

ST PAT'S MATTERS

A magazine for parishioners and friends of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta



BE
NOT
AFRAID

I am with you always

April 2020 | Issue 102

Editorial

As the February issue of *St Pat's Matters* was being circulated, the "hot" topic of debate was the catastrophic bushfire crisis that were incinerating immense swathes of Australia and the disastrous aftermath.

But as this issue was underway the all-consuming topic of conversation became the coronavirus. Its rapid spread soon raised it to pandemic status: unprecedented, challenging confounding, turbulent times now confront the world. How to navigate these uncharted waters?

A deluge of media reports swamped us, striking fear, panic and irrational behaviour within the community. The medical emergency forced social isolation, lockdowns and lockouts, all to curb the vicious virus' spread. Businesses closed, jobs lost, the economy crippled.

However, as the disturbing situation continues to unfold, we must be thankful for the tough and brave measures undertaken by our Federal and State government leaders in dealing with this scourge. And God bless all the medical personnel at the coalface of this catastrophe and may He give them the strength to persevere in their fight to save lives.

Note that articles in this issue can be classified as B.C. (before coronavirus) when life still flowed smoothly and A.C. (after coronavirus) when St Pat's parish life was turned topsy turvy! — Especially heartbreaking with the impact on the celebration of Easter.

It's good to remember that history is littered with tragic events: war, famine, disease, pestilence, natural disasters. In recent times our nation has been afflicted with drought, bushfires, floods and now COVID19. What next?

For now, let's be encouraged by the Good News. There IS a light shining at the end of this tunnel of tragedy. **It is the Resurrected Christ, the Light of the World. Be not afraid! Trust in His abiding Presence. Believe!**

M. Polizzi

The Red Mass

This Mass was held in thanksgiving for the work of those who serve the law. It was also an opportunity to reaffirm a commitment to justice and faith.



Stephen McAuley of McAuley Hawach Lawyers, Parramatta was in attendance and agreed to comment on the occasion.

Five judges, two bishops, parliamentarians, barristers, solicitors, academics, law students, members of the legal profession and the wider community gathered on 28 January 2020 for the annual Red Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta.

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv DD STL was the principal celebrant with Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay OLM, Maronite Bishop of Australia and Fr Bob Bossini, Dean of the Cathedral, concelebrating. Fr Chris del Rosario, Assistant Priest of St Patrick's Cathedral, was the Master of Ceremonies.

The Red Mass has been celebrated since the Middle Ages and has been a regular fixture at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney since the early 20th century. The Red Mass at Parramatta is in its second year, and is jointly organised by the Parramatta & District Regional Law Society, the St Thomas More Society (which is the Catholic guild of lawyers) and St Patrick's Cathedral.

It is often forgotten that the Australian legal system is founded on Judeo-Christian principles. The idea that a person should do unto others what that person would have done unto oneself, telling the truth, being impartial and fair, and respecting the common good derive from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Our Lord spoke much legal wisdom such as *"when you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences..."* (Matthew 5:25). Witnesses who give evidence in Court or sign affidavits still, to this day, swear by Almighty God to tell the truth – although such important traditions risk being whittled away to the detriment of the legal system.

In an increasingly secularised world, the legal profession – as well as the community at large – must renew their commitment to justice and truth which can only be found in God. The Red Mass provides an important focal point to the parallel aims of the legal system and each individual's innate desire for Truth.

I am a regular attendee at weekday Mass at St Patrick's and on Sundays at St Bernadette's, Dundas Valley. Both parishes provide wonderful support to my wife and five young children. My son, Cameron McAuley, also sings in the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir and was a soloist at the Parramatta Red Mass. I have been a solicitor at Parramatta for 10 years and, before that, was a solicitor in the city of Sydney.

Red Mass Images



In his homily, Bishop Vincent urged those in the legal fraternity to constantly strive for justice, reflecting the values of Christ, the Great Liberator.

Some points he made:

- ◆ “Brothers and sisters, there is no other field of human endeavour that is so deeply connected to justice as the legal profession.
- ◆ “As Christians, your mission reflects that of the Servant Messiah foretold long ago by Isaiah and enacted indeed by Jesus himself – a mission of delivering justice, dignity and liberation to the victims of injustice.
- ◆ “Modelled on Jesus, the Great Liberator, you are to lead others, especially the unjustly oppressed, to higher levels of inclusion and human flourishing.
- ◆ “We cannot be true to the Gospel if we safeguard our privileges and fail to deliver justice and human dignity to those who are unjustly deprived of it.
- ◆ “It is God’s vision of justice, mercy and fullness of life that consumes us and spurs us on.
- ◆ “As we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of St Thomas More on our work at this Red Mass, we recommit ourselves towards God’s vision of justice and mercy and fullness of life for humanity.
- ◆ “May God of the journey accompany and form us into His people and His instruments for the transformation of the world.”

Legal Fraternity Members & Distinguished Guests present:

- ◆ Justice White, NSW Court of Appeal
- ◆ Judge Newbrun, Federal Circuit Court of Australia
- ◆ Judge Humphreys, Federal Circuit Court of Australia
- ◆ Judge Phillips, President, Workers Compensation Commission
- ◆ Principal Member Simon, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- ◆ Julie Owens, Federal Member for Parramatta
- ◆ Dr Geoff Lee, NSW Member for Parramatta, representing the Premier of NSW
- ◆ Daniel Mookhey MLC, representing the NSW Leader of the Opposition
- ◆ Hugh McDermott MP, representing the Shadow Attorney General
- ◆ Richard Harvey, President of the Law Society of NSW
- ◆ Greg Smith, barrister, former Attorney General
- ◆ Chief Superintendent Murray West, Fire and Rescue NSW
- ◆ Trina Schmidt, Executive Director, NSW Rural Fire Service
- ◆ Marie Wood, Acting Principal, Our Lady of Mercy College
- ◆ Michael McAuley, President, St Thomas More Society
- ◆ Learned Members of the Judiciary, Barristers, Solicitors, and Law Students



AN ‘ALL IN THE FAMILY’ AFFAIR.

Cameron, Stephen McAuley’s son sang the responsorial psalm. Then at the end of Mass Stephen thanked the organisers, expressing hope for the Red Mass tradition to continue. And as everyone gathered for refreshments in the hall, Stephen snapped his four beautiful daughters with Bishop Vincent in the Cloister.
L-R: Isabella, Ava, Olivia and Emma, resplendent in the barrister robes of Michael McAuley, Stephen’s father, who is President of the St Thomas More Society.

Venerating Saints' Relics Matters

The Relics of St Therese of Lisieux and her Parents come to St Pat's



On Wednesday evening of March 4th, the Cathedral was amassed with people eagerly anticipating the arrival of the Relics of St Therese of Lisieux, popularly known as *The Little Flower*, and her parents Emile and Zelig Martin, the first married couple to be declared saints.

Undoubtedly the people chosen from among the many who had volunteered to carry the saints' caskets into the Cathedral were buoyed by the impending privilege.

Selah Janies, Maria Toman, Rod Hilliker, Michael Lilley, Edward Safadi and Eric Grant carried St Therese's casket.

Matt Dimian, Tom Green, Michael Axiak and Andrew Rooney carried the Martins' casket.

On their arrival, Fr Bob Bossini, as Dean of the Cathedral, welcomed the Relics at the Chapel Gates. Then, as the two beautiful caskets were solemnly and reverently processed into the Cathedral, the Choir led the singing of the hymn, *By All Your Saints Still Striving*. Once in place for veneration before the Altar, Fr Bob incensed both caskets of the Saints' relics.

The simple Liturgy was comprised of a Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel, Homily, Prayers of Intercession, Litany of the Saints, blessing and concluding hymn.

Then followed the opportunity for personal veneration of the Relics throughout the night. At 6:15am on Thursday morning, another set of parishioners had the opportunity to carry the Saints relics from the Cathedral to the waiting hearses to be transported to Broken Bay Diocese.

The Bearers of St Therese's casket at this time were: Louis Egbunike, Macnos Mutano, Tony Maroun, Anthony Khoury, Jean-Pierre Kesrouani, Simon Laoulach.

The Bearers of Louis and Zelig Martin's casket were: Peter Abboud, Zoran Jurisic, Marciano Gaddi, and his son.

People stood outside the Cathedral's entrance in spite of the drizzling rain to farewell the Relics. Seeing the funeral personnel from W.N. Bull solemnly and slowly leading the hearses out of the gates towards the lights at Victoria Road was profoundly emotional and unforgettable.

Thanks is due to

- ◆ Fr Bob for being instrumental in organising the relics to visit St Patrick's;
- ◆ to Fr Chris del Rosario and Bernard Kirkpatrick Director of Music for compiling the Rite of Welcome;
- ◆ to members of the Choir for their usual exceptional standard of singing during the Liturgy;
- ◆ to the pall bearers of the Saints' Relics; and
- ◆ to all the faithful who came to venerate the Saints' Relics, to pray and seek their intercession.



Sharing Matters

Maria confides:

Why St Therese's relics are so special to her.

A few short weeks ago, the church newsletter had some information about St Therese and the relics coming to St Patrick's Cathedral.

My mother's patron saint is St Therese of Lisieux. This has become increasingly important to me as my mother has in recent years moved away from God.

When my younger brother, my mother's youngest child, died of a heart condition three years ago, she blamed God. The anger she felt at the loss of her son, left a space for the evil one to work his ways, and work them he did.

When I saw the relics of St Therese and her parents were coming to St Pat's, and Father Chris asked for volunteers to be Pall Bearers, I volunteered that night.

I just knew in my heart, that with steadfast prayer, and more prayer, and the privilege to assist with the relics of St Therese could be a turning point for my mother. I told her about the relics. I kept her closely involved in the relics' movements.

And I prayed, and I prayed, and I prayed.

On the night St Therese's and her parents' relics were at St Patrick's Cathedral, my mother said, "What a blessing!"

What a blessing indeed!

God works in mysterious ways. The relics of St Therese have helped to bring my mother back to God.

Thank you St Therese.

Thank you Father Chris.

Thank you St Patrick's Cathedral.

Above all, thank you God.

María

Fr Brian Lucas, organizer of the Relics' Pilgrimage in Australia, commented that the pilgrimage was an opportunity for Australians to come together, to have that sense of belonging, and to find inspiration in the life of St Thérèse and her parents.

He also said, 'I think the connection between the relics of St Thérèse and [those] of her parents gives us an opportunity to consider the importance of relationships and family life....the great legacy of St Thérèse is the example she gave through her writings of her connectedness to God. Her struggle with weakness, but her fierce determination to be loyal and faithful to God's will, is the legacy in which everyone can participate.'

He further pointed out that the realisation of the simplicity of her message will give people a firm foundation for their own spiritual journey.

Prayer Petitions to the Saints:

So many petitions for prayers!! People wrote in the Memorial Book provided by W.N. Bull, Funeral Directors. There were also baskets of petitions written on slips of paper. These were later typed up in the parish office by Donna Mission as a supplementary booklet which was then incorporated into the main book.

But a random few of the so many prayer petitions are shared here.



Please pray for all, St Therese. I took your name at Confirmation and gave it to my daughter at birth.



I ask the powerful intercession of Sts Therese, Louis and Zeli in the conversion of my brother and sisters back to the faith. In their pursuit of the world, they have lost their way. Through your example guide them back to the Lord's embrace.



Pray for all indigenous Australia, for serenity and peace for all.



Those infected by coronavirus and a vaccine be discovered.



For the holiness of families and protection against the assault of the Devil.



Dear Sts Therese, Louis and Zeli, Thank you for your great love of God and Jesus. Please intercede for us sinners that we may grow with love and kindness to all mankind. Amen.



Dear Lord, through the intercession of St Therese and her parents, I pray for the conversion of someone special to me, that he may turn to Jesus. Amen.



St Therese, please pray that we may obtain such a willing missionary love like yours. St Louis & St Zeli, please pray for the families of our diocese that they may be inspired by you and radiate Christ's love through the vocation of marriage.



We lost 4 kids on 1st February. 7 kids were hit by a drunk driver, 6 were my nieces and nephews, 3 of them passed away, God, pray for the driver's soul.



We pray to Sts Therese, Louis and Zeli for the conversion of souls, and for Australians to turn from sinful ways and be reconciled to Jesus.



Dear St Therese, Saints Louis and Zeli Martin, thank you for your intercession and prayers answered.

Learn from St Therese

"Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, or even at their difficulty, as at the love with which we do them."



Jesus, the Doctor of all doctors, teaches without words. ...I have never heard Him speak, but I know He is inside me. At each and every moment, He guides me to do what I must do.



This year, Pamela Bain, St Pat's SRE coordinator gave the Catechists two options as to which Mass to attend to be commissioned for the year's ministry in state schools. — the Vigil or 9:30am. Currently our SRE tally stands at 24 on class, with 7 retiring from 'active service'. At the Vigil on 7th March, Fr Bob commissioned Eric Grant, Pamela Bain, Leo Coleman, Patricia Warden and Marian Valentin, after which he presented retiring catechist, Margaret Climpson with a certificate of appreciation 'in recognition of



her dedicated commitment to the Children in NSW Public Schools as a Special Religious Education Teacher'. That's Margaret above holding her certificate, with Patricia, Maria and Father Bob on the left, Leo and Pamela to the right. At last year's annual Mass for the diocese's SREs, Bishop Vincent acknowledged Margaret's 45 years presenting her with a beautiful award.

SRE Commissioning Take 2 took place at 9:30am Mass on Sunday by Fr Chris del Rosario, after which he presented retiring Catechist Ray Love, with a certificate of appreciation for his dedication to the ministry. At last year's annual Mass Ray received an award for over 40 years of catechesis in state schools. Pictured with Fr Chris after Mass: l-r Pamela Bain, Ray Love, Marian Polizzi, Anne Haddad, Bernadette Ching and Michael Sobb.



Those retiring SREs not present — June Barrett, Mary Brennan, Chelsea Valentin, David Mannall Mindy Mercado — later received their certificates from Pamela Bain.

A matter to ponder: am I being called to join the SRE ministry?

SREs (Special Religious Educators/Catechists) are volunteers who:

- ◆ Teach and share their faith with children of their parish who attend the local State Schools.
- ◆ Have a passion for sharing the gift of faith with young people.
- ◆ Have an hour per week to prepare and share their time and talents with young people.
- ◆ Are people who respond to the central mission of the Church — to make Jesus known and loved.

Ever thought about volunteering to be SRE?

**WHO? ME?
YES, WHY NOT YOU?
IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?**

Interested? Want more details on how the ministry works?

Contact the Parish Office: Phone 8839 8400;
Email: secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au

PARRAMATTA DEANERY MASS

Eight parishes belong to the Parramatta Deanery: St Bernadette's, Dundas Valley, Holy Trinity, Granville, Holy Family, Granville East, St Patrick's, Guildford, St Oliver Plunkett's, Harris Park, St Margaret Mary's, Merrylands, St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta, and St Monica's North Parramatta.

On Friday, March 13th, SREs from these parishes attended the Annual Deanery Mass at St Oliver Plunkett's Church. Illness prevented Fr Chris D'Souza from being the main celebrant, so Fr Bob Bossini 'filled in' with Fr Paul Roberts as concelebrant.



SRE Ministry Matters



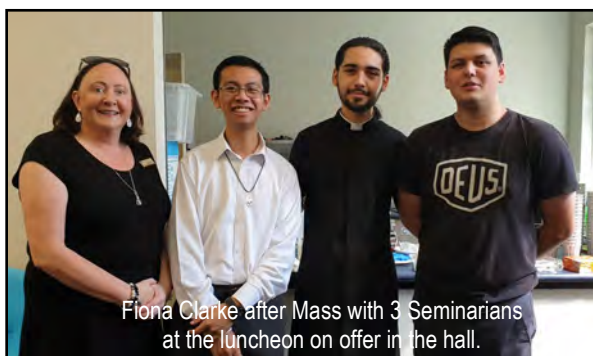
Fr Bob commissioned and blessed Fiona Clarke as Parramatta Regional Coordinator, then the parish coordinators and finally all SREs of the Deanery.



After Mass Fr Bob presented certificates to those who had completed training courses or for years of service.

Congratulations to Anne Haddad, who has notched up 10 years in ministry for the Cathedral Parish. Our other St Pat's SREs up for awards were absent:

Anthony Prashanth Level 1 Certificate, Pamela Bain, Level 2 Certificate, Patricia Warden 10 Years' Service, Chelsea Valentin 5 Years' Service.



Fiona Clarke after Mass with 3 Seminarians at the luncheon on offer in the hall.

Fr Paul Roberts' homily based on the Gospel Reading from Matthew 21: 33-43, 45-46 was inspiring and definitely worth sharing. Or at least selected parts of it!!

Have you ever thought of your SRE class as a trellis with a vine growing over it? As Catechists you are the landowner's servants — the prophets who remain faithful to God and break open His Word to the children. It is always harvest time in God's vineyard. As Catechists you are entrusted with something really challenging, and it is just this — to communicate a God who is invisible, in glory and majesty, beyond the senses; trying to communicate this message of salvation to children of this generation, who are mandrake magicians on i-pads, and who can obtain instant information from search engines all over the world; trying to bring the Gospel message week after week to a generation who hardly knows how to turn the pages of a book; where everything is online and technology is a competing god: **you are endeavouring, as disciples, to bring every ounce of your faith to bear and to bring the God we cannot see into the hearts and minds of the children you teach.**

Yet our Gospel message today reminds us, "He sent his servants to collect his fruit". What is that fruit? It is the Word of God sown in every human heart which is waiting to be revealed; your children have the embryonic Word of God sown in their hearts and they look to you as SRE teachers to cultivate and harvest the truth in their hearts. And that is the immense dignity of your ministry as SREs.

There must be times it feels almost impossible getting lessons ready and trying to control wayward kids. There are the daily challenges of the class room; the short periods of 25 minutes or less, where you have to call on your creative skills and life experience to bring a meaningful encounter with Christ to your children. It must be hard to see the impact you are having on the hearts and minds of your students, Yet, the seeds you sow are of infinite value and are not immeasurable..... So today is a time for us "to come away for a while" and reflect on the wonder of God's spirit working with us and in us.

- Our children, many unchurched, deserve the best of what God's word offers us — we can't presume the home and parents are giving much or anything.....
-As a Catechist, you are the immediate face of God.
- But nothing can replace the practical wisdom of Catechists who have taught for years, know the local culture and what energises the children about God.
- I wish to affirm and thank you all for your keenness and apostolic efforts which are truly exemplary in an era where religion and faith are fair game to slander and hearsay. Catechists count yourselves at the really important mission-focus end and evangelizing frontier of our parishes.
- Let us always remember we are but stewards in the vineyard, and you are the face of God's mercy to each student.

People like **JUDITH DUNN OAM** FPDHS are salt of the earth. Appalled by the state of St Patrick's Cemetery, she was galvanised to put in motion the historic cemetery's clean up campaign to coincide with *Clean Up Australia*. She informed the parish office and Parramatta Council of her proposal. The appeal for volunteers was broadcast....Read Judith's report.



History & Heritage matter



Clean Up Australia at St Patrick's Cemetery Sunday 1st, March, 2020

I was delighted that so many turned up and worked with a will. Thanks to everyone who gave up their time on a warm day to make the cemetery more presentable

One person turned up, an Irishman in Australia for a year – who stayed all morning and was most interested.

Nineteen others turned up from Parramatta and District Historical Society, Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery and Friends of St John's Cemetery. We worked for three hours then I gave a tour of the cemetery. All departed by 12.30pm.

Results of our work:

- ◆ 2 garbage bags of litter, paper, cans, bottles.
- ◆ 1 fallen tree chain sawed up and removed.
- ◆ The chapel is cobweb free, swept and sparkling clean inside and out.
- ◆ The courtyard raked free of leaves and then swept.
- ◆ The gravel area around the chapel raked of leaves and weeded.
- ◆ Three large piles of tree branches ready for council to remove (near the Chapel and in section F).
- ◆ Several large graves cleared of leaf litter which has not been cleaned for years (some wonderful loam under the top leaf litter!)

I will report to the council:

- a). 1 hole in the fence to be repaired on Church St side, near Pennant Hills Road. Small – but if small breaches are caught early they do not become a large problem.
- b) The wooden frame of an old easy chair to be removed! Currently near gate nearest Pennant Hills Road. It has been in the cemetery at least 2 years.
- c) In Section F, the backing has come off one of the previously repaired headstones which leaves it very fragile – needs repair.
- d) The large black granite Cranny memorial has been pushed off its base but it is still whole. Also Section F near lynch gate. It needs lifting and pinning back into position. This will require a team of stone masons. Cranny descendants were in attendance and disappointed to find their ancestors' memorial vandalised. An S57 form needs to be downloaded from the Heritage Office for the repairs as the cemetery is heritage-listed.

Once again many thanks to everyone who gave whatever time they could spare. Thankfully the first aid kit was not required.

WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.

Judith



VIGNETTES FROM ST PATRICK'S CEMETERY

JUDITH COMMENTS: *There is nothing really remarkable about the lives of these*

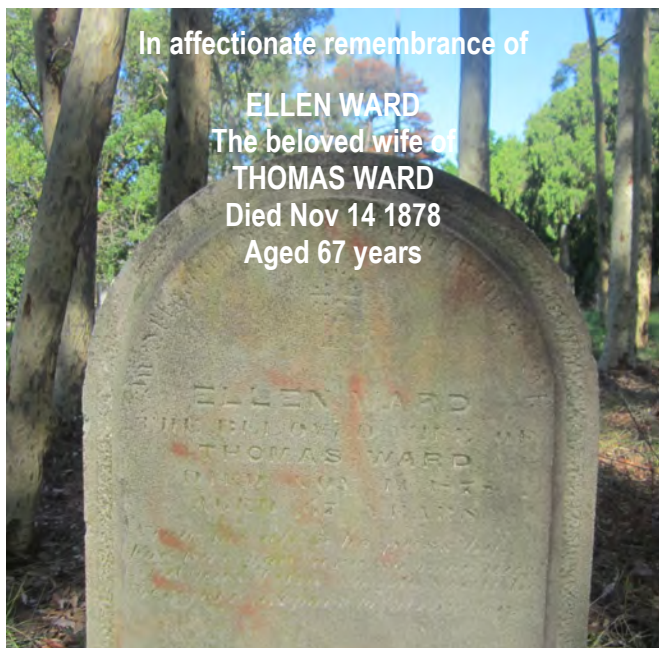
two people, and yet they are remarkable in the way they rose above their circumstances and survived the best way they could. How many of us could overcome such circumstances and not just survive but carve out a good life for their families? THEY LIVED LIVES OBSCURELY GREAT.

ELLEN WARD, was convicted of stealing flannel in 1831 in Limerick, Ireland, and transported for 7 years to NSW. She arrived on *Hooghley* in September 1831 and was granted permission to marry Thomas Brown in December 1838. He had arrived as a convict on *Minerva* in 1821 and they were married in St Patrick's Church in January 1839 by **Father Sumner, the first priest to be ordained in Australia.**

After producing five children in quick succession, Ellen's husband Thomas died suddenly in 1847. Now a widow, Ellen quickly married Thomas Ward, a convict per *William Jardine*, in 1848. This marriage was performed in Maitland and two daughters were born in that town. Thomas died in 1854 and Ellen came to live with her son in Sorrell Street, Parramatta where she eventually died in November 1878.

Widowed women often remarried quickly as they needed both a roof over their heads and financial support. With five small children life would have been very difficult as at that time there was no widow's pension or child support. Although Ellen's second marriage may have been a marriage of convenience, it lasted until Thomas died.

Ellen was remembered affectionately. Her memorial reads:



In affectionate remembrance of

ELLEN WARD
The beloved wife of
THOMAS WARD
Died Nov 14 1878
Aged 67 years

PHILLIP HOGAN was a political prisoner from Clonmel, Ireland. He was a member of the United Irishmen, and was transported for life for political offences against English rule.

An educated man, he arrived in 1799 on *Friendship* the same ship that carried Father Dixon to the colony. He married Mary McMahon in 1810 and they went on to have eight children (and 59 grandchildren by the time he died!) The 1824 census reveals he was on 180 acres of land at South Creek with 17 acres in wheat, 1½ in potatoes with another 40 acres cleared. He owned 110 horned cattle, 23 hogs, 17 bushels of wheat and 5 bushels of maize. This is a convict who worked hard and did remarkably well in the colony. Phillip was an assigned servant to Reverend Samuel Marsden at his farm, *Mamre* at St Marys and continued to live there for some time after he gained his freedom.

His curious epitaph reads,

*“How lovd how valud once avails thee not
To whom related or by whom begot
A heap of duft [dust] alone remains of thee
Tis all thou art and all the proud shall be.”*

This verse is taken from Alexander Pope's "Elegy to a Dear Departed Lady."



THE MEMORY OF
PHILIP HOGAN
WHO DEPARTED THIS
LIFE 23 May 1829
Aged 63 Years
How lovd how valud once avails thee not
To whom related, or by whom begot
A heap of duft alone remains of thee
Tis all thou art and all the proud shall be.

Judith's report to Parramatta Council elicited the following email on 6th March:

Judith

Thank you so much for organising and attending the Clean Up Australia day at Saint Patrick's Cemetery. It's a great outcome for visitors and the cemetery. Can I ask you to also please extend a big thank you from City of Parramatta to all those volunteers who attended.

The site looks much improved with the removal of the litter. We do have a contractor managing the vegetation and Council

ground staff remove litter etc, however I'll give some thought to improving the regular maintenance regime including removing leaf litter from within monument surrounds.

In regards to the maintenance issues that you identify below, we're aware of the Cranny headstone and this is on our list for repair. The other items will be attended to asap.

Regards

Pino Todarello
A/Supervisor Open Space and Natural Resources

Belonging Matters

Debra Andrews affords us a 'wee' window into her family's long association with St Pat's Parish — well beyond a century!

As a little girl there was nothing I enjoyed more than going to Mass at St Patrick's with my 'Gran'. It was pre-'Vatican II' days and dressing for Mass included diving deep into her drawer full of gloves and mantillas. We would sit on the left side -- front pew. In the mid 1960s before the church burnt down, the front pew would have been approximately where the holy water font is now in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. For me, this was terribly exciting geography as my parents (with my four siblings) were 'mid-church, right hand-siders'. So, this unexplored territory felt like Burke and Wills traversing the continent!



Me in my 'flying saucer hat' in 1965.

At the age of three or four, my wearing a mantilla was out of the question with my mother. She had me wearing a more 'age-appropriate' head gear of a hat that looked like a flying saucer. On a windy day it would take to the air, unless I had the chunky piece of attached elastic in place under my fleshy little chin.

Gran would tell me stories of how our family had been members of St Patrick's Parramatta for nearly a hundred years. This was in the mid 1960s so now in 2020, it seems we sit at 138 years of belonging. I recently started digging in an attempt to discover who and when my relatives became members of St Patrick's Parish. Imagine my dismay when I discovered that Gran's parents had been married at Holy Trinity Granville in 1882. However, all was not lost. It appears that my Great Grandparents (Stefano Ellich & Jane Wright) had been one of the first marriages to take place at Holy Trinity, Granville and at that time it was part of the St Patrick's Parramatta Parish. Gran had us in, on a technicality!



Robert & Ada Andrews

'Gran' (Ada Ellich) and 'Pa' (Robert Andrews) were married at St Patrick's, Parramatta in 1924. Then, my own parents, Pat Royan & Don Andrews, were married there in 1957.



My siblings and I received all the Sacraments in St Patrick's. (eldest to youngest Gary, Bill, me Debra, Kathryn and Rob). And, although none of us now live in the vicinity of the Cathedral we all retain a close attachment to the Blessed

Sacrament Chapel (the old church to us). — Memories of when our parents would chat after Mass in the hot sun by the front doors on Victoria Rd (now behind the Chapel altar) and pick up the Sunday papers from the paperboy who would be perched on the drinking fountain across the road. Us children would play around the interesting curves of the church and in Marist Brothers School next door, (where the cathedral now stands), with other children we knew from St. Patrick's Primary School and whom we still call friends to this day.



Water Fountain from where Sunday newspapers were sold

My father passed away in 2015. And whilst cleaning out drawers I stumbled upon some real family St Patrick's history. In a little box I found some medals my 'Pa' (Robert Andrews) had been awarded. One was from the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society in 1922; the other from the United Friendly Society (UFS) Dispensary Institute Parramatta District for serving as President in 1929-30 and for services rendered until 1937.



What struck me most was that these medals were gold, one marked 9ct and the other 18ct. By comparison, the computer-generated awards we receive today, seem a little sad. The medals were beautifully engraved, so some 90 years, on a Granddaughter would know what they were for and when they were awarded. Also in the drawer was what I now know is a green velvet Ceremonial Hibernian collar (given to members post 1870) with glamorous gold tassels.



Cont'd next page.

Belonging Matters cont'd

I hope parishioners of the new, modern Cathedral of St. Patrick's will have treasured memories and community experiences to pass down in their families as I have had.

My Family circa 1983: ↓



Robert 'Pa' Andrews about 65ish

← Back row: L-R - Bill, Kathryn, Rob, Mum & Dad
Front row: L-R - Debra, Joanne, Bill's wife, Gary

Editor's 'Find': Below is a photo of Debra's parents, Don and Pat with me at the 2013 St Pat's Spring Fair. They were always very faithful supporters of all parish endeavours.



The Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society

The society was established in Victoria in 1868 to assist Irish Catholic immigrants with funeral and sickness benefits. There were also branches in other states. They based themselves in Catholic parishes and had a triple role:

1. to provide sickness, hospital and funeral benefits for members through subscriptions,
2. to cherish the memory of Ireland,
3. and to foster loyalty to Australia, their adopted home.

Hibernians, in their colourful green and gold regalia were prominent in the organisation of St Patrick's Day activities and in many other social occasions run by branches.

United Friendly Society, (UFS) Dispensary Institute Parramatta District

This was a society formed in 1880. This social enterprise is still operating on a not-for-profit basis. They exist solely for the benefit of members, working to improve the health of both our members and the local community.

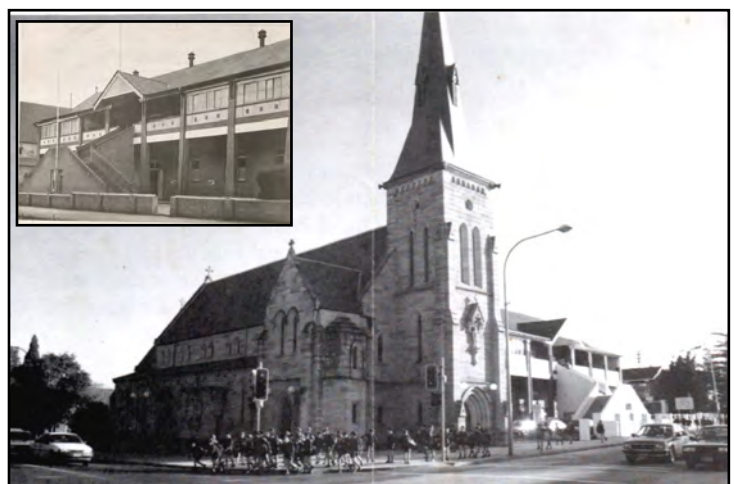
Parish History Matters

Parishioners, only familiar with the new Cathedral post 2003, might perhaps have trouble envisaging the old St Pat's that Debra mentions in her story. Hopefully, these archival photos will help put them in the picture.

Picture 1: Cathedral interior pre Feb. fire 1996. The Sanctuary area is now the main entrance enclosed by those magnificent doors designed by Robin Blau. The original stained glass window lost in the 1996 fire now houses the Eternity Window.

Picture 2: St Pat's interior circa 1995. Taken from the Sanctuary to the back of the church. Now, it is the Sanctuary of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. (Debra sat in the front pew, left side, with Gran).

Picture 3: Exterior of "old" St Pat's. To the right is the Marist Brothers School (also inset), on which site the main cathedral now stands.





In December last year, five of St Patrick's CREDO Youth Group had the good fortune to attend the ACYF — Australian Catholic Youth Festival — held in Perth under Fr Chris del Rosario's supervision. They readily agreed to the request for write-ups about being part of such a huge convergence of young Catholics from around the nation.



Hi, my name is Dylan Lal, I am 20 years old and one of the Credo Youth Leaders here at St Patrick's. In 2019 I was fortunate enough to be a part of the group sent to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) in Perth to represent the Parramatta Diocese.

I was very interested in attending ACYF Perth because I had attended the same festival two years prior which was actually held in Sydney, and it was here that I would further develop my spiritual relationship and journey with God. In witnessing the masses of youth who came from all over Australia, was incredibly moving for me because I could see how in touch these students and young adults were with their faith, and I just needed to see where this could go for me. In saying so, I was able to fly out with my fellow youth group members and Fr Chris del Rosario (our group leader) over to Perth. Upon arriving in Perth my group and I fell in love with the beautiful clear blue sky as we had not seen this in a while since NSW was experiencing harsh bushfires, and after numerous photos we continued on to our hotel where we would prepare for the next three days of ACYF.

The first day of the festival began with music and words from various speakers greeting us to their land and city of Perth. The event would then progress into a series of segments where the Perth youth demonstrated the beauties of their home.

Now, a few days prior the Director of Catholic Youth Parramatta James Camden contacted and asked me to represent the Diocese of Parramatta in an ACYF segment called 'Cruisin' with Columba' to answer some questions. Of course, I was so anxious about the idea of speaking in front of a mass audience,



but before I could doubt myself, I told him that I'd be delighted to do it and I was now committed to the task. I then became a part of this panel with

Bishop Columba from the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes and four inspiring individuals each from a different state. Here I would give Australia my testimony of my faith journey with God, and it was from this moment I'd become known as the 'Poster Boy' and the 'Face of the Parramatta Diocese' during the span of ACYF.

After all introductions, we would explore the great presentations, be a part of live praise and worship sets from Catholic bands and musicians of Perth, participate in fun activities which allowed the young adults to move around and meet new people, and whether

**My encounter
with the Holy Spirit
allowed me to realise
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much more amazing feats in life**

you wanted to do those things right away or later you could find quiet rooms for prayer and adoration. For me, I attended the praise and worship workshops where I could hear about all the amazing journeys through faith and reflect on my own. In saying that, I also found a great joy in being able to assist Fr Chris del Rosario in leading our group and being able to connect with one another, whether we were entertaining each other with stories or listening to each other's recounts on our days and how we felt.

The second day of ACYF Fr Chris let us roam around and experience the festival for ourselves and look for what was calling to us. I took straight to the performances from my favourite catholic musicians Josh Angrissano and Gen Bryant, and funny enough while I was there to enjoy their music and hopefully grab a photo (which I definitely did), I actually met another stranger and became engrossed in conversation about life, faith and being able to come to such an event. I got to speak to Josh's wife who was running his merchandise spot and she shared their struggles and blessings since moving from the US to Australia. At Gen Bryant's performance I happened to be sitting next to a wonderful couple who I would soon find out to be her parents. I met them again at Gen's merchandise store and we spoke for quite some time about Gen and how it was so exciting to see all these youths in one spot for God. For me, the second day was a day of reflection because it was God's guidance which placed me in positions where I would meet amazing and inspirational people who would influence how I carried myself with God.

Our final day was filled with mixed feelings of excitement and sadness because everyone wanted to stay just a little longer before returning home. Cont'd next page

Youth Matters....more on ACYF

Dylan Lal's article cont'd from previous page

In saying that, instead of going to another music performance I visited a presentation on the Aboriginal Culture to educate myself and find out how I could support the culture once I returned home. Afterwards, I managed to learn about the importance of Music Ministry and tips about how to manage youth groups when singing and leading masses, these would be tips I'd take with me to better serve in our youth group with Genevieve Lee, our Lead Musician and fellow Youth Leader. Ultimately the day was capped off with a pilgrimage walk to the final mass site where all ACYF participants would gather for mass, receive our final blessings and be sent home to bring back the Spirit which has spoken to each and every one of us.

The festival's theme, **"Listen to what the Spirit is saying"**, really resonated with me and came in a full circle on the last day. It took some time for me to think about it and I allowed myself time to also pray on how I felt after the three days. My encounter with the Holy Spirit allowed me to realise that we each have the power to accomplish great things, but it is only when we allow God to work through us, we can achieve much more amazing feats in life. God placed me in positions which put me out of my comfort zone. He provided me with confidence to speak with strangers and with that, God has never been more important to me.



Kayleigh Figueredo writes:

I'm 15 years old and I attend Catherine McAuley High School, Westmead. I'm an altar server at the Vigil Mass, and I volunteer at the Cloister Café on Sunday, once a month with my mother. I have been involved in church life here since I was 10 years old.

I first heard about the ACYF Festival in Perth through Fr. Chris, and we, along with Stacie, Dylan, Mel and Gen attended it from the 7th to 11th of December in 2019. ACYF was all about focusing on the theme "Listen to what the Spirit is saying" especially through talks on certain topics and lots of music. Overall, it was a three day festival (plus two days of travelling) filled with prayer, music and lots of fun.

Personally, the plenaries and the musical events were my favourites, because it was a time when everyone would gather together as a huge community and enjoy the performances and prepare for the day ahead. There were plenaries in the morning and at night, where we would pray together, sing together and laugh together before heading out into the different areas of the convention centre for talks and performances, or before heading back to the hotel after an exhausting but eventful day.

"Listen to what the Spirit is saying" is all about taking some time before making decisions to think about the best way to approach the situation. Is this what Jesus would have done? It's really helped me to grow my faith because after returning from the trip I tend to reflect more and think about things before I act them out. This theme also helps me to take time out of my day to pray and reflect on events that have happened, and figure out the best way to solve any problems I might have.

ACYF 2021 will be my second ACYF and it's rumoured to be held in a rural location; so a change of scenery will also be a very refreshing place to reflect on my faith journey so far, and I can't wait to go again!



Fr Chris above and Dylan enjoy being 'a part of praise and worship sessions with Catholic bands



Youth Matters

still more on ACYF

Genevieve Lee, fellow Credo Leader reflects:

At the beginning of 2019 I found myself commencing my post high-school life and preparing to journey to the other side of the globe for World Youth Day 2019 in Panama City.

This pilgrimage proved to be one of the most fruitful moments, in my life thus far. I had the opportunity to grow in faith and friendship with those around me, whilst celebrating my faith and my God with people from different countries. Saying yes to this and delving into the unknown proved to be easier than expected. But coming down from the mountain that was World Youth Day was the real challenge. You go from being on a constant high with your friends and days full of prayer and praise, to coming home to your normal everyday life, where I realised it's much harder to engage in personal prayer when it's just you and God. When I finally found myself in a space to pray though, I asked God to continue to help me grow however He thought fit.

So when the opportunity to attend the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) in Perth arose last December, I said yes.

The three-day festival was packed with plenary sessions, talks from distinguished Catholic speakers, opportunities to engage with bishops and discuss the Plenary Council 2020 as well as live music.

With so many options to choose from in such a lively environment, I found myself more attracted to daily Mass, Adoration and Reconciliation. By having the choice to engage in prayer amidst all the hype of the festival, gave me time out to be grateful and thankful for all the opportunities I had been given in 2019.

Overall, the festival was such a great space to make new friendships and rekindle old ones. Being surrounded by other young people who wanted to meet and encounter the Father, the Son and the Spirit, was such a heartening experience. It



reminded me that despite all the hardships we as young people experience individually and collectively, there lies a unique and sacred place in our faith that allows us to unite and find a sense of belonging.

Also a big thank you to Father Chris del Rosario for guiding our group spiritually and physically over to Perth. Our journey would not have been as enjoyable and easy without him! Our thanks should also be extended to our parish at St Pat's as well, for continuing to support the spiritual growth of the Credo youth. We are eternally grateful, to be supported by you all whether financially or spiritually. Please know that we continue to keep you all in our prayers wherever we go.



A Youth's Good Deed Matters

Naomi Weilche, supported by family and friends, arrived at the Cloister Function Room to undertake a very brave act — that of sacrificing her locks all for a worthwhile cause. Naomi explains further, providing blow by blow shots of the shearing procedure.



On Sunday 15th March I participated in the **World's Greatest Shave**, a fundraising event, organised by the Leukemia Foundation, that raises money that goes towards supporting those diagnosed with Leukemia, as well as their families. Every year thousands of people participate in this fundraiser to shave their hair off, some even donating their hair to make wigs for Leukemia sufferers. I wanted to participate in this as I wanted to be a part of something that helps make a change. On the night of the shave I was surrounded with all my family friends who also took part by being the ones who shaved my head. I had originally pledged to raise \$350 but by the end of the fundraiser I had raised \$1,024. I would like to take this time to thank everyone who donated to this wonderful cause. **Naomi**



The shearers, from the top: Dylan, Fr Chris, Mili, Genevieve and Anna, Naomi's mother.



Interestingly, Genevieve, a few years ago underwent a similar experience

to raise money for charity.

Youth Matters

 a final ACYF article from the youngest attendee

Stacie Touche was just 14 when she went to ACYF. Readers will be impressed by her honest account of the experience.

Last year in December I had the privilege of travelling to Perth for The Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) along with a few other parishioners. My name is Stacie Touche, I am 15 years old, currently in Year 10 at St Patrick's Marist College Dundas. I have been a part of Teen Credo for around five years and have been an altar server at the Cathedral for the past seven years and this is my experience at ACYF.

At first I thought that I wouldn't be able to go to ACYF due to my age, because at the time I was 14 and being under 18 I thought I needed parental supervision. But it turned out I only needed adult supervision, so when that was confirmed, I asked my parents if I could go. I wanted to go to ACYF because from what I had heard from the rest of Credo, it just sounded pretty cool, and I thought, "Hey I want to go! I'm going to learn some new stuff about my faith, and I might meet some new people. It's going to be great!"

Little did I know that it would bring far more to my life than a few friendships and more knowledge.

Before the trip I was very nervous that I wouldn't meet any new people because I am very awkward when meeting someone new and I am also very quiet. I did make one specific friend, with whom I ended up walking to the final Mass and I still keep in contact with her.

My favourite part of ACYF had to be the final Mass. To get there we had to walk quite a distance. Once we arrived, there was music and I saw thousands of people lining up at the food trucks. But when Mass started the atmosphere changed dramatically. This was my favourite part, not because of the great food and music, but because I finally felt at peace, and I hadn't felt that in quite a while. It also felt good to attend Mass, sitting down amongst people around my age and who had the same love for the faith as I do. Being able to go to Mass and feel at peace and to be more attentive than usual, and feel so full was something new, something special.

Throughout the Conference I attended many talks that lead to many questions and notes that I made on my phone. On the last day of ACYF one of the talks I went to just happened to be in the Prayer Space, located behind the Chapel, almost as if it were hidden. Once I entered it I felt so calm and almost at peace. I say almost at peace, because during most of the trip, I was distracted. When I walked in I found a spot in the corner. I sat down and started writing in my journal, writing down all my questions and reflecting on my notes. And that's when I realised how distracted I'd been for the whole trip. I was so distracted by my surroundings and the people around me, that I hadn't opened up my heart completely for much to happen. Yes, I had gained information and had had different experiences, but I hadn't actually had any really meaningful experiences, because my heart was distracted.

In the Prayer Room, I asked myself many questions and also figured out a lot of things: things I needed to work on, things I needed to change and things I needed to start doing. It was in that Prayer Space I realised that I can't hear God, because He whispers, and my life is filled with so much noise. Even when I'm in physical silence, my heart and mind are filled with so much noise. The talk on liturgical and worship music that I was

supposed to go to, ended up being moved to the Chapel, right next to the Prayer Space, but I didn't end up going, and I don't regret it.

To anyone considering going to the next ACYF, please just do it. If you're scared that you won't know anyone, that's fine, — people will come up to you and talk with you. If you just want to go because you think it sounds cool, like I did in the beginning, honestly go, because I bet you will still get something out of it.

As long as you try your best to truly open your heart to God something will happen. Even if it is something small, because that small thing could trigger the next big thing in your life.



Stacie receives Holy Communion from Archbishop Prowse from the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese at the final Mass

Stacie at the final Mass with some of the other youth from St Pat's: Melissa, Kayleigh and Dylan.



◀ Stacie, earlier this year at "Lifted Live" organised by Catholic Youth Parramatta. In the next issue of St Pat's Matters, we hope to induce her to talk about the experience of performing at this event.

The Next Issue of St Pat's Matters.....

might still be months away, but during this COVID-19 Lockdown, we encourage parishioners to share their experiences:

- how has the virus crisis impacted on your lives physically, emotionally, spiritually;
- how has your faith been tested/strengthened;
- comments on celebration of Holy Week/Easter in "lockdown";
- what "Good Sam" acts you have witnessed or experienced personally; and
- what positives have emerged from the crisis.

Email to M. Polizzi at balmap5@bigpond.com or leave it at the parish office marked "for St Pat's Matters".



COVID-19 'strikes': Sacramental Programme affected.

**Special Update
by
Meg Gale, Co-Ordinator,**

**We thank Meg for submitting this report
in answer to questions we asked
re postponement of the Sacramental Programme.**

When was the decision made and why at that time?

The decision was made in the week leading up to the session for Remembering Baptism 4 (scheduled for Saturday 21st March). It was made at this time due to growing concern around the fast-developing situation with COVID-19 in Australia and the ongoing advice from the government in relation to this. On the Monday before our session, Mr Anthony Matthews, REC at St Oliver's Harris Park, contacted the team via email to flag that we needed an action plan in response to the developing situation of COVID-19. The response of the team was strongly that we should postpone at this time and so I consulted with Fr Bob to seek his advice regarding this and on the Wednesday 18th March, an email was sent to the participating families to notify them that we would postpone. As it happened, the timing couldn't have been better as it was just later that same morning that the government tightened restrictions around large gatherings, directing that these should be limited to groups of no more than 100 people; under these new restrictions we would not have been able to hold the session anyway.

Reactions of you and the Team?

I think postponing the session was seen as necessary, although I'm sure most team members also felt it was also really unfortunate that we had to postpone under these circumstances, but the safety and wellbeing of all involved was —and of course, still is — paramount for us.

Reaction from the parents and children?

All the reactions I received were positive and parents were thankful that we had taken these measures to ensure the safety of all.

Any idea of when the Programme will resume?

Initially, I was hoping that we might be able to resume after Easter with the scheduled Term 2 sessions but with the current climate and the projection of restrictions being at least 6 months unfortunately, it is unlikely that this will be the case. So, it is really hard to say for sure when we'll be able to recommence. At the moment it remains a matter of wait and see.

Any comments of your own?

I would like to thank Fr Bob for his guidance during this challenging time and the Parish and Sacramental Teams for their ongoing encouragement, patience and support. I also thank our wonderful parish community for their ongoing prayers for the programme and for our children in the process (albeit suspended at this time). Last, but not least, I thank our families for their understanding and reassure them that we remain here for them should they need any help or support during this difficult time of uncertainty. Please be assured that as soon as we have clearance, we will be doing our utmost to get the program back on track and the children ready to receive their First Eucharist.

**Email sent to parents on the morning of Wednesday,
18th March notifying them that the session for
Remembering Baptism 4 had to be postponed:**

Dear all,

I hope this email finds you all safe and well.

This email is to notify you that, in response to increasing concern about the developments surrounding COVID-19 and with a desire to do everything we can to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of our community, the Sacraments of Initiation team, under the guidance of Fr Bob, have had to make the hard decision to postpone Saturday's session for Remembering Baptism 4.

This is an unprecedented time which brings so much uncertainty for us all, but it is still our hope that as the situation with COVID-19 continues to be monitored and reassessed we might be able to reschedule the Remembering Baptism 4 Session to a later date. Please know, though, at this time, there is no certainty of when this might be. We will continue to endeavour to comply with the parameters of current recommendations and constantly align ourselves to the developing situation. At the same time our prayers are for the speedy resolution of this situation and for the safety of all.

Please be assured that I will be in contact as soon as we have any further information on when the session might be rescheduled.

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to let me know.

Kind regards,

Meg Gale

THE GIRL WHO WANTED TO RECEIVE COMMUNION SO BADLY THAT JESUS INTERVENED DIRECTLY.

Imelda Lambertini, born in Bologna in 1322, and named Magdalen at her Baptism, was chosen as God's messenger and began doing God's work when she was only five years old.

On her fifth birthday, she asked if she could receive Holy Communion. At that time a child could not receive until they attained the age of 14. Magdalen, accepting the emptiness she felt, would have to wait.

Magdalen was 11 when she was finally granted her lifelong wish, of receiving her First Holy Communion. Incredibly, the love and joy that was felt by the young nun was too much for her. Upon receiving Communion, she closed her eyes and died, filled with her Saviour and His love.

Sister Imelda Magdalen was beatified by Pope Leo XII in 1826. She has been declared the Patroness of First Communicants and her feast day is May 12.

**Blessed Imelda, please pray for all St Pat's children
waiting to receive Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist.**

HOW DID JESUS INTERVENE TO GRANT IMELDA'S WISH?

Do a GOOGLE search and be inspired.



RCIA. UPDATE

by
Deacon Pirotta,
Co-ordinator

posted Sunday Bulletin 8/3/2020

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process that makes it possible for adults to be received into the Catholic Church.

**UNDERSTANDING THE RCIA —
a journey for the entire parish.**

Last Sunday, the Diocese celebrated the Rite of Election at St Patrick's Cathedral, at 2pm.

The Rites of Election and Enrolment of Names mark the end of a lengthy period of preparation for the Catechumens. During the Rites, the Catechumens publicly acknowledge their desire to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, and their desire to be received into full Communion with the Catholic Church on Easter Saturday. The Rites mark the beginning of a period of more intense preparation for those to be received, who, after the Rite of Election, are now called The Elect. They are asked to follow Christ with greater generosity of spirit. To our community, thank you for the prayerful support you have given the RCIA this far on the journey. Please continue to pray for our Candidates, Catechumens, Sponsors and Team as we continue our journey to Easter.

The 5 Catechumens from our parish are :
**Nurerawady, Rosnah, Jenny,
Lecky & Brandon**



When Deacon Roderick posted the above RCIA report in the Sunday Bulletin, little did he envisage what was about to happen as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on all facets of life.

Nor were the five Catechumens, (now called The Elect), pictured above with the Bishop and members of the RCIA Team, after the Rite of Election, aware that their longed for Initiation into the Catholic Church was about to be put on hold.

COVID-19 Crisis impacts Initiation



**Meet Rosnah (Aby), Jenny, Lecky, Nurerawady (Ady) & Brandon
The Elect of St Pat's Parish**

As Deacon Rod says: *The current crisis is truly and literally taking the five 'elect' during their RCIA journey, to the 'tomb' for a much longer period than perhaps any other people in recent times. Their new birth in Christ is going to be more meaningful because they have experienced what it means and entails to be a disciple of Christ.*

Like everything else during the Covid-19 pandemic, the RCIA journey has been affected. We continued to meet up to the time the law permitted us and that was the Saturday Vigil Mass of 21st March – the 4th Sunday of Lent. During that Mass, all of the five 'Elect' knelt and celebrated the 2nd Scrutiny. **It was the last weekend after which all public gatherings were prohibited.**

At first, it was a great shock. The news meant that we could not celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation at the long-awaited Easter Vigil. Although, very disappointing for the 'elect', their status in the Church is very special. The elect, after their period of catechumenate are fully formed for living the Christian life. So, the RCIA Team has endeavoured "to incorporate them into parish life the same way we involve the rest of our parishioners. Specifically, with the help of their godparents, we encourage the elect to continue to meditate on God's word, to live as a Christian community in their domestic churches, to fully, consciously, and actively participate in the church's worship through the Liturgy of the Word or Liturgy of the Hours, and to witness to their faith through acts of charity as much as they are able in these circumstances. What we should not do is to treat them like catechumens, especially if our catechumenate is structured as a classroom experience. Formal catechesis ended for the elect on the First Sunday of Lent.

<https://teamrcia.com/2020/03/rcia-mystagogy->

We have shared links, prayers, homilies, participated in live stream Sunday Masses and the Triduum in the comfort of our homes and communicated with copious emails. We watched the Pope's 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing and connected with the Universal Church.

As I contemplated the disappointment of the Elect, I imagined Mary pregnant with Jesus and her long 9 months waiting to give birth to her Saviour. What was her response? Mary's answer in search for meaning in uncertain and anxious times, was to connect with her cousin

Elizabeth to share her joy and give praise to God. This is somewhat similar to our Elect's experience which led me to write a prayer for them during the COVID-19 crisis (see next page). I have also encouraged them to pray St Alphonsus Liguori 18th Century Spiritual Communion prayer – a prayer which I have learnt when I was a young boy.

This is what one of the 'elect' wrote: ***"Spiritual Communion is what we need at the time of quarantine. With the technology that humans innovated, I feel blessed to still be able to join the mass spiritually with the Bishop."***

Continued next page

CORONAVIRUS INTERRUPTS RCIA

Cont'd from page 17

Although the usual time for the celebration of the Sacraments of initiation is the Easter Vigil, the RCIA already allows for the celebrations of the Sacraments to take place outside the Easter Vigil. Obviously, the preferred option is during the Easter Season, but since this will not be possible, it can be celebrated any other Sunday (no: 26 & 27**). The rite also encourages us that when 'the celebration takes place outside the usual time care should be taken to ensure that it has a markedly paschal character' (no: 200 **). The third Scrutiny will be celebrated before the Sacraments of Initiation, either on a Sunday or a weekday with the usual intervals between celebrations and they are not to be celebrated on solemnities of the liturgical year. (no: 133 & 30 **).

We will continue to do this until the quarantine is lifted. This year's RCIA journey is truly and literally taking the 'elect' to the 'tomb' for a much longer period than perhaps any other people in recent times. Their new birth in Christ is going to be more meaningful because they have experienced what it means and entails to be a disciple of Christ. Their incorporation in the life of Christ and the parish is already taking place. Hence, the fruits of the Spirit and the grace of God are already being received and lived.

** from Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult (Study Edition).

Prayer of the Elect.

Lord, we are your 'elect'.
Lord, purify us and enlighten us through the Scrutinies.
Lord, you quench our thirst,
Lord, you give us light and Life.

We are ready to accept You as our water, light and life,
But our Easter feels so far away!
The waters of baptism seem to have dried up
As we wait for You to meet us in the Sacraments of Initiation.

Our hope lingers as our faith continues to grow in You.
Our hearts ache as we wait for Your death and resurrection.
Our bodies are united with Your sufferings.
Our minds join You in Your rising.

Make us one with You in spirit.
Make us one with Your church while we wait to be initiated.
Make your grace flow through the prayers of Your Church
As we are already united with You.

Mary carried You in her womb.
She ran in haste to the mountains.
Her cousin Elizabeth waited to be embraced.
Her joy was infectious, and her child leapt with joy.

Put Your arms around us,
No virus can stop our love for You.
Continue to purify us with Your protection and favour
Until the day we immerse ourselves into Your tomb and womb
AMEN.

Deacon Rod Pirotta 29.3.2020

Words of Comfort Matter

Always in the midst of crises there are holy and gifted people within the Catholic Church who dispense words of assurance to strengthen the Faithful.

May you be encouraged as you reflect on the offerings below:

From Pope Francis:

**"Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic,
in the face of the many false securities
that have now crumbled,
in the face of so many hopes betrayed,
in the sense of abandonment
that weighs upon our hearts,
Jesus says to each one of us:**

**'COURAGE,
OPEN YOUR HEART TO MY LOVE.'**

"We currently might feel like we are in a kind of exile time. Certainly, as a faith community, we are exiled from being in each other's presence and exiled from receiving the Eucharist.

But after the painful period of exile for the Israelites, came the time to return.

And so we trust it will be for us.

"The God who once hung upon a Cross out of love for us, knows everything there is to know about human suffering. He is suffering with us in our current struggles.

Some people think that if you have enough faith, life will be plain sailing. But this is not so. The fact that we can swim doesn't prevent us from being knocked about by the waves. In the same way faith doesn't shield us from the hard knocks of life or death.

What, then does faith do?

It gives us bearings, and thus enables us to live in a fragile world without getting lost or giving in to despair.

Just as swimmers trust that if they don't panic, and if they do a few simple things, then the power of the sea will uphold them. So believers entrust their lives to a greater power than us all.

This power is the creative dynamic of God, who rebreathed new life into his Son at the moment of His Resurrection!

We are called to re-breathe new life into our sisters and brothers, our Society, our country, our world!

INCONCEIVABLE!

FAITHFUL LOCKED OUT!

NOTICE

As from Monday 23 March 12pm

The Cathedral & Blessed Sacrament Chapel

will be locked until further notice.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

We are not sacrificing our faith and our ultimate loyalty to the church when we temporarily close the churches. For “church” never closes, since the love of God never ceases to be poured into our hearts by the Spirit.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE LAST TIME CHURCHES WERE CLOSED IN AUSTRALIA WAS DURING THE SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC OF 1919.

Counting our blessings as COVID 19 tightened its grip

Liturgy means “public religious worship” and that is precisely what the pandemic has ‘stolen’ from us.

The official notice posted on Murphy House told parishioners that from Monday 23rd March, we could no longer enter the Cathedral for communal worship. Almost like the final nail in the coffin.

The previous day, Sunday 22nd March, was the last time Mass was celebrated with the faithful present in the Cathedral. And even then it was with social distancing already being enforced. Picture this: Pat Preca, Mili Lee and Noella Sheerin before 11am Mass going around measuring off two metre lengths then marking those spots with a strip of masking tape on alternate pews, to show people where they could sit! And already the choir had become a casualty of the pared down liturgy. No singing! Only 100 people were allowed in the main Cathedral, 50 could listen to the Mass from the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and then other worshippers had to congregate in the Cloister, listening via the loudspeaker system.

What else was different? The priest celebrated Mass from the side of the altar, closest to Victoria Road facing to the congregation sitting on the Cloister side and those assembled outside. The Readers had to forsake the Ambo to proclaim the readings from a stand near the Altar.



Now, Fr Bob and Fr Chris were further “put to the test” as how best to serve the flock with people now locked out of the Cathedral. So now alone in the Cathedral, the priest celebrated daily Mass at 6:30am and 12:30pm and on Sundays **for the people**; with Mass being broadcast to the Cloister for those who chose to still attend, keeping in mind the social distancing laws as much as possible. Then when Mass was no longer allowed to be broadcast to the Cloister, some people felt they were no longer participating fully.

And as the days progressed restrictions further limiting the number of people gathering publicly and social distancing were strictly enforced. This impacted on those gathering in the Cloister for Mass: distribution of Holy Communion altered from Father coming out to the people, during Mass, to the people going to the Sacristy door after Mass, to finally Father going to people in their cars to give Holy Communion.

Undoubtedly, St Pat’s parishioners thank God, that conscious of their priestly ministry, and no matter how difficult it might be, both Fr Bob and Fr Chris were determined to ensure the faithful had access to participation in Mass and the Sacraments. They are indeed a blessing for us.

Dedication to their pastoral duty saw our two priests daily set up The Blessed Sacrament within the Cathedral so people could come for Adoration.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation, too was available, firstly on the side verandah of Murphy House, then within the Cloister at the rear of Murphy House.

A step forward came along thanks to the blessing of the internet and techno savvy Fr Chris and Mindy Mercado, both of whom experimented with, and were successful in videoing Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel via a mobile phone set up on a tripod, then posting it on Facebook and YouTube. Parishioners could tune into Mass — spiritually linked, although physically remote. There were even Readers to Proclaim The Word of God.

And then: a HUGE leap forward: behind the closed doors of the Cathedral, the Diocese seized the opportunity to install live streaming equipment in preparation for the Sacred Paschal Triduum. Viewers will still have seen the Cathedral devoid of worshippers. But at least the celebrant most of the time was joined by the deacon, and an altar server. Also present were Readers AND a pruned back choir, their singing too long missing from liturgical celebrations.

So from now on most Masses, until life returns to normal, will be live streamed and people can choose which Mass they want to view. Live streamed Masses will then be moved to the Cathedral’s Facebook or YouTube channel.

And FYI: St Patrick’s Outreach Programme, set up by the Parish Team as the crisis took hold, is there for the welfare of all parishioners, especially the more senior members. If you need help, don’t hesitate to call the parish office (8839 8400). If you know of someone who might need assistance let us know or advise them to contact the parish office.



HOLY WEEK & THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM: *Victims of the Virus*

What a difference a virus can make!

The beautiful liturgies and rituals that we, as Catholics are so accustomed to celebrating during this most sacred time — not only here in our parish but in parishes world wide — became ‘casualties’ of the pandemic.

However, Fr Bob in his reflection in the bulletin for Palm Sunday urged us: *May these coming days be sacred, solemn, holy and challenging for us. This present health crisis challenges us to see in our suffering and discomfort the mercy and presence of our God.*

So with St Patrick’s Cathedral closed to public worship, live screening of liturgies became the norm. But in what ways did COVID19 cause drastic pruning of Holy Week ceremonies?



No Blessing of the Palms in the Cloister or procession into the Cathedral



No Palm Sunday Procession from Parramatta Town Hall to the Cathedral for the 6pm Youth Mass



No Office of Tenebrae on Monday evening.



No Chrism Mass: on Wednesday for the blessing and distribution of the Holy Oils to priests and representatives of the Diocese’s 47 parishes.



No renewal by priests of their vows made at Ordination. (Hopefully this Mass will be held later in the year.)

Celebration of the Sacred Paschal Triduum is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. It encompasses the most profound and pivotal mysteries of the Catholic Faith.

But this year: ‘pared down liturgies:

HOLY THURSDAY: Mass of the Lord’s Supper: No washing of



feet. No procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose in the Cloister, being taken to the Tabernacle instead.

GOOD FRIDAY: No Stations of the Cross in the Cloister.

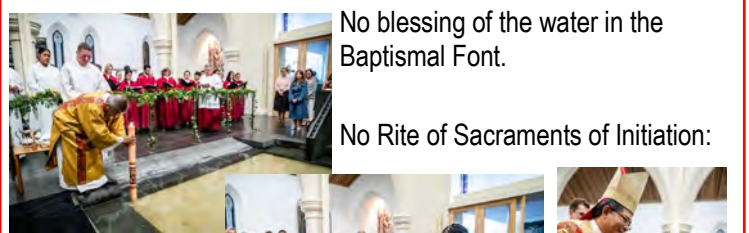


No congregation was present to venerate the Cross, or to receive Holy Communion.

THE EASTER VIGIL: No SERVICE OF LIGHT in the Cloister, nor



Procession of The Paschal Candle into the Cathedral.



No blessing of the water in the Baptismal Font.

No Rite of Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism
Confirmation
First Eucharist.



didn't want to see, like the disproportionate impacts on communities of colour, the poverty 'first-world' medics have *always* worked in, the ultimately political nature of all things.

But the virus itself does not discriminate. It takes princes and prime ministers as it does the man in a

Modern Mary (April 2020)

Three months ago, we were recoiling from apocalyptic fires, droughts and floods. There were even locusts swarming parts of Africa at the time! I remember snidely joking about a plague coming next...

Throughout communities, the responses to this coronavirus vary. They span from doomsday fear through to suspicious indifference. In our lucky country, we complain about having to stay warm in our homes, or about not being allowed to buy as many \$20 mini bottles of hand sanitiser as we want.

For many mothers, the domesticity of the lockdown has further compounded those characteristically female obligations and removed the little freedoms we once had. I've never baked, cooked and cleaned so much in my life. And home-schooling? That's a myth. I would sooner believe that a bilby delivered my online shopping this week than believe that my son was learning ANYTHING at home. I try to remain in control of the elements though. I try to purify my family's little world. In the initial phase, when we were all still out and about, I went to Aldi. For no known reason, my youngest lays flat on the ground in front of the shelf of disinfectant and licks the floor. You don't control a thing. Not a jot.

Many writers and commentators speak of how this virus has reversed all of the effects of globalisation, trade and capitalism, bringing the richest nations to their knees. They speak of how religious purists are bracing themselves with science, and how scientific realists are praying and hoping that the probabilities tip in our favour. We can all see the futility of trying to harness unseen atoms that travel as they please.

We feel that futility and lack of control each time we consider that we don't actually have a cure for cancer – that it's a symbiotic attack by rogue cells that make random what science had painstakingly ordered. Now, epidemiologists and virologists stand alongside statisticians and economists to forecast how we aim to control the unknowns. But they keep cautioning that the modelling is not certain, that we don't actually KNOW what the outcome will be. Despite this, we still look to the modelling for comfort. The gradual flattening of a curve soothes us, like the gentle calm that you feel when you stroke a child's curly locks flat.

We feed off statistics, the numbers help us to feel in control. Although what we capture statistically is only the tip of the iceberg, information is power, so we keep counting. The counting is a measure of our success – although each country's successes differ wildly. Sometimes the counting shines light on the things we

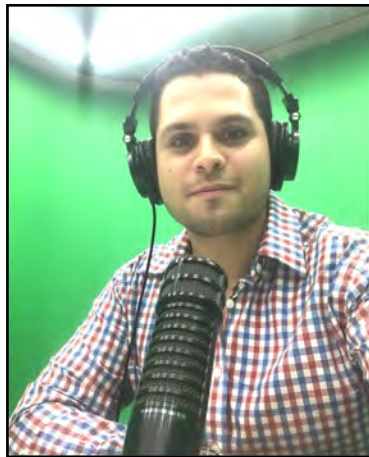
nursing home without the global reach of a million Instagram followers. There are nation states where people quietly get sick and die in their homes without the need to be counted. They don't measure their government's success by counting how many ventilators and masks it's procured, but by counting the number of days it takes for the bodies of their relatives to be picked up from outside their front door, as is the case in Ecuador.

But you know what? This week, a 30-year old woman living in Punjab saw the Himalayas from her balcony for the first time in her life. The lockdown has lifted the pollution and the North Indian state is in awe, staring at a horizon they didn't realise was there two weeks ago.



The pristine clarity that I imagine would've received Noah when the rain finally stopped. Maybe in this viral tragedy we're actually being cleansed.

Arundhati Roy writes: *"What is this thing that has happened to us? It's a virus, yes. In and of itself it holds no moral brief. But it is definitely more than a virus. Some believe it's God's way of bringing us to our senses. ...Whatever it is, coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it".* (Arundhati Roy, April 2020)



Greetings to everyone, I'm George Manassa the host and founder of *The Catholic Toolbox* Radio Show and Podcast, here on 1701AM (LIVE 8:00-9:00PM SYD. EST) on the 'Voice of Charity Australia' Radio Network.

I began broadcasting during Lent in 2019.

Our aim is to equip you with three practical solutions each week, to live the Catholic Faith in today's world.

If you enjoy listening to our radio show, why not consider emailing us at thecatholictoolbox@gmail.com to book in a time to speak or consult with us.

In late March I spoke with Father Bob Bossini, our parish priest, regarding the "Art of Running a Parish" particularly relevant in the uncertain times ahead for our parish during this Pandemic of COVID-19 and how parish life will continue to operate, however remotely, and how the community of Christ will continue to stay connected.

Here is a transcript of the concepts discussed during our interview and my thoughts as well.

The three pillars of formation for the Catholic Faith from the moment of birth unto the final days of one's life, that will shape the soul of the individual are the family, school and finally the parish.

Here we particularly focus on the nurturing of faith through involvement in parish life to foster faith formation.

The parish is a physical community with its own territorial boundary within the diocese to which it belongs. It is also your local Christian community of the Faithful where you can find access to the Sacraments, a priest and be in communion with our Lord and the other members of the Church, His Body.

More than ever, in today's modern world, parishes are struggling to fully engage the faithful belonging to their community. Many

older people who were cradle Catholics are continuing the 'tradition' of attending Sunday Mass, because 'it was just something that was always done and it is also good for the kids.' This can be such a prominent attitude among Mass goers, that we can even refer to them as '59' Catholics.— Catholics who attend Mass for 59 minutes and leave; those who have no living faith beyond the Communion line, nor vibrant involvement in the parish.

In such communities, priests and staff face this particularly daunting challenge as to how they can re-engage such people who still remain in the pews every week. And in the light of an ever-aging population, what does the future hold given the so often poor engagement of youth and fostering of vocations often evident in these times.

Here are three practical projects which every parish priest and his parishioners of any ability can work towards together.

1- Sacralise (*imbue with or treat as having a sacred character or quality*) the liturgical worship again. By far the importance of this often gets swept underneath the rug of neglect and ignorance. The purpose of our worship and the very reason for which we gather on Sunday needs to be checked. If we treat the liturgy with reverence, from sacred furnishings, music to gestures and

other elements, the parishioners will be elevated greatly to God. Think about it this way, why would you respect the Church and the Faith if we do not even take the Mass seriously? Eliminating unnecessary entertainment from the Mass and putting God at the centre of worship, will provide a greater incentive for people to continue practising the faith.

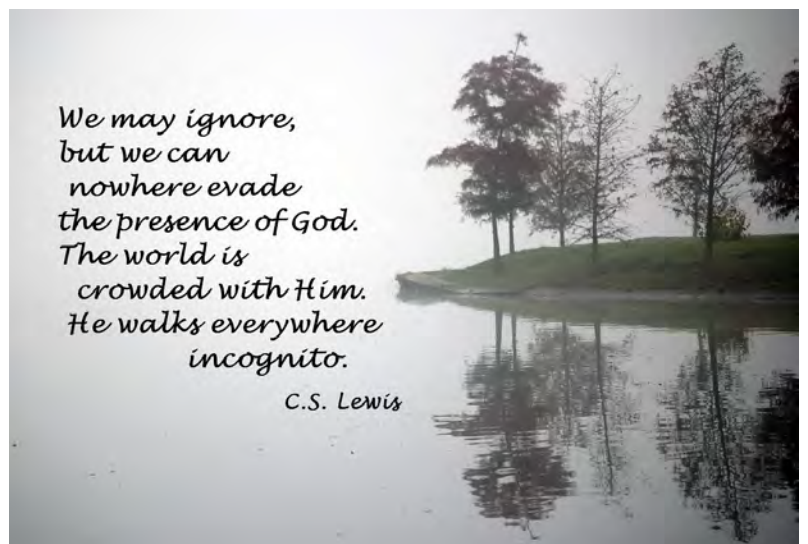
2- Create a youth/young adults group. The youth are simply the future of the church, and due to the complimentary collaboration with the Catholic schooling system to which they belong, have a greater chance of receiving catechesis and formation. — especially young adults who are asking crucial questions about the faith during our modern time; if we are not competing for the soul and mind of the youth, the secular world will inevitably win.

3- Create a parish catechetical formation program. To compliment the upgrade of liturgical practices, the reasons for the changes need to be explained, as well as tenets of the faith. Provision of a monthly or bi-monthly formation program would be a way to educate parishioners. Every parish needs to have these projects in its cycle of activities as part of its pastoral plan.

a matter
worthy of reflection
worthy of reflection

*We may ignore,
but we can
nowhere evade
the presence of God.
The world is
crowded with Him.
He walks everywhere
incognito.*

C.S. Lewis



More on The Visit of the Relics at St Pat's

Ronda Dahlen shares “being there”.

On Wednesday 4/3/2020 Tony, my husband and I were among the privileged congregation who sat in the Cathedral and waited for the arrival of these holy relics. A large crowd had gathered and we were not disappointed. At precisely 9.30 pm, a procession into the Church burst upon us and we were momentarily stunned by the enormity of the occasion and awed by what was unfolding. My heart was filled with love to see the two glass cases in which the beautiful caskets containing the relics rested.

Fr Bob was overcome with emotion, as was I, and as were all of us.

St Therese, the Little Flower, had been my inspiration through my school days (many years ago); she was the go-to saint I always prayed to whenever I was stuck during my exams. Sr. Mary Wenceslaus, of the Good Samaritans, was my teacher in primary school and on the day prior to the start of our Year 5 exam, she told the class to remember to pray to The Little Flower if ever we were stuck or panicked during the exam. The little prayer she gave us to say was

**LITTLE FLOWER, IN THIS HOUR,
PROVE THY POWER.**

I certainly had occasion to use it and it certainly did work. As the years have gone by, I passed it on to my children and grand children. Over the last 7 years I have been an Invigilator for the HSC and the level of nerves for some of the children waiting to enter the exam room, is almost unbelievable. So of course, to try and calm them down, I quickly told them of the Prayer to the Little Flower. I could tell by the look on their faces that just repeating it worked wonders, — you could say “miracles”.

Exams aside, we should all be adding this little prayer to the many we are now saying in this time of crisis that we are facing with the pandemic.

Thank you Little Flower.

Ronda



Too many special moments captured during this special occasion to share here.

From the Relics' arrival to the liturgy and time for personal veneration, to the moving adieu in the rain as the caskets



containing the Saints' Relics were reverently placed in their hearses ready to make their slow departure from the Cathedral precinct.

No manner of reporting and sharing of images can adequately describe what happened.

YOU HAD TO BE THERE!

