

# Horizons



## WALKING THE PATH: SYCHAR'S LABYRINTH

Biblical Garden  
Transforms  
Unused Space

Lenten Message  
Inspires Art

#70  
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Toowoomba



# Horizons

## FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

When you know someone with a sizeable fruit tree or vegetable patch, you tend to find yourself with a fridge full of said fruit or vegetables. You also find yourself eating the same thing repeatedly unless you get a bit creative.

So many times in my life and faith, I find myself “eating the same”, and well, it gets boring. Some aspects are not negotiable at the core, so that’s where the creativity comes in. What breathes life into something that’s become ho-hum?

What within me elevates my own experience of life and faith? What can I see around me or experience that will bring new energy? I see so many people searching for comfort in the traditional, a return to what we once were when maybe we were better. I see others push boundaries, their comfort coming from bucking the system, busting norms, and forward-facing.

While forgoing tradition and embracing change for the sake of it ignores

*Horizons is a conduit for news and information, helping to bind the Toowoomba Diocese together. The magazine aims to promote the work of our Diocese’s Parishes and Ministries so God’s mercy, love and the joy of the Gospel are experienced, celebrated and shared.*

*We wish to acknowledge the Aboriginal people God placed upon this land, the first custodians and caretakers of the land upon which we now build our lives and gather to worship. We also pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.*

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history and the building blocks to now, it denies the growth, learning, and wisdom of the past. If I want to breathe life into anything, I must be mindful of tradition but firmly forward-facing and listening to the Spirit.

So, what new recipe will I find to experience the Fruits of the Spirit so I’m not “eating the same”? And more importantly, what will I do with the bag of 10 avocados sitting on my desk? Avocado cheesecake, anyone?

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Cover image: Enjoying walking Sychar’s permanent labyrinth feature. Story page 9.



The clergy of the Toowoomba Diocese gathered with Bishop Ken Howell at the Micah Centre to pray, reflect, listen and share.

## GATHERED TOGETHER

**Ever since I became Bishop, I have wanted to gather the priests together so that I might get to know them better and also that we might consider the important things concerning our future.**

We started with the question: what do the priests of Toowoomba Diocese need to discuss? This question was asked of the Council of Priests and all members of the clergy as a lead up to our time together on Wednesday and Thursday 15-16 May. These reflections became the basis of our discussions.

We were very fortunate that Sr Monica Cavanagh RSJ, Congregation Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph (and originally from Allora) came to guide our deliberations. Sr Monica led us along a pathway like that used in Rome for the Synod (last year and this year). In

this way, every priest was listened to as their wisdom was shared with each other. This kind of synodal listening also happens in the spirit of prayer, so that we can ask the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and reflections.

A significant question for me was to ask: what do we need to do so that we can minister to this vast Diocese in the next five years? During this time, a number of priests that we rely on at the moment will have moved into retirement. This led us to further ask: how do we minister to the West and do we need to make changes to how we minister in the city of Toowoomba?

For me, it was wonderful to listen to the wisdom of both our younger and more senior clergy. It was good that

we could be together to pray, reflect, listen, and share as the presbyters of the Diocese. I found myself marvelling at the commitment of our priests to the Diocese and its people over so many faith-filled years of dedication.

We will continue to reflect on our discussions, and these will lead us towards a Diocesan Synod in the future. For now, please continue to pray for our priests and occasionally to thank them for their good work.

**Bishop Ken Howell**  
*Bishop of Toowoomba*  
*June 2024*





L to R: Fr Mick Carroll, Bishop Ken Howell, Sr Miriam Lorenz, Sr Miriam's nephew, 'BJ' Gentry and Fr Michael O'Brien.

## SAPPHIRE JUBILEE A GEM OF DEVOTION

SR EILEEN MARCH

**God's ways are mysterious.** He throws his seeds far and wide, watching expectantly for them to grow. Certainly, the seed of a religious vocation that landed in the heart of a young girl living on a farm near Gayndah landed in very fertile soil. It has grown into a silver, a golden, a diamond, and now a sapphire flower. Sr Miriam Lorenz SSPC celebrated 65 years of Religious Consecration on 6 January this year, a milestone at which few arrive. For Sr Miriam, though, the grace of her vocation has been matched with the graces of a long life and most certainly a sharp intellect and wit.

Sr Miriam was born in Gayndah, Queensland, one of the seven children of John and Ellen Lorenz and grew up on a farm at Branch Creek, attending the local small State School.

Her parents and grandparents subscribed to our mission publication, "Echo from Africa and Other Continents". Reading the stories of missionary life in the "Echo" motivated her to enter

our Congregation in 1956 as the first Australian vocation. She made her First Profession in 1959 in Kew, Melbourne, where she also made her Final Profession. She served the Congregation in Melbourne, New

Zealand, America and Canada before founding our house in Toowoomba in 1986. She went to Rome in 1995, where she was elected as First Counselor and served as the Missions Secretary for that six-year term.



Sr Miriam's First Profession in 1959 – L to R: Sr Miriam's mother, Ellen Lorenz; Sr Miriam; Fr John Shorten; Archbishop Simonds; Sr Miriam's sister, Sr Marcella (Josephite) and her father, John Lorenz.





L to R: Sr Reena John Thyveetil, Sr Miriam Lorenz, Mother Selin Karikkattil and Sr Eileen March.

Sr Miriam has been editor of the “Echo” for over 55 years, a task she still fulfills. Methods of editorial work have changed over the years and Sr Miriam has kept pace with them. She now uses a laptop and Microsoft Word to “cut and paste” instead of scissors and glue!

While it is easy to write a short biography of someone’s life, picking out a few important moments, it is never easy to describe the courage, dedication, perseverance and love for God which nourish their soul and form the foundation of their life. This is definitely true for Sr Miriam. All of her life she has walked in faith and the love of her “dear Lord”. May she continue for many years to be an example and inspiration to her fellow Sisters in religious life, to her family and to all whom she meets.

Even though Sr Miriam’s jubilee was in January, we postponed the official celebration to 16 March once we knew Mother Selin Karikkattil, the Mother General of our Congregation, would be visiting Toowoomba. Special thanks to Bishop Ken Howell and Fr Michael O’Brien for including the jubilee Mass, at relatively short notice, in their busy schedules, and Fr Mick Carroll for concelebrating. We also thank Vicky Coccozza and the choir members who helped make the Mass a joyous celebration.

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MSS Sisters today, Front L to R: Srs Mary Cleary, Cecilia Bailey, Margaret Windsham. Back L to R: Srs Nancy Doyle and Pat Quinn.

# MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY A TESTAMENT TO MISSIONARY SISTERS SERVICE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

SR PAT QUINN

**This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Sisters of Service and the 60th anniversary of their arrival in Toowoomba.** In 1964, five sisters left their motherhouse in Tasmania to establish a foundation in this diocese. I, Sr Pat Quinn, was the youngest of the group. Our mission initially was to reach out to isolated families in regional areas and to provide a religious correspondence course for parents to educate their children in the faith. We visited remote parishes on a regular basis.

Sr Cecilia Bailey, another of our original group, recalls a story. In her early days in the diocese, she and another sister visited a property far out west. As she stepped out of the car, the mother of the family came out to meet them and threw her arms around Cecilia. She began sobbing. Cecilia simply held her, wondering if some tragedy had happened. When Cecilia asked how she was, the woman said, "With this drought, my husband has been away for months, cattle droving along the roads to find some feed. I am here with my five little boys and, I have not seen a woman in months". This story paints a vivid picture of the isolation of some people and of

what the visit of our sisters meant to them. In the 1960s and 70s, there were not the communication systems that there are today, nor well-formed roads.

Our Sisters would visit country state schools and gather the Catholic children for classes. Sometimes we arranged camps for religious instruction and activities for kids in places like shearer's quarters as well as school holiday live-in camps at our convent in Toowoomba. In 1982 Sr Imelda McMahon established The Family Bookshop at the request of the bishop and managed the bookshop for 18 years. The sisters also worked in youth ministry and trained catechists. They established a permanent pastoral presence serving the individual parishes of Goondiwindi and Miles for some years. Sr Mary Cleary was appointed by the bishop as pastoral leader at Jandowae for 11 years and I set up the Portiuncula Centre for counselling and spiritual development which served the wider community for 27 years.

In earlier times, our sisters were often referred to as the "Rosary House Sisters" simply because that was the name of our convent, but our title is Missionary Sisters of Service.

Our congregation was founded by Fr John Wallis in 1944 when four women gathered in Launceston to begin their formation and subsequently travelled to isolated parts of Tasmania. Our numbers have never been large, yet our sisters also served vast, remote areas in New South Wales, in a number of Queensland dioceses and South Australia. Like many congregations, our numbers have dwindled. In 2010, our congregation set up a mission entity that enables our mission to grow and continue into the future. This mission entity is "Highways and Byways – Healing the Land – Healing Ourselves – Together".

Clare Smith, foundation president of the local Highways and Byways branch, knew the sisters as a child growing up in Daymar. "On behalf of the Toowoomba Diocese, the Members of the Toowoomba Branch of Highways and Byways wish to thank all these ladies who ventured beyond to find people and sit around the kitchen table with them listening to their stories," said Clare. "Meeting people where they were with their simple message of God's love for each of us, made them welcome and their visits much appreciated."



## NEVILLE HUNT REFLECTS ON HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE MSS SISTERS

**We recall the “Yes” made by the Missionary Sisters of Service when, in 1964, they offered to be a source of God’s loving grace in the remote parts of Western Queensland.** Amidst the challenges of the 1965 drought and the collapse of the Wool market in the 1960s, which saw prices plummet from 200 cents per pound in the 1950s to a mere 30 cents per pound in 1970, families found their longstanding properties insufficient to sustain them.

I recall being moved from my normal fieldwork in the Lands Department to a new role in rural reconstruction, with the aim of transiting wool growers into other enterprises or off their properties.

An example is the family of Bert Harris, who set up a calf-rearing enterprise, with the family hand-rearing bobby calves from the Darling Downs dairies. Tragedy struck the family when one of their children was hospitalised in Toowoomba. With few resources, Bert, Zita and the children were cared for by the sisters at Rosary House until the crisis lifted. Bert and I could then organise things in Toowoomba and on the property at Weengallon. Bert knew that the sisters’ commitment to serving the families of the outback could be relied upon when there was nowhere else to turn.

The sisters shared the isolation of bush life at the time when communication, if there was any, consisted of a wire strung through the bush and maintained by the families sharing the line. Roads were unreliable, and communication with the outside world was very limited.

The sisters role in this environment was highly valued by the bush community, irrespective of what church a family belonged to. Bringing companionship to the women and



MSS Toowoomba foundation group, L to R: Srs Fran O’Brien, Cecilia Bailey, Joan Shannon, Pat Quinn and Julianne Dunn. Photo credit: MSS Archive

faith education to the children, sharing in the difficulties of travel on bush roads, living on the properties and in the back of the small churches, conducting faith camps for children and operating the correspondence course that the congregation developed to help isolated parents develop the faith with their children.

Times have changed, with power and communication available throughout rural Queensland, and roads and modern transport making life in the outback much easier. A new challenge awaits people who are willing to make the “Yes” of Mary their calling; the faith that was nurtured by the sisters needs to be resourced in new ways to awaken the beauty of the presence of God in all places, and especially in the quiet beauty of the Australian bush. Pope Francis has asked us to fulfil our baptismal mandate through the life we share and “get the smell of the sheep on us.”

*Invitation  
to all:*

Our local Sisters along with our Toowoomba Highways and Byways members invite you to join us in celebrating our 80th and 60th on **Sunday 14th July** at St. Anthony’s Parish with Mass at 2pm followed by afternoon tea.

For catering purposes please **RSVP by 5th July**  
Text Sr. Pat on 0422 462 678.



# CALLED TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES

DR DAVID TUTTY

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Many of us find watching the television news difficult. Many choose not to watch the news at all. It always seems to be bad news full of conflict, crime, violence, wars, alliances and enemies. It is difficult to see these stories day in and day out. It is difficult to hear of those harmed or killed. Yet it is not difficult for us to make judgements about whoever are the perpetrators and what punishments they deserve. We do not have much difficulty in identifying others as our enemies.

At one level, naming enemies is a very normal human process. It is a response that comes out of hurt or fear because of current or past hostilities. We want to protect ourselves and those we love and support. We name as our enemy any who try and dominate us and harm us.

Yet the most innovative feature of Christian faith is Jesus' call that we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matt 5:44). Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus "did not point his finger at those who wrongfully condemned him and put him to a cruel death" (Mass at Bari 2020). Our pope emphasizes that Jesus, when he was on the cross, called out, "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). Jesus did not judge those who condemned and crucified him but begged his father to forgive them.

When we think of Jesus' commands, we mostly think of his call to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. The story of the Good Samaritan was

a response to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus told this story in the full knowledge that his listeners understood that the Samaritans were despised and seen as enemies to the Jews. Therefore, to love our enemy is one part of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

To love our enemy begins with our willingness to honestly understand the causes of the hostilities. Truth-telling is needed, not only of what happened, what violence and harm was done, but also of what shaped and formed particularly the perpetrators. Psychologists and counsellors tell us that people who speak or act violently carry unresolved trauma and need healing. Their violent words and actions have come out of the woundedness that they carry.

Psychologists also tell us that the perpetrator often does not know nor appreciate the harm that their violence causes. This is what Jesus was saying when he said that those who crucified him did not know what they are doing. This is part of the trauma reality. A perpetrator's trauma limits what they see, what they take in and what they remember afterwards.

Just as this woundedness impacts individuals, it also impacts the actions of groups and even nations. Australia is a nation that carries much trauma. Our colonial forebears made themselves the enemies to First Nations peoples. Our forebears were the perpetrators of violence.

We benefit now from this violence and continue the colonial structures.

This is also the root cause of what is happening in Palestine. After centuries where Jewish people lived in peace all around the Arab world, the Israeli nation has made itself the enemy of millions of Palestinians. After many decades of wars and military occupation both sides carry huge trauma. The extreme violence and destruction that is happening in Gaza will not bring peace but it will only increase future trauma and future violence.

So we, like the Israelis, need to see that we carry perpetrator trauma and we need healing. We need to take truth-telling seriously. To love the enemy here is to learn to love ourselves enough to seek healing. To love the enemy here is to understand that we need to grow in empathy and learn how to act without violence of any sort.

And we need to pray for this healing.

I also ask that we pray for healing of all perpetrators of war, be that in South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine, Russia, Myanmar, Mali, Niger, Somalia, DR Congo and everywhere else there is military conflict. May they know that violence is never the answer.

And ... please watch the news. Check your personal biases and those of the news outlets. Look for news that comes from the experiences of those who suffer most. Use this as a source of prayer and as a way of learning to love.





Some of the helpers present on the day the first iteration of the labyrinth was completed.



Original labyrinth. L to R: Peter and Eileen Castles, Josephine and Peter Nolan, Kryz Keryk and Sr Elaine Morzone.

# WALKING THE PATH: THE EVOLUTION OF SYCHAR'S LABYRINTH

SR ELAINE MORZONE AND MOYALIA TOKMAK

**From Sychar's beginning, there was a dream of a possible future labyrinth in the garden.** The dream lay dormant for a few years while attention was focused on developing three contemplative spaces: Creation-God's First Incarnation (The St. Francis Garden), One in the Mystery of Suffering (spherical sculpture), the Well of Encounter. Once the foundational structure of the garden had emerged, the dream of having a labyrinth resurfaced.

At the beginning of 2023, steps were taken to find someone who might help us realise our dream and detail logistics and costs involved so that we could look for ways to raise any necessary funds. For months on end, we waited in hope for a response which never came through the channels we had set for

ourselves. In early October, we made enquiries about other possibilities and within three weeks, we had the first iteration of our labyrinth. Randal and Susan Dennings from Brisbane assisted us in determining the size and style of labyrinth which suited the space available and our preferences. Randal used his creativity to develop a simple and inexpensive way of marking out the labyrinth pattern. With the use of a centre point, string radius, and a moving circumference of people pouring flour, the initial pattern for the labyrinth was held in place. Adjustments to refine the outline were made by Randal and were then painted with a line marker by David Beauchamp from St Mary's College.

Randal and Susan honoured us by leading our first official labyrinth day

on the theme "Walking the Labyrinth – Healing the Fractures of Our Divided World". Our Sychar Christmas celebration included a Christmas labyrinth walk where we were invited to gaze into the manger where a mirror reflected back to us that we were the Christ now being born.

Our excitement about having our labyrinth turned to anxiety when the rain started to fall, and all our efforts to retain the initial imprint with the use of non-toxic weedkiller seemed to be never-ending. We realised that while we appreciated the simplicity of our grass-roots pattern, we needed to look towards something sustainable. We were led to the wisdom and artistry of Richard Jones who connected us with landscape designer Jamie Ross. Jamie, with his son Harry, created a labyrinth which exceeded all our expectations. There is a right time for everything under the sun, by this time, we had received a generous donation from the Toowoomba Theological Society, which had a humorous, elusive and circuitous journey to reach us. Just as the labyrinth itself is a metaphor for life, the whole process of establishing our "forever" labyrinth was itself a metaphor. It involved an invitation to wait, to move with the ebbs and flow, to embrace connection with others, to be open to surprise, and to recognise the value of collective wisdom.





# HELLO TO FRESH FACES AND FAREWELL TO LONGTIME FRIENDS

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There have been some changes within the diocesan offices over the past few months. Gone, but not forgotten, we look at the time shared with Fr Peter Dorfield and Theresa Harvey, both taking a well deserved break

in retirement. We also say welcome to Lance Guteridge, who is stepping into Fr Peter's role, and welcome to Karen Morris, who is Executive Assistant to Bishop Ken Howell.



Lance Guteridge and Fr Peter Dorfield

## CHANGE OF THE GUARD FOR DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY

### LANCE GUTERIDGE

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**In April, Fr Peter Dorfield retired from the position of Executive Officer Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry.**

Having previously retired for health reasons, he was called back into active ministry at the request of Bishop Robert McGuckin. Fr Peter has been committed to the role and has worked tirelessly to ensure that the diocese has a professional safeguarding system in place for over four years.

What people may not know about Fr Peter is that he is a qualified pilot.

The traits that make him a good pilot served him well, shining through in his meticulous attention to detail. His work reflects a person who has operated at altitude and understands the requirements to get it right. Despite having a mechanistic approach to his Safeguarding Ministry obligations, he has always been somewhat organic in his approach to his pastoral duties. Fr Peter has always been prepared to do what was needed at the time.

Of course, Fr Peter's ministry predates his time in the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry. At times, he has volunteered to serve in two other dioceses, experiencing a shortage of priests. It was during one of these occasions that he lived and worked in a men's shelter, providing services to those who were on the margins.

Fr Peter has served in all parts of the Toowoomba diocese, including the western and southern areas. During his time in the remote areas of the diocese he provided ecumenical services to

those communities where there were no other religious ministers. This necessitated him performing Christian burial services for people from other denominations. He also worked closely with the First Nation's people within the diocese as a part of his ministry.

The people who have worked with Fr Peter enjoy his presence in the workplace. He is always cheerful and obliging towards his work colleagues. As he steps away from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry, Fr Peter hopes he will be able to restore his motorcycle, which he has previously disassembled.

Fr Peter's successor is Lance Guteridge, who brings extensive experience of 44 years with Queensland Police to the role. Lance hails from Applethorpe and has spent a lot of time in the Toowoomba Diocese. He is married with 3 grown up children. While Fr Peter leaves big shoes to fill, Lance is keen to build on the solid foundation created for the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry.





Diocesan staff gathered for Theresa Harvey's (2nd on right) last day.

## REFLECTING ON THE MANY PATHS I'VE CROSSED

### THERESA HARVEY

**I am excited and sad at the same time as I write this.** I am excited to retire and travel with my husband, Greg, and sorry to leave my diocesan family after 22 years. We will also start a new chapter of our lives, becoming first-time grandparents.

I still remember my job interview with Tom Jolley, Fr Brian Sparksman and Noeleen Train. I was applying for the position to be Fr Brian's part-time secretary. He was Chancellor and Judge for the Tribunal at the time. The Chancellor's office was in the Marian Centre with the Tribunal and Archives. Gabrielle Saide started part-time in the Archives two weeks before me. The Tribunal was staffed by Noeleen, Fr Peter Schultz and part-time secretary Patti Howard.

After some time, Sr Carmel Pattinson sgs arrived to take on a Pastoral Formation role. She was given an office in the Marian Centre and I was asked to give her some admin support. After Sr Carmel's departure, Rob McCormack was employed, and in September 2012, Sr Elaine Morzone mfic started job sharing with Rob. Rob retired and Elaine continued in the role. Elaine has since opened Sychar

House of Prayer and Spirituality and is a good friend to me. Our dear Rob passed away in February 2019.

In 2007, Anne Borserio took over the day-to-day running of the Tribunal. I added Tribunal secretary to my position description in 2010, making me a full-time employee. Anne retired in March 2016. Anne and her husband John are good friends of ours and they moved back home to Western Australia. Sadly, Fr Peter Schultz passed away in August 2019, and I became the coordinator/auditor for the Tribunal. I could also call on Fr Michael O'Brien.

I would like to mention Fr Adrian Sharp and the staff at the Regional Tribunal Catholic Province of Queensland. They have been a great help to me over the years. They all show the light and compassion of Jesus to the

people who come to us for help, as do the staff in the regional offices, who are often working alone.

I have worked for three Bishops during my time - all completely different men. Bishop Bill Morris was a pastoral man who knew the length and breadth of this huge diocese. Bishop Robert McGuckin was a Canon Lawyer who had a deep knowledge and was a great help to me after Peter Schultz passed away. Bishop Ken Howell is at the beginning of his journey as our Bishop.

To all my colleagues within the diocese, my thanks; we have shared many laughs and tears over the years. Finally, to all our priests and religious sisters and parish secretaries, it has been a pleasure to work with you over the years. God's blessings on you all and I will miss you all.



Representatives of the Regional Tribunal for Queensland travelled to Toowoomba to celebrate Theresa Harvey's (centre, standing) years of service.



# NO STRANGER TO THE DIOCESE

## KAREN MORRIS

In January, I had the privilege of taking on the role of Executive Assistant to Bishop Ken Howell, replacing Christine Hickey, who is now enjoying her well-earned retirement.

I grew up in Toowoomba, attending Holy Name and Sacred Heart Primary Schools and St Saviour's College. Upon leaving school, I worked for Westpac Bank, where I met my lovely husband Shayne, an Allora boy. We were married in 1993 at The Shrine and have two wonderful children, now young adults, Kate and Sam of whom we are very proud.

Following my work in banking, I took on a new career in education. I worked in various administrative roles in Toowoomba schools, an area I have



Karen Morris and Bishop Ken Howell.

thoroughly enjoyed, with my first role in education at St Mary's College and my last role at Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, where I assisted the Director of Education Services.

Shayne and I are members of St Thomas More's Parish, and I am currently a member of their Parish Pastoral Council.

I am settling well into my new role with Bishop Ken. I am enjoying reacquainting myself with many of the priests and parishioners in our diocese. This is a role where I can bring my administrative and organisational skills to support Bishop Ken with the various responsibilities of his office. I feel blessed to have commenced in this role. Please say hello if you see me around.

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Port Vila hospital staff and volunteers

## HEALING JOURNEY FOR ENT SURGICAL TEAM

PANDORA BEVAN

**The population of the South Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu has very limited access to specialist medical attention.** For more than 15 years, ENT surgeon Dr Roger Grigg AM has been volunteering his skills to treat local people needing ear, nose or throat surgery. In February, St Vincent's Hospital Clinical Nurse Cathy Whyte accompanied Dr Grigg on a 7-day trip to Port Vila, Vanuatu, with an ENT surgical team.

Organised by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) with support from the Australian Government, the Pacific Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Project aims to provide patients access to specialist surgery thanks to a volunteer surgical team.

Dr Grigg led the ENT Project team comprising two surgeons, one anaesthetist, two theatre nurses and one audiologist from Australia and New Zealand. Their goal was to ensure as many patients as possible had access to safe and high-quality ENT surgery, which is not available in Vanuatu.

One hundred ninety-seven patients were assessed in the outpatient ENT clinic, many of whom had travelled from surrounding islands for medical care. Thirty-one of those patients then underwent ENT surgery at the Port Vila Central Hospital, which provides health services to a population of over 80,000.

The team worked 12-hour days to see the 197 patients through the pre-surgical clinic. This was the first ENT Project since 2019, as COVID-19 had stopped the annual visit for a number of years.

“The warm climate in Vanuatu meant we saw lots of ear disease. Thyroid disease is also quite common,” Nurse Cathy Whyte said. “We performed a number of basic grommet procedures that aren't normally available in Port Vila.”

Dr Grigg performed complex surgeries in the Port Vila Hospital, including saving the life of a young girl. “We saw many complicated ear and neck patients, but one in particular stands out,” Dr Grigg said. “An 11-year-old girl with a history of ear infections presented partially unconscious from an advanced ear infection that was spreading inside her brain.

“It required an urgent operation to drain the infection and remove the underlying abnormality. If our team was not present, she would have probably died within a few days,” he said.

Dr Grigg and Cathy have been working together since 1999. 2024 marked over 15 years since Dr Grigg embarked on his first visit to Vanuatu. Cathy has travelled on five ENT projects throughout the past ten years.



Dr Grigg and Cathy during an ENT surgery

Over the years, Dr Grigg and Cathy have taken donations of medical equipment and theatre consumables overseas. They have also run training and education sessions for the Port Vila Hospital staff.

Cathy emphasised that the nurses in Port Vila were extremely knowledgeable despite not having access to the quality medical equipment we have here in Australia.

“The most rewarding part of volunteering on these trips is the appreciation we receive from the local community. They are the kindest, most beautiful people, and to be able to help them means so much to me,” Cathy said.





# EMBRACING CHANGE: CATHOLICCARE MOVES TO NEW HOME

KATE VENABLES

Change is the heartbeat of progress, and it's with great excitement that we share the news of CatholicCare's relocation to a new, dynamic location at 146 Mort Street. We have bid farewell to our former premises in the heart of Ruthven Street and have ushered in a new era of growth, innovation, and opportunity for the organisation in our new home in Mort Street.

The decision to move was not taken lightly, and it was born following the sale of our former premises. With any move or major change, there are many moving parts to consider. We have embraced this entire process as an opportunity to better serve our community, elevate our services, and create an environment conducive to our vision of excellence in community support. Our new address in Mort Street represents more than just a physical space; it embodies our commitment to resilience and our dedication to providing unparalleled

service to our cherished clients.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the relocation, one thing remained constant: our unwavering dedication to our clients. We understood the importance of continuity for our clients and following the pandemic in 2020 we were in a good place to transition all of our clients to online and phone and continue to support our clients with limited interruptions. Our teams worked tirelessly to ensure a seamless transition, with minimal disruption to our clients and service offerings that our community has come to expect from us.

As we embark on this new chapter, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our loyal clients and partners, dedicated employees, and supportive community. Your unwavering support has been the cornerstone of our journey, and

we're honoured to have you by our side as we embrace this exciting new chapter. Rest assured, our commitment to supporting our community remains steadfast, and we welcome you to experience this unwavering support and get in touch with our office to find out more about how we can support you or someone you know. We reopened our new doors to our first clients in the new office on 15 April, where we've continued to go above and beyond for our community and clients.

Change is inevitable, but with it comes boundless opportunity. We invite you to join us on this journey as we chart new horizons, continue to deliver unwavering support, and maintain what it means to be a leader in our industry.



CatholicCare Executive Leadership Team during the move to Mort Street location.

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TOOWOOMBA

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Belief in a better world

Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools

**St Joseph's College**  
TOOWOOMBA

For more than 60 years, St Joseph's College has been a leading school in the Toowoomba region, instilling strong Christian values through an inclusive and empowering College community.

- ✓ Co-educational
- ✓ Catholic
- ✓ Safe, supportive environment
- ✓ High-achieving
- ✓ Strong community
- ✓ Values-based





**Belief in a better world**

## IF YOU WANT A BETTER WORLD, TELL A BETTER STORY

**DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:  
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Catholic education has a compelling story. Bold decisions, larger than life characters and sacrifices by people who truly believe in the value of a Catholic education to the life opportunities of students and their families. That story told well is the foundation from which we have operated and taken direction for many years. It has served us well.

Our relatively recent motto, “Belief in a better world”, is another chapter in our evolving story. If we truly want a better world then we must tell a better story. Better than the prevailing stories currently available to students and their families.

Recent research into what people see as the strengths of Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) has given helpful insight into the drafting of our evolving better story. Participants identified 4 areas that are highly desirable to families, and provide a stable foundation for the rapidly changing future.

### **FAITH:**

Our schools educate young people spiritually, morally and religiously for life in the 21st century. Many parents now seek an education for their children based on a Christian story and values. They realise, probably more than ever, it is the ideal foundation for life in a fast-paced, rapidly changing and unpredictable world. Likewise, many adults are drawn to work for an organisation that espouses these values and beliefs.

### **PROGRESSIVE:**

While TCS has a deep respect for tradition and our past, we know we must keep moving forward and remain relevant to our community. This means reframing and rethinking many traditional ways and understandings to present them anew to an eager and receptive community.

### **CONNECTED:**

We are deeply embedded in the life of our communities, not just

geographically located within them. We live and breathe the same cultural challenges and realities of our communities. The connections and relationships we develop in doing this lasts for generations and nurtures our work and future ambitions.

### **UNITED:**

While we are 32 schools and an office, and we respect each other’s individuality, we are one. When we stand as one, we are stronger than the sum of our parts.

Having a better story helps locate the prevailing “It’s all about me” story within a far grander and more inspiring story. The Christian narrative centres on the call and challenge of the Gospel as lived and encouraged by Jesus Christ.

This better story, lived and told well, is the foundation of our work and the reason parents continue to choose TCS schools for their children’s education.



# GOOD SAMARITAN COLLEGE CELEBRATES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

**In an impressive achievement, a student from Good Samaritan College Toowoomba, has become the first student from the college to be accepted into university.** Emily Murphy has overcome significant challenges and has shown immense resilience to pave her way towards higher education. Her journey is a testament to her commitment and courage.

Emily, a talented individual with a flair for beauty services, achieved a statement of attainment in Beauty Services, Certificate III from TAFE. Inspired by her passion for helping others, she has been accepted into UniSQ's Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP) and is preparing to embark on a journey towards a rewarding career. This pathway program has been developed to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the academic skills needed for university study.

Emily's determination to live independently and secure her own rental accommodation showcases her perseverance and determination to create a better future for herself. With her resilient attitude and the unwavering support of Good Samaritan College, she has worked hard to achieve her goals.

Emily said, "I feel really happy that I can pursue my dreams and continue my education at university. Good Samaritan College has provided me with the support and resources to overcome challenges and reach this milestone. I am grateful for the opportunities they have given me, and I am excited to see what the future holds."



Dr Pat Coughlan with Emily Murphy

Good Samaritan College provides unique and tailored learning experiences for young people, supporting them to achieve their potential in partnership with parents and caregivers. The college fosters values of community, courage, curiosity, and compassion to empower students on their educational paths. It's heartwarming to see how education can transform lives and open doors to new opportunities.

Principal of Good Samaritan College, Libby Rosentreter said, "Witnessing our resilient and committed young people carve out unique paths to success is incredibly rewarding. We enjoy celebrating their extraordinary journeys and the boundless potential every one of them possesses."

The college has played a pivotal role in supporting Emily's journey towards university. The college has cultivated a safe and encouraging environment, empowering the students and nurturing their confidence in their abilities. With a dedicated team of educators, Good Samaritan College has provided the necessary guidance and resources for students to realise their potential and help make their dreams come true.

The success of Emily has set a powerful precedent for the current and future students of Good Samaritan College. Her story is one of courage, persistence and breaking down barriers. As the first in her family to attend university, Emily is inspiring others to believe in their own potential and overcome obstacles that may stand in their way.





L to R: Dr Pat Coughlan, Tawana Carmody, Mayrah Dreise, Angela Travers during the hand over of the conference cross. (Image of the conference cross used with permission).

# TOOWOOMBA TO HOST FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN 2025

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## The Queensland Catholic Education Commission's First Nations Education Conference is held every two years in one of the five Queensland dioceses.

This conference provides staff of Queensland Catholic schools with a platform to showcase the achievements of their work in supporting successful outcomes for First Nations students and school communities. It also engages educators in professional learning in cultural competency and introduces them to culturally appropriate and innovative teaching and learning practices for First Nation's students.

In 2025, Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) will host this significant conference. The conference cross has become a traditional symbol passed onto the conference's host diocese and it was symbolically handed over to Dr Pat Coughlan by Mayrah Dreise from Brisbane Catholic Education. It has now taken pride of place in the reception area of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

TCS looks forward to hosting the conference next year and showcasing the wonderful work of the First Nations students and the teachers who shine in this area of teaching and learning.

## The story of the conference cross

Aunty Rosemary Bell, a Quandamooka woman and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Coordinator at the time for Brisbane Diocese, created the conference cross. Aunty Rosemary organised the crafting of the cross using wood from the Ngutana-Lui Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Studies Centre in Brisbane.

With other Quandamooka people, shells were collected from the shore of Stradbroke Island to place on one side of the cross. The conference cross is a powerful symbol and reflects the journal of caring and sharing the weight of living life. The shells on the

seashore, some whole, others broken, and many crushed by the footsteps of people, are a reminder of living life, and that the cross is heavier for many.

Michelle Na-Kui (Pink Water Lily) Ballesteros, who is a descendant of the Darumbal Clan from Central Rockhampton, was commissioned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee to create an artwork that symbolises the coming together of the five dioceses. This appears on the other side of the cross.

The image symbolises the core that brings everything together - a spirituality that lies within oneself and that of the cross. The five large circles represent the coming together of the dioceses in Queensland. The small dots indicate the journey and sharing, with all things interacting on a continuous exchange around the Catholic ethos and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning Cycle.



# RIDEWEST A CHANCE TO PEDAL FOR A PURPOSE

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Elyce Ruhle, the Director of Sport at St Ursula’s College Toowoomba, recently demonstrated her unwavering commitment to both physical endurance and philanthropy by participating in RideWest. This 1,311km biennial charity bike ride spans from Brisbane to Longreach over 8 days, raising funds for mental health support programs benefiting regional Queenslanders.

Elyce said she was proud to contribute \$11,150 to such a worthy cause and represent St Ursula’s College on the ride.

“I joined RideWest to challenge myself both physically and mentally, but quickly realised it’s more than just riding, it’s about advocating for awareness of available programs and support systems in rural Queensland and empowering individuals to start a conversation if they are facing challenges. As a teacher, I believe it is crucial to break the stigma surrounding mental health challenges and provide essential resources for

those who may be struggling. RideWest allows me to contribute funds to the Royal Flying Doctors, Wellbeing Out West program which provides vital resources, support and education to rural communities. This program significantly reduces the barriers of travel and time for accessing mental health services in remote areas. Its impact on fostering healthier communities reinforces my belief that everyone should have access to such support, regardless of location. Riding is my way of turning that belief into a reality,” said Elyce.

Elyce epitomises the spirit of participation in sport and embodies the school motto “Serviam”, meaning to serve others, inspiring us all to strive for excellence in every endeavour. Her dedication to both athletic pursuits and community service sets a shining example for all of us.

RideWest aims to raise funds for mental health support programs, specifically the Royal Flying Doctor Service’s Wellbeing



Elyce Ruhle during the RideWest charity bike ride.

Out West program. Elyce’s impressive fundraising contribution significantly contributed to the overall fundraising total of \$578,150 during the event.

As Elyce pedalled through the vast Queensland landscape, she carried with her the values of St Ursula’s College and the Catholic ethos, serving as a beacon of inspiration for others.




**SPeial RELigious Development (SPRED):**  
 SPRED seeks to ensure that people living with intellectual/developmental disabilities are supported in their religious, spiritual, social, and emotional development. It is a ministry of inclusiveness and evangelisation which meets people where they are. Staff, volunteers and SPRED Friends journey together in faith, love and respect.

Your gift today supports the vital ministry of **SPRED**





# EDUCATION IN BRIEF



On 8 March, Mater Dei Primary School Toowoomba held a “Rainbow Day for Year 1A”. As part of our outreach into the wider community, we sponsor a Year 1 class at the School of St Jude in Arusha, Tanzania. St Jude’s offers free, quality education to the poorest and brightest students and has worked hard for over 20 years to rank in the top 10% of schools nationally. Mater Dei has been sponsoring St Jude’s since they started in 2003.

Students donated a gold coin to dress up in their brightest clothes. The Year 6 spirituality group delivered rainbow doughnuts to every class for morning tea, and we celebrated together on our oval.

Blessing of the St Mary’s School Charleville Staff at Mass. On the night the children from St Mary’s School took great delight in performing the ministries of readers, the offertory procession and welcome.



Principal Mr Gabbett recently hosted some former captains and leaders to discuss establishing the Mary MacKillop Catholic College Alumni. This is key to the growth of the college and will enable a path for graduates to continue their careers and studies supported and welcomed by the MMCC community.

“We are excited to be planning a few key events for this year to formally commence our alumni association and we will be inviting our college community to attend,” Mr Gabbett commented. Mary MacKillop Catholic College look forward to growing and developing the alumni association, so graduates can build new connections and relationships.







Former St Mary's College student, Dr Ian Cheung (left) fielded questions from current students during a special Q&A session.

## ST MARY'S OLD BOY SHARES STORY OF HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO SURGICAL SUCCESS

TYHLA ROPER

**On 30 April, St Mary's College Toowoomba welcomed Old Boy, Dr Ian Cheung for a question-and-answer session at a full school assembly.**

Dr Ian Cheung was born in Hong Kong. He arrived at St Mary's College at the start of Year 5. He knew very little English but carried with him a wonderful work ethic and a determination to succeed. He was Dux of Year 10 and then in Year 12 of St Mary's College in 1993.

Dr Cheung obtained his undergraduate medical degree at The University

of Queensland before completing a fellowship in orthopaedic surgery through the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. He then completed further training at the Singapore General Hospital, which is considered a regional centre for spinal surgery and spinal deformity surgery. Upon his return to Brisbane, Dr Cheung completed a second postgraduate fellowship in spinal surgery.

Dr Ian Cheung is an Orthopedic Surgeon who is interested in all areas of adult spinal conditions. His practice

encompasses the management of cervical, thoracic, and lumbar conditions.

Last year, Dr Ian returned to the college where he attended the Old Boys' Ball. Principal Brendan Stewart was amazed by how reverently all of his fellow brothers in the same year level spoke about him - some were in awe of him, and rightly so.

Dr Ian returned as part of the Men for Tomorrow series at the college. School leaders took great pleasure in asking him questions and learning more about his inspiring story.

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SSC Health Hub students Paige Mills and Hope Meldrum.

# ST SAVIOUR'S COLLEGE HEALTH HUB IS SETTING THE PULSE OF HEALTH CARE

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

**St Saviour's College Toowoomba has recently announced the expansion of its Health Hub program offerings to meet the growing demand for health training in the Darling Downs region.** Now in its fourth year of operation, the Health Hub has doubled its program to accommodate the influx of students across the region.

Principal Jessica Wade expressed excitement about the program's extension and highlighted the alignment between industry-standard training and the school's mission. "As a Mercy school, we have always aimed to educate women who serve their communities in practical ways, such as caring for the sick, elderly, and vulnerable," Mrs Wade said.

The St Saviour's College Health Hub has been an incredible success and serves as a valuable asset to the Toowoomba community. Mrs Wade proudly stated, "More than half of our university-bound Year 12 students from last year have moved into health related courses this year."

In 2024, the Health Hub will also

welcome students from Mary MacKillop Catholic College Highfields, Assumption College Warwick, St Mary's College and St Joseph's College Toowoomba. This increased demand has prompted the hub to expand its program from one day per week to two days.

The health sector is experiencing significant growth in Toowoomba and the wider Darling Downs region. According to the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) Economic report for December 2023, health care and social assistance employment make up almost 20% of all jobs in the Toowoomba region. Furthermore, the region has received a \$1.3 billion investment in constructing the new Toowoomba Hospital.

The success of the Health Hub can be attributed to several factors. Mrs Wade explained, "Our students show a passionate drive to help and assist others. The qualifications we offer provide a work-ready pathway to university, and our dedicated health centre simulation room and passionate educators contribute to the overall success of the program."

The vision for the Health Hub came from St Saviour's College Career Development Practitioner, Mr Chris Grierson. "Our goal has always been to respond to the needs of our community while equipping students with qualifications that support their career goals," Mr Grierson said.

When asked about the number of graduates pursuing university studies in nursing and health, Mr Grierson is pleased that students were inspired to pursue careers in this field. "The program has gone from strength to strength. It is a privilege to support students in finding their passion, and I am incredibly proud of what the St Saviour's College Health Hub has accomplished."

Graduates with qualifications from the Health Hub are now in high demand in the region's caring, nursing, and aged care sectors. For more information about St Saviour's College Health Hub, please visit [ssctwb.catholic.edu.au](http://ssctwb.catholic.edu.au) website under SCC Life, Learning in Years 10-12.



# BIBLICAL GARDEN TRANSFORMS UNUSED SPACE

SARAH LILBURNE

In 2019 an underutilised learning space in the senior area of Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby was refurbished into a chapel for college prayer liturgies and gatherings. Following the creation of this beautiful space, an opportunity arose to utilise a vacant area of the grounds to the rear of the chapel for something new. Cate Brennan, Deputy Principal of Religious Education, designed the initial plan for a Biblical Garden to transform this area, which would include symbolic plants and representations of moments in the life of Jesus that we learn about in the Bible. The intent of the garden is to create a space where students and staff can visit, sit, stroll and enjoy a place of reflection and peace.

Mrs Brennan’s design incorporates the Celtic Cross, which links the college to its Irish heritage and founders of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, and the Christian Brothers Edmund Rice. The Celtic Cross is also the symbol at the centre of our college crest, which reflects richness in faith and hope. The four arms of the cross represent the four directions of north, south, east and west as well as the four elements of fire, water, air and earth. The clever design has allowed distinct garden spaces to be created, which will each have their own features, including an edible garden, a rose garden, a space for native plants and desert-type plants, all of which are either mentioned in the Bible or have special religious meaning to the college.

Last year, the site was levelled and marked before rock walls and pathways were created using donated stones and materials from the local community. Later in 2023, planting began with Year 6 students combining with Deadly Ed to plant out various native plant species which partner with plaques that provide information on the use and symbolism of each plant to First Nations People.



Students at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College have been helping with the creation of a new Biblical Garden at the school.

In early 2024, a row of olive trees was planted by the Year 9 Agriculture students and the desert garden was planted by the Year 11 Study of Religion class and the 8B Praxis class. Many of the plants have been propagated by a local gardener which enhances the meaning of the garden in that the

materials have been recycled and the plants have been donated. The students have collectively contributed to the early stages of the garden, and we look forward to providing opportunities for more students to be involved in the creation of each phase and the care of the Biblical Garden in the future.



Deadly Ed helped Year 6 students with the native themed section of the Biblical Garden.



## NEW SCHOOL PRAYER AN INVITATION TO LEARN AND GROW

KERRI-ANN MANTHEY



L to R: Kerri-Ann Manthey (APRE) Ella Larkin and Ava Parkin (School Captains) and Lisa Cavanagh (Principal).

As part of Holy Name Primary School Toowoomba's commitment to enhancing Catholic identity, a new school prayer was launched on 14 March. The prayer is framed in such a way as to invite participants into a recontextualisation of the Catholic perspective, highlighting the Mercy Charism, in an inclusive and contemporary environment. The launch also included the refreshed Powers of the Mind and Powers of the Heart frameworks designed to guide the school in both academic growth and spiritual reflection, empowering students and staff to live full and flourishing lives.

In 2018, the school embarked on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Visible Learning Lighthouse Project. As a community, they developed a set of learning dispositions – Powers of the Mind. These included learning to be persistent, to communicate, to collaborate and to be reflective. Together, these learning powers form the foundation of a transformative educational experience – one that prepares students for success in the classroom and for a lifetime of learning, growth and service to others. Through

the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Illuminate Project, the school was inspired to refresh their Powers Of The Heart – Compassion, Hospitality, Justice and Excellence - Gospel values lived in the Mercy tradition. These values remind students of the shared humanity and reaffirms a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every individual.

This launch was celebrated and supported by the school community, and it was wonderful to welcome guests from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office and Parish Priest, Fr Darrell Irvine.

## UNDER 8'S DAY A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF LEARNING, PLAY AND COMMUNITY

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE



Local kindergarten children also joined in the fun at Sacred Heart's Under 8's Day.

Sacred Heart Primary School in Toowoomba recently hosted an exciting Under 8's Day event, celebrating the joy of learning and play for young children. The day was filled with fun activities, fostering a sense of community and promoting their Catholic values.

The morning started at 9:00am, when the school's hall came alive with a vibrant array of activities, each designed to captivate young hearts. Children immersed themselves in a world of creativity by participating in the many interactive activities including crafts, story reading, face painting, obstacle courses and a photo booth. Local providers also offered children a chance to try activities such as gymnastics and Taekwondo,

allowing them to try new things.

The spirit of Under 8's Day extended beyond Sacred Heart's walls, and children from local kindergartens joined the festivities, forming new friendships and sharing laughter.

Under 8's Day emphasised the importance of play, exploration and creativity. Through hands-on activities, children learned problem-solving skills, empathy and resilience. Play is essential for cognitive, physical and social development, and it fosters imagination, problem-solving skills and emotional well-being. It's a holistic experience that contributes to a child's growth and development.

During the event, parents, teachers and students interacted, reinforcing values like kindness, respect and fairness. These shared moments create lasting memories. It was heartwarming to witness the Sacred Heart community coming together to celebrate, and to have fun!



Principal Tyronne Maher helped at the face painting table.



St Joseph's School Students participated in the Amiens Bridge of Friendship Opening Ceremony

## EXPLORING LONDON, PARIS, AND THE WESTERN FRONT

MARY ROBERTS

**A group of 36 students and six staff members from St Joseph's School Stanthorpe recently embarked on an unforgettable educational journey across Europe.** Their recent school trip took them to iconic landmarks in London, the romantic streets of Paris, and the historic battlefields of the Western Front in France and Belgium.

### London Adventures

The adventure began in the heart of London, where students marvelled at the city's rich history and vibrant culture. The group stood in awe beneath the towering Big Ben, its clock face ticking away the centuries. Nearby, the Houses of Parliament provided a glimpse into British politics and governance. Students crossed the majestic Tower Bridge, capturing Instagram-worthy photos of the River Thames and the London skyline. At Borough Market, students sampled local delicacies and explored the bustling market stalls. The Natural History Museum and the Tower of London offered fascinating insights into science, history, and architecture.

Meanwhile, a visit to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre transported them back to the Elizabethan era. The London Eye provided breathtaking views of the city, while a tour of Madame Tussauds allowed students to rub shoulders with wax replicas of celebrities. The group attended an exciting Europa League quarter-final football match and experienced the magic of a West End musical theatre performance. These unforgettable moments left a lasting impression on everyone.

From London, the students hopped on the Eurostar to Paris—the City of Love. Winding streets, charming cafés, and bookshops awaited them in the Latin Quarter. Students soaked up the bohemian atmosphere and practised their French with locals. The Musée d'Orsay and the Louvre showcased masterpieces by renowned artists, and we fought the crowds to catch a glimpse of Mona Lisa's smile. In Montmartre, students explored the artistic heritage of this hilltop neighbourhood. And, of course, no trip to Paris is complete without a visit to the iconic Eiffel Tower,

a highlight for the entire group. A leisurely cruise along the Seine River allowed students to admire the city's landmarks from a unique perspective.

### Honouring Sacrifice on the Western Front

The journey took a solemn turn as the group travelled to the battlefields of the Western Front. Here, they paid tribute to fallen soldiers who bravely fought during World War I. Students walked the hallowed grounds of Flanders, Passchendaele, Fromelles and Ypres, reflecting on the sacrifices of soldiers. Students performed moving commemoration services at the gravesides of their relatives, laying wreaths on behalf of extended family in Australia. At the Menin Gate, student leaders laid a wreath to honour those who never returned home. The tour culminated in a moving Anzac Day dawn service and wreath laying at Villers-Bretonneux, where students stood in silence, remembering the fallen.





Amiens Bridge of Friendship Opening Ceremony

## Building Bridges of Friendship

As an integral part of the tour, students also participated in the Amiens Bridge of Friendship opening ceremony, representing their school, community, and country, exchanging national flags with French counterparts, and singing both national anthems. This initiative aims to strengthen the relationship between France and Australia, fostering understanding and goodwill and honouring Australian Army Engineers who were vital in the success of World War I campaigns in the region. As part of this initiative, Joey's students also spent time with French peers, discussing life in Australia and France and sharing interests.

## A Spiritual Journey

Amidst historical sites, students visited churches and religious landmarks, including the Sacre Coeur Basilica, Amiens Notre Dame Cathedral, and St Martin's Church in Ypres. These sacred spaces served as reminders of courage, service, and the enduring spirit of humanity.

The school trip was more than just sightseeing—it was an opportunity for growth, cultural exchange, and remembrance. As students returned home, they carried with them memories that will last a lifetime.



Amiens Notre Dame Cathedral, Belgium



Paris



London



# HIGH TEA A HIGH SUCCESS

PATTI MCNAUGHT

On 8 March, St Mary MacKillop Parish Highfields hosted a High Tea to celebrate International Women's Day. This was the brainchild of our Parish Pastoral Council Chair, Nikki Tonkin, who took it upon herself to organise this function, which was a first for the Highfields Community. Realising this was a huge task and a risk-taking venture, she decided that it would be worth it, and it certainly was.

The aim was not only to honour women in the community but to be a fundraiser for our St Vincent de Paul Conference in Highfields to support women in need and to support our local parish. With the help of PPC member Rebekah Bowdler and parishioner Megan Ford, things were soon underway.

We were given a glass of bubbly on arrival and were shown to our tables. The tables were resplendent in the International Women's Day colours, beautiful flowers and little trinkets relating to the occasion. Fr Brian Noonan came to give us a special blessing.

The two inspirational guest speakers Agnes Derrick, a litigation lawyer and Cas Watene, cake decorator extraordinaire, told us of their very interesting lives, and stressed the fact that woman can do anything if they try. It was an honour to celebrate their stories. These two women both have families as well as their chosen



L to R: Agnes Derrick and Cas Watene shared their story for Highfield's International Women's Day High Tea.

profession. A Q&A followed.

This year, we celebrated the contribution of two of our female parishioners, Colleen Weber and Beth McCormick, thanking them for the many years of living our mission and vision statement, giving to others, and being inspirational to those around them.

The catered high tea was more than we had expected and was enjoyed

by all. It was a wonderful atmosphere to hear everyone chatting away to each other at their respective tables.

We raised \$500 to donate to St Vincent de Paul, which was presented to the secretary of SVDP at Sunday Mass.

This function will be held again next year, and we hope to make it a bigger and better occasion.

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**as we prepare great men**  
**to become great priests**  
**for Queensland.**

[www.seminary.catholic.net.au](http://www.seminary.catholic.net.au)









L to R: Sr Marie Veritas, Anglea Travers, Dr Pat Coughlan, Sr Rose Patrick O'Connor and Lee ann Weekes.

## FLYING VISIT BRINGS PRAYERFUL MESSAGE

FR NATHAN WEBB

**It was no episode of “The Flying Nun”, but the visit was flying nonetheless.**

Four members of the Sisters of Life stopped briefly in Toowoomba following an evangelisation mission through New South Wales and Tasmania.

The sisters set their sights on Toowoomba to visit the hometown and family of Sr Rose Patrick. However, once news of their visit spread, every second of their time in the sunshine state was filled.

Arriving Monday night, the sisters joined the St Patrick’s Cathedral young adult group, Veritas, as their featured presenters for the month. Mass, prayer, input, and an opportunity for Q&A filled the evening. The sisters witnessed to living from our deepest identity in Christ, founded in our own goodness and relying on Jesus in our weaknesses.

Tuesday morning began with a visit from two of the sisters to the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office formation and development day for APREs and school religious leaders. There

they witnessed to their charism and spoke to the challenge of recognising and receiving people with delight in their own goodness and dignity.

Mass, prayer, and fellowship then followed at Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba, the home parish of Sr Rose and her family. They spoke to their work and mission before leading prayer with reflections and song.

The sisters then spent the evening getting to know the home life and family of Sr Rose. In typical Webb fashion, this included exploring the gardens and pets of the estate and joining in a mini-concert. This was all topped off with a hearty home-cooked meal.

Wednesday morning saw the sisters back at the Cathedral for Mass before bidding farewell to the land down under with their sights set toward the Americas. They have returned to their various communities scattered across the east coast of the USA in the hope of visiting Australia again soon.

The Sisters of Life are a community of religious sisters with a charism to protect and enhance the dignity of human life. Founded by John Cardinal O’Connor, the late Archbishop of New York, in the 1990s, the sisters work with society’s most vulnerable. They seek out and receive those cast out or put down by the narratives and situations of their lives. [www.sistersoflife.org](http://www.sistersoflife.org)



The Sisters of Life joined the Cathedral’s young adults for Mass, prayer and Q&A session.



# CLIFTON PARISH HELPS OUT THE MEMORY OF MSC'S ON MISSION

FR VINCE CARROLL MSC

Recently the Parish Council of Clifton, under Fr Warren Padilla's leadership, agreed to a request for a statue of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart to be donated to a new church on the Tiwi Islands under the patronage of Our Lady of Peace. The statue was stored in excess to Clifton's needs in their beautiful church and it was given in memory of the many Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) brothers and priests who had worked in the Tiwi Islands from 1911 to 2023.

Fr Vince Carroll MSC requested the statue and installed it at Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island, on 8 December 2023. This date is significant not only as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception but also as the founding date of the MSC in 1854. The statue is specific to the MSC and is similar in design to that of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which was created by the founder in 1855. There are many such statues dotted around Australia.

St Joseph is saluted by the MSC as model and patron of those who love



Parishioners at Our Lady of Peace Church on the Tiwi Islands admire their newly donated statue from Clifton Parish.

the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The MSC brothers especially had a great devotion to Joseph. It is fitting that this particular statue finds its new home where it does as many MSC who worked at Downlands College Toowoomba also did parish work at Clifton and mission work later on the Tiwi Islands.

Fr Vince is fairly sure, but cannot prove it except circumstantially, that there is a familiar connection to this specific St Joseph of the Sacred Heart statue. His grandparents, Thomas and Bridget, or possibly aunts, could have originally

donated the statue to Clifton. The family lived in Clifton in the 1920s and donated a similar statue to Beenleigh convent where their daughter Sr Avitus (Anne) was a Josephite Sister. In 1992, Fr Vince obtained that statue and relocated it to Ferguson Island in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, at the Village of Meudana, in memory of his father, Thomas, who served in PNG in WWII.

The Divine Word Missionaries are now servicing the Tiwi Islands and were very grateful to receive the statue along with parishioners.



# LENTEN MESSAGE INSPIRES ART

FR JAMIE COLLINS

**During Lent this year, the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development engaged Italian Street Artist Mauro Pallotta to provide a visual interpretation of Pope Francis' Lenten Message.**

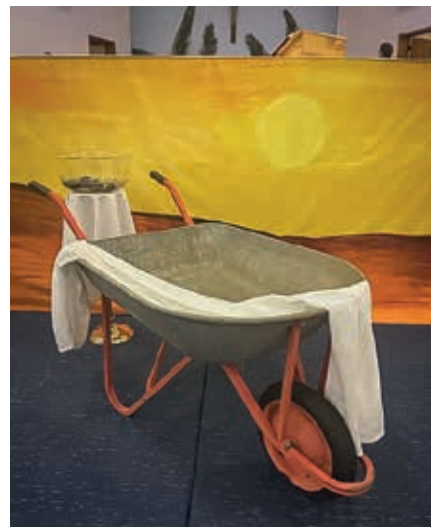
The first piece of cartoon-style art shows Pope Francis with a wheelbarrow navigating a road full of difficulties. However, the illustration suggests that it is through faith and the guidance of the Pope himself, that the challenging road becomes possible.

St Anthony's Parish, inspired by the illustration, displayed an empty

wheelbarrow on the sanctuary in front of the altar for the duration of Lent, reflecting the title of the Pope's Message, "Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom".

Representing our faith being nourished through the wilderness of Lent, the wheelbarrow was then decorated appropriately for the days of the Sacred Triduum and burst into colour at the Easter Vigil.

The drawings released weekly during Lent by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development were printed in the Parish Bulletin, along with the reference to the Pope's Lenten Message.



Display for Holy Thursday.



Display for Easter



**About the artist: For 2024, the Vatican commissioned artist Mauro Pallotta to create the official image for Lent.**

The artist, also known as Maupal, was born in 1972 in Rome. He attended the A. Caravillani Art School and later the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome.

Maupal's first foray into street art, titled "Super Pope", garnered him world wide attention.

During a press conference in Rome to present the Holy Father's 2024 Lenten Message, the artist said, "Translating the words of Pope Francis into works and conveying the values expressed in the Message through my art, is for me a preferential way of reaching far, breaking down barriers and somehow accompanying people to cross the desert to reach the desired goal of freedom."

During this year's Lent, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development published a new Maupal drawing once a week to compliment a passage from the 2024 Lenten Message.





Many people shared their fond memories of Fr Jack MacGinley at a his send off celebrations.

# COMMUNITY GIVES THANKS UPON RETIREMENT OF LONG TIME PARISH PRIEST

NORMA FARRANT AND MARY PORTER

**Fr John (Jack) MacGinley, a local household name, retires after almost 40 years of faithful service in the Tara area.**

Born Kevin John Patrick MacGinley on 28 June 1941 at "Oakdene" Toowoomba, John, the fifth of eight children, grew up at West Haldon, "Steel Rudd Country". Ordained into the priesthood on 29 June 1967, he served the parishes of Stanthorpe, Dalby, Quilpie, Jandowae, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi and Toowoomba (Holy name, Our Lady of Lourdes and St Theresa's) before taking up residence in Tara on 9 November 1984. He was the Chaplain of the Oakey Army Base from 1974 to 1987 and until recently, presided over the annual pre-Weetwood Race Mass in Toowoomba.

In his younger days, Fr Jack was a champion polo player, golfer, footballer, fast runner, dancer and singer. He has been heard to say, "Is there anything we MacGinleys can't do?"

On Sunday, 28 April 2024, a large gathering of people from all walks of life, representatives from the local community, parishioners from Glenmorgan, Meandarra, Moonie and Tara, friends and family from Toowoomba to Quilpie, came to show their appreciation of Fr Jack's lifetime of ministry and to celebrate his retirement with him.

Bishop Ken Howell, Fr Rod MacGinley, Frs Vince and Mick Carroll and Fr Brian Redondo concelebrated Mass with Fr Jack. Fr Jack thanked his family, friends and parishioners for contributing to his life and mission and received a heart-warming Irish blessing from the St Joseph's School Tara students.

During brunch, 16 members of the local and wider community voluntarily shared stories about Fr Jack, each highlighted the many ways he had been there for them and their family. It was a testament to the man, his vocation and daily witness of God's love in the world.

In his 39 years and five months in Tara, Fr Jack travelled many kilometres to celebrate Mass in the communities of Moonie, Meandarra, Glenmorgan and, up until about six years ago, Flinton. He left very early in the morning, collected the Sunday newspapers from outside Tara Newsagency and delivered them to The Gums Store and the Meandarra Newsagency.

It was always Fr Jack's policy to "only ever charge the parish for the cost of a bottle of milk per week." With his

tireless and cost-effective work as a painter, maintenance and repair person, tree lopper and plumber, he truly was a "jack of all trades".

Fr Jack has been there for the community in times of celebration and



Fr Jack MacGinley cuts his retirement and farewell cake with long serving parishioners Mrs Pat Moran and Mrs Joan Mitchell.



devastating hardship and loss, providing the Eucharist, funerals, baptisms, marriages, communion, confirmation, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, and walking with people through droughts, floods, fires, and tragic events such as the Wieambilla shootings. Anyone who has been to a funeral Fr Jack has presided over feels assured that there is life after death, comforting the bereaved as they say goodbye to loved ones, relatives and friends.

Fr Jack has been actively involved in Anzac Day ceremonies, Riding for the Disabled, the Grow movement for mental health, the Parish Fete, the Tara Show and Rodeo, clearance sales, the St Vincent de Paul Shop and pastoral care for St Joseph's Tara School community. He distributed donated bread from Brumby's, the pumpkins he grew and he gave people in need access to drinking water.

Trailer loads of furniture and other goods were often dragged behind Fr Jack's

vehicle for the St Vincent de Paul Shop in Tara. Not many would have seen a station wagon towing a trailer overflowing with furniture in a funeral procession a couple of cars back from the hearse. That is just what Fr Jack did, from St Patrick's Cathedral to Greenmount Cemetery, for his brother Neil's in 2000. A sight that probably would have been amusing to Neil as he himself apparently was notorious for using the back seat of his car to cart a foal or a calf around.

Locally, the Parish Fete is often referred to as Fr Jack's Fete. Fr Jack said, "The aim was to give all people an affordable and enjoyable day out that would be a financial and social success."

Fr Jack and the nuns had a great partnership of taking care of each other, visiting towns and caring for the needy around the area. In the words of Sr Naomi Fogarty, "Getting to know Fr Jack is hard but loving him is easy."



Fr Jack MacGinley also served the Charleville Parish.

Thank you, Fr Jack, for all you are and all that you continue to be to so many. Thank you for your tireless work in saving souls and making the parish a "quid". It is your time to take your own advice and "take it easy."

## FAITH IN MOTION FOR HIGHFIELDS PARISHIONERS

PATTI MCNAUGHT

On 13 March, some parishioners from St Mary MacKillop Parish Highfields travelled to Brisbane to hear Fr Richard Leonard present "Living Liturgy: Being sent out on Mission to the World." When this was advertised in the bulletin, parishioners were keen to go. As we were all oldies, we thought that hiring a bus would be better than travelling in tandem in cars. Thankfully, Mary MacKillop Catholic College loaned us their small bus, and Joe Tonkin came forward as our driver.

On the day, we all met in the same location, and soon, everyone was on board. Joe had arranged some music to entertain us along the way, and we arrived in good time for the 7:00pm presentation. At the Hanley Room, we were greeted with a cuppa and a chance to meet parishioners from



Highfields Parishioners enjoyed a road trip to see Fr Richard Leonard's presentation in Brisbane.

other towns before the presentation.

Introduced and assisted by Michael Mangan, Fr Richard Leonard was at his brilliant best as he delivered his great presentation. He touched on the fact that we are nourished by word and sacrament at our weekly Eucharist. The gathered community are then sent out to live and proclaim our faith, hope and love in Christ. What does the world look like into which we are sent? What liturgy might enable us to reclaim a missionary energy that is hospitable, bold, inclusive, and Catholic? It was only a 60-minute

talk with Q&A afterwards, but we could have listened to him for longer.

Fr Leonard made mention of the Toowoomba crowd that travelled to see him and thanked us. Huge thanks go to the college, for the loan of their bus, and to the best driver on the planet Joe, for the fun and laughter that we all enjoyed on the way to Brisbane and back. A wonderful night, well worth waiting for. We are now known as "Oldies Inc." and will travel together on more occasions such as this in the future.



# LOOKING BACK ON 70 YEARS OF COMMUNITY AND FAITH AT AUGATHELLA

CARRIE LOCK

Up to 50 people, travelling from as far away as Rockhampton and Brisbane, attended the seventieth-anniversary celebration at St Patrick's Church Augathella, on 5 May.

The morning began with a Thanksgiving Mass with Fr Peter Doohan, followed by brunch on the lawns.

Fr Peter explained the establishment of the church and its ongoing presence in the community in the context of the readings, which were focused on love for one another.

It was a beautiful autumn day, and people engaged in various outdoor activities, including a short talk presented at the old cemetery on the history of the early church in Augathella and a walk through the presbytery. Also of particular note was a tour of the neighbouring block, which has been revegetated with native trees over the past ten years by Bernie Schalk, a community member who was actually at the opening of the church in 1954. In the church foyer, people could view old news articles, photos, vestments and a display of old coins and other metal items discovered recently on the old church block, with some items going back to the 1880s. An opportunity was provided for people to light a candle in prayerful memory of a loved one. But probably the best activity of all was sitting under the old olive tree on the church lawn with friends, old and new, sharing memories and being together as a community.

The morning concluded with the planting of a bottle brush tree for Mrs Beryl Barnsley. Beryl passed away on 14 April at age 96 years. She was a devoted and much-loved member of the parish all her life and was tireless in her service of the liturgy, church building and community.

We had a lovely morning, and we look forward to a future of continued service, devotion and community.



Bernie Schalk (3rd from right) talking about the revegetation with native trees on the church block.



Fr Peter Doohan cut the anniversary cake.



# REFLECTING ON 24 YEARS OF DEVOTION TO DALBY PARISH

DAMIEN MORGAN

**When someone steps down from a position and leaves a role they have been working in for more than 20 years, many changes will be noticed, and probably not all at first.** So it will be in Dalby, as Narelle McIntyre has retired from her position in the Parish Office, some 24 years after being hired by Fr Hal Ranger to produce the Parish Newsletter back in November 1999.

We all understand that nobody is irreplaceable, but it's the "invisible" parts of a job that someone will have to pick up. Narelle was employed to produce the newsletter but soon picked up an extra day a week in the Parish Office to attend to administrative matters such as keeping the Parish Register up to date and organising rosters. But there is more to the role than what the job description might state.

Providing greenery for the Church, sourcing candles of a particular shade

of mauve for Advent, liturgical season preparations, and organising guest speakers and cooking for parish events such as Churches Together, just for starters.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Narelle took the lead in ensuring that all protocols were strictly followed for masses, for cleaning the Church and parish toilets, for visitors to the office and so on. There was even a Garage Sale conducted under COVID restrictions.

Her work for the Church Centenary celebrations was vital. As secretary of the committee, she had all the normal tasks of minuting meetings and making sure all committee members were kept in the loop, but there were also hours of research for the history, as well as proofreading the text of "The Gem of the West". She found the appropriate tradespeople to restore St Joseph's stained glass windows. Rolled up her sleeves to assist with the restoration of the bell and cleaning and painting the bell tower, and approached and organised older parishioners to be interviewed by students of Our Lady of the Southern Cross College. All this, and found the time to produce a brilliant self-guided tour leaflet of St Joseph's and its grounds.

After Fr Hal, Narelle worked with Fr Michael Cooney and Fr Jim Cronin as Parish Priests at Dalby.



Narelle McIntyre

Back to the task she was originally employed to do: the weekly Parish Newsletter. Over 24 years, some 1200 issues have been produced. Each week, some 140 copies are printed for Dalby, and another 20 are printed for Bell. In years gone by, many more were produced. All up, that's somewhere close to a quarter of a million sheets to be printed and folded; not just a gargantuan task, but just think of the risk of paper cuts!

Thank you, Narelle. You will be missed from St Joseph's Parish Office. Enjoy your retirement.

# WHAT A BLESSED JOURNEY FEELS LIKE

FR MICHAEL O'BRIEN

**What does it feel like to be part of something for 50 years? Something that gives you energy and fulfilment every day? Something that allows you to be part of people's lives so as to experience their hopes and dreams?**

For Dorothy O'Reilly, it has been a blessed journey indeed! Dorothy has been the secretary of St Joseph's Parish Stanthorpe for 50 years. During that time, she has walked with many people of the parish through celebratory and distressing times. Dorothy completed her schooling at St Joseph's School

Stanthorpe in the early 1970s and took up the role of secretary in the parish pretty much straight away. Dorothy's connection to the priests who have served at St Joseph's is a testament to her abilities and friendship. Half of the time was with the late Fr Lino Valente over his two appointments to Stanthorpe, of whom she has very heartfelt memories.

To commemorate this amazing achievement her two sisters, Noreen and Veronica, who live in Toowoomba, came with me to surprise her with a Papal Blessing to mark this great occasion. To say she was surprised is an understatement, although her modesty in this accomplishment probably means she'll never talk to me again when this article is published!

We celebrated with lunch at the local RSL hosted by Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran and were joined by other parishioners.

From Fr Gonzalo, past priests and the parishioners of St Joseph's, thank you, Dorothy, for all you have given this



Dorothy O'Reilly

community over the last 50 years. As Fr Lino would probably say, Grazie Mille (A thousand thank yous).



# PARISH IN BRIEF

PARISH



Fr Peter Doohan with the Rev Jim Cosgrove of the Anglican Church at the Charleville Community Domestic Violence March.



St Mary's Race Day, Charleville.



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