way of charity to the neighbour, but not the neighbour in the abstract. Catholicism, Christianity generally, and other religions as well have always inveighed against telescopic philanthropy.

"Who is my neighbour?" a lawyer asks Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus's answer is, the one you encounter on the way.

Taken from <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2016/05/look-at-me> by Patricia Snow



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George Paul

St Joseph's Church, Gunnedah, was overflowing for the final farewell to one of its most loved parishioners, George Henry Paul, who died on May 20 at the age of 84.

The church was packed with mourners from a wide cross section of the community and beyond - the Mass, concelebrated by Fr John McHugh, Mosignor Ted Wilkes and Fr Tony Castelli, was broadcast to those sitting outside.

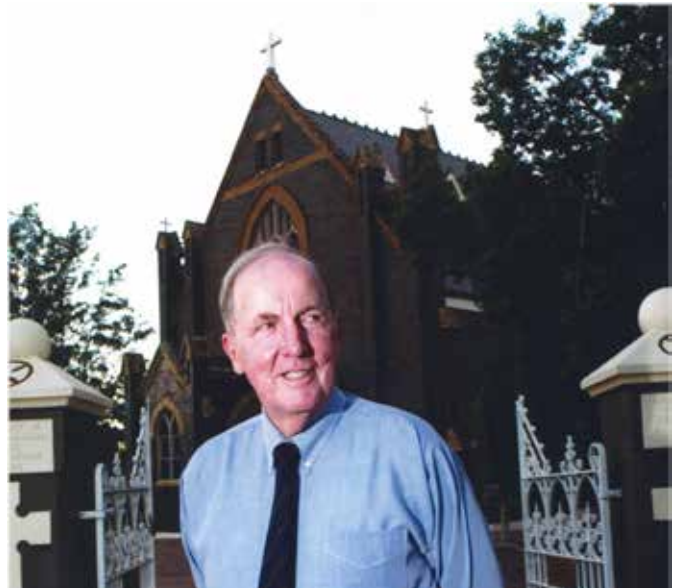
Born at Concord West, August 9 1934, George grew up in the city but quickly embraced country life when he came to Gunnedah and married Robyn Hussey. Together they raised five boys Ian, Mark, Michael, Paddy and Brendan and immersed themselves in the community they loved.

A chartered accountant, George volunteered his skills to assist with parish finances and support the Sisters of Mercy with financial advice. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Armidale Diocesan Investment Group (ADIG).

In 2002, George was recognised for his service to the church and the Pontiff with the Croce Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice bestowed on him by Pope John Paul II and presented by Bishop Luc Matthys in St Joseph's Church. He was the first parishioner to ever receive the honour, which he accepted humbly and with enormous grace.

His contribution to the wider community was often done quietly and without fanfare, with generous service to the Apex and Rotary Clubs of Gunnedah. His integrity, kindness and compassion in many other areas of his life did not go unnoticed and the large turnout for his funeral was a testament to a life well lived.

The late George Paul was laid to rest at Gunnedah Memorial Park on May 27. He is survived by his loving wife Robyn, and family Ian and Deirdre, Mark and Melissa, Michael and Anne, Paddy and Trudy and Brendan, as well as 11 grandchildren - Conor, Aislinn, Niamh, Molly, Tom, Ruby, Eddie, Olivia, Toby, Erin, Lachie, Phoebe and Harry Paul. His sister Patricia and brother Ronald predeceased him.





ST PATRICK'S WALCHA



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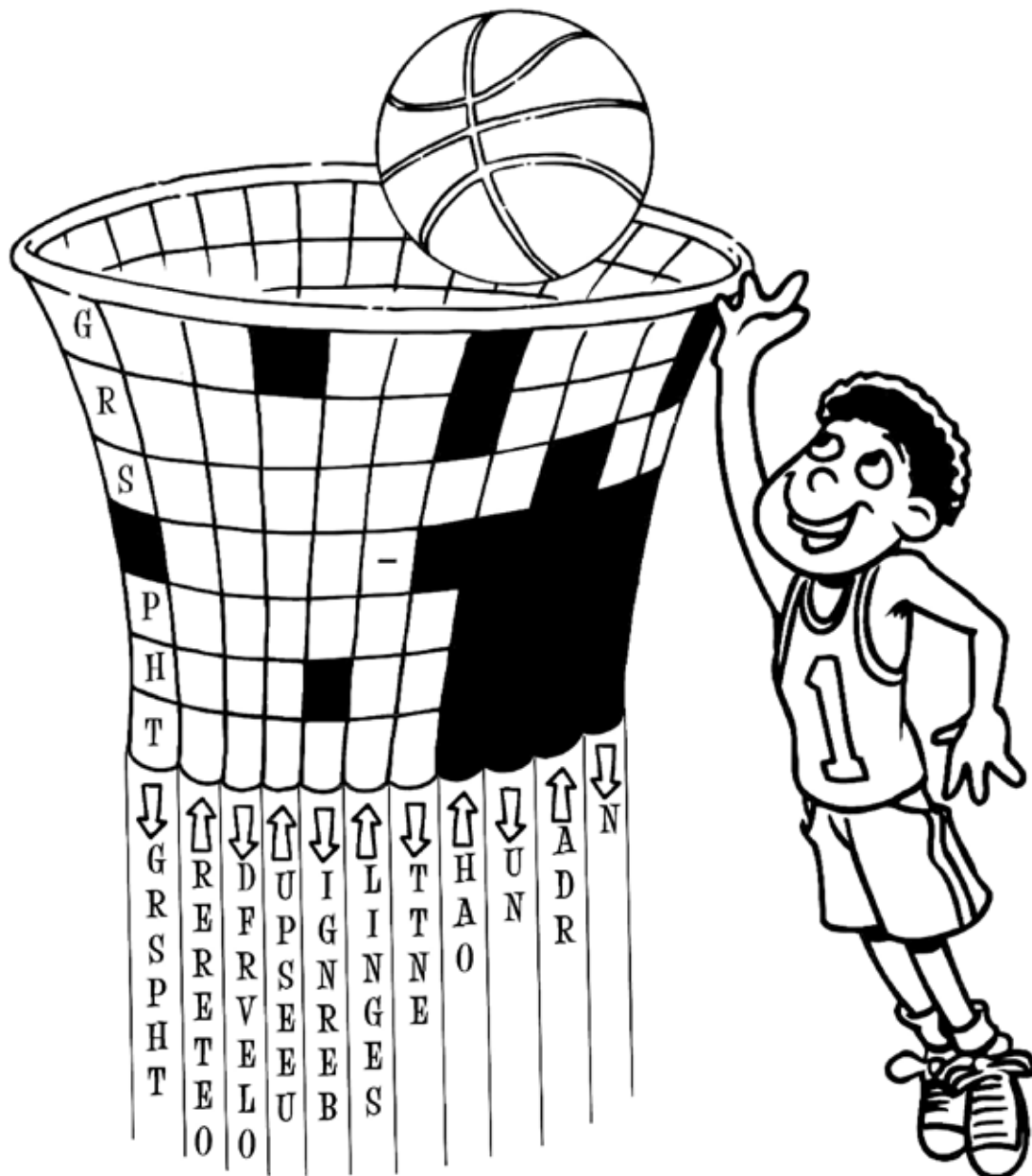


SLAM DUNK!



Psalm 46:1

Write the letters in the spaces of the net, following the direction of the arrows. If the arrow goes up, write the letters from the bottom to the top in order. If the arrow goes down, write the letters from the top to the bottom in order. The first one is done for you. Then read the Bible verse.





Christ is risen! Alleluia!

On Easter Sunday morning I woke early to accompany my brother seminarians to St Peter's square to sing in the choir at the Papal Mass. Making our way to the Vatican on the bus and then through a number of security checkpoints in the square was unusually smooth – there was a wonderfully joyful atmosphere. The singing of some joyful hymns prior to Mass filled me with even more gladness.

Then, just prior to the commencement of Mass and most unexpectedly, I received a 'tap on the shoulder' from one of the liturgical MCs who asked if I and a couple of my companions would be willing to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. I really couldn't believe what was happening and just remember thinking, 'praise God, praise God, praise God!'

The five of us were led to another seat, even closer to the Holy Father than the one we had been assigned in the choir. Just after the Creed, we were led into St Peter's Basilica which was completely empty and remarkably quiet. There, right in the centre of the nave stood two large tabernacles with lit candles on either side and a long table with ciboria.

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer and during the Lord's Prayer, we were ushered out into the square where I was directed to a point just in front of the obelisk in the very centre of the square. I distributed Holy Communion to a number of the Swiss Guards before approaching the barriers which were lined with faithful eager to receive Holy Communion.

After some time, a group of Indonesian pilgrims approached me and I was able to offer them Holy Communion in Bahasa, '*Tubuh Kristus*'. To my surprise one elderly woman burst into tears, before being embraced warmly by some other pilgrims – it almost brought me to

tears. I was also very inspired by the number of young people who eagerly and lovingly received our Blessed Lord. There is absolutely no doubt that He was totally and fully present there among us, just as He promised, "surely I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:20).

After Mass, I had the opportunity to spend some quite moments in the empty Basilica where I prayed for the Church in Australia, for the Bishop, the priests and the people of the Diocese with whom I felt a very strong sense of connection through prayer. It has been an unforgettable Easter for me, one where the message of the joy, hope and peace of the Resurrection is resonating very powerfully within me. Christ is very much present, showing us the way to the Father. I pray that, through the free gift of grace, we all continue to encounter Christ in the course of our daily lives.

Damien Locke | April 2019 | Rome





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