

Horizons



GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: OUR SACRAMENTAL JOURNEYS

Blessed by Friendship

Braille Learning Pathways

#71
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FREE Publication
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Toowoomba

Horizons

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.

FROM THE EDITOR

INGRID MCTAGGART

As I put together this issue of Horizons, I'm filled with joy by the stories about and written by women and girls being fabulous. While the role of women in the Catholic Church has become a hot-button issue (maybe it always has), it is essential to recognise the remarkable achievements of women today and appreciate the foundation laid by pioneering types. Sharing these stories reinforces the gifts women bring to the table, we are not merely "complimentary", we stand on our own merits.

In the timeline I'm writing this, I'm sandwiched between two feasts celebrating two remarkable women cherished by our diocese: St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Mary of the Southern Cross. These selfless yet driven women have become benchmarks for how to live a faith-filled life.

I've always loved our diocesan image of Mary of the Southern Cross. Jan Williamson's warm image of a gentle yet practical-looking mum with

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bubba on her hip speaks to Mary's example to us, a strong woman forged in the shadow of the Cross.

Mary MacKillop, the epitome of practical faith and persistence, once said, "Never see a need without trying to do something about it." Filling the

pages of this issue of Horizons are stories of women and girls devoting their lives to and living this mantra. They are religious and lay; they are students, catechists, teachers, office workers, social workers, parishioners, friends, young, old and amazing.

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Cover image: Confirmation at All Saints' Parish Roma. Story page 28



Bishop Ken Howell with his mother, Betty Howell, after his Installation as Seventh Bishop of Toowoomba in 2023.

FAREWELLING A MOTHER: BETTY HOWELL

At my Reception as Bishop of Toowoomba last July, I spoke of my mother at the end of Mass. As I mentioned that Mum would turn 97 years in a couple of days, the congregation erupted in applause to salute this milestone. However, the bishops in the sanctuary later told me that Mum wagged her finger at me for drawing attention to her – but I’m sure she loved it!

Farewelling my mother at the age of 98 brought both joy and sadness. On the one hand, we have been so blessed to have shared her life and love for so many years, but this blessing also brings a deep sadness, as you would appreciate. The Funeral Mass for Mum recognised that death does not break that bond of love, as true love never dies!

In the homily that day I said that it is impossible to appreciate all the experiences and events of Mum’s 98 years. As we move through these days of grieving, we are left with a deep sense that this woman of faith

has indeed lived life to the full. She may never have travelled overseas or even around Australia, but her life was centred around other things that gave her dignity and joyfulness.

Betty was born in Longreach, the daughter of a drover Charlie Williams, and a Windorah girl Mary McCullagh. From her early years she learnt to appreciate living with the minimum of things, but on the foundations of love. Those early years were lean with her father often away droving for many months. She treasured the love of her sister Pat and her brothers Ken and Charles. Her mother Mary was a woman of deep faith, which she generously shared with her daughter. She was influenced by the Presentation Sisters, who taught her in both Longreach and Yeppoon and who encouraged her to participate in the religious life of a Catholic schoolgirl, especially at a time when the world was at war.

Life post-school would see Mum work in Longreach before making the move to Brisbane. It was at a company called BTI where she met a co-worker named Jack Howell. The rest is history as they fell in love and married at St Joseph’s Church Kangaroo Point in 1957. The waves of the “joys and sorrows, the pleasures and the pains, the hopes and disappointments” of married life were ahead of them both, and all these things, that were described

to them on that day in the marriage rite, did indeed come true. Mum and Dad depended on each other to deal with whatever life sometimes threw at them. But always with faith in God and the knowledge that God was indeed walking beside them. Our father died ten years ago, and in more recent times, Mum experienced a decline in mobility, and the close of her life came with a sudden illness on July 25.

As we look back as a family, we start to discover things we had for so long taken for granted. Things that were so much a part of Mum’s life that we just expected them without taking much notice. The things that people have said to us as a family in the days following her death have expressed some of the qualities we may have appreciated but may have also taken for granted. Perhaps this is a gentle reminder to be grateful for what our loved ones offer us in both simple and profound ways.

A final word perhaps comes through these words of Scripture:

Remember those ...who first spoke God’s message to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. [Hebrews 13:7]

View Funeral Mass: shorturl.at/XADPr

Bishop Ken Howell
Bishop of Toowoomba
September 2024



Sr Stancea Vichie shared a heart felt history and reflection after Mass to celebrate a milestone anniversary for the MSS Sisters.

MSS ANNIVERSARY A STORY OF VISIONARY MISSION

CATHERINE MCALEER

“It began with four women; Gwen, Alice, Kathleen and Joyce, accompanied by Fr John Wallis to put into action a dream, to reach beyond the towns and cities... To be with the often-forgotten people in those vast areas to be close to, and listen to their stories, love and respect the people in their ordinary everyday lives, honouring them in the baptismal call to mission in the world. We were not bringing God to the people; God [was] already present.” Sr Stancea Vichie.

Congregational Leader of the Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS), Sr Stancea Vichie, began her reflection with these words at the recent celebration of the 80th Anniversary of their Foundation and 60 years of the Sisters ministering



The MSS Sisters today along with members of their mission entity “Highways and Byways”.

in the Toowoomba Diocese. As part of the celebration, a brief history of the MSS was shared, reflecting on the foundation on which their mission and ministry was built. The Sisters journeyed beyond towns and cities to reach those in rural areas and on the margins, or as the Wedding Feast in both Matthew and Luke’s Gospels proclaim, the inspiration behind the MSS motto, “Into the Highways and Byways”.

They set out into the deep and willingly took as many risks as necessary to

serve those on the margins. And serve them they did. In 1964, five Sisters arrived in the Toowoomba Diocese, two of whom still live here, Sr Cecilia Bailey and Sr Pat Quinn. Joining the Sisters for this special celebration was Fran Spora, another of these amazing pioneering women who travelled from Dubbo to celebrate and remember.

Reading from the Chapter Report from 1956 when the community was in its 12th year, Sr Stancea remarked that the words written then were just as

relevant today as they were 68 years ago. "We pray that the spirit of initiative, experimentation and of adventure will never be lacking to MSS, but rather that always we will be animated by an apostolic spirit constantly seeking new ways as well as using old ways more effectively to bring people to the knowledge and love of God".

A montage of photos showed the Sisters throughout the years around kitchen tables, driving resource-filled station wagons, at crossroads in far-flung places, meeting with refugees and the elderly, leading groups at counselling centres and teaching sacramental programs. Smiles played on the faces of those present, especially the Sisters who had lived and ministered in the Toowoomba Diocese; Sr Pat Quinn, Sr Margaret Windsham, Sr Nancy Doyle and Sr Mary Cleary as they recalled these events. Their initiatives, experimentation and adventure shining through as many of the congregation also recalled their encounters with the Sisters over the years.

In his homily, Bishop Bill Morris, who is Patron of the Missionary Sisters of Service entity Highways and Byways, remarked that the Founder, Fr John Wallis, "...with his vision of how to carry and tell the story of the risen Lord was ahead of his time and affirmed and encouraged by the documents of Vatican II. You could say in today's language and vision, he was synodal." It was this vision and message that the Sisters have lived and shared as they went out into the highways and byways, across Australia and within the Toowoomba Diocese.

Reflecting on the Sisters' future, Sr Stancea said, "We may be an older group of women in 2024 and we are moving towards our completion and fulfilment as a community of women, so while there is a dying, there is at the same time, wonderful shoots of new life, a spirit of love and service being handed on through the gift that is given to us to share."

The MSS' work continues through their mission entity, "Highways and Byways: Healing the Land – Healing Ourselves – Together".

SR CHRISTINE GABBETT: LEGACY OF LOVE, CARE AND DEVOTION

INGRID MCTAGGART

On 2 August, family and friends gathered at St Vincent's Chapel, Nudgee, to celebrate the life and ministry of Sr Mary Christine Gabbett rsm.

Josephine Gabbett was born on 19 May 1926 in Toowoomba. Josephine's connection to the Catholic Church and the Sisters of Mercy started from an early age. With the faith-filled family home in close proximity to St Patrick's Cathedral and St Saviour's Primary School and College, she was the second generation of her family to be educated by the Sisters of Mercy.

Josephine entered the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane on 8 June 1945 and, at Reception, received the name Mary Christine. When Sisters returned to their baptismal names, she remained Christine. She made her final profession on 13 January 1951.

Sr Christine spent her life between the Toowoomba Diocese and Brisbane Archdiocese, using her talents and gentle influence in varied pastoral ministries, including teaching. Her decades-long career as a beloved teacher included schools in Warwick, Dalby and Roma and returning to St Saviour's College, Toowoomba. Sr Christine retired from classroom teaching in 1988.

It was at St John's School Roma that Sr Christine became a pivotal teacher



Sr Christine Gabbett

in the education of a young Michael O'Brien. Fr Michael shared a tribute to his Years 8 and 9 teacher in the St Patrick's Cathedral Newsletter. He recounted his surprise at receiving mail on his first day at Banyo Seminary. "... I noticed on this first day there was one [letter] for me, which the Rector doubted, but when he looked there was one there indeed. That letter was from Sr Christine to promise prayers during my journey toward priesthood. Such a simple gesture but one I haven't forgotten."

Sr Christine moved into Pastoral Care post-teaching. In Words of Remembrance shared at her funeral Mass, Sr Christine was eulogised as a woman who took great joy from the pastoral encounters in her ministry. "She deemed it a great privilege to visit the sick and frail, or the house-bound whose lives were sometimes burdened with anguish and isolation, and she tried hard to transform their dark and difficult times by acceptance and love," the reflection read.

On 27 July 2024, Sr Christine died at Emmaus Aged Care Centre, leaving a legacy of love, care and devotion.



L to R: Dr George Tucker and Dr Malcolm Scarr

CELEBRATING SERVICE: ST VINCENT'S HONORS DEDICATED STAFF AND DOCTORS

CARMEL SENG AND PANDORA BEVAN

In recent months, St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba has farewelled and recognised incredible staff and doctors who have contributed so much to our hospital.

In June, we farewelled Judy Holzberger from our Health Information Services team, who headed for a well-earned retirement after a 22 year stint as a Clinical Coder. After migrating to Australia when she was 15, Judy completed her nursing and midwifery training in Western Australia. She nursed in Pittsworth before moving into coding in the early 1990s. Judy looks forward to being kept busy in her craft room and spending time with family in retirement.

More recently, we wished Maternity receptionist Lynda Glass all the best with her well-deserved retirement. Lynda has been with St Vincent's Toowoomba for almost 26 years, in St Raphael's Medical Ward and Supply, but primarily working in the Maternity Unit. Maternity Nurse Unit Manager, Melanie Osborne, and colleagues commented on what an integral part Lynda has been in Dorothea Devine. "I'm very grateful for the close-knit team we have here. It feels like I'm

leaving my family," said Lynda. Lynda is looking forward to gardening and doing yoga in her retirement and dreams of travelling to the UK and India to do mission work, just as her mum did.

In early August, we held the annual Emeritus Medical Fellow Awards and black-tie dinner. The award aims to foster and deepen relationships with the medical community in a way that reflects the Mission and Values

of St Vincent's Health Australia and Mary Aikenhead Ministries. General Practitioners and Medical Specialists with a long service history of delivering a high quality of service, reflected by the high esteem they hold within the medical and hospital community, are eligible for this award. In 2024, we were delighted to name General Physician Dr George Tucker, and Anaesthetist Dr Malcolm Scarr our Emeriti.



St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba Maternity Ward farewelled long serving receptionist, Lynda Glass (seated).



St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba Medical Records Team with Judy Holzberger (4th from left).

Born and raised in Mackay, Dr George Tucker pursued his medical education and training in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Mackay, and Edinburgh. In 1982, he established a private practice in Toowoomba, where he served as a Visiting Medical Officer at St Vincent's until his retirement in 2017. Throughout his career, Dr Tucker actively participated in local hospital and AMA committees, including the Toowoomba Hospital Fundraising Committee and the Hospice Management Committee. Additionally, he has held various positions at the University of Queensland's Rural Clinical School, where he is now an Honorary Associate Professor. In this role, he focuses on developing medical student exchanges between the Rural Clinical School and Kobe University in Japan.

Dr Malcolm Scarr began his academic journey at the RAAF Academy in Point Cook, earning a Bachelor of Engineering in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Sydney. He then transitioned to medicine, studying at the University of Queensland and completing his internship in Townsville. Dr Scarr's medical career took him to Charters Towers, the Gold Coast, Charleville, Brisbane, and Calgary in Canada before settling in Toowoomba and working as an Anaesthetist in private practice. He held several key positions on hospital committees and served as Chairman of Downs Anaesthetics Practice. Dr Scarr also co-authored a publication in the Medical Journal of Canada.

These staff and doctors have contributed so much to not only St Vincent's, but also the community. Our hospital is significantly enriched by their expertise and dedication to advancing medical practices, patient care and services.

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TOWARDS CREATING LAUDATO SI' PLANS

DR DAVID TUTTY

For decades we have been growing in our appreciation of the environment and of our need to care for it. We

enjoy the beauty of plants and trees, birds and wildlife. We are grateful for the parks and gardens, the waterways and bush areas that enable us to rest and relax in our local region.

Because of our appreciation of the environment around us, we are becoming more aware of the changes that are happening. We are aware of longer droughts and more severe flooding, of rising temperatures and competing demands for water. We are becoming aware of the impacts of these changes on our health and well-being,

The awareness of change around the world led Pope Francis to release his encyclical *Laudato Si'* in 2015. This document is a mixture of worldwide peer-reviewed science concerning climate change and biodiversity loss, reflections on faith and spirituality, and a call for action to care for our common home and to live a simpler, more sustainable lifestyle. Pope Francis followed up this encyclical with an Apostolic Letter called *Laudate Deum*. Here he stressed the urgency of responding to the climate crisis and the importance of immediate and bold action as a moral imperative.

Following the release of *Laudato Si'*, the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development created

the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform outlining seven goals for urgent and immediate action based on Pope Francis' insights.

THESE GOALS ARE:

- Respond to the Cry of the Earth (What kind of world do we want to leave for future generations)
- Respond to the Cry of the Poor (Helps us see that everything is interconnected)
- Foster Ecological Economics (Purchasing is a moral act not simply an economic one)
- Adopt a Sustainable Lifestyle (Our cultural and ecological crisis calls us to change)
- Offer Ecological Education (Many things need to change but most of all it is us)
- Develop Ecological Spirituality (We are called to be protectors of God's handiwork)
- Support Community Engagement (We do all of this with others)

We are invited to create action plans around these seven goals. These plans are to be created at a range of different levels. Parishes, schools, Catholic ministries and the diocese itself are invited to create a plan and to commit themselves to action based on these seven goals arising from *Laudato Si'*.

There are many examples of plans already produced that help us have some idea of what might contribute to feasible and attainable actions. What follows are a few of the actions named in *Laudato Si'* Plans in Adelaide, Brisbane and Kiama.

The Archdiocese of Adelaide commits to fostering ecological awareness through developing resources for parishes for the Season of Creation. As part of their growing spirituality, they commit to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and seek to learn from First Nations

peoples' care of Country. Adelaide commits to auditing its investments and procurement processes and seeks to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

The Brisbane Archdiocese seeks to plant native trees and vegetation on Archdiocesan property, to plan for extreme heat events and to enrol parishes in the *Laudato Si'* Platform. Brisbane commits to gathering liturgical resources that foster Pope Francis' ecological spirituality and to offer experiences of walking on Country with First Nations peoples.

A parish example comes from SS Peter and Paul in Kiama, New South Wales. They seek to become more energy efficient, to reduce travel emissions, plant native trees and install LED lights in their offices and meeting rooms. Kiama Catholics choose to buy office supplies from recycled materials and use recycled products for hospitality events. They commit themselves to providing information and advocacy opportunities specific to climate change, refugees, local and global poverty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The parish commits to install and utilise water tanks for garden watering, washing of cars and the flushing of toilets.

These few examples name concrete actions we can all do and, at the same time, they require a deepening of our spiritual journey. At the heart of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* encyclical is the call to ecological conversion. All of creation is God's handiwork and we are invited to know God and respond to God through caring for creation. Pope Francis calls us to care for our common home and *Laudato Si'* Plans are an outward sign of our deeper inward conversion.

We hope that all future generations can enjoy the beauty of creation as we can. Let us create plans that contribute to caring for our common home so that this is possible.





Some of the current Social Justice Commission members: (L to R) Fr Peter Dorfield, Kathy Doherty (Chairperson), Bernadette Witham and Malual Mawien.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION MEETS IN GOONDIWINDI

DR DAVID TUTTY

In mid-August, the members of the Social Justice Commission travelled to Goondiwindi for their quarterly meeting. The Commission tries to meet out of Toowoomba once or twice each year in order to connect with other diocesan communities and to listen to what matters to them. This trip to Goondiwindi was made possible through the kindness of Fr Bony Abraham, the parish priest. We thank him for his welcome.

The Social Justice Commission works under the Bishop's guidance to raise awareness and educate around key issues of injustice. The current focus is on issues impacting on First Nations peoples, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and our need to care for the whole of God's creation.

We approach these issues with a prayerful, faith-filled openness so to understand better the issues and to

act in the light of Catholic teaching. Pope Francis has provided us with valuable insights into social and ecological issues and invites us to respond in ways that contribute to a more just and sustainable world.

The Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba Social Justice Commission began in 2002. It consists of the Bishop, a Council of Priests' appointee, the Executive Officer (myself) and eight members drawn from parishes and ministries around the diocese. Members are discerned and nominated to the Bishop, who appoints them normally for a four-year term. Our current members

are Chairperson Kathy Doherty, Vice Chair Robie Jayawardhana and members Bernadette Witham, Susan Tek, Malual Mawien, Paul Wilson and Denise Ryan. Fr Peter Dorfield is the Council of Priests' appointee.

Our quarterly meetings are on a Saturday for four to five hours. Meeting papers are prepared in advance and include a range of recent articles on topics that contribute to the justice issues at hand. An important part of each meeting is inviting a "local voice", a local person who can help us understand some of the local issues of the place where we meet.



Some of the current Social Justice Commission members: (L to R) Susan Tek, Paul Wilson, David Tutty, and Kerry Kruger.



WALKING GOSPEL PATH A PRAYERFUL JOURNEY

MARY OTTO

On 4 May people from around the world gathered in their communities to celebrate World Labyrinth Day with the intention of creating a rolling wave of prayer for world peace. Several people gathered at Sychar House of Prayer and Spirituality in Toowoomba on that very day to participate in a session called “Walking the Four-Fold Gospel Path” led by Randal Dennings.

During the session, Randal generously shared his knowledge and experience of praying with the labyrinth. The morning’s experience was based on the work of author Alexander Shaia and his understanding of the four gospels as a four-part journey, leading the reader to better understand who they are within a world understood and lived as sacred.

Those who gathered brought a variety of knowledge and experience of the labyrinth and life. For each of us, our familiarity with and understanding of the labyrinth was enriched by Randal’s input. In his presentation, Randal illustrated a diversity of labyrinth styles within a historical and spiritual context. Encased within Randal’s explanations was the concept of the Four-Fold Path of the Gospels based on Shaia’s work.

Randal drew our attention to the focus in each of the four gospels according to Shaia: Matthew’s invitation to face change, Mark’s moving through suffering, John’s receiving of joy and Luke’s summons to service. We were invited to hold in our hearts a prayer for peace in our world as we later walked the labyrinth, taking with us one of the gospel perspectives, depending on our personal life’s journey.

For all present, it was a deeply moving though individual experience. At the conclusion of our “journey” we

were given time to reflect upon our experience. Each shared experience was unique and shaped by the individual’s life experience. Every participant felt privileged to hear of the experience of others, making for a deeper understanding of the power of walking the labyrinth in prayer.

Sr Elaine’s preparation of the beautiful Opening and Closing Prayer on the theme of “journey” welcomed us gently

into a sacred space as “beloved” and rounded off the session with an invitation to journey on in the presence of God. Randal’s obvious passion for, and knowledge of the concept of praying through journey, his gentle invitation to participate in that journey, and his respectful and prayerful response to each participant’s sharing, contributed significantly to the morning’s session being both powerful and authentic.



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Lisbeth Raeside lead formation sessions for SPRED catechists.



SPRED Friend Bernadette Byrne.

BLESSED BY FRIENDSHIP

LORETTA COMAN

For more than 40 years the Toowoomba Diocese has been one of only two dioceses in Australia to offer a ministry committed solely to the spiritual and religious development of people living with an intellectual disability. Over these past 40 years, some 330 men and women from the diocese have volunteered their time and shared their faith and love with our friends who live with an intellectual disability.

Being a SPRED volunteer is so much more than being called to do a task, it is committing to an enduring friendship with another, a friendship based on reciprocity and mutuality. The call of the SPRED volunteer is a call to catechise - to echo and re-echo Jesus Christ and the good news that Jesus taught and lived.

We are called, especially because of our ministry as catechists, to grow and deepen our own spirituality – we cannot give what we do not have! As faith-filled people ourselves, we have been gifted with so much. As baptised disciples, we are challenged to act, “to seek new channels of communication and methods more suitable for

fostering the encounter with Jesus”. (Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization. (2020). Directory for Catechesis.) Then, we can say we truly are a welcoming and inclusive church where everyone belongs.

SPRED Toowoomba was recently privileged to host Glasgow Director of SPRED, Lisbeth Raeside, who was in Toowoomba for two weeks to conduct formation sessions for our SPRED catechists. Over three days, Lisbeth offered carefully crafted sessions that guided us to explore our awareness and understanding of the spirituality of the catechist and how the intersection of spirituality and religion shapes SPRED into a ministry where faith and friendship meet.

Her final offering was the gift of a day of quiet reflection on “The blessing of friendship”. We began the day with a quote from C.S. Lewis, “You have not chosen one another, but I have chosen you for one another”.

The day gave me time and space to reflect more closely on my fifteen-year friendship with my friend Bernadette. Bernadette had been a member of the Wednesday morning SPRED group long before I commenced as leader catechist in the group in 2009. Before Bernadette and I became faith companions, she had had two other faith companions who had both subsequently retired, the last rather unexpectedly in August 2020. So, in a way, we became companions by default. Largely non-verbal and a wheelchair user for the past ten years,

Bernadette had a strong personality and left you in no doubt about her likes and dislikes. She also had one of the sweetest smiles I had ever seen.

Even though Bernadette had people who loved and cared for her, at a cultural level, with a widespread conception of life that is often narcissistic and utilitarian, Bernadette’s life may not have been viewed by many as full, rich or meaningful. However, as we grew together and got to know each other more, our friendship transformed us both.

Being in Bernadette’s company for a couple of hours every fortnight taught me the art of “leaning in”, or to paraphrase the poet, Mary Oliver, my friendship with Bernadette taught me to “pay attention”, to “be astonished” and to “tell about it”. For her part, I watched her become more peaceful and more aware of those around her, especially when she would look me directly in the eyes. Yes, God’s love is patient and enduring, and after fifteen or so years together, she trusted and loved me enough to return my gaze.

Just before Easter this year, Bernadette unexpectedly passed away. Disability theologian John Swinton talks about the difference between “inclusion” and “belonging”. He says to be included, you just have to be in the room, but to belong, you have to be missed. If that is so, then my dear friend Bernadette surely belonged, as she is deeply missed.

DIOCESAN DISPATCH

FR HAL RANGER: A MAN OF INTEGRITY, PATIENCE AND COMPASSION

JACINTA MCGOVERN
AND KATHY PINGEL



Celebrating after Mass, the Cathedral thanked Fr Hal for his ministry.
L to R: Frs Peter Dorfield, Michael O'Brien and Hal Ranger.

On 13 July, St Thomas More's Parish celebrated Mass with a special focus on honouring Fr Hal Ranger. After Mass, parishioners braved the cold to share in a supper, a glass of red wine and some cake to wish all the best to Fr Hal, commencing his retirement. The parish bestowed their appreciation and admiration upon Fr Hal with gifts, kind words and plenty of stories shared. Fr Hal has been particularly close to the parish of St Thomas More's the past 16 years during which time he has ministered to the community, and even more so since the passing of Fr Peter Schultz in 2019. Everyone agreed that Fr Hal's generosity, compassion and willingness to listen and support others were what we appreciate most about Fr Hal. Every person who encounters Fr Hal leaves the interaction feeling heard and uplifted. Fr Michael O'Brien shared about Fr Hal's caring mentorship as he worked alongside him in his early days of priesthood. Duane Wann, Principal of St Thomas More's Primary School, spoke of the guidance that Fr Hal gave to students of the school while giving him a gift on behalf of the school. Jacinta McGovern, the St Thomas More's Parish Coordinator, presented Fr Hal with a gift from the parish and thanked him for all he gives to others. The ladies from the Open Door Group also held a morning tea in his honour.

On 14 April, the St Patrick's Cathedral parish community gathered to celebrate Fr Hal's 16 years of ministry there. Fr Hal was honoured during and following the 9:00am Mass, which he concelebrated with Fr Michael O'Brien and Fr Peter Dorfield, the current and previous Dean and Priest Administrator of the Cathedral, respectively. In the words of Fr Peter, whose friendship with Fr Hal reaches back more than 50 years, "Fr Hal is a person of integrity and truth, patience and compassion, and generous openness for those who struggle in

life. His gracious presence, heartfelt appreciation of all he meets, and tender and effective support for those in grief or distress are hallmarks of Fr Hal's approach. Underpinning all these human qualities, Fr Hal is a prayerful person who has and continues to enrich the lives of those whom he meets."

While Fr Hal is stepping away from a parish-based ministry, he will remain very much in our hearts, prayers and thoughts.



Fr Hal Ranger (centre) joined the Open Door Group at St Thomas More's Parish for morning tea.

DIOCESAN DISPATCH



Fr Gonzalo Garcia Duran is currently on leave from Stanthorpe Parish.

Fr Nathan Webb (pictured) is currently Administrator at Stanthorpe Parish, also serving the communities of Lyra and Wallangarra.



Welcome to Fr Periya Savarimuthu who is currently serving the Warwick Parish as Associate Pastor.



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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.

DIOCESE IN BRIEF



CatholicCare Social Services – Toowoomba Region gathered in June in person and virtually for the blessing of their new office space by Bishop Ken Howell.



Bishop Ken Howell was honoured to be among a group of other faith leaders and civic leaders invited to speak at the Garden City Mosque Open Day and Food Festival.





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DR PATRICK COUGHLAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Setting aside time to reflect on our purpose in Catholic education has moved from being a privilege to being essential. Being clear and united on our purpose is necessary because of the rapidly changing nature of our context. As the context of our work changes, we run the risk of losing sight of our purpose, our work then ceases to be inspiring and our impact on students and their development is weakened and diminished. In other words, without purpose, our work loses its meaning. Hence, our recently completed Bishop's Inservice Days which afforded every member of staff an opportunity to reflect on the questions: What is it we are here to do? And who is it we are here to serve?

An important component of this reflection is understanding our current context and the challenges. Firstly, there is no doubt that the pace and nature of change is more than we have ever experienced previously. Secondly, simply coping with the

demands of day-to-day living seems a lot harder than it used to be. Stress, burnout, and anxiety about the future are more common in our experience now, not to mention the complex lives that students and their parents bring to the classroom. And lastly, the many things in our lives that we once could trust and rely on, particularly our institutions, are now largely ignored and discredited. This has resulted in rising inequality, plummeting faith in authority figures generally, declining social trust and a society bitterly divided.

In the midst of these challenges Catholic schools are thriving and have become places where spiritual growth and development is nurtured, where Catholic values are modelled, and consciences and character are formed and informed. Every young person is immersed in a community of faith, hope and love.

Our communities tell a better story of academic success for all students within distinctively Catholic communities.

This story replaces the powerful and alluring "It's all about me" story with a far grander and more inspiring narrative founded on the call and challenge of the Gospel as lived and encouraged by Jesus Christ.

The current staff of Catholic schools now are the privileged authors and creators of this better future. It will require an almighty, prophetic leap of faith similar to that taken some 161 years ago in this diocese by the congregations of religious brothers and sisters. It will also require that no matter whatever else happens, we never lose sight of our purpose.

Our purpose is to enable young people to discover and nurture their God-given individual talents, empowering them to lead balanced and fulfilling lives and to develop for themselves a framework of Catholic values and beliefs that they will take with them beyond school, to build on and modify throughout their lives.

BISHOP'S INSERVICE DAYS – QUILPIE, ROMA AND TOOWOOMBA

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

QUEENSLAND CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

21-27 JULY



COMMUNITIES OF FAITH HOPE LOVE





L to R: Madonna Sleba, Jodie Marshall and Deirdre Young.

OUTSTANDING WORK RECOGNISED DURING CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The Aunty Joan Hendriks Reconciliation Award is given as part of Catholic Education Week. The award is named in honour of Aunty Joan Hendriks, a Ngugi elder of one of the three groups of Quandamooka people on Moreton Island. Jodie Marshall, Head of Boarding at St Ursula's College Toowoomba, was this year's recipient.

Jodi's leadership at St Ursula's College is truly transformative. Known for her integrity and compassion, she leads the boarding house with a blend of fun, laughter, honesty and strong values. Under Jodi's leadership the boarding house has become a sanctuary where acceptance of differences, honest communication and resilience are daily lessons.

Whilst embracing all - remote and international students, those in difficult family situations, and those with learning or physical challenges - her commitment to equity and equality is especially impactful for First Nations students. Jodi's understanding of their communities enables her to support these students with compassion and guidance, leading to their success

in scholarships, sports, academics and cultural engagement.

Building a strong Catholic identity, Jodi fosters a sense of sisterhood that the girls carry with them for life. She has introduced cherished traditions like weekly family nights, Christmas in July and the Year 12 formal family dinner, enhancing community spirit. Her emphasis on building and maintaining relationships lasts long after

graduation, with students welcomed back as visitors and special guests.

Jodi's service extends beyond the boarding house. One example of note is ...and don't spoil this secret...she is often incognito at school events as the Ursie Bear, the school mascot.

Jodi is a beloved member of the College community and a worthy recipient of the Aunty Joan Hendriks Award.



L to R: The Hon Michael Healy MP, Minister for Tourism and Sport, Jodie Marshall and Archbishop Mark Coleridge.



2024 TCS Excellence Award recipients.

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EXCELLENCE AWARDS – A PASSIONATE AND INSPIRATIONAL COMMUNITY

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The outstanding educators and staff of Toowoomba Catholic Schools were honoured at the annual Excellence Awards on 25 July. This prestigious event recognises and celebrates those who exemplify excellence in their roles every day. This year, nearly 100 nominations were received from across the Toowoomba Diocese.

Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director: Toowoomba Catholic Schools praised the dedication and commitment of the staff, stating, “We are privileged to have an outstanding staff who believe in and are committed to inspiring young people to learn and reach their full potential. They work alongside volunteers and support staff to create a system of schools that is united, connected and progressive.”

Pat highlighted the innovative contributions of this year’s award recipients. “It is through their efforts and influence, that we continue to provide excellent educational experiences,

pastoral care and community connections across our 32 schools. We thank all of our finalists and recognise the invaluable contribution they make to both staff and students’ lives,” said Pat.

One of the award recipients of the evening was Sarah Yates, who received the School Leadership award in the Excellence in Leadership category.

Sarah, an Assistant Principal at St Joseph’s School in Stanthorpe has been instrumental in shaping teaching and learning practices and spearheading innovations such as the Visible Learning Program and the Exemplary Teaching and Learning Framework. Her efforts have significantly improved teaching practices, earning the school Level 3 Visible Learning+ Certification, one of only eight schools worldwide to achieve this distinction. Beyond her academic contributions, Sarah prioritises the school’s Catholic identity and Mercy charisma, fostering a community where students, staff, and

parents grow in their understanding of their purpose as lifelong learners who act in a Christ-like manner.

Sarah was extremely honoured to receive this award. “I would like to acknowledge my Principal, Andrew Kendall OAM, and the many colleagues and students I have had the pleasure of working with during the last 31 years,” said Sarah. “Each one of them has helped to shape me into the person, the teacher and the leader that I am today and for this I am grateful. I am very proud to be a teacher and leader and hope that in some way, I can leave a small mark on a profession that has given me – and continues to give me - so much.”

Congratulations to all the award finalists and recipients who demonstrate excellence in their workplace daily. Their invaluable contributions continue to enrich the lives of both staff and students across Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

Excellence in education support

Teaching and learning support

Leona Doherty - St Anthony's School, Toowoomba

Administration, finance, and facilities support

Warren Farquharson - St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Volunteer support

Jodie Cosmo - St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Excellence in teaching and learning

Early career teacher

Riley Salter - Assumption College, Warwick

Primary expert teacher

Brendan Luck - St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Secondary expert teacher

Kylie Purbrick - Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

Excellence in leadership

Emerging leadership

Jake Weise - St Mary's College, Toowoomba

Middle leadership

Simone Forbes - Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

School leadership

Sarah Yates - St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe



L to R: Dr Patrick Coughlan, Sarah Yates and Graham Legerton from Hayball

HISTORIC DISPLAY CONNECTS SITE'S PAST WITH PRESENT

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The building currently occupied by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, is a repository for the memories and experiences of thousands of school children who passed through the Toowoomba South State School. A recent visitor to the office, Ian Bentley, who began his schooling in this very building in 1956, dropped by to share his memories and experiences.

Ian has been a valued contributor to the historical display that links the building to its previous role as a school and kindly donated a couple of his schoolbooks to the display. However, of tremendous interest, was his Year 1 port. The small satchel is a relic of a bygone era when hundreds of student's ports adorned the corridors of Toowoomba South while their owners attended class. Ian's donation conjures memories of these children racing to their ports at "little" and "big" lunch to retrieve their food.

This tangible link to the past reminds us of what school was like, preserves memories and experiences, and

reinforces that the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office has been a place of learning for almost 150 years.



L to R: Paul Herbert, Education Officer: Curriculum, with Ian Bentley and his school port.



Studying hard: L to R: Kimberly Benvenuti, Chris Grierson, Alyson Holmes and Adele Sretenovic participated in the Harvard Project Zero Visible Thinking course.

LEADING THE WAY WITH HARVARD'S VISIBLE THINKING

ST SAVIOUR'S COLLEGE, TOOWOOMBA

St Saviour's College Toowoomba, has just seen the graduation of its second cohort of teachers from the internationally acclaimed Harvard Project Zero Visible Thinking course.

This prestigious course, offered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, focuses on nurturing powerful and enduring thinking dispositions in students.

College Principal, Ms Wade, highlights the significance of this 12-week program, emphasising the dedication and commitment of the staff involved. "Project Zero Visible Thinking challenges educators to reimagine their classrooms. In an era where information is readily accessible, it is crucial to foster deep understanding and reasoning rather than mere knowledge acquisition," Ms Wade said. "The thinking routines of Project Zero promote rich classroom discussions and encourage students to confidently share and challenge ideas, listen deeply,

and consider diverse perspectives. These routines build confidence in our young women, empowering them to engage thoughtfully and critically."

Visible Thinking, a research-based approach used globally across various subjects and settings, aims to deepen content learning and cultivate students' thinking skills and dispositions. "We become more effective learners when we are aware of our learning processes and can manage our thinking," Ms Wade said. With over 40 per cent of its teaching staff now graduates of this course, St Saviour's College aims to exceed 50 per cent by the conclusion of the next intake.

The impact of the Harvard Project Zero course has been transformative, with teachers experiencing significant 'a-ha!' moments as they reflect on their practices and the cultivation of thinking in their classrooms.

Ms Wade commented that her greatest learning from the Harvard course was realising how, at times, she had inadvertently deprived students of the learning they deserved by doing the thinking for them. "It is the 'thinking' skills that our students need most," Ms Wade said. "Skills such as forming conclusions, uncovering complexity, making connections, wondering, questioning, and reasoning with evidence are essential. These skills will shape our students into empowered critical and creative thinkers, entrepreneurs, and social architects that the world desperately needs."

The college's commitment to the Harvard Visible Thinking course is part of its broader learning framework, the Mercy Approach to Learning, which underscores its dedication to fostering a culture of deep thinking and lifelong learning.

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BAGGING A BETTER DEAL FOR VULNERABLE WOMEN

CHARLOTTE PIPER, YEAR 12 STUDENT

As Service Captain and leader of the Protea Place service group at St Ursula's College Toowoomba, I have had the privilege of working alongside group members from Grade 7 to 12 over the past couple of months with the support of Mrs (Keryn) Welsh to plan and hold a trivia night in honour of Protea Place Toowoomba. The event took place on 25 July.

With the profits going to Protea Place, it was only fitting to have the theme for the night be "Roles Reversed", with guests challenged to dress as the opposite gender. We were fortunate to have 15 tables booked for the trivia night. While participants tested their knowledge on six gruelling rounds of questions, they also got to enjoy some hot pizza and delectable dessert platters put together by our talented group members. With a \$100 board, a minty wrapper challenge, coin toss game and best-dressed table and individual, there was plenty of opportunities for prizes to be won. The winning table consisted of three teachers from the

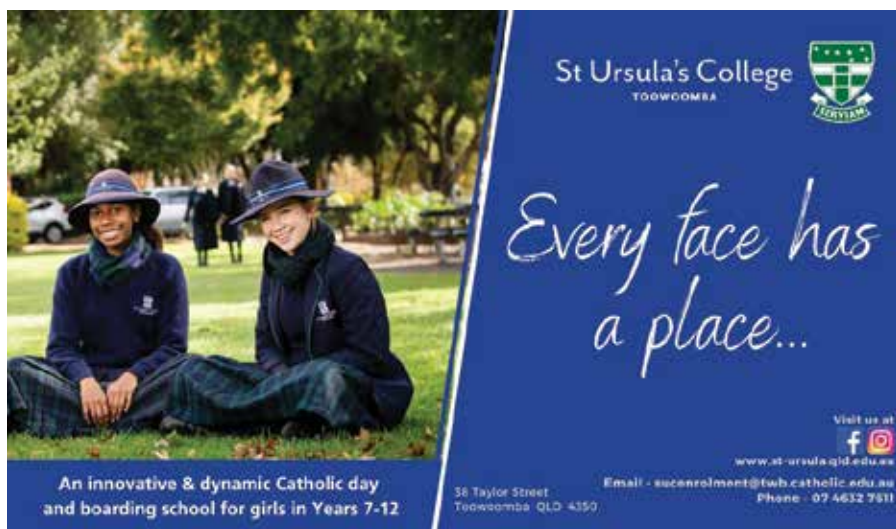


L to R: Charlotte Piper and Michelle from Protea Place.

college who really embodied the theme of roles reversed dressing as students of the opposite gender from St Ursula's and St Mary's College Toowoomba, respectively. Yes, that meant students saw Mr Lee in a stripey dress.

In addition, to engage students and further support Protea Place, we launched the "Bags for Better" campaign in the lead-up to the trivia night. Within this, we encouraged each PC to fill a bag with essential items for vulnerable women in our community. They were tasked to get creative with the bag type and contents, from toiletry bags to handbags to overnight bags to children's bags. Everyone was more than generous, and we filled Mrs (Elyce) Ruhle's Landcruiser boot floor to roof and back seat with over 45 bags.

It was a delight to see students actively embodying our motto, Serviam (I will serve), and I am honoured to say that we raised \$1,340 for Protea Place and provided the bags, which are invaluable. We look forward to seeing this event continue and further support Protea Place.





Bishop Ken Howell (left) and Fr Anthony Samy (right) with their newly gifted stoles created by Lisa Sting (middle).

PASTORAL VISIT BRINGS GIFTS AND GIFTS OF THE SPRIT

MAJELLA MORRIS AND ANNA CHANDLER

Bishop Ken Howell travelled to St George on 6 June for his first pastoral visit to our parish. Bishop Ken celebrated Mass with the children, staff and families of St Patrick's School, St George. At the end of Mass on Friday, the school presented Bishop Ken and Parish Priest Fr Anthony Samy with a handmade stole embroidered with the school crest.

These stoles were made by Lisa Sting, the mother of students Amber, Year

6 and Carter in Prep. The two stoles were the first items Lisa produced using her new embroidery machine. We were very proud to present these to Bishop Ken and Fr Anthony.

After Mass, Bishop Ken, Fr Anthony and Principal James Wren led teams in a trivia quiz called "Beat the Bish". All teams were very competitive, and even though "the Bish" was beaten, he graciously accepted the loss! Bishop Ken and Fr Anthony spent the rest

of the day visiting each classroom to speak with students and staff. We appreciated the time spent with our community, and our children loved getting to know Bishop Ken.

On Saturday, the Bishop met with the different Parish Committees and enjoyed lunch and chatting with parishioners. Fr Anthony took Bishop Ken on a short road trip to some of the smaller towns in our region on Saturday afternoon, and they enjoyed a dinner at the famous Nindigully Pub.

Sunday was a very special morning for our parish when children from our community celebrated their Confirmation. Mass was followed by a beautiful morning tea organised by the Parish Hospitality Committee, where the Confirmation group cut a cake made especially for them by Donna Worboys.

Thank-you to everyone involved in making this weekend so memorable, and we can't wait to have you back in our beautiful community, Bishop Ken.



Bishop Ken Howell (centre) spent time during his visit to St George chatting with students and staff at St Patrick's School.

BRAILLE LEARNING PATHWAYS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

SARAH LILBURNE



L to R: Lachlan Simmich, Christine Casey and Emerson Simmich.

Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby (OLSCC) is a trailblazer in the Toowoomba Diocese for providing learning with braille. The college is the first school to train school officers and teachers in this specialised area of support. This training fosters an inclusive learning environment for two enrolled students, siblings Emerson and Lachlan. Both students' efforts in learning at school with braille have earned them a Braille Bronze Award Medal from the Queensland Department of Education, and they were the first students in any Queensland school to achieve this award.

Emerson began in Prep at the college in 2022, and her brother Lachlan started a year later, following in the footsteps of their older siblings. Emerson initially started her learning journey using mainstream classroom resources. Her teachers soon identified that her level of vision impairment could limit her academic progression in the future. With the assistance of Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, Education Officer Helen O'Shea, the learning support staff identified the need to

introduce her to braille learning. This need was subsequently detected for Lachlan as well during his Prep year.

School Officers Donna Nothdurft and Jo Bradford received specialised training through the Department of Education to support Emerson. Both Donna and Jo were pivotal in their interest in partnering their vision impairment services with other independent and Catholic schools.

Both students made the transition to braille learning at the start of 2023. Class teachers Melita Dellit and Kristen Joyce have been instrumental in the transition to braille learning and have worked hard at normalising this as part of their classrooms. Emerson and Lachlan use special resources produced by school officers Donna and Jo using Duxbury technology and learn numeracy online via a maths program developed by a lecturer in Melbourne. Lachlan and Emerson use the Perkins Brailier in class to communicate their written ideas and will soon transition towards digital braille technology.

The Braille Award Medals were introduced by the Department of Education in Term 2 this year to reward and encourage students who are learning braille as their mode of literacy and numeracy. Christine Casey heads Braille Services, part of the Department of Education Statewide Vision Impairment Services. Christine provides schools, teachers and students with information, training and personalised learning programs and she has been instrumental in establishing Braille Education at OLSCC. Christine completed individual assessments with Emerson and Lachlan to determine their emerging fluency in braille.

When meeting with staff, Christine said that while the model of Braille Education at OLSCC is still evolving, she would encourage other braille-learning Queensland schools to look to OLSCC as the model to emulate. For Emerson and Lachlan, learning with braille has enabled them to achieve academic success, and the dedicated staff at OLSCC are proud to be able to support them on their learning journey.

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L to R Back: Dr Pat Coughlan, Senator the Honorable Anthony Chisholm (Assistant Minister for Education), Fr Brian Noonan. L to R Front: Sr Robyn Brady SGS, Shannon Dyson-Holland, Libby Rosentreter. Seated: Bishop Ken Howell

AWARD WINNING ARCHITECTURE A BLESSING FOR COLLEGE

TOOWOOMBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Recently, Good Samaritan College Toowoomba celebrated a significant milestone with the opening and blessing of their new building, Polding Place. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Bishop Ken Howell, who performed the blessing, and Senator Anthony Chisholm, who officially opened the building. The event was a wonderful celebration of the college's achievements, with young people representing with pride.

The college is committed to creating environments that cultivate learning and growth. Polding Place is a testament to this commitment, providing a space that enhances the educational experience for young people and staff alike. The building is named after Archbishop John Bede Polding, the first Bishop of Australia and founder of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The sisters have a historical connection with the site through education. Our Lady Help of Christians, as it was once known, consisted of a church and convent,

with the church doubling as classrooms during the week. The college was renamed Good Samaritan College from Youth Community Learning Centre in 2020 to honour the sisters.

Libby Rosentreter, Principal of Good Samaritan College, remarked that these improvements have fostered a more engaging and supportive atmosphere, positively impacting educational outcomes and community spirit. "These new spaces have revolutionised our operations. We have a warm, welcoming, commercial-grade kitchen that allows us to train our young people for industry and also enables us to cook nutritious food to share as a community. The classrooms are inviting and technologically advanced, which has had a positive impact on the engagement and comfort of our young people." Libby said.

Polding Place has made a mark in the architectural community, receiving awards and recognition for the building's

exceptional and innovative design. The 2024 Dulux Colour Awards highlighted the creative use of colour throughout the building. The Darling Downs/West Moreton Australian Institute of Architects 2024 Awards also gave an Award for Social Impact, an Award for Regional Project of the Year, a Commendation for Educational Architecture and short-listed for Sustainable Architecture. The jury praised Polding Place as a "resolved piece of adventurous architecture that goes beyond the design brief. The building's active edges and adaptable structure enhance the courtyard's amenity and character, extending classroom spaces to support students' learning activities. The project is commendable for its social and cultural impact on the school, student wellbeing, and the wider community." Hutchinson Builders also received two Master Builders Awards for Polding Place.



End of Term 2 Sacred Heart Day Celebrations
at Downlands College Toowoomba

THEME OF COURAGE AND PEACE CONTINUES TO GUIDE COLLEGE

ANDREA COLLINS

The Downlands theme for 2024 continues to guide the direction we take in this second year as a Prep to Year 12 college. Our theme “Come with Courage and Find Peace” draws inspiration from Constitution #7 of the Missionnaires du Sacré-Coeur (MSC) which in turn draws on Matthew’s message “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

The college is committed to creating environments that cultivate learning and growth. Polding Place is a testament to this commitment, providing a space that enhances the educational experience for young people and staff alike. The building is named after Archbishop John Bede Polding, the first Bishop of Australia and founder of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The sisters have a historical connection with the site through education. Our Lady Help of Christians, as it was once known,

consisted of a church and convent, with the church doubling as classrooms during the week. The college was renamed Good Samaritan College from Youth Community Learning Centre in 2020 to honour the sisters.

Concluding Term 2, Sacred Heart Day Eucharist and the following celebrations highlighted many of these elements. Our offering of beautiful warm blankets to the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal as part of our offertory procession was wonderful to behold as older students and younger ones presented their blankets together. After Eucharist, the students gathered around the front drive, surrounded by the arboretum to create chalk art around the drive loop.

The Year 11 Residential Retreat ran during week 4 and was hosted at Brookfield, slightly north of the Brisbane River. Students were fully engaged in each of the activities offered during the retreat and journeyed to a deeper state of self-knowing and an



Downlands Year 12 students on a pilgrimage to MSC
Heartland of Sydney and Douglas Park.

awareness and appreciation for one another. The peaceful surroundings offered at Brookfield provided an important time for the students to rest and reflect. They gained a deeper understanding of themselves and their cohort, especially as they look ahead to leadership challenges as a new chapter of the Downlands College story commences in 2025.

Polding Place stands as a beacon of excellence, embodying the values and vision of Good Samaritan College and Toowoomba Catholic Schools.



Students and teachers alike joined in to support World's Greatest Shave.

HAIR RAISING ANTICS FUNDRAISE FOR GOOD CAUSE

ERIN KEHOE-O'SHEA

St Mary's College Toowoomba witnessed an extraordinary display of camaraderie and action on 21 June, as students and staff came together for the World's Greatest Shave event in support of the Leukaemia Foundation.

Principal Brendan Stewart expressed his pride in the school community's efforts, stating, "Friday was a memorable day for St Mary's College. The spirit of unity and compassion displayed by our students and staff was truly remarkable."

The event saw an outpouring of support as hair fell and moustaches vanished, but the highlight of the day came as Mr Stewart himself, along with Mr Marsh, went above and beyond by braving the wax for the cause. "I am incredibly proud of our community for coming together and making a real difference," remarked Mr Stewart. "It was an honour to stand in solidarity with our students and staff as we raised funds for such a worthy cause."

The collective efforts of the St Mary's College community did not go unnoticed, culminating in a total of \$5,537.00 raised for the Leukaemia Foundation. Mr Stewart extended his gratitude, saying, "I want to sincerely thank all the students and staff who participated, as well as everyone who generously donated. Your support will

make a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by leukaemia."

The event was a testament to the school's commitment to making a positive difference in the community, serving as a source of inspiration for all involved.



Hair today, gone tomorrow: St Mary's College Toowoomba students supporting World's Greatest Shave.

EDUCATION IN BRIEF




St Mary's School Charleville celebrations for Catholic Education Week were very ably led by Year 5 students.



During Catholic Education Week celebrations, Loretta Clayton was congratulated on 20 years of service to Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

L to R: Loretta Clayton, Fr Peter Doohan and Katrina Dunne, Principal St Mary's School Charleville.





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- ✓ Catholic
- ✓ Strong community
- ✓ Safe, supportive environment
- ✓ Values-based

OUR SACRAMENTAL JOURNEYS

After months of preparation for sacraments in schools and parishes, many across our diocese have been celebrating the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. Thank you to parents, teachers and parishioners who have helped guide the children through these important milestones in their faith journey in the Catholic Church.



Confirmation candidates from St Patrick's Cathedral Toowoomba. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Fr Michael O'Brien and their parents. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Michael O'Brien.



Confirmation candidates from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Toowoomba. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by the Parish Sacramental Team. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr John Quinlan.



First Communion candidates from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Toowoomba. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by the Parish Sacramental Team. First Communion celebrated by Fr John Quinlan.





Confirmation candidates from Roma Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Melissa Irwin, Nicole Southee, Toni Densley and Fr Thomas Duncan. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Thomas Duncan.



Confirmation candidates from St Thomas More's Parish Toowoomba. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Kristin Byrne, Erin McVeigh and Jacinta McGovern. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Nathan Webb.



Confirmation candidates from Warwick Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Sally Hagley, Pat Sheil and Sharon Young. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Franco Filipetto and Fr Periya Savarimuthu.



Confirmation candidates from Highfields Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by the Parish Sacramental Team and Paula O'Rourke, APRE Mary MacKillop Catholic College. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Brian Noonan.



Confirmation candidates from Balonne Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Belinda Eley, Majella Morris, Donna Worboys and Veronica White. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Anthony Arockiam.



Confirmation candidates from Sacred Heart Parish Toowoomba. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Emilie Yu Yap and Fiona Webb. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Hermi Rafada.



Confirmation candidates from Charleville Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Kirsty Lines and Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Peter Doohan.



Confirmation candidates from Holy Name Parish Toowoomba, late 2023. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Carol Keutmann. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell with Fr Salvador Fernandes.



First Communion candidates from Pittsworth. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Fiona Drew, APRE St Stephen's School Pittsworth. First Communion celebrated by Fr Thomas Areekuzhy.



Confirmation candidates from Pittsworth Parish. The children were prepared to receive the sacrament by Fiona Drew, APRE St Stephen's School Pittsworth. Confirmation celebrated by Bishop Bill Morris with Fr Thomas Areekuzhy.



The Eucharistic Procession at St Patrick's Cathedral wound its way through the Cathedral grounds to end at the Micah Centre.

EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION TAKES FAITH TO THE STREETS

ANNA REESE AND OWEN WEBB WITH JOSHUA YU-YAP

Toowoomba city's northernmost parish has a successive track-record of Eucharistic Processions in recent years; 2024 was no exception. On 2 June, the parishioners of Sacred Heart participated in the annual Corpus Christi Eucharistic Procession. Preceded by flowers, candles and billowing incense, Parish Priest Fr Hermi Rafada carried the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament from the church building and through the parish complex before the community returned to the church for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

St Patrick's Cathedral also held a procession for Corpus Christi led by Bishop Ken Howell. The public display of faith and devotion wound its way through the Cathedral grounds to the

Micah Centre at the neighbouring Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office. There participants spent time in quiet prayer during Eucharistic Adoration.

ONE MINUTE READ: THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST AND EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION

The Solemnity the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, also known as the Feast of Corpus Christi, is a significant celebration that honours the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist - The Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ, contained in a piece of bread. The solemnity encourages an increase in Eucharistic piety and devotion. Throughout this feast we are reminded of Christ's enduring presence in our lives and are called to reflect His love and compassion in our relationships with others.

Alongside Holy Thursday the Solemnity also honours the Institution of the Eucharist. However, given the former's presence in Lent, there is a pervasive sadness about the celebrations. Corpus Christi is a feast of euphoria and exaltation.

Corpus Christi was first celebrated in 1246, thanks to the invocation of

St Juliana of Liège (also known as Juliana of Mount-Cornillon), when Bishop Robert de Thorete instructed it to be observed in his diocese of Liège, Belgium. Jacques Pantaléon was serving as Archdeacon in the diocese at the time, who would later become Pope Urban IV. St Juliana had long worked for the establishment of a feast honouring the Eucharist outside of Lent. Her prayers and devoted work bore much fruit, but only in select parts of modern-day Belgium and Germany.

Some years later St Thomas Aquinas advised the Pope to institute the feast in Rome. Remembering the work of Juliana, Pope Urban IV accepted the recommendation. Thus, it became the first universally-instituted Solemnity in the church other than the feasts of Our Lord's life. From then on churches all around the world have kept this feast as a day of special solemnity.

A unique aspect of this solemnity is the traditional procession. This procession is meant to be a prolongation of the celebration of the Eucharist, and a public profession of faith. After the completion of Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the monstrance, and the priest, followed by the people, completes a pre-determined processional route usually from one church or holy place to another.



Flower girls followed by cross and candle bearers lead the procession as Parish Priest, Fr Hermi Rafada carried the Monstrance through the grounds of Sacred Heart Church in Toowoomba.

Invitation for 2025

St Patrick's Cathedral would like to celebrate again next year, hopefully in a bigger way and involving more parishes in our diocese. In order to do this, we need a few volunteers to be on an organising committee. If you are interested, please email Anna Rees on annarees@outlook.com.au



Fr Jim Cronin at his Ordination at St Patrick's Cathedral Toowoomba in 1974.



Fr Jim Cronin cuts the cake for a parish celebration to mark 50th Anniversary of Ordination.

JUBILEE A GOLDEN MOMENT FOR FR JIM

LESLEY CLAPPERTON AND NARELLE MCINTYRE

On 12 July, Fr Jim Cronin celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination, which took place in St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, in 1974.

Parishioners and friends gathered in Dalby to celebrate with Fr Jim on 21 July to show appreciation for his 50 years of priestly ministry. Fr Jim has been Parish Priest of St Joseph's Parish Dalby since 2016, only a small part of his 50 years. In a welcome message that appeared in the 3 January 2016 edition of the

parish newsletter, it was noted that his appointment was a "welcome back" as he had spent time in Dalby in 1975.

Peter Cuskelly, Principal of Our Lady of the Southern Cross College Dalby, spoke on behalf of those gathered, congratulating Fr Jim on this milestone and expressing gratitude for his faithful ministry and friendship to our faith communities. Peter mentioned the many occasions on which Fr Jim would have celebrated significant

events in the lives of families – baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Fr Jim spoke of the immense impact that love and support from his family and the many parish families have played in his priestly life during his journey as a priest. He has treasured the people and situations that have shaped his ministry and expressed hope that the gifts he has been able to bring to people have, in turn, helped them in their life's journey.

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FAITH, FUN AND FRIENDSHIP ON THE AGENDA FOR YOUTH CAMP

GERARD PURCELL

“We wanted to provide an opportunity to the young people in the area to meet together and support each other in friendship with God and each other,” said Gerard Purcell, Storm King Youth Camp Principal Organiser.

In late June, 30 teenagers from all over Queensland converged at Storm King Dam on the Granite Belt to enjoy four days of faith, fun and friendship under the chaplaincy of Fr Nathan Webb.

“The camp was a great success. It was requested by the young people after a successful family camp late last year. Understandably, the young people didn’t want to wait a whole year to rekindle friendships,” said Gerard. “We heard from Fr Webb that we must make sure that



Bushwalking proved to be a popular activity for attendees at Storm King Youth Camp.

Jesus is at the centre of our friendships. I can certainly see that coming through in these remarkable young people.”

Activities included camping and bushwalking, along with prayers and presentations from Fr Nathan and others. The camp organisers were assisted by the generous support of volunteers who cooked, cleaned, and mentored.

“I was pleased to see that while the young people were hesitant at the start, you could see the friendships develop over bushwalking and around the bonfire,” said Isabelle Bott, Camp Supervisor. “It was such a great week for everyone involved; I learnt so much from the young people.”

The final night of the camp was celebrated with a Winter Ball.

“I hope that the young people take

their experience of Christ, which they had at this camp, into the weeks and months ahead of them,” said Fr Nathan.

“The camp gave us the opportunity to strengthen our communion with each other,” said attendee and organiser Vayda Heads, “while growing in communion with Christ”

Caroline Naug said “It was an amazing experience and I enjoyed every second of it, from climbing up mountains, to getting dressed up for the Winter Ball. The team did a great job putting it all together... Amazing memories to share with my new friends.”

After a successful winter camp for teens, Storm King Youth Camp are now looking forward to their Summer Family Camp. Further details can be found at www.stormkingyouthcamp.org

PARISH

PARISH JOURNEY INSPIRES QUESTION “WHERE TO NOW?”

PATTI MCNAUGHT

In June the St Mary MacKillop Highfields Parish Pastoral Council presented a PowerPoint reflecting on our parish journey. Nikki Tonkin, our Parish Chair, put this together beautifully. As the presentation was shown, each Parish Council Member participated in telling the story from the start of our visionary journey in 2017 through to our present day much-loved and alive parish. The presentation was shared on two different occasions to ensure everyone had an opportunity to hear and share in our journey.

Our Nikki thanked our wonderful priest, Fr Brian Noonan, for his constant support and encouragement of the community. Our presentation was received with

acclamation and parishioners were amazed at how far we had come.

The presentations were followed by a facilitated discussion focused on “Where to now, for our parish?” after Mass on 7 July. All parishioners were welcomed and encouraged to participate. The gathering was well attended, with parishioner Dr Joan Conway facilitating this important discussion. We thanked her for giving us her valuable time. With her brilliant facilitating techniques and strategies for “challenging thinking” for our future, she certainly added depth to the morning, and we are blessed to have her in our parish. Responses to questions were gathered at the end of the morning discussion, as this will help



Hard at work: (L to R) Patti McNaught and Nikki Tonkin.

inform the Parish Council’s Strategic Parish Plan for the next two years.

As our parish moves forward, a new Parish Logo has been created. Brought to life by graphic artist and parishioner Kylie Dolan, the logo was unveiled at a shared mass with Mary MacKillop Catholic College in August. Name tags bearing the new logo will be blessed on the day. Our shared Mass will be followed by festivities at the Mary Mackillop Catholic College Alumni Day.

SESSIONS FILL PARTICIPANTS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

MICHAEL PYKE

In May, Fr Steve Fletcher visited the Toowoomba Diocese to host two sessions for the local Catholic Charismatic Renewal group. Fr Steve is the Moderator of the Missionaries of God's Love, a relatively new Order established in Canberra in 1986. They are dedicated to bringing the Good News of God's love to those who do not yet know His love. They are especially focused on young people and people experiencing poverty. The Order is charismatic, whose energy and life springs from the experience of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit".

Fr Steve hosted two sessions at Sacred Heart Church Toowoomba, which focused on our relationship with Jesus. Jesus invites us to come and drink from His Spirit. If we accept His invitation, then out of our hearts can flow living water. This living water can overflow and touch the lives of people around us. It is important for us



Fr Steve Fletcher

to not be frugal about our request to Jesus. An interesting question asked of those attending was, "Do you ask for a thimble full of grace, or do you ask for a bucket full, which is overflowing." This will determine how effectively we spread God's word and love to others.

Those attending had the opportunity for Fr Steve to pray over them for healing,

something that everyone participated in. One of the attendees reflected on the experience, "Fr Steve prayed for joy to be poured out over me, and the healing of my memories. I felt all this was true and deep in my heart. I left with a deep sense of trust and truth in these things, with hope that I could carry on with these positive attitudes that made me worth dying for on the cross."

PARISH IN BRIEF

Fr Thomas Areekuzhy (left) presented a Papal Blessing to Millmerran parishioners, Pat (centre) and Terry (right) Taylor, on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary.



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