



Growing in my faith journey

By Patti Beattie

I've been fortunate to have been involved in Catholic Education in the Diocese of Broken Bay for almost 30 years and have recently been called to serve the Diocese as the ***Diocesan Pastoral Project Facilitator***.

In 1992 I was appointed to my first teaching position, at St Agatha's Pennant Hills, before moving to the Central Coast in 1995 to teach in several of our primary schools across the Coast. In 2013 I accepted a position at Catholic Schools Broken Bay in the Student Achievement team, supporting the pastoral care and wellbeing needs of students across the Diocese.

The parable of the Mustard seed resonates with aspects of my faith journey. The growth that I have experienced throughout my life has been one that has been nourished and tended to with care. A seed that was planted during the early years by my parents' own faith commitment. I have been fortunate over the years to have been provided with opportunities and experiences that have allowed this seed to grow.

Some significant moments and opportunities over the years have included involvement in youth group activities, Parish and Diocesan retreat opportunities, Alpha courses, attendance at Australian Catholic Youth festival events and World Youth Day pilgrimages. Just like the mustard seeds, not alone did I grow from small beginnings of faith, but I grew in faith and love through the small and ordinary experiences of life.

As a leader, World Youth Day pilgrimages were tough mentally, physically and emotionally. I was often reassured during these pilgrimages that I was called to walk with others on a journey, supporting their faith journey all the while strengthening and supporting my own. During these times I was provided with opportunities to draw closer to God, through prayer, Mass, worship, music, being with others and walking with them. The joy and opportunities that I experienced first-hand whilst travelling with our young people helped and supported my faith journey.

My faith has been a great support to me not only during the good times of joy and celebration, but also during the difficult moments of life. A significant moment in my life when I needed to reach out a little tighter and a little harder was in 2008 with the sudden death of my mother at the age of 64 and more recently 12 months ago with my father. One of the most privileged moments in my life to date has been to be with my dad, praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet as he took his final breaths and left this earthly life.

The parable of the Mustard seed reminds me that the seeds of the Kingdom are there, and we have opportunities to sow seeds for ourselves, with and for others. It is the opportunities that we have each and every day that allows the seeds to grow, and when we find ways that allow people around us to grow, it gives them opportunities to also know and

love Christ more deeply. Focused on Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, I will continue to find opportunities to be amongst people who will help me, and my faith, continue to grow.

In accepting the secondment position of Diocesan Pastoral Project Facilitator, my seed of faith will continue to grow through new experiences and working alongside the wider community of the Diocese. This project is an opportunity to plant more mustard seeds, an opportunity to water and tend to others and to also learn from flourishing trees that have been planted in the years gone by.

I look forward to supporting Bishop Anthony in building a Diocesan-wide missionary footing by responding to his key pastoral priorities for evangelisation across the Chancery, parishes and agencies with an outward facing emphasis on Evangelisation Broken Bay, Catholic Schools Broken Bay and CatholicCare Broken Bay. I look forward to working alongside and with the people of the Central Coast as we bring the Bishop's vision for evangelisation in a parish context, with a particular view towards parish renewal and discipleship, to fruition.

Patti Beattie is the new Diocesan Pastoral Project Facilitator for the Central Coast. She has worked in Catholic Education in the Diocese of Broken Bay for almost 30 years and is a parishioner at St Patrick's, East Gosford.