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BBN

PUBLICATION
OF THE CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
BROKEN BAY

#208

DECEMBER 2020

JOY

GRATITUDE



PEACE

JOY

HOPE

PURITY



HOPE

PEACE

PURITY



GRATITUDE

JOY





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DIOCESE OF
BROKEN BAY**

DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

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Design: Edward Baricevic
Photography: Tom Croll

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We acknowledge the Darug, Gurrngai and Darkinjung Nations, the traditional custodians of the land across our Diocese. We recognise the Aboriginal people as holding the memories, the traditions and the culture of the lands we live and work upon. We honour their wisdom and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

A time for gratitude

By Bishop Anthony Randazzo

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you for your prayers!

In the last issue of *Broken Bay News*, I mentioned to you my six priorities for our community of the Church in Broken Bay and asked you to pray as I prepared my first Pastoral Letter as the Bishop of the Diocese.

The Pastoral Letter has been released, it is entitled *Jesus Christ, our beginning and end*, and I address it to each one of you. In it, I expand on the six priorities and offer them to you for your contemplation and prayer, in order that we as a community might walk together along the path that God wills for us. I intend it to be a guide for deeper reflection upon those priorities and a stimulus for the missionary momentum of our Diocese.

The first priority, the person of Jesus

Christ and his message of the Good News, is a natural one to contemplate in this Advent Season as we prepare for the Christ Child, our heavenly King. The person of Jesus Christ comes to us at Christmas in the most pure and vulnerable state – as a new born child.

This Child comes in poverty and littleness, in lowliness and humility. And he comes in such a way so that we might be infinitely blessed:

“For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Since God became poor himself in the person of Jesus Christ, God's heart has a special place for the poor. Through poverty, God brought redemption to the human family. (Evangelii Gaudium, 197)



Advent and Christmas is a time for tenderness and welcome, for gratitude and giving, for peace and hope. It is also a sign of endings and beginnings, as the calendar year draws to a close and the liturgical year begins.

More than once I have heard someone say they can't wait until 2020 is over. Yes, it has been a challenging year for our country and world, a year like no other. It is understandable that many hope to put the year of the pandemic behind us. However, if our desire is to close the door on 2020, get it over and done with so that we can get back to normal, then an opportunity has been lost.

This year has given us an opportunity to be grateful for the many blessings we have encountered amidst the difficulties. The blessing of family and friends at times of social separation. The blessing of home amidst the frenetic pace of everyday life and demands. The opportunity to address



the poverty of loneliness by reaching out to others. The comfort of prayer and relationship with God in times of isolation.

This year has given us the opportunity to push the reset button. To come right back to basics. To discover anew the person of Jesus Christ, our beginning and end. (Rev 1:8)

Christmas gives us an opportunity like no other to welcome the Christ Child into our midst. To contemplate him,

and with all God's angels, to worship him with fervour and joy (Hebrews 1:6).

May the peace embodied in Jesus Christ born for us, rest upon you and your loved ones this Christmas and be a light of hope for the year ahead.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

All are invited to join us this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Check with your parish for registration or booking for Christmas Mass in 2020

For a full list of Christmas Mass times in parishes across the Diocese of Broken Bay please visit www.bbcatholic.org.au



Bishop Anthony's Pastoral Letter: Jesus Christ, our beginning and end.

Bishop Anthony Randazzo has issued his first pastoral letter to the community of the Church in Broken Bay, entitled, *Jesus Christ: Our Beginning and End*. It was released on the First Sunday of Advent 2020 and outlines six important priorities the Bishop has identified in his first year as the Bishop of Broken Bay.

"Each week over the past year I have written a short message to the people and clergy of Broken Bay as a way of keeping my heart and mind focused on you, God's holy people, who have been entrusted to my pastoral care," Bishop Anthony explains in the introduction.

"I have been your Bishop for just over a year and in that period, I have had time to consider what I believe are important priorities for our community of the Church. In six points I have summarised these priorities, and I bring them to your attention and offer them to you for your contemplation and prayer."

The letter is addressed to the community of communities that form the Body of Christ in the Diocese of Broken Bay, some 215,000 Catholics that live within the geographical territory of the Diocese. However, Bishop Anthony makes it clear he is speaking personally to each one.

"I address this letter to you," he says. "I had you in mind when I asked the Holy Spirit to inspire my words and guide my writing to communicate these important matters."

The six priorities begin with the person of Jesus Christ and include such themes as discipleship, building a culture of vocation, unity, education and the poor. Bishop Anthony develops each priority with teaching and personal examples from his own life and experience within the Diocese.

Bishop Anthony sets the context of the pastoral letter in the midst of the challenges the community, and indeed the world has endured throughout 2020. Though the difficulties have been real, Bishop Anthony identified new opportunities that have also emerged.

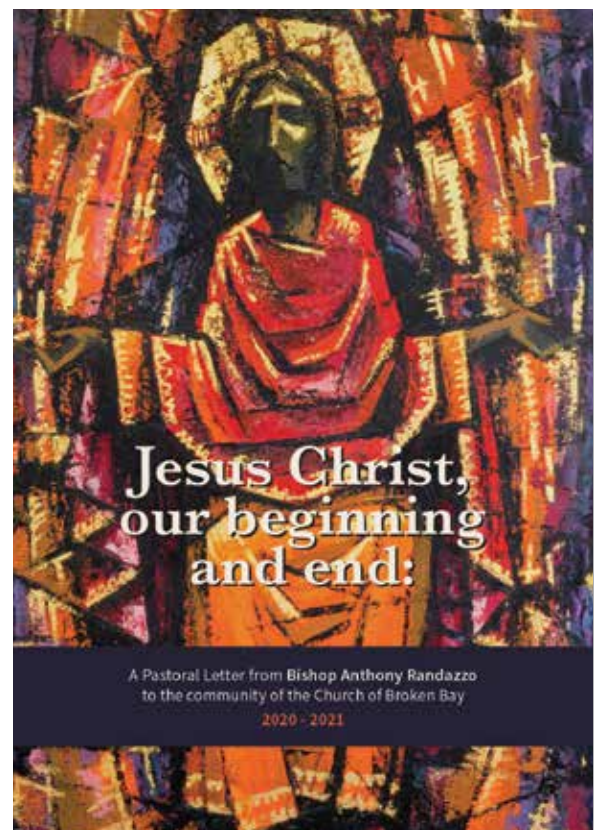
"Your distinctive perspective has been shaped by the challenges and opportunities presented to us in a most memorable year. During 2020 we have seen bushfires, floods, a pandemic, and dramatic changes to our way of

life. We have also been reminded that we have creative ways of living as the community of the Church. Most importantly, as a community of faith, this year has provided new opportunities for us to see Jesus Christ in our neighbour and in our midst."

The Pastoral Letter in booklet form will be distributed throughout the Diocese during Advent and be a resource for parish and school communities in the coming year.

Bishop Anthony encourages all to take the pastoral letter as a point of reflection, discussion and prayer for spiritual growth and development.

"With this pastoral letter I offer to you, my brothers and sisters, the thoughts of my mind and heart and the fruit of my prayer. I hope that you will see in this work my desire to be close to you as your Bishop so that together we might follow Jesus Christ as his disciples, seek the path of holiness, proclaim the Gospel to the world, and live life in the Spirit."



How Broken Bay kept COVID-safe in 2020

We've heard it so many times this year. 2020 has been challenging. In March when the Prime Minister announced that all places of worship had to close, it sent our Catholic communities in Broken Bay into a spin. How could we operate when our churches were closed?

Very quickly we adapted to live streaming Masses, Zoom prayer groups and Mailchimp Parish newsletters. Like everyone else across the world, we pivoted and progressed.

When churches were allowed to be open again a few months later, COVID-safe plans had to be put in place in all our parishes.

Parish communities have taken the challenges in their stride, providing common sense and innovative solutions to keeping people safe. There is wonderful variety in our church buildings, with safety procedures different to reflect the various qualities of each one.

In August, two parishes in Broken Bay had confirmed COVID-19 cases in their churches, namely St Agatha's, Pennant Hills and Holy Name, Wahroonga.

Due to the asymptomatic nature of the virus, it is impossible to know when a COVID-19 infected person visits our churches. That is why the Covid-safe plans are so important. In the cases of St Agatha's and Holy Name, their COVID-safe plans were in action, all the rules were followed, including



social distancing, hand sanitising and sign-in procedures for each visitor. Thankfully because of the rules being followed, there was no COVID-19 transmission in these churches.

With larger crowds expected at Christmas, and numbers allowed increasing, we must all play our part to continue to keep our parishes safe. Do not attend Mass if you have respiratory symptoms or have been in contact with a known COVID-19 case, use the sign-in procedures, wear a mask if you can't socially distance appropriately, sanitise your hands and follow the COVID-safe rules in your parish. The pandemic may be part of our lives for a while yet, but we can still celebrate the birth of Jesus and worship together in a COVID-safe way.



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We give thanks and celebrate Vocations

By Fr Paul Durkin and Michelle Chahine, Vocations Team

It has been a very blessed time for the Vocations Ministry and the Diocese of Broken Bay this year. Several ceremonies have marked a significant step in the journey of three men toward the priesthood.

In October 2020, the Bishop Anthony Randazzo ordained Roger Delmonte, Aldrin Valdehueva and Sam French as transitional deacons, each in a different parish.

From early times, particular roles of service, including deacon, subdeacon, lector, and acolyte, were instituted in the life of the Church. These orders over time became linked to preparation for the ordained priesthood and were divided between “minor orders” (such as porter, exorcist, lector, and acolyte) and “major orders” (subdeacon, deacon, and priest). Each order was received,

and its function performed for a suitable time before the next step on the path to ordained priesthood.

The roles served an approved purpose in the Church, usually related to the celebration of the liturgy. For example, the porter was the doorkeeper, responsible for opening and closing the church and guarding the door during the celebration of Mass. The acolyte, in the original role, was responsible for lighting the candles around the altar and he accompanied the priest, bringing a candle near him so that he could read the proper prayers. The lector was set apart to read the sacred Scriptures during the liturgy. The subdeacon assisted the deacon and priest by helping set the altar, among other duties.

The orders have been revised and developed at various stages in the history of the Church. Even with some of these ministries being open to the lay people faithful since Vatican II, the practice of officially instituting lectors and acolytes retained its connection to preparation for ordained priesthood and diaconate.

As a Diocese, we celebrate as these men are ordained deacons and installed as lectors and serve in these ministries in preparation for Holy Orders.

May God continue to raise up ‘shepherds after his own heart’ who will care for and lead the flock of Broken Bay. With three men well on their way to being ordained for the priesthood, let us continue to support and pray for those discerning their vocations in life.

Let us remember and pray for the young people in our community and in our families and ask the Lord to enlighten them and give them the grace and courage to respond to His call.

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Deacon Sam French and family



Deacon Sam congratulated by his father

Deacon
Aldrin Valdehueva
with Bishop Anthony



“Please pray for me that I will remain grateful to God, that just like St Callistus the First, I will be God’s faithful servant, your loving deacon, and a witness to God’s unconditional love until the end of my life.”

Deacon Aldrin Valdehueva

“I give thanks to Almighty God and his Blessed Mother, not for what I have accomplished, but for the good work that He has done in me. I have been ordained a deacon, and a servant of God’s own Church. I pray that the graces received in this great sacrament may be planted deep within me and conform my heart to the servant heart of Jesus.”

Deacon Sam French



Deacon Aldrin makes his promise of obedience to Bishop Anthony

“As I begin my journey as a Deacon, please pray that I may indeed continue to remain faithful, joyful, and fruitful in being configured more to Christ in serving God and his people, through the patronage and intercession of Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary. Thank you once again, stay safe, and God bless.”

Deacon Roger Delmonte



Michelle Chahine and Deacon Roger



Bishop Anthony delivers his homily at Deacon Roger’s ordination at OLOR Cathedral



Five men installed to the Ministry of Lector

On Saturday 7 November 2020, Bishop Anthony Randazzo installed five new members to the Ministry of Lector at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, Waitara.

Shayne D’Cunha, Huy Tran and Tân Nguyen are seminarians for Broken Bay, and Eric Leahy and Richard Houwing are preparing to be Permanent Deacons.

The Ministry of Lector is an important step in their formation.

“Eric, Richard, Huy, Tân, and Shayne, the Ministry of Lector to which you are called is not merely a step taken to complete the curriculum of diaconal or priestly formation,” said Bishop Anthony in his homily. “Nor is it a box to be ticked as you respond to the call to sacred Orders.

“While the sacred Scripture remains at the heart of your intellectual and doctrinal formation, you need not only to demonstrate a capacity to integrate your academic studies, but also to communicate your learning to the people of your own time.”

For Richard and Eric, formation for the Permanent Diaconate is a four-year journey which includes prayer, theological study, pastoral ministry and reflection on experience. These four years are punctuated by the same formal moments of recognition and commitment which seminarians experience

on their journey to priesthood, namely, Institution to the Ministry of Lector, Institution to the Ministry of Acolyte, and being called to Candidacy, prior to ordination. Diaconate Aspirants Richard Houwing and Eric Leahy have recently completed their second year of formation.



Huy Tran and Bishop Anthony



Tân Nguyen and Bishop Anthony

Eric Leahy with his wife Annette and children Patrick and Alana



Richard Houwing, with his wife Teresa and Bishop Anthony

Shayne D'Cunha with his parents and sister Nadine, and Bishop Anthony

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WE HAVE YOUR SOLUTION



Renewed Vision for Evangelisation in Broken Bay

By Tomasz Juszczak, Director, Evangelisation Broken Bay

There is a lot to get excited about as we move forward under a new vision for the Diocese of Broken Bay. Central to this vision, and the very reason this Diocese even exists, is the mission of evangelisation. Put simply, our role as the community of the Church of Broken Bay is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people. How we do that is when things really start to get interesting.

The Office for Evangelisation has recently changed its name to ‘Evangelisation Broken Bay.’ This change was to provide a greater focus on unity and collaboration with the other agencies in the Diocese. Rather than being separate agencies working in silos, Bishop Anthony Randazzo views us all as different arms of the one body of the Diocese of Broken Bay. As such, we are:

Catholic Schools Broken Bay –
Education arm of the Diocese

CatholicCare Broken Bay –
Merciful arm of the Diocese

Evangelisation Broken Bay –
Evangelisation arm of the Diocese

With this name change also comes a renewed vision for evangelisation in the Diocese, which, is both fresh and authentically Catholic. Bishop Anthony has identified six priorities for our Diocese which will be placed at the centre of this vision. The Bishop has already mentioned these priorities in the last edition of BBN and will continue expanding on them in the coming months. These priorities form the basis of the Bishop’s Pastoral Letter, and together as a community we will have the chance to delve further

into their meaning during Lent where we are creating a Lenten program linked to these priorities.

From these six priorities, Bishop Anthony, together with the Evangelisation team, have discerned three main goals for evangelisation in the Diocese. The three “Comms” as it were:

1) Common Good – This goal is centred on helping people achieve true justice and peace in the community by focusing on forming good citizens. It’s about building the common good in society by drawing people into a true flourishing of life. Whilst we foster good citizens of this world, we always proclaim the citizenship of the next world with the knowledge that the one good that is good for all people, is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

2) Community – This goal is about gathering the Church community as the one Body of Christ. Here we explore both who we are as the Church (using scripture and tradition) as well as what we believe (probing Church doctrine) in order to discern how we can grow as a community.

3) Commission – This goal focuses on Christ’s Great Commission to go and “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). It looks at evangelisation as being the central mission of the Church, proclaiming the kerygma to all with the hope of fostering a genuine encounter with the living God.

These three goals and six priorities give us a clear vision for evangelisation, with each of the six priorities relating directly to one or more of the goals. Keeping this in

mind, there are two ways in which our team will go about realising this vision. The first and primary way is through parish support. Everything we do will look to link back to parishes, supporting them in their mission, growth and evangelisation efforts. Parishes are where we experience the community of the Church and we want to make sure they, and not the Chancery, are the centres of this renewal.

The second way we plan to reach our goals is through our own creative evangelising efforts, keeping in mind that they too must link back to parishes. For example, when we look to organise pilgrimages, we will work with parishes to discuss how to most effectively use such experiences to build the parish communities.

Finally, to support these efforts, there will be change in the structure of Evangelisation Broken Bay. We will have four teams which will all work together under this renewed vision. The CCD team and Catholic Youth team will remain. We will be re-establishing the Life, Marriage and Family team, this time with a little twist. The team will now also be looking after social justice initiatives in recognition that upholding the dignity of the human person

and looking after the vulnerable in society are consistent with being genuinely pro-life. It's a matter of being pro-life from conception to natural death, including everything in between.

Our final team which used to be called "Catholic Life and Faith Formation" has now been renamed to "Parish Renewal and Discipleship." The main focus of this team will be to assist parishes in becoming more missionary focused and help them in their efforts to foster intentional disciples of Christ. This team will be the point of collaboration for all four teams in evangelisation as all the teams will look to support parishes in this way within their specific areas.

All these changes also come with the excitement of recruiting new people to join our team. We have recently advertised five separate roles, generating significant interest. The hope is that we will have our full team ready and raring to go at the beginning of 2021. Watch this space as we invite you all to come on board this new vision, moving forward in our mission as the community of the Church of Broken Bay.



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 catholic healthcare



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Healthy Young Men program

In 2017 approximately 75 per cent of people who died by suicide were males

Black Dog Institute

While visiting schools and the community, CatholicCare's Central Coast Family Centre received repeated requests for a program for young men that would help them navigate relationships and help them to understand what respectful relationships look like, while promoting positive mental health.

Many young men on the Central Coast have been raised in homes where domestic and family abuse is prevalent. Many have continued the cycle of violence treating their partners in the same way that they witnessed when growing up. We refer to this as inter-generational transmission of domestic violence.

This year CatholicCare entered into a partnership with headspace (headspace.org.au) to create and deliver a program for young men aged 13 - 18 years which supports the promotion of better mental health while learning about healthy relationships. The aim of the program is to work together to prevent domestic and family violence and prevent youth suicide on the Central Coast.

A significant risk factor for suicide in men under 30 is intimate partner violence. The creation of the Healthy Young Men program unpacks the pressures on young men today and works with their perception of how they are seen as

males in contemporary culture. The program has a focus on how to be an active bystander (someone who not only witnesses a situation but takes steps to speak up or step in to keep a situation, from escalating or to disrupt a problematic situation). The program also arms them with the strategies and language they need to be positive role models in our community.

The program has been delivered across six weeks in three schools to date and is also being delivered to the Frank Baxter Detention Centre. Feedback from students include "I think all guys should do this", "I've learnt a lot", "This was really helpful, I now know how to speak up."

Program co-creator and co-facilitator Danielle Habib says, "These young men are given tools they can use every day to support them in being the best men they can be, including mental health strategies, active bystander tools and how to challenge gender stereotypes."

Fellow co-creator and co-facilitator Silas Pollard states, "It has been a great opportunity during COVID-19 to work with young men in schools on important issues around mental health and healthy relationships."

www.catholiccareddb.org.au

We're growing our Supported Independent Living program

CatholicCare Disability Futures is expanding its work within the Supported Independent Living (SIL) environment.

Supported Independent Living is the name of the NDIS funding that provides supports to people with disability to help them live as independently as possible, within their chosen community. It is also sometimes referred to as supported accommodation, as participants share common areas and tasks such as cooking, cleaning and social interaction, as well as having their own personal room.

SIL funding allows you to be supported by a team of trained carers who understand your goals and support you to develop independence in achieving these, as well as assisting you in your personal care

requirements. This extends to supports that may be required overnight as well as transport and social outings.

Already providing SIL in a home in Lindfield, CatholicCare will be providing services to a new group of people with a disability moving into Manly House early 2021 – a new Specialist Disability Accommodation apartment block located in North Manly, with contemporary features and many mod cons!

If you would like more information on SIL and how it works, or would like us to provide you with SIL services where you currently reside, please call **(02) 9488 2500** and ask for Desley McAuliffe or email disabilityfutures@catholiccareddb.org.au.



Reducing street sleeping – the Together Home program

During COVID-19 there were over 1,200 people street sleeping across NSW. As part of the Premier's promise to reduce street sleeping by half by 2025, a \$36.1 million funding package was announced by the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ) to fund community housing and support providers to make available 400 homes and support packages for clients who have a chronic history of experiencing homelessness across NSW.

As part of this package, our Northern Sydney Specialist Homeless Services team tendered successfully to partner with Link Community Housing, providing 12 homes and support packages for clients who have experienced chronic homelessness in the Hornsby, Ku-Ring-Gai, Ryde and Hunters Hill areas.

The model of practice is based on the world-renowned Housing First program, which prescribes safe and permanent housing as the first priority for people experiencing homelessness. Once housing is secured, a multi-disciplinary team of support workers can address complex needs through services like drug and alcohol counselling, or mental health treatment, which is where CatholicCare's Together Home team will come in.

The Together Home team, who will join our existing Northern Sydney Specialist Homeless Services team,



will deliver in-home intensive therapeutic supports including casework, skills training and a range of wellness and recovery services - with the overall aim of providing long-term housing sustainability. The service will play a key role in assisting participants to re-integrate back into community, supporting them to access essential services such as mental health and NDIS.

Within six weeks of receiving the funding – Link Housing and CatholicCare have already supported all 12 participants into their new homes and out of temporary motel accommodation.

www.catholiccareddb.org.au/housing-homelessness/



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www.catholiccareddb.org.au/childrens-services/vacation-care

Bringing hope with the Lights of Christmas

By David Ryan

One of Sydney's most popular Christmas events, the Lights of Christmas, has chosen the artistic theme of hope to reflect the meaning of the season as the harrowing 2020 year approaches its finale.

"After the year that we have all had, it will be very consoling for the people of Sydney, and especially young families to be able to celebrate Christmas in this way," said Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP.

"I am pleased that the Lights of Christmas are continuing this year."

For over a decade the Archdiocese of Sydney has hosted Lights of Christmas at the St Mary's Cathedral precinct; an event attracting hundreds of thousands of families, children, community groups and visitors to Sydney.

Including reposting, in 2019 the reach of the Lights of Christmas on social media totalled 2,969,173.

In contrast to the modern commercialisation of this Christian holiday which often obscures the hopeful message of Christ's birth, the Lights of Christmas displays the true meaning of Christmas - the good news of Christ's coming - along with beautiful images of the Madonna and Child. Now, more than ever, this message of hope in Christ's coming is needed.



Lights of Christmas is the work of AGB Events with the financial support of Paynter-Dixon construction company.

"Lights of Christmas provides an opportunity to come together safely as a community and celebrate the season of Peace, Joy and Love. As we farewell this difficult year, we live in hope for a bright future," said Anthony Bastic, AGB Events' CEO and the creator of Lights of Christmas.

"I'm so pleased Sydney will get to enjoy the Lights of Christmas, this community event has become an annual tradition for so many and this year, more than ever, we need something to look forward to."

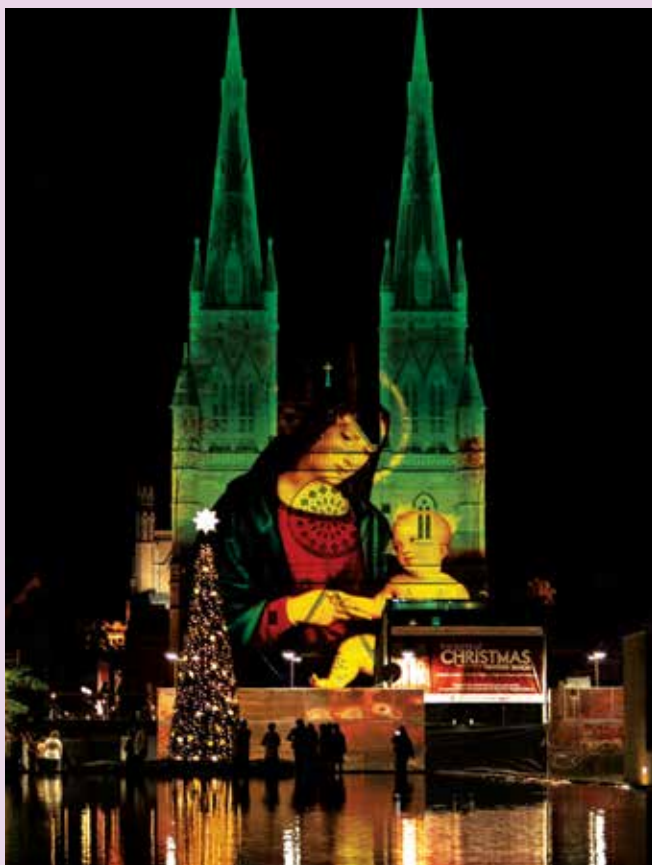
Paynter Dixon Executive Chairman, James Boyd, was also pleased to present the Lights of Christmas in 2020.

"After what has been a really challenging year, it is wonderful that Sydney families can now come together for this iconic Christmas event," said Mr Boyd.

While COVID-19 is seemingly under control in New South Wales, AGB Events will nonetheless be working closely with the NSW Department of Health in implementing COVID safety guidelines for the outdoor event. All attendees will need to electronically register upon entry.

Lights of Christmas will be held daily from 10-25 December with light shows screening from 8.30-11.00pm.

**For details or to register visit
www.lightsofchristmas.com.au**



Make Disciples: Renew the Church

By Pina Bernard,
Team Leader Parish Renewal and Discipleship team

While celebrating World Mission Sunday in 2019, Pope Francis asked, “What instructions does the Lord give us for going forth to others?” and answered, “Only one, and it’s very simple: Make disciples.”

The word ‘disciple’ is often heard in current ‘Church’ conversations. It has even been suggested that a lack of discipleship is at the forefront of the decline in practice we are experiencing in the Church today. If this is indeed the case, then Pope Francis’ simple answer leads us to further questions: What is a disciple? How do we make one? And more importantly, am I a disciple?

I think we can find some answers through one of the very first disciples, St Peter. In Luke chapter 5, Peter the fisherman is washing his nets after what has been an unsuccessful night of fishing. On the shoreline not far away, Jesus is teaching, and beginning to get crowded by the many people wanting to get closer to hear him. He has an idea. Getting into Peter’s boat, he asks Peter to pull out a bit from the shore... It is clear that Peter understands that Jesus is someone with some authority, because when Jesus asks him to put the nets out for a catch, Peter agrees, despite not expecting to catch anything.

The result of this fishing attempt overwhelmed Peter. So many fish were caught that the nets started breaking and the boat was sinking. Peter now knew deep inside that Jesus was from God. This was no longer just an intellectual understanding based on what he had heard Jesus teach, but rather an experience based on his relationship with Jesus. Peter’s first response was to recognise his own unworthiness. Yet Jesus reassured him and confirmed the call, which Peter answered by leaving everything and following him. Peter had no idea how the future would play out, what would ultimately be asked of him, and the challenges that he would face. He simply said ‘yes’ and chose to follow Jesus.

Sherry Weddell refers to this text when speaking about intentional disciples as people who ‘drop their nets’ and follow Jesus. The encounter with Jesus changed everything for Peter and his fellow fishermen. Peter spent the next three years in Jesus’ inner circle, walking alongside him, eating with him, learning from him, observing how he lived and acted, and experiencing miracles along the way. We also know, only too well, of his failures; not always being



Miraculous draught of fishes by James Tissot

able to understand Jesus, being corrected quite strongly at times (“Get behind me, Satan!” - Mt 16:23) and denying that he even knew Jesus. Yet he ended up giving his life for his Master and the Kingdom. He gave everything, as did Paul and the other disciples of the early Church, as well as countless others in the Church’s long history.

So what can we learn from Peter about discipleship? First, it starts by being captivated by Jesus. This may be a pivotal experience, or perhaps an understanding fostered over many years. Our journey may have begun at our baptism; we may have heard the story of Jesus through the witness of a family member or a friend; or we may have come to know Jesus through a series like Alpha, a retreat, during prayer or the Mass. In some way, however, we encounter Jesus and He speaks to our heart.

This experience calls for a response. Like Peter, being a disciple of Jesus means being someone who actively learns from Him and follows Him. We must each make this choice for ourselves and say ‘yes’ to accepting Jesus as our Lord and God. After all, it is Jesus who gives us the ultimate fullness of life through the Holy Spirit.

Like Peter, we also need to be apprenticed. Discipleship is a journey, and it takes time. We need to be accompanied along the way, not simply left to manage on our own. To be able to follow, we need to know more about Jesus, to build a relationship with Him through prayer, to really listen to Him, to read the scriptures, to meet Him in the Sacraments, and to learn from and with the community of the Church, the Body of Christ. Disciples continually learn and grow, both alone, and in a particular way, together. When we inevitably come across struggles, doubts and challenges as Peter did, having a faith community to support us is essential.

To better recognise what discipleship might look like in practice, it can be helpful to offer a description. Fr James Mallon describes a disciple as someone who:

- has a personal relationship with Jesus
- can and does share faith with others
- is open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- has knowledge and love of the Scriptures
- knows basic Catholic theology
- has a daily prayer life
- experiences real Christian community
- has a commitment to Sunday Eucharist
- celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- can pray spontaneously out loud when asked
- serves in ministry
- sees his or her life as a mission field¹

While other attributes may be added, this list offers us a good starting point to better understand the areas of growth for us to become mature disciples. If we take up Pope Francis' statement to 'make disciples', the above can help us to see what this means. It means to create relevant

and welcoming spaces where people can encounter Jesus and then develop a personal relationship with Him; where they experience real and authentic community; where people can read the Scriptures and learn about faith; where people have opportunities to pray and to welcome the Holy Spirit; where people can be encouraged to use their gifts in service to others; and where everyone shares their faith with others, inviting them into the joy of the Good News that they themselves experience. Just as Jesus' priority was to go out to invite everyone into God's love, so should it be for His followers.

As more and more people become authentic disciples, a new energy and passion will be felt in our parishes. Pope Francis' simple statement proves to be the key. Disciples are 'made' when people come to know Jesus and decide to follow Him. It is therefore important to put in place discipleship pathways where people can enter the journey of knowing Jesus and keep taking further steps along the way to support their growth.

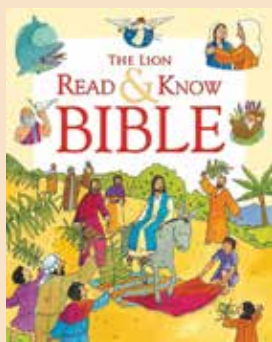
It starts with each of us.

In reflecting on the above list of attributes, what might be the next step that you will take?

¹ Divine Renovation Guidebook, p.159

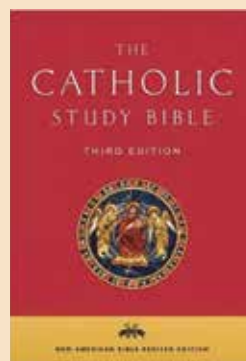
Give the Gift of a Bible this Christmas

Through the generosity of the Fr Harry Davis Estate, the Diocese of Broken Bay offers a selection of Bibles at affordable prices.



The Lion Read & Know Bible \$15

This Bible is appealing and accessible to young readers. More than fifty stories are retold in simple language and there are thirty fun and informative double-page features that bring to life the cultural context of the Bible.



The Catholic Study Bible \$55

This hardcover Catholic Study Bible in the New American Bible Revised Edition translation provides study notes and an extensive reading guide that leads the reader through the Scriptures, book by book.

The Catholic Gift Bible (NRSV translation) is also available, in a black or white cover, for **\$14**. To purchase, please contact **Pina Bernard** on **8379 1627** or **faith.formation@bbcatholic.org.au**



DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY
Filipino Chaplaincy



2020 *Christmas* **Novena Masses**

12/dec
waitara
7:00 PM

The Launch Mass
Hornsby Cathedral Parish
23 Yardley Ave, Waitara

15-23/dec
dee why
7:30 PM

Christmas Novena
Evening Masses
St Kevin's Church
50 Oaks Avenue, Dee Why

16-24/dec
chatswood
5:30 AM

Christmas Novena
Dawn Masses
Our Lady of Dolours Parish
94 Archer St, Chatswood

More inquiries:  [bbfilipinochaplaincy](https://www.facebook.com/bbfilipinochaplaincy)
Contact: Deacon Roberto Corpuz, Pastoral Coordinator
Mobile 0414 525 448 Email roberto.corpuz@bbccatholic.org.au

Due to COVID, there will be no fellowship
& light refreshments after Mass.

A new look for Catholic Schools Broken Bay



Bishop Anthony Randazzo, has launched a much-anticipated new branding for Catholic Schools Broken Bay which introduces a new name and a dynamic new logo.

The changes are in line with the vision Bishop Randazzo has for the education mission of the Diocese.

At a lunch attended by staff in October, Bishop Randazzo expressed his delight in the look and feel and how it supported the new direction of the *Towards 2025* initiative, a strategic vision for the next five years of Catholic education in the Diocese of Broken Bay.

“We are committed to an authentic Catholic education for the flourishing of human and faith development,” said Bishop Randazzo, “and the change of name to Catholic Schools Broken Bay, puts the emphasis on our identity as teachers of the faith with a commitment to excellence on all levels of education”.



Bishop Anthony Randazzo



Danny Casey

Director of Schools, Danny Casey commented “the new logo and naming convention reflect the more agile way in which we will be supporting the schools within our Diocese.”

Bishop Randazzo reinforced the key role schools play in the mission of the Diocese. “Danny and the Workstream Leaders are amongst my closest collaborators,” he commented.

Previously called The Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay, they will now be known as Catholic Schools Broken Bay, a direct reflection of the support system for schools and their commitment to offering authentic, professional Catholic education delivered with care and compassion.

“The new logo features a cross shining its light out over the water with arrows pointing in a forward direction, highlighting faith as being central to everything we do,” said Mr Casey. “The five light beams represent the Catholic Schools Broken Bay values of Faith, Joy, Witness, Compassion and Courage. The water symbolises us coming together as one which is central to the direction of our Diocese.”

The previous logo had served the Catholic Schools system well, since 1986 when the Diocese was initially created, explained Mr Casey.

“This is an exciting time for our Diocese and our system of schools as we transition to align our look and feel with our new strategic direction,” he said. “The change highlights our deep commitment to our *Towards 2025* vision of inspiring the hearts and minds of our students to know Christ and love learning.”

Highly Accomplished Teachers

Two teachers within the Diocese, Stefanie Thom from Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School, Forestville and Erin Sullivan from MacKillop Catholic College Warnervale, were certified as Highly Accomplished Lead Teachers this year.

The accreditation, which comes from NESAs (New South Wales Education Standards Authority), recognises excellent teaching practice and was presented to them by Danny Casey, Director of Schools at Catholic Schools Broken Bay. Stefanie and Erin are only the second and third teachers in the Diocese to receive this accreditation, joining Amy Gill at Mercy Catholic College, Chatswood, who received her award in 2018.

Only 700 teachers in Australia have been accredited to date with 30 from Catholic Schools in New South Wales.

Erin said, "I found the entire process [of gaining the accreditation] to be so valuable in how it required me to reflect on my practice. Throughout my collection of evidence I needed to examine what I do as a teacher and reflect on my impact."

decided to go for it to hitting the submit button."

Stefanie said she saw the accreditation as an opportunity to gain confidence with the teaching standards.

"It was a long journey, with multiple challenges, highlights, learning opportunities, tears and laughs. To have finally completed this level of achievement brought the feeling of success and accomplishment."



Stefanie Thom and Danny Casey



Danny Casey and Erin Sullivan

She said she was "elated" when she got the news that she'd been accredited.

"It's a really nerve wracking wait because you put so much time in - for me it took two and a half years from the time I

Acts of Kindness for our Frontline Workers

As part of Wellness Week in September, children from St Philip Neri Catholic Primary School, Northbridge made a special delivery to frontline workers at the Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital.

The children hand-packed 120 care packages containing tea, coffee and delicious treats donated by parents and staff. They also added personalised messages of thanks to show their appreciation for the work of the doctors, nurses and other frontline staff.

Wellness Week is an initiative where students, staff and parents are encouraged to do more for each other.

"Our public health unit and virtual hospital staff, who have been working around the clock for months looking after COVID-19 patients and keeping our community safe, were chuffed indeed!" said a representative from the Sydney Local Health District.

"Your kindness has made the world a better place today."

School Principal, Fiona Blysmá commented, "It was great to see all members of our community parents, students and staff contributing to our Acts of Kindness in our Wellbeing

Week, actively living our school motto ‘Deeds Not Words’ and thinking of others in these challenging times”.



RPA Care staff: (L to R) Shika, Nick & Carmela



Students (L to R): Jessica, Maybel & Thomas

Compassion in Action

Evangelisation and Catechesis, along with Student Achievement is one of the two key priorities in the *Towards 2025 Strategy*. This workstream includes all activities associated with the Church’s universal mission to make present and announce Jesus Christ (Evangelisation) through an education in the faith (Catechesis) which includes Religious Education.

Members of this workstream work with schools in Broken Bay, supporting them with the creation of vibrant centres of faith and learning. Through formation activities, prayer and experiences of quality Religious Education students come to know, love and serve Christ in the world.

The students at Our Lady of Dolours Catholic School, Chatswood have a very strong sense of social justice and a desire to help those less fortunate than themselves.

Concerned older members of the community within care facilities might be feeling lonely without visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic, the school’s Year 5 leaders devised a

new social justice initiative – letter writing.

Each week up to 40 students come together to write letters to the residents at The Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood and so far, over fifty letters have been written and sent.

“The children really enjoy participating in this initiative and knowing they are contributing to making someone’s day a little brighter and putting a smile on someone’s face,” said Principal Kirsty Thorpe.

“We are now excitedly awaiting to hear back from our new friends and hope to continue our letter-writing club well into the future.”

“I love how we get to make someone smile by writing a letter,” said Airley in Year 5. “It may not take much time, but it will make such a positive impact on someone’s life. I enjoy helping the younger children write their letters. I’ve learnt that even though the younger students at OLD have little bodies, they have such enormous hearts.”



Innovation Leads commissioned

Fourteen staff from a diverse range of roles across our Diocese were recently commissioned by Bishop Anthony as Innovation Leads. Our Innovation Leads are insightful and visionary leaders who will work alongside the Workstream Leads to help drive the strategic direction of *Towards 2025*.

During the formation days it became clear that our Innovation Leads had a passion and focus to make a positive

difference to the students, families, staff and communities. Our Innovation Leads were blessed that both Bishop Anthony and Danny Casey generously gave their time to join them as they gathered. Bishop Anthony inspired the Innovation Leads with his understandings and thoughts on servant leadership.

The nature of the work for our Innovation Leads is beginning to emerge with projects in each of the workstreams becoming apparent. We are certainly blessed to have such capable, positive and hope-filled people working collaboratively to help Catholic Schools Broken Bay be the very best we can be.



(from left) Robert Peers, Jane Denny, Patti Beattie, Jeanie McDonnell, Anne Duncan, Rebecca Billing (kneeling), Elizabeth Calabria, Clare Thorpe, Bishop Anthony, Danny Casey, Monique Collins (kneeling), Amber McDonnell, Lynn Hames, Kevin Williams, Anthony Maher (kneeling), Angela Wark, Karen Pezzuto, Fiona Schubert (kneeling), Trish Biok.

Mercy together

Year 10 students at Mercy Catholic College, Chatswood gave an original graduation gift to their Year 12 school leavers this year.

The 'Mercy Together' project is inspired by well-known artist JR's 'Inside Out' project, comprising photo portraits of everyday people.

Year 10 art student Charlotte explained that the 'Mercy Together' project consisted of photographs of our Year 12 students and College staff. Staff and students alike made funny faces and had the chance to get creative to make the project fun. The printed photographs were then stuck to a

prominent wall within the College grounds, using homemade glue made from cornflour, vinegar and water, where the black-and-white images stood out against the colours of the surrounds.

"The artwork is ephemeral, in that it will only last a very short time, as it will either get washed away by rain, slowly deteriorate or be taken down," said Charlotte.

"The overall meaning and purpose of this project was to show our support for Year 12, as this year has been extremely unpredictable and difficult," said Caitlyn, another Year 10 art student.

"We also wanted to bring our school community together



after a period of being isolated through home-based learning.”

Year 12 students reported feeling touched by the amount of thought and effort put into the project, with College Vice Captain Sofie saying that the artwork was a great reminder

that in these uncertain times we are not alone, we are all a part of the Mercy community.

Year 12 and 2020 College Captain Brooke said, “Despite this year being really tough and challenging, the love and support from the rest of community has made it so much easier.”

Zoos up for debate

Primary students from Corpus Christi Catholic School, St Ives recently won the Grand Final of the Schools Debating Network, beating rivals Redlands in a close-run debate. The topic for the night, ‘That zoos in Australia should close down permanently’ was awarded after the team argued persuasively on the affirmative side.

Representing the Brigidine College Juniors, two teams of six Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6 students) debated North Shore independent schools on Friday evenings throughout Term 3, moving to a Zoom format due to COVID-19 restrictions.

“Apart from winning the debating finals it was a great experience working together, improving and gaining confidence to speak publicly,” said Bianca, one of the Corpus Christi debaters.

The teams were coached by former Brigidine students and champion debaters Ciara Flynn and Ella McCarthy, with Ms Vicky Boyd as convenor.

“The students bring such joy and excitement to our competitions and we are thrilled that they won their Grand

Final,” said Ms Boyd. “We look forward to many more years of successful collaboration.”

“The Corpus Christi debaters were an absolute pleasure to work with,” said Ms Flynn. “They showed maturity beyond their years, from their respectful, attentive manner during debate preparation to their gracious acceptance of a win or loss.”



Front row: (L to R) Bianca, Millie, Jamie, Emily
Back row: (L to R) Ms Ciara Flynn (Coach), Ms Vicky Boyd (Brigidine Convenor), Mrs Jayne Wheen (Principal -Corpus Christi)

Good Deeds rewarded at MacKillop

Students at MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale continue to show their compassion for others, with Year 12 students using their Muck Up day festivities to raise money for a children’s charity.

The students raised \$1,500 for the Starlight Foundation by dressing up in costumes and collecting money around the school grounds from 7.00am in return for offering a range of fun activities for students, including rafting in the school dam.

School Captain Ryley Small said the school leavers decided to raise funds for the Starlight Foundation because there were many children who were less fortunate than themselves.

“We wanted to give to a children’s foundation because

some students might not have the opportunity to graduate,” said Ryley.

Students in younger years at MacKillop have also been recognised for their compassion and good deeds. Jackson Lantry in Year 10 edged out nearly 118,000 nominations to win the Young Volunteer of the Year Award from the Centre for Volunteering this year for his extensive volunteer work. As well as pioneering the College’s JUMP (Josephites Undertaking Mission Projects) program in 2017, Jackson assists giving out meals at the Coast Shelter, coaches a local soccer team, serves weekly College breakfasts and mentors in MacKillop’s Primary Assisted Learning program.

Caleb Pantos in Year 10 and Rose Fergus in Year 9 were also nominated for the award, a great achievement for all these fine young people.



Year 12 collecting donations



Jackson at the Coast Shelter Gosford



Stage Two complete at Mater Maria

Mater Maria Catholic College, Warriewood has completed its Stage Two extensions with the new buildings blessed by Bishop Anthony Randazzo.

“My hope is that these buildings will assist the Catholic school community of Mater Maria to embrace strong, vibrant and authentic Catholic education,” said Bishop Anthony. “What we have at Mater Maria is a series of first-class buildings, well-designed and beautifully constructed.”

“The blessing of these buildings is another step towards strengthening Catholic education in the community of the Church of Broken Bay.”

“It is unusual to be welcoming such a small group to such a significant event,” said Principal Marc Reicher during the opening. “We’ve had a number of challenges. To put a new build through the middle of a school and to have it in construction for two and a half years, was easy by comparison to reducing the invitation list to COVID-19 restriction requirements.” Mr Reicher said he was very grateful to the school community for understanding that not all could attend.

Mr Reicher also spoke of his pride in the development and augmentation of the College in recent years, stating, “I’m very proud that we have been able to achieve our projected

growth, allowing us to provide a Catholic education to over 1,000 students on the Northern Beaches every year.”

“Thanks to this growth and careful financial management at the school level, the support of the Diocese and the building fund, we were able to start this project in 2017, and we have gradually moved into the spaces over the last 12 months.”

“We are very grateful for the support of Catholic Schools Broken Bay to have been able to make all of this happen, our students and families will be the richer for it,” concluded the proud Principal, Mr Reicher.



Left to right: Fr Robert Borg, Bishop Anthony Randazzo and Marc Reicher, College Principal

Using our combined strength

As part of the *Towards 2025 Strategy* one workstream, Student Achievement, are exploring innovative ways to share the combined expertise across the Diocese as we strive to be at least as good as the very best.

HSC marking experience is some of the best professional learnings for HSC teachers where they are trained in a process that closely mirrors HSC marking. Trial HSC Marking Centres were run across the Diocese in eight different subjects in 2020 providing teachers the opportunity to improve their understanding of the marking

process, required standards and expectations of students that will benefit their ongoing work helping Year 12 students prepare for the HSC examinations.

Due to COVID-19, NESAs (New South Wales Education Standards Authority) informed students and schools that the marking of HSC major works in the Technologies and Visual Arts courses would be undertaken by teachers within the school setting rather than NESAs trained travelling markers as has been the case in previous years. In response to this, Catholic Schools Broken Bay established marking teams consisting of experienced markers from across the Diocese to visit each school and share their expertise with colleagues. The collaborative marking allowed teachers to share and grow their understanding of the process of marking major practical works and will benefit students into the future as teachers use these learnings back in the classroom.



Davin, Year 12 with the CEO of Royal Fast West charity Lindsay Crane. Davin redesigned the new Royal Far West building as his major HSC project.

Catholic Schools Broken Bay have also begun the development of Cross Campus Courses. These courses will provide students in Years 9–12 with greater subject choices by using shared system resources, learning environments and teacher expertise to provide access to a broader range of courses. Cross Campus Courses will be delivered through a combination of both face-to-face and online lessons, allowing students from any secondary school in the Diocese to access the course. Six courses have already been developed for delivery in 2021, with more in the pipeline.

Celebrating Indigenous literacy

Primary students from Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School, The Entrance participated in a special virtual celebration of Indigenous language and literacy as part of National Indigenous Literacy Day at the end of last term.

Students were engaged, inspired and delighted as Indigenous woman Cheryl Lardy read Sally Morgan's book *Can You Dance?* in Kriol (the second most common language in the Northern Territory) and Play School actress Justine Clarke recited the English translation.

The children also danced and moved along to music performed by Kuku Yalanji pop star Jessica Mauboy.



Students and parents also enjoyed listening to stories told by children and community members of the Tiwi Islands, Jilkminggan in the Northern Territory and Bidyadanga in Western Australia.

The school held a Great Book Swap as part of National Indigenous Literacy Day, to celebrate reading locally and to raise much-needed funds for Indigenous literacy.

Students swapped their favourite books among their friends in exchange for a gold coin donation, with all money raised going to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation to buy new books for children in remote communities.





The Family – A Blessing for the Church

By Alison Newell

One of the earliest memories of my childhood is kneeling by my bed at night with my parents and brothers and sisters to pray the Rosary. Dad's devotion to the Rosary underpinned all we were as a family in those early days of my life. Prayer held us together, nourished us and formed us for our future lives. Whilst there wasn't a lot of spare money around in those days and raising a large family was tough, mum and dad's devotion to the faith of our family was a witness to what they believed; that in Jesus Christ, we were all rich.

When I was raising my own family, this same faith, and the promises that we made to our five children at baptism were always at the forefront of my mind. I raised my children with Jesus Christ at the centre of our daily lives. The daily tasks of work, education, washing, shopping, cooking, taxi-ing to sport or music and simply loving them, became my spirituality even as they frequently challenged my parental decisions. I used to call it the spirituality of the clothesline. Sometimes, prayer was done on the hop, or at the clothesline, and sometimes it was as simple as marking them with the sign of the cross at bedtime.

Christian families are places of evangelisation and catechesis as they witness to their faith in the living out of their daily lives. This witness has the capacity to spread the Good News beyond their family unit. Families provide fertile ground for evangelisation through the building of trust and friendships.

Love in families is expressed through fidelity to each other. This faithfulness of family members provides strength for the day ahead and helps to overcome challenges which families face daily. God is in the joys and sorrows, the good times, and bad times. God is in the calm and the chaos of family life. The spirituality of the home is where parents and children learn to make sacrifices for each other. It is where children first experience love, friendship, and forgiveness. These things are 'caught' not 'taught' in families. These spiritual

experiences form children in the ways of love; the love which Christ has for the world.

The domestic church is the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Jesus promised to be where two or three are gathered in his name (Mt 18:20). The term domestic church dates to the first century AD. The early Church fathers understood that home was a holy place.

My domestic church now lives in several different households, with most of my children married with children of their own. When my children or grandchildren visit my home, which they do regularly, I mark their foreheads with the sign of the cross (we call it Nan's blessing) to remind them of their Baptismal call to holiness. Sometimes, if they are driving past my home, mum or dad will pull up out the front just because one of the grandchildren 'needs' a blessing. This simple practice has brought peace and hope to my children and their children. It provides a moment of the sacred in the chaos of busy lives and it is a constant reminder of the presence of Jesus Christ in the joys and challenges of relationships and life.

We know that today, many families are struggling with disability, sickness, unemployment, domestic violence, mental illness, or loneliness. Putting food on the table and paying bills is a challenge for many. Brokenness in families is a space where Christ enters to provide healing and love. The Church has much to learn from ministering to families. In their struggles, we see the sufferings of Jesus.

Families are the backbone not only of the Church, they are the foundation of society. As a community of Christian believers, let us value the dignity of all families and appreciate the blessings which families bring to our parishes and to our world.

Alison Newell is one of the delegates representing the Diocese of Broken Bay at the Plenary Council. She is the CCD Diocesan Coordinator and a parishioner at Toukley/Lake Munmorah Parish.

The courage to share God's Word

By Raj Rajasingam



Raj Rajasingam

On 20 November I celebrated the anniversary of the turning point of my faith journey, my baptism and confirmation day.

My parents, both teachers in Christian schools, were practising Hindus. My sister and I grew up attending temples and saying prayers at home. Though we attended the Christian school, no one approached us to talk about Christ or His love and mercy. Conversion was never mentioned.

It was my classmates in the Methodist high school, who were Anglicans and Methodists, who used to come to my house in the afternoons after school and share bible tracts with me. They would ask me questions and try to explain the Gospels to me.

In 1978, I arrived in Sydney to complete high school and met up with two other Malaysian Chinese Students, who were not Christians. I remember that on the first day of walking into the gates of the university, I was given a bible by Campus Crusade. The persistence of my classmates in Malaysia, who shared the Scriptures with me, instilled in me a hunger for God's word. I was faithful to reading the Scriptures every night for the next seven years, even if I got home after midnight!

Over time, I lost track of my two Malaysian Chinese friends. It was many years later that we were able to reconnect through the internet and discovered the path that God had led each of us. My sister invited me to a Pentecostal Church and eventually

I moved to the Anglican Church where I was baptised and confirmed in 1988.

I was chosen by the Anglican Church to go to Taize in 1989. I ended up spending eight months in Taize, being sent by the brothers to Scandinavia and Poland to speak to young people and adults, sharing my faith and what God had done in my life. It was during my stay in Taize, that I met my future wife, Roslyn, a Catholic. I was received into the Catholic Church, we married in 1991 and have been blessed with two boys.

As a husband and a father, I have continued my thirst for God's Word and take time each day to read scripture and spend time in prayer, and regularly attend retreats and teachings.

I have always looked for opportunities to serve and share God's love in various ministries within the Church such as altar serving, ministry of the Word, social justice, ecumenical and interfaith events and the Vinnies Van.

In my involvement with Couples for Christ Australia, my passion is to encourage Catholic families to be grounded in God's love and mercy and having Him at the centre of their lives and to then share this with other families. We meet weekly to pray, discuss scripture and faith related topics and fellowship with one another. I regularly give talks on prayer, scripture and evangelisation.

Raj Rajasingam is a Plenary Council delegate for Broken Bay. Raj is an active parishioner of the Cathedral Parish of Hornsby at which he exercises a range of ministries. He serves as the National Missions Director of Couples for Christ Australia. He has considerable national and international experience in programmes of Evangelisation and works extensively in lay formation throughout Australia. He also brings his rich multicultural experience to bear on the matters before the consideration of the Plenary Council.

Caring for Creation at St Anthony in the Fields, Terrey Hills

By Anne Lanyon, republished with permission from Catholic Earthcare

“A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us.” Laudato Si’: 202

St Anthony in the Fields church community on the outer edges of Sydney is one of three churches of the Frenchs Forest Parish. It is located close to Garigal and Ku-ring-gai National Parks. A small group of parishioners had already been volunteering in the grounds, removing small sections of the invasive weeds which had already smothered a large proportion of the one-hectare site, replacing them with native species.

In 2015, following the publication of *Laudato Si’*, the group drafted a visionary response, offering leadership in steering a way into the future for the Parish. All three of our churches have been built on Indigenous Australian bushland and are blessed to be in an area known as the Duffy’s Forest plant community. We owe the forest a great debt for housing our churches, our schools and many of our families.

Our Parish is well placed to show initiative in our local community and in the Diocese of Broken Bay in repaying some of the debt we owe to the local and greater environment and in responding to the urgent calls for metanoia or change of heart. We asked, “How can we, as a Church, show leadership in putting something back into the environment?”

Kierans Creek runs through St Anthony’s, and the riparian zone is an important habitat for small birds such as the yellow robin, reptiles such as the eastern water dragon, and the black swamp wallaby. Surrounding properties are



becoming alienated from surrounding natural vegetation through continued development. We want to offer hope to the next generations towards healing Earth, our Common Home.

“Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation.” Laudato Si’: 14

Following a community forum on *Laudato Si’*, we formed a Landcare Group in 2016. With the help of a grant from Greater Sydney Landcare and the support of the Northern Beaches Council, which provided ecological expertise, support and advice, we have achieved much in three and a half years.

We have gathered tremendous support from our parish priest and the community with volunteers from the church and wider local community doing primary and maintenance weeding, planting local species, providing refreshments, recording what we do, helping with promotion and grant applications. We have a wonderful relationship, grown over many years, with the Northern Beaches Aboriginal community.

We have begun Youth Landcare with the involvement of local high schools. We have connected with a local birdwatching group as we delight in discovering little birds such as the red-browed finch (*Neochmia temporalis*) currently nesting in the habitat we have restored. We have the Stations of the Cross in the Forest and a meditation walk through part of the restored area. People are spending time in the grounds reflecting, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Spirit of God calls us to pray, to learn and to take action as a community of Creation. “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). With this long term project, we are protecting the waters and riparian areas of the headwaters of Kierans Creek which runs into the Hawkesbury River; we are reducing the impact of invasive species, protecting biodiversity, providing a wildlife corridor and learning more about biodiversity and ecology as well as educating others.



An alternative to Halloween

By Rosemarie Anne Anuat

Halloween signifies an occasion for dressing up, social gathering, carving pumpkins and horror movies. However, this year, our St Kevin's Filipino community in Dee Why partook in a special tradition celebrated by Catholic Christians around the world – All Hallows' Eve, All Saints Day and All Souls Day.

The three holy days in the liturgical year, commencing on 31 October to 2 November, marks a time dedicated to commemorating Catholic saints and martyrs, and remembering our dearly and faithful departed.

During our third Sunday Filipino Mass, we saw young children gathered dressed in costume honouring saints and martyrs - including two little boys dressed as the Filipino saints and martyrs, Saint Lorenzo Ruiz and Blessed Pedro Calungsod.

"I was photographed with young boy whose parent thought my robes were a costume!" laughed Fr Emman Chuntic.

Each child is asked, "who is your saint and what makes them special?" With the teaching from parents and the proclamation of the Gospel, we understand a main commonality between many saints and martyrs is living a holy life – following God's teachings and being in the service of the Lord by helping those in need.

Accompanied with prayer, parishioners offered lighted candles at the altar in tribute of respect and peace for the souls of our loved ones, ancestors and family members who have passed on, and those in Purgatory.

It is recognised that celebrations are exceptionally important this year, in memory of fatalities from complications related to the COVID-19 virus and in consideration of those grieving loss, prohibited from participating in traditional practices for the death of their loved one due to pandemic restrictions.

The festivities of All Saints Day and All Souls Day symbolise hope for all souls to be guided to heaven and remain beside our Lord.



St Michael, Mother Teresa and St Terese (below)



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