



The gardener (also known as Mother Superior)

By Fiona Brown

My role at the Hornsby Cathedral Parish is to accompany young adults in their faith journey, assisting the two leaders of the Young Adults Group. They call me Mother Superior!

Fr Peter deSouza asked the young adults in the Parish to run the Lenten Program this year, after running it last year. We were so excited to use the Diocese of Broken Bay Lenten Program and in 2021 include the wider parish community as we journey towards Easter.

I try to lead by example, so the first week of the Lenten Program I led the discussions, then two of the young adults thought they could take over the following week. I'm really happy to see them take over, and that's how I see accompaniment. Lead by example to begin with, give them the model, allow them to feel positive and confident, then empower them to go on and lead.

I like to plant seeds, I'm the gardener. I plant seeds, give them a little water, see how they grow and then flourish in their relationship with Jesus.

There are up to 15 regular attendees of the Young Adults Group at the parish on a Monday night, and we have about 25 parishioners joining in the Lenten program on Thursday nights in Lent. We were able to split up into four groups with young people leading the discussions in the groups.

The Lenten Program *Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega* is based on Bishop Anthony's Pastoral Letter *Jesus Christ, our beginning and end*, which was perfect timing for me personally. I have been in discernment about joining the Parish Pastoral Council and as part of that discernment, I have read the Pastoral Letter numerous times. It's helpful to see the flow of the Bishop's priorities and relate them to scripture.

I love *lectio divina*, so this is a great way to literally play with the scriptures before you listen to them on the weekend. I feel you get a much richer experience at Mass after hearing about the readings from other people and discussing their opinions during the Lenten Program. I can bring that to this week's Gospel.

The Young Adults Group discussed Lent the Monday before Ash Wednesday, and Mary, one of the leaders, brought the Pope's letter for Lent which talked about Lent being a joy-filled time. It led to a great discussion with the young people about Lent often feeling like a time of preparation and giving up things, but not about joy. Then hearing what Pope Francis said about joy gave them a new perspective. I set them homework in the first week, which was to bring joy to others and spread the Good News to them!

Our young people are also preparing to lead the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday at the Parish. After leading the Lenten Program, they'll end Lent with leading the Stations of the

Cross before we celebrate the Resurrection as the fulfilment of the Easter mystery. It's the full journey.