

ST PAT'S MATTERS

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

September 2021 | Issue . 108

*...with Faith in God,
Hope springs eternal
in this COVID crisis*

Editorial

Turbulent times have descended upon us yet again! Like a terrorist, COVID-19 re-emerged unexpectedly in late June to wreak havoc on greater Sydney; the virus then spread its deadly, invisible tentacles to infect and affect all NSW, not only healthwise: the extended lockdowns to combat the virus' spread have crippled businesses economically, and people financially and spiritually.

In our parish we lament being locked out of the Cathedral, but thank God for the blessing of Mass being livestreamed along with a plethora of spiritual nourishment being available online, especially that offered by the Mission Enhancement Team of Parramatta Diocese. Excellent!

In this issue we farewell Fr Chadi and Fr Chris evangelises at MacDonald's. Enjoy Deacon Rod's article about a woman of great faith.

On the social justice scene, Marist student Brendan Pospischil writes about bringing his school's issues of concern to the world stage via the UNHRC, while Bob Edgar attends a memorial service for the Myall Creek Massacre of aboriginal people.

With regard to spiritual matters, Maria Abraham's account of people gathering at Freeda Sawant's home last May to pray the Rosary reveals her love of, and connection to this devotion.

Judith Dunn reflects on lessons learnt from the Pandemic; Silvana Rechichi revisits childhood memories of religious celebrations back in her Italian home town; Patti Murphy and Barbara Hector recall schooldays at St Oliver's and St Pat's; and Modern Mary shares views on the varying ways mothers cope in crisis situations.

Read the updates about the SRE Ministry and Sacramental Programme and the report on the Cancer Fundraiser, *St Pat's Style* And check out who's featured in *Getting to know parishioners*

Currently we are celebrating the Season of Creation, so the last page you are exhorted to make an Ecological Examen of how your living affects **The Earth God Loves.**

M. Polizzi

Priestly Matters Farewell Fr Chadi

Unfortunately, COVID lockdown restrictions prevented Fr Chadi being able to physically say goodbye to St Pat's people. Instead, he spoke to us through his reflection (below), in Sunday's Bulletin on 8th August. That day he celebrated his last Mass joined by Fathers Robert Riedling, Chris del Rosario, Peter Williams and Joseph Nguyen in the Cathedral, devoid of a congregation, only able to reach out to the Faithful via livestreaming. Not the ideal way to say goodbye, but nevertheless it had its blessings.

Thank you Fr Chadi, for your ministry, your insightful homilies and your devotion to engaging with parishioners to foster personal relationships. **YOU WILL BE MISSED!**



IT'S TIME TO WRITE YOU my last letter in this bulletin. I would like to let you know that this Sunday, 08 August, is my last day at the Cathedral. My gratitude goes toward God for my staying at the Parish Cathedral of Parramatta for nine months, and I appreciate having had the opportunity to meet you and have a short relationship with you all.

Thank you for the support and encouragement you have provided me during my time at the Cathedral. Thank you for your active presence and heart. However, words never can give the right expression of the feeling. Thank you so much everyone.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross, Australia's first Saint. Mary MacKillop was a pioneer and advocate for the poor, sick and those on the margins of our society. Today, her mission to the poor is very much alive in our world. Mary's love for Christ was so strong that she sought Him out in the poor, sick and suffering. There are many examples in Mary's life where she put aside her own needs to serve the sick, the lonely and the disadvantaged. The children taught by the sisters often had no shoes to wear. On the night before their First Communion, Mary would have a re-enactment of the Washing of the Feet. This meant all the children would have clean feet for this special occasion in their life. From the pen of Mary MacKillop who wrote to the sisters in March 1900: *If choice be given, seek the most neglected places to which He calls us. Let us never forget that, in the spirit of our Rule, it is to those we should desire to go.... Let us be true to the beautiful spirit of our Institute.... Let St Joseph's true children remember their mission and seek first the poorest, most neglected parts of God's vineyard.*

Coming to today's reading, we find Jesus inviting us not to be anxious, not be worried. At a leadership training course, a business executive found that fifty-four percent of his worries related to things that were unlikely to happen; twenty-six percent related to past actions that could not be changed; eight percent related to the opinions of people whose opinions really did not matter to him; four percent concerned personal health issues that he had since resolved; and only six percent concerned real issues worthy of his attention. By identifying and then letting go of the worries he could do nothing about or that were a complete waste of his energy, he eliminated ninety-four percent of the problems that had plagued him.

Jesus, however, talking about worries concerning clothes, food, and drink, says, *"indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* The basis of trust is an experience that, despite the instabilities, uncertainties and controversies of life, the course of the world and our own life are ultimately in the hands of God.

How can we overcome worry?

1. Focus on eternal matters instead of temporary ones;
2. Focus on our Father's providential care;
3. Recognise our great value to God;
4. Recognise how unproductive worry is;
5. Pursue God's promises;
6. Focus on God's grace for today.

Human beings who try to live these points, or at least some of them, and discover in themselves even a tiny bit of trust in God and in life, will be relieved of the stress of constantly worrying and awaken to see their present and future more clearly. Trust in God and you will see miracles in your life.

Please keep in touch. I can be reached at my personal email address: i_chadi@live.com
United in prayer,
Fr Chadi

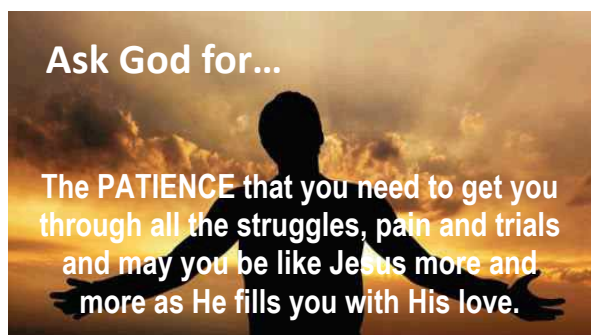
More on Fr Chadi..



One of Fr Chadi's last pastoral duties at St Pat's was as keynote speaker at the monthly Faith Formation on 18th June. Recent livestreamed Formation sessions at the Cathedral have been a collaborative effort by *Live Christ Share Christ* (Michael & Marietta Giullemma) and the *Catholic Toolbox* (George Manassa).

For his presentation on **Peace and Patience**, Fr Chadi prepared an excellent, informative power point.

Just two of the power point's numerous slides shown below reveal his innovative and impressive talent.



PATIENT ANTICIPATION.

We promised Fr Chadi, that when this oppressive LOCKDOWN ends, he will be welcomed back with open arms, by St Pat's Parish community for the promised, but long-postponed, **FAREWELL MORNING TEA.**

In his talk above Father spoke about PATIENCE. one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Let's practise that virtue now!

More Priestly Matters



Fr Chris on Mission: Evangelisation in McDonald's

When walking into McDonald's your mind is usually focused on one thing: what will I be eating today? The queue and its stretch is secondary to the thought of filling one's stomach with one of Ronald McDonald's famous burgers. Marketing isn't wasted on a hungry man. Such was the case when I had just finished giving a talk to a young adults group in the Diocese. It was quite late, and I hadn't had a bite to eat since lunch. As I was driving back to the cathedral presbytery I noticed the famous golden arches up the road and quickly made the decision to pull in for a bite to eat. I didn't think that I'd be leaving with more than a burger.

I queued up alongside others, eyes fixed on the menu. As I made the decision to order a large double quarter pounder meal with extra fries, I couldn't help but notice a McDonald's employee walk out of the toilets, eyes fixated on me. I assumed he was a bit confused with my outfit — I was wearing my clerical collar — nonetheless I made my way towards the front of the line, order in mind. As soon as I began to give my order, the employee interrupted me with the question, "Are you a padre?" I was genuinely confused, as I didn't expect that response from a McDonald's order. I answered yes and he quickly repeated his question this time more forcefully, "Are you a padre?" I calmly answered, "Yes". To my surprise, he didn't berate me, rather he turned to his colleagues informing them that I was a real priest. Rather than taking my order he asked if he could meet with me as he was interested in discussing religion. "Of course," was my response, "here's my contact details." He smiled, then took my order, and went back to work.

I can say with confidence that I didn't expect an email from him. However, God seemed to stir his heart and a few weeks later I received an email asking for an appointment. I marked out one hour for Steven (not his real name) to meet with me at my office.

The day came and I can say in all honesty it went very well. Steven was very respectful to the office of priesthood and all that I stood for but, he couldn't wrap his head around the idea of a good God desiring human flourishing. How can rules and the like allow one to truly experience freedom? If righteousness is a by-product of obedience to the law, then all things are determined, there is no freedom. Our conversation went in that direction. I don't wish to give the finer details of our conversation as it wouldn't be prudent, but I can say that the Church's teaching on Divine Law and Free Will didn't sit well with him. In the end we decided to agree to disagree and shook hands. He did say he'd like to meet with me again and I was agreeable to that.

It's been over a year since my first meeting with Steven and I've since met with him twice. He's joyfully told me that he has now become a Christian and that God is slowly revealing Himself in his life. I'm grateful to God that He has shown His love and beauty to Steven. God works in mysterious ways and He's brought one of His sons back into the fold through a small decision to order a McDonald's burger. Who knew you could get more than you paid for at McDonald's?

Editor's Note: God's mysterious ways: if I had not been watching Fr Chris' livestreamed 11am Mass on 29th August for the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, I would have missed hearing this story with which Father began his homily; and subsequently, the opportunity of asking him to relate it here. His homily focused on Moses saying, "Now, Israel, take notice of the laws and customs that I teach you today, and observe them, that you may have life," and the fact that God's commandments are not concerned with restricting human freedom, rather it is the opposite. God's law is about freedom.



Part of Deacon Roderick Pirotta's ministry at St Patrick's Cathedral is to co-ordinate the RCIA PROGRAMME (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). He agreed to share his experience of accompanying one person on her journey to becoming a Catholic – Margaret Cooper. He confided, "I am still ringing her every week during lockdown because she is now 'living the mysteries' – *mystagogia* and has plenty of questions to ask. (quite curly ones!)"

A WOMAN OF GREAT FAITH.

“When Jesus heard this, He marvelled at the centurion. Turning to the crowd following Him, He said, *"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."* (Lk: 7:9).

As the co-ordinator of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and an adult faith formator at St Patrick's Cathedral in Parramatta, I have the privilege of meeting people whose faith is extraordinary. Margaret Cooper is one of those people whose faith reminded me of that centurion.

In the last issue of St Pat's Matters, Margaret Cooper, a 92-year-old active and lively lady has eloquently shared with us her experience and journey of faith. She was a baptised Anglican, well catechised, very inquisitive, and passionate about her beliefs. She did not need to go through the RCIA journey pathway since she was already baptised and catechised in another faith tradition. Margaret already had a relationship with Jesus, lived her faith to the best of her ability and has been a member of the Body of Christ by virtue of her baptism. (The Catholic Church accepts baptisms of other faith traditions that have the Trinitarian formula when baptised). When Margaret asked to become a Catholic, she was asking to be in full communion with the Catholic Church. This is my story from my own perspective and experience with her. I am publishing this article with her permission.

I was contacted by email by one of the parishioners stating that a lady named Margaret from Quakers Hill wanted to become a Catholic. My name was put forward to him by another parishioner. He forewarned me that Margaret needed someone to listen to her and not to be dictated

to! She does not take any nonsense from anyone.

Being a specialist nurse for the elderly and a Deacon, I thought I had the right skill-mix to accept this invitation. Sometime after Christmas 2020, I met Margaret for the first time in her house. I did not know what to expect! If there was any hesitation or apprehension, it quickly disappeared in the first few minutes. Margaret seemed to trust me straight away, perhaps because I heeded the advice that I was given in the email I received prior to meeting her. I listened for two hours, interjecting when necessary, and for clarifications only.

Margaret was straight to the point: objecting to some beliefs of the Protestant Church and quoting the Bible, chapters, and verses by heart to my dismay! I reassured her several times that her thinking was very 'catholic' and I think her restless heart was because of this! Margaret was not sure what I meant by 'thinking catholic' but was very appreciative and keen to meet again. I wanted her to think about and reflect deeper about the mystery of the Incarnation and of the person of Mary, Mother of Jesus. I wanted to space our meetings every 4-6 weeks, so that there would be time for reflection.

In each meeting, we went through exploring the Catholic Faith and getting into deeper discussions. I had no doubt that the Holy Spirit was giving Margaret the knowledge, wisdom, and fortitude to ask more questions and formulate new insights about our mysteries of faith. I kept watching Margaret struggling and growing in understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist; the role of Mary; the role of faith and good works; the meaning of the Mass and the Communion of Saints. She kept asking me; *"Do I have to believe*

all this to become a Catholic?" I felt a great responsibility and a sense of unworthiness to decide whether Margaret was ready to be received in full communion into the Catholic Church or not.

There was still a lot of logistics to be arranged: which parish she would join, where would the Liturgy be held and who would preside at the Liturgy. I prayed for the Spirit to guide me. After the fourth meeting, Margaret asked me whether I thought she was ready to become a Catholic. Spontaneously I said, *"No, you are not ready yet!"* I was not sure how Margaret would take that answer, but astonishingly it seemed to me that she accepted it without questioning. I gave her another 4 weeks or so, to reflect on what we had discussed.

During our next meeting, the 'cloud' seemed to have lifted from Margaret's heart and mind. She was speaking like the apostles after Pentecost, explaining in great clarity, the deepest theological insights to me. She had joined the dots together and I could sense her joy and peace. Her heart was not restless anymore! After that meeting, I had no hesitation to tell her: *"Margaret, you are now ready."* "Yes", she said: *"I think I am! I can see why you told me I was not ready last time!"*

The rest is history, as they say.

After her being received in full communion in the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, I met Margaret for a couple of more times face to face. However, COVID lockdown struck. Margaret always felt that there is so much more to learn, and the trust built between us was mutually beneficial. Therefore, during lockdown I decided to keep phone contact with Margaret on a weekly basis.

Cont'd next page

A WOMAN OF GREAT FAITH.



We spend hours talking about spiritual matters and as usual Margaret always has a list of questions to ask me. For Margaret, this is like a lifeline especially in times of isolation and loneliness. She seems pre-occupied about her funeral arrangements because she likes things organised — with all the

details. Margaret appreciates greatly my positive outlook on life and the spirit of constant hope. She loves listening to me rehearsing singing the Gospel of the following Sunday. She told me it reminds her of her husband.

My meeting with Margaret has been a blessing. Like the centurion, I am in awe by how God works. Like the Centurion, Margaret's faith has been a shining witness of God's love for us. Margaret has been a gift to me and to the Catholic Church. I tell you, I have found a great woman of faith!

Deacon Rod



Margaret (in pink) with her Catholic friends celebrating at Mary Immaculate Church, Quakers Hill on Queen's Birthday June Holiday.

From the Editor: *Facts about Deacon Rod matter.*

Deacon Rod was ordained to the permanent diaconate by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, on 22 February 2019.

Most St Pat's parishioners know of his involvement with RCIA but are probably unaware of impressive aspects of his chosen vocation, beyond that ministry.

- He is a Clinical Nurse Consultant working with the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) in the Nepean-Blue Mountain Local Health District for the last 13 years.
- He specialises in the care of the Mental Health for the Older Person and Dementia working in this area since arriving in Australia in 1991, having worked in Ireland and England for a few years.
- He was the Manager of several Aged-Care Facilities in Sydney and Specialised Units for clients with Behaviour and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD).
- His qualifications include Master of Nursing and Master of Arts in Theology.
- As part of his work, Deacon Roderick supervises and teaches many nurses, allied health and medical students in the care and dying of people with dementia.

As a follow-up to previous online euthanasia talks, Deacon Rod and Dr Michael Tan, both with backgrounds in palliative care, teamed up online on September 13 to discuss care for the dying in the context of the Gospel.

Check out with Deacon Rod if the presentation can still be viewed online.



**Want to become
a lifelong disciple of Christ?**

"Come and See" (John 1:39 - 41)

**What is RCIA?
The Rite of Christian Initiation
of Adults?**

It is a process which leads you towards becoming a lifelong follower of Christ, **by becoming a Catholic.** We will explore your doubts and beliefs, the quest for the meaning of life, service to the poor and concerns about the environment from the eyes of the Catholic teachings and Pope Francis.

This journey of faith, which passes through different stages and ritual steps, leading up to reception of the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, is an exciting one: full of discoveries, wisdom and challenges!

Who can participate in the RCIA?

The RCIA process is for people who are:

- not baptised and never lived the faith;
- baptised Catholics but never lived the faith;
- baptised non-Catholics (another Christian denomination) but never lived the Christian faith.

**Come, discuss and discover
in a welcoming and supportive
atmosphere whether you, or
someone you know, is called to
become a Catholic.**

For more information
contact the Parish Office
on 8839 8400

or email Deacon Roderick Pirotta at
deacon@stpatscathedral.com.au

Speaking up matters: A young person voices his concern

Young parishioner Brendan writes in detail about the chance for he and fellow students to broadcast world-wide their concerns on three issues, they perceive to be especially pertinent to Australia: climate change, domestic violence, and asylum seekers.

Hello, I am Brendan Pospischil, a Year 11 student of Parramatta Marist High School and a parishioner at St Patrick's Cathedral, where I usually attend Sunday morning Mass. This article will cover my recent work, along with other students from my school, with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) which is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The UNHCR, among many things, runs a program known as the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**. Every 5 years, each UN member state is the subject of a review, where every other UN member state can make statements about the human rights situation in the country under review, and also make recommendations to positively impact the nation's human rights. In each session the UPR runs, there are around 20 states under review, so as you can imagine, it is difficult for the diplomatic staff of each state (known as a "Permanent Mission", not an Embassy) in Geneva to gather information and recommendations to present at the review. That is why they rely on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to meet with them, discuss the human rights situation of countries under review, and present recommendations which the diplomats may then consider making in their short presentation to the country under review, in front of the whole UNHRC.

Australia had its review early this year (January, 2021), so the meetings between NGOs and Permanent Missions occurred late last year (December, 2020). I, along with the other students from PMH [Parramatta Marist High], were extremely privileged to have contact with members of an NGO which had official status in Geneva, — FMSI, [Marist Solidarity International Foundation], which is associated with the Marist Brothers. Br Chris Wills, our FMSI member, as well as an old boy of PMH, Bradley Murphy and his mate Patrick Cooke who had been previously involved in the UPR, explained the UPR process to other students and me, and used their contacts in Geneva to organise the meetings with each Permanent Mission.

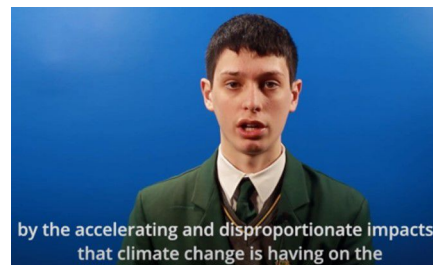
These meetings were with 12 states (Sweden, Fiji, Iran, Portugal, Belgium, Uruguay, Peru, Haiti, Finland, France, USA, and Ireland) and who were deciding what to present during the later UPR. The other students and I focused our advocating around three issues which we perceived to be especially pertinent to Australia; climate change, domestic violence, and asylum seekers. I specifically focused on climate change, explaining how Australia is a major exporter and consumer of fossil fuels, and how we were facing increasing impacts of climate change through increased bushfires, flooding, storms, and drought. We finished explaining our concerns and then gave three specific recommendations to help with the resolving of our respective issues, in the hope that these would be what each Permanent Mission would present later during the review of Australia.

During the actual review of Australia in January 2021, we watched as a number of the states that we had spoken with mentioned issues (such as climate change, domestic violence and asylum seekers) in their 2-minute speeches, in some cases even using parts of our exact language in their recommendations.

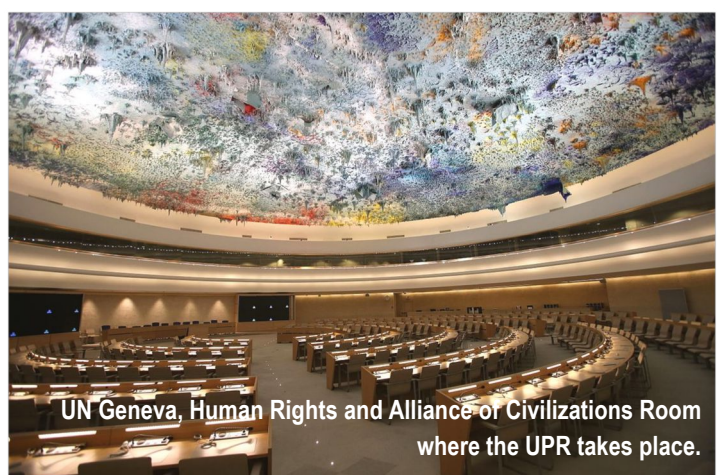
To my knowledge, and that of everyone else that was involved, this is the first time that a group of youth from a country under review presented their own thoughts and opinions to other Permanent Missions as a part of the UPR process.

More recently, a student who was a part of the earlier UPR process, Zain, and myself submitted videos to two different UNHRC meetings. Zain's video was presented to a meeting after the UPR of Australia, where Australia formally accepted the recommendations that it had been given during the UPR. In this video Zain restated the main recommendations given by the group of students, including myself. My video was submitted to a meeting specifically discussing the impact of climate change on older people, and I used the opportunity to again advocate my UPR topic of climate change and the unique vulnerability that they face in regards to extreme weather. ** (see video transcript on adjacent page.)

I hope that this sets a new precedent of young people speaking up about issues that they are concerned about more generally, but especially at formal institutions such as the UNHRC where their voices have the greatest impact. What seemed like a fairly small thing for me and the students has had a great impact and has garnered broad attention, with the Australian ambassador to Geneva, Mrs Sally Mansfield, even sending a letter to the other students and me congratulating us on our work, and setting a new example that she and I hope will be replicated with other countries in their own UPR reviews in the future.



Screen shot of Brendan from his video presentation.



Editor's Note: Congratulations, Brendan on an impressive achievement. It's encouraging to know St Pat's young people are concerned about the world's future, prepared to speak out about it and most importantly, act upon it.

You can watch Brendan's video presentation on <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12w1Wul0rfeqFSwJGfYxswTtcyEtu9Th2/view>

Speaking up matters:

Below is a transcript of the presentation Brendan made on his video, specifically discussing the impact of climate change on older people.

Thank You Madame President,

My name is Brendan Pospischil and I am a 16 year old student at Parramatta Marist High School, Australia's oldest Catholic School and I am representing the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI). As the generation who will inherit the planet, my fellow classmates and I continue to be concerned by the accelerating and disproportionate impacts that climate change is having on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by older persons.

In Australia we saw this first hand in 2019 and 2020 during a devastating summer and bushfire season. People aged 60 and above accounted for half of the lives lost and thousands were hospitalized due to the effects from severe smoke inhalation.

Our TV screens and social media feeds were peppered with sights of young people pushing their grandparents in wheelchairs away from their burning homes, masks strapped to their faces, oxygen tanks working overtime.

But it's not just the bushfires. Climate change had expedited the effects of drought in Australia and the Murray-Darling Basin, one of Australia's largest rivers and most important sources of water, has 2 trillion litres less water now than it did in 2012. This forces older people to expend relatively more energy and time travelling to collect water, particularly in remote areas, where the next nearest source can be hours away.

Such problems are not unique to Australia, and as climate change continues to amplify the effects of extreme weather events around the globe, it is our job as the next generation, to make sure that our older persons are cared for and made an active part of global climate change policy.

My classmates and I urge the Human Rights Council, and the United Nations more broadly, to continue to promote age-inclusive climate action. As recognized in the UNFCCC, [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change], must have the widest possible co-operation between all countries on climate change action. It is essential to ensure the enjoyment of human rights of all and even more so for our older persons.

I thank you.

Brendan has included links to a video of last year's meetings made by former student Brad Murphy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2xq34SagwA>
Parramatta Marist's Submission to the UN
for the Universal Periodic Review of Australia. (16min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMWbLwS6ZNU>
Summary of above submission. (6min)

Sacraments matter in this family!



Who could forget the beautiful image of this young boy making his First Holy Communion that fronted the last issue of *St Pat's Matters*?

With hands reverently cupped and gaze intensely focused on Jesus, he epitomises the way we all *should* approach the altar to receive the Body of Christ, our food for the journey.

The boy is **Papani Loto'aniu**. He responded to the invitation in the Sunday Bulletin to First Communicants to write about this special day: This is what he wrote:

On Sunday 6th June, I had my first Holy Communion. My Holy Communion took place at Church, St Patrick's Cathedral. It was a special day for me because I was receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

For this occasion I was wearing a Ta'ovala, which is a traditional Tongan outfit. It is worn to show respect and authority for my culture.

We got a Mass Book, a rosary and a holy water font.

After Church, we celebrated the day with a feast of traditional Tongan food. I had fun with my family, playing games outside and eating lots of food. It was a really fun and enjoyable day.

Sesilia, Papani's mother, noticed her son had forgotten to mention the following: *All his great aunts and uncles came for his special day, even a great aunt, who is a nun at Sacred Name Anglican Church, Christchurch, flew from New Zealand for the celebration.*

This gathering of relatives from near and far indicates how important it is for the Tongan extended family to come together when celebrating significant milestone events in the Catholic Faith.

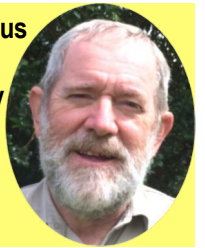


↑ Papani with his grandmother Seini, God parents, Jessica and Joshua, and his little nephew Elijah.



← At left Papani cuts his First Holy Communion cake, provided by his cousins. One of his great aunts watches closely!

In past issues, it's usually been Phil Russo OAM commenting on indigenous matters, a cause close to his heart for many years. Here Phil's long-time friend, Bob Edgar enlightens us about a past atrocity against the aboriginal people and shares the experience of recently attending the 2021 annual memorial service held in remembrance of the tragedy. Like Phil, Bob has long advocated on many social justice issues, aside from those relating to our indigenous brothers and sisters.



MYALL CREEK MASSACRE MEMORIAL SERVICE 2021

The theme was acknowledgement of the past, reconciliation and a strengthened resolve to move forward together.

For most of the last 50 years, when the June long weekend comes around, my habit has been to pack up my motorbike and spend a couple of days camping in the Snowy Mountains with several hundred other like-minded souls. COVID-19 has altered this annual event but not quite ended it. However, this year, I had resolved to attend the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial. I had known about this event for several years and decided that this year I would make the journey, but not without inviting Phil Russo. Phil is passionate about Indigenous affairs and reconciliation is first and foremost in his ideals. He is also a committee member of the local ATSIC branch.

Myall Creek, on the land of the Wirrayaraay people, is situated about 25km north of Bingara in the Gwydir Shire. The nearest large town is Inverell, 600km from Parramatta.

The Myall Creek Massacre occurred on 10th June 1838. Many massacres of indigenous people were carried out across the land before this and still occurred well into the 20th century. At Myall Creek a group of station hands, mostly former convicts, forced the natives to a ledge and hacked and slashed their victims. They later burned them. It is believed that 28 people, mainly women and children, lost their lives. Myall Creek was notable in that it was the first massacre that was reported to the authorities as a crime. Indeed, massacres at the time were sanctioned by the authorities to clear the way for grazing and cropping. However, at Myall Creek Station some witnesses of the event were so horrified that a long journey was undertaken to inform the nearest Police Magistrate at Muswellbrook. He was away, so the station hand Hobbs was obliged to continue to Sydney to report to Governor Gipps.

Gipps, unusually for the time, was galvanised to take action and instructed the Muswellbrook magistrate to attend the area and investigate. Subsequently ten men were arrested and marched in chains to Muswellbrook and on to Sydney for trial. This all took several weeks.

Public opinion was against the arrests and funds were raised for the defence. The men were acquitted. However, Attorney General Plunkett immediately ordered a second trial. Seven of the ten men were tried and convicted. They were hanged on the 18th December 1838. It appears there were no other instances of white men being tried or convicted for killing natives in subsequent massacres.

In January 1965 Len Payne from Bingara proposed, among howls of derision, that a memorial be erected at the site. He clung to that wish and visited the site annually until his death in 1993. It was not until 1998 that a committee was formed to make it happen. Despite some opposition, including physical threats, the committee steadily generated enthusiasm in the indigenous and white communities. Gwydir Shire Council got on board and a permanent memorial was finally dedicated on the 10th June 2000.

On the 13th June 2021 hundreds of people gathered from near and far for the annual ceremony. Guests and speakers each year include descendants of the victims and the perpetrators and of the law officers. The theme of this memorial service is peace and reconciliation. The program began with the Welcome to Country followed by a minute of silence. The Traditional Dance in Welcome was performed by the Ngambaa Dhalaay Dancers and Tingha Nucoorilma Dancers. Official speakers welcomed all and thanked the Gwydir Shire Council and NSW Government for funding the new facilities at the site. A learning centre will be included in the next stage of the project. The guest speaker was Professor Lyndall Ryan who spoke of the hundreds of massacres that we know of and those still to be documented. It is a grim history.

After the ceremony we were invited to walk the 500m serpentine path (Creator Rainbow Serpent) to the memorial stone. First we passed through the smoke, cleansing hearts and minds, warding off bad spirits. Next we have ochre applied to our foreheads as a sign of mourning. The path is paved with red stones symbolising the blood shed here.

Along the path there are seven plaques and at each one a group of school children read the text for the groups passing by. At the end of the path stands the Memorial Stone surrounded by crushed white granite, the colour of mourning for the Aboriginal people.

When all were gathered at the stone a bullroarer could be heard, informing the spirits that we have come to perform the ceremony and calling everyone to be respectfully quiet. Readings were presented and candles were lit by descendants of the victims and the perpetrators. The theme was acknowledgement of the past, reconciliation and a strengthened resolve to move forward together. It was a very moving service. We walked back along that path with new friends and a greater sense of being as one in this great nation with a common purpose and hope for the future.

To next page

Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Service continued

The service was greatly enriched by the musicians, singers and dancers who interpreted the story and performed it. Special mention also to students from local primary and high schools from Bingara, Warialda, Inverell, Tingha, Glen Innes and Holy Trinity College in Inverell. Other regular attendees from further afield were Somerset College from the Gold Coast and Radford College in the ACT. Politicians who also came to take part in, or just be present at, the ceremonies were MP for the Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall, Federal MP for Sydney Tanya Plibersek and MLC Walt Secord who also invited his Rabbi.

Phil and I hope to be able to attend this very spiritual and poignant event again next year and would invite any other interested parishioners to make the journey. Further information regarding Myall Creek can be found by contacting the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial at www.myallcreek.org



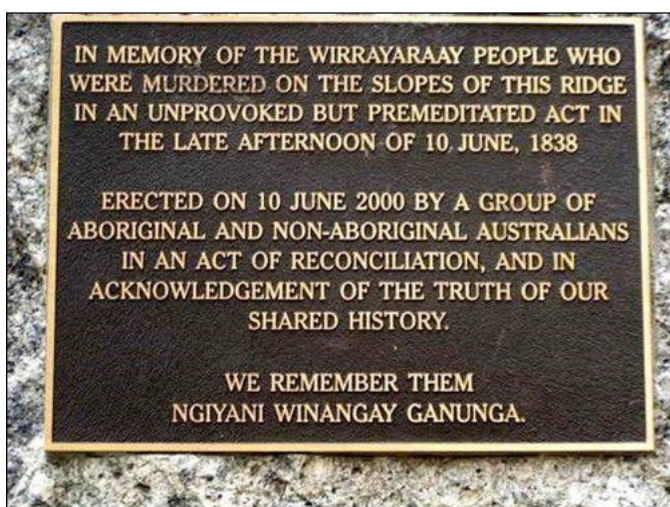
Dancers at the Welcoming Ceremony



Descendants at the Memorial Stone



Readings at the Memorial Stone



Bob Edgar

P.S. It is worth noting that the **World Youth Day Cross** visited the memorial site during its visit to the Armidale Diocese in 2008. Some further information can be read here: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2008-01-28/cross-to-visit-myall-creek-memorial-site/1025590>



School students reading for passing groups



Students gathered at the Memorial Stone



As in the last issue of *St Pat's Matters*, regular contributor JUDITH DUNN again detours from her usual concentration on matters pertaining to history and heritage.

Sharing Matters

Instead, here she openly shares how COVID's presence and the ensuing lockdown has affected her life. Be heartened by her positive attitude; resolve to likewise focus on remaining positive, and in so doing help dissipate the dark side of this trying time that causes so many people without Faith to despair.

Reflections on the COVID Pandemic

COVID HAS GIVEN ME TIME. It has given me permission to stop. It has given me time to think. To drop all those extra activities and meetings, writing reports and checking allotted tasks have been completed. Are they all necessary? It has been a time to reflect that I sit on nine committees. With the extra time I have been able to attend to my mending pile which becomes smaller as lockdown gets longer. I have had time to knit and sew for charity. Despite poor eyesight, I have just finished knitting two blankets and numerous beanies for the homeless. And I have had time to attend to daily readings and reflections from *Word of God*. This can sometimes get skipped when meetings and duties take up too much of my time and make me exhausted. Daily reflection calms me and gives me a better perspective on life.

Be still and know that God is near.

TIME ALSO TO THINK OF OTHERS. In our house we have turned out wardrobes and drawers – St Vincent de Paul will have plenty of new stock when they re-open. Do we really need that item of clothing that we have not worn for two years – but love? And folding clothes neatly back into the drawers, there has been time to reflect - do I really need six T-shirts and six blouses? So take the opportunity to give something extra, not just the older, less-loved garments, but something that is still really good.

Thank God for the gift of giving which brings us such joy in return.

COVID HAS GIVEN ME PATIENCE. When standing in a line to buy pasta, flour and rice that has been bought by panicky shoppers. Patience gives me time to take a deep breath and say a *Hail Mary* for those squabbling over the last pack of toilet paper! Patience to think the people panic buying might be refugees who have lived through times of great deprivation and might fear it again, so stockpile items with good keeping qualities. I keep my Rosary in my pocket and standing in queues is the perfect chance to say a few prayers.

Thank God for patience.

COVID HAS TAUGHT ME RESILIENCE. Many young people today have not lived through adversity. Older people might have lived through war and depression and are more able to make do. Remember when a parcel arrived and the string would be untied and put it in a drawer for later use? Likewise smoothing out the brown paper wrapper and saving that also. It is not a disaster if one ingredient is missing to complete a recipe for dinner. I never heard my mother complain about food that was missing from shelves during the war – she learnt to make do when we were allotted one egg per week *per family*. There were nine of us to share that one egg. I have watched in awe through the Olympics and Paralympics. The athletes' struggles, perseverance, hard work and graciousness in defeat have

amazed me and made me feel small when I rail against small speed humps in my life.

Thank God for the ability to see what really matters and to be grateful for what we have.

COVID HAS GIVEN ME EMPATHY. It has prompted me to phone a friend, not to ease *my* loneliness, but think of someone else who is isolated and may welcome a call. Someone in a nursing home or an elderly person living alone, a mother with several children who is finding lockdown hard. A phone call brightens up their day but also brightens mine. A member of my family has a serious mental illness which results in them ringing up to seven times a day for reassurance or to expound their latest theory on life. It is hard to be empathetic when the calls come at 2am! But thinking how COVID can destabilise even the most rational person, makes me realise how doubly difficult it must be for those who are already experiencing difficulties. So I try to be more patient in the middle of the night. Sometimes empathy needs practice!

Thank God for the gift of empathy.

COVID HAS GIVEN ME THE CHANCE TO OBSERVE

NATURE. I take outdoor exercise to the limits of my capability and Government regulations. I walk in a park and wonder at the beauty of nature. We do not have to be in a National Park to see nature, a walk on a suburban street is just as rich with flower gardens and pot plants to see. Choose one leaf or one flower and wonder at its perfection. I let the words of *How Great Thou Art* run through my mind and see the joy in natural things. Feed is put out for birds and time spent watching them from the veranda as they fly in for unexpected bounty. Wild bird seed for the parrots, a little stale bread, fat saved from meat for Butcher Birds and Magpies who reward me with their delightful call.

Thank God for the beauty of nature.

COVID HAS INCREASED MY GRATITUDE. I usually read non-fiction, historical journals and research works, but changed the genre and have read inspirational biographies of Australian bush life instead. Many bemoan the task of home schooling our children. Think of the women of the outback for whom that is a way of life – home-schooling their children with the support of Distance Education (formerly School of the Air) Their only other choice is to send their children away to boarding school at a very tender age. Boarding school is inevitable for high school and that too must be a wrench. We think it a hardship for only one person of the household to go shopping once a day for food. Imagine the outback housewife whose great joy is the fortnightly or monthly plane or truck delivery of fresh milk, bread and fruit. Camped in a tiny outback settlement recently, we heard a train whistle and smiles of delight spread over the locals' faces as they told us it was the monthly train delivering fresh produce. While in far-west Queensland, we were told to listen for the train whistle during the night which heralded the "tea and sugar train."
cont'd next page

SRE MINISTRY MATTERS UPDATE



Following the Recruitment Drive for volunteers on 19/20 June and the blessing of SREs at 9:30am Mass, Fr Robert emailed his thanks to Pamela Bain and Fiona Clarke, Parish & Regional Coordinators, respectively.



Interestingly, he also wrote: *And thank you to all our parish SREs for all you do each week. Your commitment to spreading the Good News to the children in our state schools is much appreciated. As I said on the weekend, [at the 9:30am Mass], I am the product of state schools and still remember some of the SREs who came in each week, though I probably wasn't as attentive or appreciative of their efforts at the time. Nonetheless, a seed was planted, and, as Jesus said...*

Lockdown restrictions extending to state schools has meant that SREs have not had classes since June, a situation much lamented by them, as they sorely miss interaction with the students. Of particular concern are those children who won't have any input about the Catholic faith in the home environment during this protracted hiatus. Currently, there's talk of a staggered return of classes by the end of October, if then! Another problem is the likelihood that combining grades for SRE lessons will not be permitted.



In a recent communique from the Department of Education, the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) was advised that Special Religious Educators will need to be fully vaccinated before they can return to working in State Schools.

As St Pat's SREs wait out the exclusion, they are grateful for Pamela Bain's dedication as parish coordinator. Fiona Clarke's comment: *Her commitment to this ministry is amazing. She is the glue that keeps it altogether.*

Judith Dunn's Reflections cont'd

At 2am the whistle blew and everyone leapt out of bed and gathered at the railway siding in an odd assortment of clothes, to receive fresh produce from the train. How spoilt we are, being able to shop once a day!

God make us grateful and content with what we have, not to dwell on what we do not have.

COVID HAS GIVEN ME THE CHANCE TO STRETCH MY MIND. There are only so many jigsaw puzzles, Sudoku and crosswords before I needed to attempt something new, so set myself the task to learn a new language (or at least part of a new language) I determined to learn 1,000 new words of French before lockdown is over. Who knows, we might be able to travel next year. I was a less-willing student when a child so Madam Imelda would now dance for joy to see my perseverance as I cram new words and phrases each day. (I was educated by French nuns who were addressed as Madam, rather than Sister) However, as I am much older and slower to learn, I think we will be well out of lockdown before I achieve my

task. Learning a new language is good for the brain so it is not a wasted exercise.

God give us the gift of perseverance.

COVID HAS REMINDED ME TO LAUGH. Especially when things go wrong as I have recently struggled with poor eyesight. My husband complained of an itchy back for a couple of days and we racked our brains to find the reason. I remembered I had placed a new bar of soap in the shower. A check revealed it was a bar of dog soap! But we can vouch for the fact dog soap works – my husband does not have a single flea! Making grilled cheese for lunch one cold day, I spread it liberally with my home-made chutney – which turned out to be my home-made fig jam. An unusual culinary experience that will not be repeated.

Thank God for the joy of laughter.

As we creep ever closer to the loosening of COVID restrictions and the delight of meeting again with children and grandchildren, of the ability to go to Mass again, I try to be an optimist and see the lessons I can learn from COVID and the way it can assist me in the way I live my life.



Judith the positive: lover of nature, giver of time and talent for the homeless; making do while camping at the Rabbit proof Fence.

Getting to know parishioners matters

This section was introduced in the last issue of *St Pat's Matters*. It features a collation of parishioners' stories that appear in each week's bulletin, an initiative instigated by Fr Robert Riedling when he became Dean of the Cathedral.

MEET THE GUILLEMAS



Hello everyone, My name is Michael. My wife, Marietta, and I are long-time parishioners here at St Patrick's Cathedral parish. Although we live in Baulkham Hills, we prefer to call this wonderful parish home. We started serving this parish in 2016 through the *Live Christ Share Christ* movement. Our former Dean and Parish Priest, Fr. Bob Bossini, was

instrumental in providing us with the guidance and blessing to promote this ministry. With the grace of God and endless support by the clergy and the parish staff, we are currently in our fifth year providing monthly formation sessions, retreats, Lectio Divina and bringing good cheer through carols to our elderly in nursing homes every Christmas season. Since last year, we have been livestreaming our sessions to reach a larger audience. We are currently doing collaborative sessions with the Catholic Toolbox Radio/Podcast Show (via Voice of Charity) with fellow parishioner George Manassa to enhance our outreach mission of evangelisation. We hope and pray that we will continue to provide interesting topics on different platforms to spread the Good News to everyone, God willing. See you at one of our monthly sessions here at the Cathedral every third Friday of the month. God bless



MEET PATTI MURPHY

Born in Northmead, the youngest of three girls. Part of a remarkable family. Educated at St Monica's and St Patrick's. I have four children, whom I love dearly — Matthew, Sharon, Paul and Stephen and four grandchildren — Nathan, Jessica, James and Liam. I am

blessed also with a marvellous extended family: five nieces, (one the recent recipient of an OAM), and two nephews, their children and grandchildren.

I came to St Pat's when I retired in 2004, and soon Sister Susan had me on the roster as a Reader and Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. I became involved with meditation, was a volunteer when Murphy House was open, am on the Hospitality Team. I have made many wonderful friends. I learned that praying means accepting what God sends as he always knows best. Long ago I was given the Serenity Prayer, adopted by alcoholics. *"God give me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference."* As well as trying to make the best of each day, this is what I always try to live by. Fond 'parish' memories include Father Dave and the trips we did with him monthly in search of the best hamburgers and the wonderful lunches and movies he provided for us after 12:30 Mass on Fridays. Also how I love Father Bob and still miss him so much.

MEET SILVANA RECHICHI:



Greetings fellow parishioners of St Pat's! I was born in Italy; with my family, I migrated to the Land of Oz in 1968. I was 13. We settled in Parramatta and became parishioners from those very first days, all told 53 years! We spoke not a word of English yet we felt at home from the very first moment we set foot inside the church. I remember with fondness the first people we met the very first day we attended Mass: Frank Keane, Molly Boyle, sisters Noreen Mclean & Marie Ray, Paula Cowling and many

more who, through their faithful dedication and loving example, helped me grow in the faith and encouraged me to participate more fully in the life of the church here in Parramatta.

Over all this time I have been involved in various ministries: Reader, Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist and Communion to the sick at Westmead Hospital, Rosary and Lenten groups; Novena to Mary & Taize prayer groups, just to name a few. I was also a chorister in the Parish Choir and later also a cantor at the 6:00pm Vigil Mass, which I still attend to this day. Each of the ministries mentioned has brought with it its own spiritual rewards and enriched my life in many ways.

In 53 years the Parish has experienced its share of painful episodes but none more so than the disastrous fire of 1996 which destroyed our spiritual home and saw its parishioners scattered to nearby parishes. What a joy it was to be part of a combined Diocesan Choir at the dedication of the new Cathedral in 2003 and, like a phoenix rising, witness its re-birth.

Sadly, one by one, I had to let go of all the ministries when the time came to care for my mum in the final years of her life. Some years after her death, I "reprised" the Novena to Mary Full of Grace, originally started by then Dean, Fr. Kevin Walsh, and which takes place on the last Tuesday of the month, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

From a very young age I was encouraged to let faith reside in my heart and reason in my mind. Together they continue to shape and direct my life. Now that I am older, and hopefully wiser, I am beginning to understand a glimmer of that great commission entrusted to us by our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and that is to *"love the Lord my God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind"* and to *"Love my neighbour as myself"*.

Pax et Bonum.

Editor's Note:

Further on you will come across more articles from three of the parishioners featured in *Getting to know you*:

1. Barbara Hector and Patti Murphy revisit school days.
2. Silvana Rechichi's trip down memory lane was triggered by the upcoming Feast of the Assumption.

Getting to know parishioners matters

MEET BARBARA HECTOR



I was born in 1936, the second child in a family of eight children. My family name was Carter. I was the first baby to be baptised in the new St Patrick's church. (In 1936, the old church was destroyed by fire). I received Holy Communion and Confirmation at St Patrick's, was educated at St Pat's Primary School, then went to high school at OLMC, where I graduated after attaining my Intermediate Certificate.

I joined the CYO and later the Patrician Club. I had a two-year working holiday in New Zealand, and then came back and rejoined the Patrician Club, where I met my husband, Norm Hector. We married at St Monica's Church and raised two daughters, Anne Marie and Claire. Eventually Norm, and our daughters, joined Robert Beasley's Choir, so once again we were back at St Pat's in Parramatta.

In 1993 Father John Boyle asked Norm to train as an acolyte. Norm and I had a beautiful granddaughter in 2014. I lost Norm in 2014 and I miss him terribly every day. The deterioration of my eyesight also has been a very great challenge. St Patrick's has always been my spiritual and family home.

MEET THE BERNARDO FAMILY



If you have attended the 11:00am Mass over the years, we might be familiar faces to you. We are Dennis and Aileen Bernardo and our children Caitlin, Jacob and Ava. As parents of three young children at the time, we were struggling with getting everyone ready for Mass. Either it was a rush getting to the 10:00am at our previous parish or our children would fall asleep at the 6:00pm Mass.

It was therefore a wonderful accident that we found there was an 11:00am Mass at St Pat's Cathedral. Over ten years on and our three children now regularly serve at the 11:00am Solemn Mass. Our eldest daughter, Caitlin, has recently become part of the Cathedral Choir. Our family have met and made friends in the parish through volunteering, attending Credo and formation classes.

Outside of the parish, we enjoy summer holidays on the South Coast, family road trips, movie nights and gathering with family and friends, enjoying Filipino food. Being a young family, there is always an endless list of activities to do and places to be.

Consciously making time to engage with our parish community has been an enriching experience that has strengthened our faith and led to us meeting wonderful people with whom to share the journey. So, take the step and get involved!

GREETINGS FROM THE LAL FAMILY!



We are a family of four: Nitesh, Regina, our son Dylan and daughter, Olana. We mostly attend the 6:00pm Mass on Sundays. St. Patrick's Cathedral Parish has been home for the last sixteen years.

We as a family became aware of the rich parish life when Dylan was preparing for his First Holy Communion. Sister Susan Ward played a vital role

in bringing our family close to our Catholic faith.

It was our children's involvement in altar serving and acolyting that led us to meet other amazing parish parents with teenage children. As volunteers at the Cathedral, we get great joy in being of service to its priests, staff and parish family, Parramatta's Catholic schools, beloved family and youth ministries. The life-long friendships formed at St. Pat's are one of the most enriching experiences for us. We are truly blessed and humbled to bring up our family in "The Cradle of Catholicism" in Australia.

CATHY DEARIE SAYS 'HI'



Hi, my name is Cathy Dearie. I'm a regular at the Sunday evening Mass having joined the cathedral parish about 25 years ago. Even in those tumultuous days following the catastrophic fire that destroyed the old cathedral, the hospitality of the parish, with morning tea served in Our Lady's Grotto, and the tea pot presided over by Mrs Marian Polizzi, provided a wonderful welcome – some things haven't changed!

Marian "invited" me to help with organising the Parish Christmas party before passing the baton to me to run the show for the next 7 years. One of the most memorable was the year we had parishioners write their names on red and green ribbons after masses in the weeks leading up to the party. We joined the ribbons to make chains and used the chains to decorate the hall. The ribbon chain, and the party, brought together people from different masses, different families and different nationalities as our Parish family.

Over the years I've had lots of opportunities to get involved around the parish and I'd certainly encourage people to consider where they might be able to contribute. I've helped out with the Parish Youth Group with Father Warren Edwards, during the times when Mass was celebrated at *St Pat's in the Fields*, in the grounds of Cumberland Hospital. The youth group was very fortunate to have the use of the swimming pool and BBQs right behind the church for some great summer fun. I've worked with Mili Lee and Sr Susan to organise our Parish Spring Fairs. Fr Wim invited me to join the Parish Finance Committee about 10+ years ago, and I'm still serving in this role. Until the disruption of COVID, I was a Reader, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and Warden at the 6pm Mass on Sunday evening.

Getting to know parishioners matters

MEET KERRY & THE GIUMELLI FAMILY



My family and I are long time parishioners of St Patrick's Cathedral having been in the parish since before the Cathedral was destroyed by fire in 1996. I was teaching at St Patrick's Primary School at the time and my children were at school on the day of the fire. This tragedy was very traumatic at the time, but it highlighted the strength and resilience of the parish community.

I have been involved in the parish in many capacities over the years – reader, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, long-time member of the Cathedral Choir, a member of the Cathedral staff for 10 years as Sacrament and RCIA coordinator, member of the Parish Finance Committee and, currently, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council. Outside the parish I volunteer for Red Nose/SANDS as a bereavement supporter on the 24-hour telephone line.

My five children have all grown up and three of them are now married with their own families. I delight in being a nanna to four grandchildren from 5 years to 16 months (Liam, Audrey, Henry, and Phoenix) and will welcome three more granddaughters by Christmas (including a set of identical twins). I think my life will be getting much busier! It might be even time to retire!

Bruce and I have loved being part of the St Patrick's Cathedral community over these years and have seen many changes in that time. However, the spirit and joy of the community have always remained, and I hope and pray it continues through these challenging times. I'm certainly looking forward to when we can all be back together again.

MEET GEORGE MANASSA



For parishioners who do not know me, I am the host and founder of *The Catholic Toolbox Show* which airs on 1701AM, Australia's Catholic Radio Network and EWTN and is on Podcast (www.thecatholictoolboxshow.com). I am also the author of *'The Art of Practical Catholicism'* and *'A Server's Toolbox'* available in St

Pat's Gift Shop, other stores and online. Furthermore, I have been a member of the Parish Pastoral Council since 2019. I am also a senior server here at the Cathedral, which has been my lifelong parish since my baptism in 1995, and then a late

Confirmation by then Bishop Anthony Fisher in 2010.

Normally I am a Master of Ceremonies or Senior Server at Sunday's 11:00am Solemn Mass, with the beauty of the solemn ritual clothed by Australia's best mixed choir, led by our very own Bernard Kirkpatrick.

I consider this parish my second home because I attend daily Mass and receive the sacraments and spiritual nourishment from the generous priests with whom the parish has been gifted, to aid the salvation of my soul (the entire objective of our Catholic faith).

My wife, Akita, and I are still newlyweds, as of the 26th of June. (We slipped through on the exact day of the most recent lockdown, as a result of God's Providence). We live in Parramatta, and continue to be active members in our parish.



MEET PAUL MOUSLEY



I have been a parishioner of Saint Patrick's Cathedral for over fourteen years.

I am involved in ringing the church bell and leading Our Lady's Cenacle each Friday when the church is open. I also perform some duties on the church grounds and belong to the Legion of Mary.

A highlight of my life has been my travels overseas as I went to Rome and Medjugorje. I was fortunate enough to have a very kind travel companion by the name of Frank Jones and he knew his way around these places that were all new to me.

I intend to live a life of fidelity to the gospel and of prayer. Saint Joan of Arc is my favourite saint as I admire her for her courage. I would love to meet her one day in heaven.

I lead the Rosary during the weekdays and have several prayer partners that I am privileged to be able to pray the Rosary with. The Rosary gives me peace, strengthens my faith and I enjoy praying with others and have established some very strong bonds with other Christians.

I am currently studying Information Technology and have been interested in computers all my life. My hobbies are music, walking, cats, gardening, chess, tennis and I love going to the movies with friends. Please pray for me

TAKE UP THE DEAN'S INVITATION: Getting to know you.... No matter how long you have been a St Pat's parishioner, consider following the examples of the people featured here and tell us a little about yourself and your family. Email your contribution (max 250 words) plus a jpeg photo of good resolution, to Pat Preca, Parish Secretary, secretary@stpatscathedral.com.au along with a phone number, in case we need to clarify something.

Getting to know parishioners matters

MEET KEVIN XU



My dear Parish friends, I hope you and your families are well and safe in this difficult time. I know many of you from 9.30am Sunday Mass where I serve regularly as an acolyte. For some of you, I may have, with blessing, served at your wedding

and celebrated with you one of the most beautiful moments of life.

I didn't grow up as a Catholic. Rather God gave me the opportunity to study and understand the faith so I could make a conscious choice to follow Christ. I was drawn to the teaching of the Scriptures, the solemnity of Mass and liturgies, the architecture of the churches, the solidarity of our people, and most importantly the unfathomable Love and Mercy of our God and the blessing of Our Lady. I studied in RCIA and received my baptism right here in this Cathedral in 2014. Parramatta is truly my spiritual home. To me, being a Catholic is a choice for life. Like any life choice, it is not meant to be easy. So in difficult moments like now, please don't be discouraged. Please don't give up. Please stay hopeful and continue to pray, knowing that God is listening, that we will come back to the Church and meet again soon.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." (Romans 15:13)

Image: Standing: Kevin and Bee Teh; seated Fr Bob Bossini, and Mili Lee

MEET MARGERY JACKMAN & HER FAMILY



Originally from Victoria, via the UK, Canada and Brisbane, I became a parishioner of St Patrick's in September 2005, when I took up the position of Principal at Catherine McAuley, Westmead.

Earlier in that year, on the day of my interview for this position, I arrived early, found the Diocesan building, then crossed the road to

spend some time in prayer before the interview. Initially I was puzzled at the sealed entrance on Victoria Road and followed the path around the side to discover, much to my amazement, the wonderfully designed Blessed Sacrament Chapel and the Cathedral itself. I remember thinking that if I was successful, this was the parish I would join, and that was before I had even heard our beautiful organ!

It was a great privilege to belong to a parish within the school community and I rejoice to see many current and past Catherine McAuley young women active in the parish. I attend the Vigil Mass, where I am a Reader and Eucharistic Minister.

To proclaim the Word of God and to distribute the sacrament is such a great privilege and a joy and I am delighted that I live in an age when this privilege is open to women. I am also the chair of the Parish Finance Committee, not perhaps an equal joy, but an important service made easier by the dedication and competence of the other members who make up the committee.

My husband, Peter, and I are blessed with three adult daughters and three grandchildren, who are presently continuing in the family tradition of Mercy and Marist education. Two of our daughters and their families live interstate and one lives in the Inner West but we all treasure the cathedral and those special times when we have been able to worship there together as a family. May God continue to bless our priests and all who gather as the people of God at St Patrick's

MEETING CLEM GALLAGHER



Clem flanked by nephew David and daughter Kathy.

Whilst technically residing outside the parish, my late wife and I were made to feel very welcome to St. Patrick's Cathedral in late 1993 by the then Parish Priest Father John Boyle (now Monsignor) and the parishioners.

Sadly, my dear wife passed away on 10 January 2010 from complications associated with the debilitating effects of multiple sclerosis. I have three wonderful and supportive children (two reside interstate) and one lives in Sydney. I have seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

I became associated with the RCIA in February 2005 as a sponsor for someone who was preparing for Baptism and Confirmation. I continued my involvement as a team member for a number of years. It was a most rewarding experience and privilege to share my faith with a committed group of people on their journey into full communion of the Catholic Church. I am on the collection counting team roster, an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at the Saturday night Vigil Mass and attend the Novena to Mary Full of Grace on the last Tuesday of each month. I have loved being a parishioner of St. Patrick's Cathedral and look forward to returning to some sort of normality in the not too distant future when the doors of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel (and Cathedral) will be reopened for us.

**Have not yet taken up Fr Robert's invitation,
to share a little about yourself and your family
with fellow parishioners?**

Please consider!

It's a wonderful way to build St Pat's community.

Praying the Rosary matters



Freeda, in orange, with some of the 65 friends who came to pray the Rosary together.

Freeda Sawant explains: *Every year I recite a Rosary prayer in the months of May & October, inviting a few friends to join our family, as that's the tradition in India. For the past 15 years, I have maintained the same tradition for my kids here in our Sydney home.*

María Abraham, who attended the Rosary Prayer Group with her husband, Sumod and children, Sophie and Steven, wrote about our gathering in May. But our gathering physically in October is unlikely to eventuate, due to the extended lockdown restrictions COVID-19 has caused.



Maria Abraham writes about

May: The Month of the Rosary

**"So then faith comes by hearing,
and hearing by the word of God."-Romans
10:17***

The Rosary, advocated by Blessed Mother and handed down to us through the saints and elders of the church, has been a source of traditional prayer for most Catholic families and communities. When we introspect the words spoken in this form of prayer, we realize it was sourced primarily from Sacred Scripture (1) or the Word of God, which as mentioned in Ephesians 6:17 (2) is the sword of the Spirit meant for spiritual warfare.

Faith grows as we hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and is pivotal to miracles in the kingdom of God. Recitation of the Rosary, rooted in scripture, thus strengthens this aspect of faith.

Our Holy Mother through the seers of Fatima and many saints across the centuries has constantly reminded us to adopt this form of prayer in our daily sojourn. The Rosary also serves as a source of contemplative prayer on the life of Christ. The pattern of repetition in the rosary supposedly draws inspiration from the early prayers of church monks who meditated upon the 150 psalms. At a time when Sacred Scripture was not easily accessible in print form to the masses and literacy was not rampant, this traditional form of prayer helped sustain faith in Jesus for many Catholics through the faithful intercession of His loving Mother.

The month of May is traditionally known amongst Catholics as "Our Lady's Month" and is a month that reminds us to adopt the Rosary form of prayer. From where I hail in India, this month sees many activities amongst Catholic communities who love to express their affection for Mary. The statue of the Blessed Mother is taken from home to home in procession and the Rosary and Litany are recited with deep devotion along with intercessory prayers. Faith is reinforced among the elders and children through these small acts of prayerful recitation in community fellowship to honour our Blessed Mother, also reminding them of the promises associated with its recitation. Once we recognize how words of

Scripture are woven into this prayer form we should be encouraged to embrace its grace to fight the battles of our mind and lives.

In May 2021, our family, along with many others participated at one such Rosary gathering hosted by the family of Freeda & Ani Sawant at Westmead. A special altar with the statue of our Lady was beautifully presented by Annamika. While it brought back fond memories of traditions practiced, it was beautiful to witness and honour Blessed Mother as the Queen of Heaven once again in a community. This Rosary focused on interceding for the intentions concerning COVID and the global needs of the human race. The decades of the Rosary were dedicated to these specific intentions and hymns were sung to seek her intercessory support. It was heart-warming to witness the elders, youth and children alike participate and sing in unison "Hail Queen of Heaven".

Afterwards, we got to partake in a sumptuous dinner through the generosity of Freeda and her hospitable family—husband Ani and children Anna and Nikhil).

Traditions such as the Month of the Rosary help reinforce faith when conducted as a community and this one rekindled hope amidst the dismal global pandemic crisis. May we sustain these traditions of faith as small Christian communities and pass on this legacy of Faith to our young ones just as has been sung through the ages.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.*

References:

(1) *Hail Mary*: roots from Luke 1:28, 41-43, James 5:16;

Our Father: roots from Luke 11;

Glory be: roots minor doxology Mathew 28:19 and Phil 4:20 and Fatima prayer in, *O my Jesus forgive us our sins.....*

(2) Eph 6:10-17: *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 11: Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ... 17: Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*



Fundraising & Hospitality Matters: giving & serving combined.



Just some of the many parishioners who volunteered for the Fundraiser

How fortuitous the Cancer Fundraiser was held on Sunday July 20th, because the following week we went into lockdown! Imagine if we had been forced to cancel on the 20th, after all the preparations!

Freeda Sawant, organiser of the Bushfire Fundraiser in 2019/2020, was again the galvaniser, calling upon the Hospitality Group to assist in this worthy cause.



In spite of COVID regulations having to be adhered to with regards to serving of food and beverages, the occasion was deemed a great success on two accounts: raising money for cancer victims in excess of \$1300, plus the opportunity for people to socialize after 9:30 and 11am Masses. — previously, some Sunday Morning Teas had to be cancelled because of COVID restrictions.

Organisers were glad to see Fr Robert come over after 11am Mass to suss out the scene and pleased he left, assured the event was a success.

Advertising for the Fundraiser included an appeal for donations of food for the occasion. And on the day, it was indeed affirming to see generous parishioners answering the appeal by arriving with goodies to contribute.

There is one downside to what eventuated in this fundraising effort: that we failed to capture the crowds of people lining up to donate at the door, or people just enjoying mingling, and most regrettably, no pictures of the members of the Hospitality Team that helped out on the day. So to all the unseen and unsung volunteers, a sincere thanks. **And to Freeda Sawant well deserved accolades, for without her instigation, the occasion would not have happened.**



Who would have thought that an e-mail to regular devotees, of the *Novena to Mary Full of Grace*, in lockdown due to COVID, would morph into an article regarding childhood memories about the Solemnity of the Assumption celebrated in my home town of Delianuova, in Italy?

Being locked out of Church, the e-mail was about an idea for a Novena of 9 days to help us spiritually prepare for the coming Solemnity. Marian Polizzi's antennae, as the editor of *St Pat's Matters*, sensed a story!

The Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady is a very special day in the hearts of my family, and each year the memories come flooding back and we commemorate this time by turning on the porch light for a period of 15 days prior to the feast day, on August 15th. In this way our aim is to stay connected to our roots and virtually linked to the activities that take place in my home town.

The Feast of the Assumption has been celebrated in Delianuova with joyous devotion long before Pope Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption of Our Lady in 1950; I think sometime around the 1600s it was adopted as the Patronal Feast Day. I think the processional statue of the Madonna dates back to the mid 1800s, if not earlier and has been restored once or twice since.

Each year this feast day comes around, my mind and heart are filled with childhood memories of the preparations that took place during the '*quindicina*', (a fortnight) and the feast day itself.

On the 31st July, the '*quindicina*' was heralded by a short burst of fireworks. Each evening, up to and including the 14th August, the people would gather in the church, (Our Lady of the Assumption) for Vespers, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction; the altar piece of the painting of the Assumption was covered by a shroud, that came down on the eve of the Solemnity to an organ fanfare. At the conclusion of nightly Vespers, our parish priest would intone the *Magnificat* and I would sit there, next to my mum, mesmerised by the sound and the beauty of this Latin Chant, — not that I understood the words or their meaning then, but in my adult years this

has become one of my favourite prayers, on a par with '*Sub Tuum Praesidium*' (*Beneath Thy Protection*) The older people unable to get to the church for Vespers gathered together outside in their neighbourhood and recited the Rosary.

In each home, wealthy or not, balconies and window sills were decorated with rows of lights which would be lit to shine brightly at nightfall; before the advent of electricity it would have been oil lanterns. The main streets were also decorated with arches of lights; these would remain until the end of August then taken down; with each passing decade they have become more elaborate in design.

Every home was a beehive of activity; houses cleaned inside out, food prepared to welcome close relatives to the feast that would follow the Morning Mass and, later on, taking part in the procession through the streets of the town.

The festivities of the Solemnity commenced on the 14th, the eve of the Assumption. After prayers and chants in the church, Our Lady's statue was brought out of the church for a mini procession around the square, a band was on hand to accompany this, and the main procession the next day, invariably playing well-known and much-loved Marian Hymns.

The day of the Solemnity began with the sound of the drums and the drum players parading through the town's streets to announce that the great day had arrived.

The mothers, grandmothers and aunts attended the early masses so they would have enough time to put the finishing touches to the preparations and welcome the invited guests coming into our homes. The rest of us attended 11am Solemn Mass then went home to enjoy the festive lunch with relatives.

Traditionally the children were given a small amount of money to spend on a toy and/or traditional sweets available at the many stalls that were set up on the footpaths by itinerant merchants, who made their living by travelling from town to town selling their merchandise.

The main Procession usually began around 5pm. The statue of the Madonna was carried around the town's main

streets; the priest, servers, sodalities and members of Catholic Action led the procession, the rest of the faithful followed behind. The procession returned to the church around 8pm when the sun had truly set and the religious celebrations ended with final prayers and a final hymn.

At this point the band that was engaged to play at the procession, offered some "secular" entertainment, and began playing excerpts from well-known, popular operas and other classical pieces. I used to listen to this music with my dad and I believe this is where my love of classical music stems from. After the concert, the day's celebrations came to a close with a 10 minutes fireworks display.

I am glad to say that many of the traditions I remember from childhood are being kept alive today, albeit with "updates and modifications" as I witnessed on visits to Delianuova in 2013 and 2016.

Sadly, since the Pandemic began, Italy has been ravaged by its disastrous effects with tens of thousands of deaths in 2020 and one of the longest lockdowns in Europe. Rightly, religious processions were curtailed all over Italy, including in Delianuova with the '*quindicina*' and the Solemn Mass being live-streamed. This year, with eased restrictions they managed to hold the '*quindicina*' inside the church, take the statue of the Madonna outside and hold an outdoor Mass in the square, people still obliged to wear masks and social distance.

As we go through our own COVID crisis here in NSW, my plea to all is to stay safe, stay well; let us continue to seek our Blessed Mother's intercession, that our Lord and God will shield and heal us and the whole world from COVID, and the many other burdens we personally carry.

May God bless us all as we continue to battle the pandemic; may our Heavenly Mother be at our side each day and whatever we do, keep in mind that...

'The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.'
[Deuteronomy 31:8]

Silvana's story cont'd

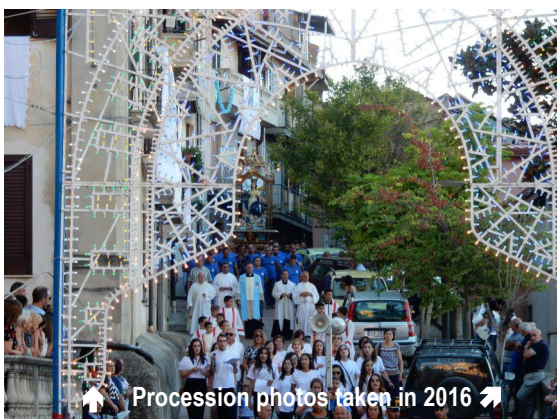


↑ Procession leaving Our Lady of the Assumption in 1958. The little boy to the right is Michael, Silvana's brother aged 6. At the time Silvana was 3 years old.

↓ Procession through Delianuova, no later than 1952.



Updated lighting Silvana saw in 2013



↑ Procession photos taken in 2016 ↗

Past Matters: down memory lane Who remembers Frank Keane?

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Congratulations Frank Keane 1999 Parramatta Senior Citizen of the Year



A life of challenges and hard work were recognised (yesterday) when Frank Keane was named Parramatta Senior Citizen of the Year.

'The Parramatta man has a proud history of serving the community, event organiser Norma Topp said.

Among other contributions, Mr Keane has been a member of St Vincent de Paul Society for the past 50 years and visits sick people in hospital as part of a volunteer visitor program.

'He's the happiest soul you could ever wish to find and he does so many things in the community,' Mrs Topp said. 'The judges grabbed him straight away. He's a marvellous old chap.'

Raised in an orphanage from the age of five, Mr Keane later worked on farms and went to fight in World War II.

'He went to war and was blown up and still has a few pins in his leg from that,' Mrs Topp said.

(Parramatta Advertiser 27.1.99)

Recently, parishioner, **Diane Smith**, while cleaning out some drawers — likely a common chore tackled by many during COVID lockdown — came across this news clip from the *Parramatta Advertiser*, 27.1.99, reprinted in the Sunday Bulletin on the 4th Sunday of Year A.

She sent it to me, commenting "Remember Frank? He was the first person to welcome me into St Pat's original Cathedral back in May 1992. I found this clip when cleaning out a drawer and thought to share it with you."

Naturally it was deemed worthy of broadcast to parishioners via our periodic magazine.

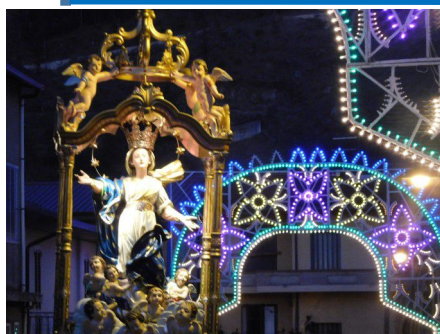
In early 1997, my neighbours, Jack and June Barrett, invited Frank to their home to interview him, with the intention of writing an article about this unique personage for *St Pat's Matters*. It featured in Issue, May 1997.

Long-time parishioners who knew Frank would certainly attest to his stalwart contribution to building up the community.

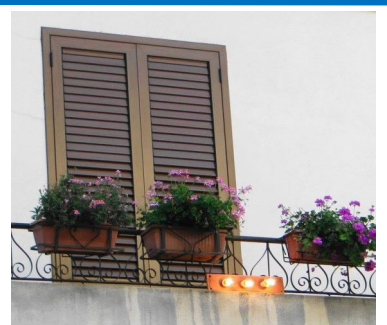
Anyone who remembers Frank, do share your recollections of this remarkable man. Email: balmapp5@bigpond.com

Interested in reading June's article on Frank? Let me know and I'll send you a copy.

M Polizzi



One of the traditions Silvana still hold dear is to turn the porch light on ↑ for the 15 days between the 31st July to the 14th August, as a symbol of the Light of Christ who was made flesh in the womb of Mary our Heavenly Mother



Remembering school days matters

from Barbara Hector

This year we celebrate 200 years of Catholic Education: Join Barbara Hector and Patti Murphy, (whose profiles also feature in 'Getting to know you') as they delight us with some of their memories of time at school.

In 1941 at the tender age of 4 years and 9 months I started at St Patrick's Primary School, Parramatta. At the same time my sister, Marie, who was 3 years and 8 months also started school. As I always had poor eyesight the doctors could not prescribe glasses as they did not know what I could really see until I went to school. The upshot of this was poor Sister Marie Therese was subjected to a child who was frightened of her habit! Undeterred, I was put into a Transition Class with a lay teacher. I think her name was Mrs Denmeade. By this stage I had glasses and was no longer frightened of the Nuns' habits.

During these early years we were well grounded in our Catholic Faith. We learned the Catechism from start to finish, and the Parables for Bible History. Our times tables were committed to memory and we had many Spelling Bees. I am not sure who my First Grade teacher was, but my Second Grade teacher was Sister Mary Aymard who also prepared us for First Holy Communion.

These nuns and teachers were dedicated to their position and we learned to respect them.

My 3rd class teacher was Sister Mary Bonconcillo. This was the year that the boys left us and went over to the Marist Brothers. We girls then went upstairs to a composite 4th & 5th class with Sister Mary Gerard at the helm. How Sister Mary Gerard got up those stairs is a mystery.

Our final primary year, 6th class was taught by Sister Mary Assissium, the School Principal. She prepared us for the Primary Final and any Bursary exams. I passed my Primary Final and obtained a Half Reverend Mother Bursary for OLMC, Our Lady of Mercy College.

I'd like to mention other memories from my Primary School years. It was Wartime

and we had trenches dug around the perimeter of the playground in case of an air raid. Each child had a survival kit, but I don't remember what it contained. We all had a bottle of free milk which we drank at play lunch.

We had singing classes with Sister Mary Pascal or Sister Mary Matthew, and Physical Culture displays under Miss Toovey. We learned to love Poetry and Drama. I remember being in a play where I declared I was going to be a nun, but that I would never punish anyone!

Peace was declared in 1945, but it took many years for life to get back to normal.

Back then the Bishop only came around every three years, so that 4th, 5th and 6th classes were all confirmed together. I also remember the School Inspector, Mr Ryan.

In Primary School we would assemble in the Hall for Morning Prayers and to sing our National Song:

*God Bless our lovely Morning Land
God keep her with Enfolding Hand
Close to His side*

*Where booms the distant battle's roar
From out some rude barbaric shore
In Blessed Peace*

*Forever more There to abide.
God Bless our Lovely Morning land,
Australia*

*God keep with His enfolding Hand,
Australia*

*On Earth there is no other land
Like our Enchanting Southern Land
Our own dear home, our Motherland,
Australia.*

One of the highlights of Primary School was our annual Picnic Day, to Shelly Beach, Gunnamatta Bay, Cronulla, where the Mercy nuns had a Convent. Only the girls from 4th, 5th and 6th went. We went by bus and had a picnic in the fresh air.

From St Patrick's, I went across the road to OLMC. High School was very different

from Primary School. Each subject was timed and a bell was rung at the end of each period and we would change rooms or stay put depending on what our next subject was. I was in the A Class and my subjects were Religion, English, Maths 1&2, History, Geography, French and Latin.

Over the years we had many nuns teaching us the various subjects: The ones I remember were Sister Gonzaga, Mother Thecla, Mother Francis, Mother Gabriel, Sister Aiden, Sister Anne, Sister Barbara, Sister Immaculata, Sister Matthew and Sister Pascal. (If the day was pleasant Sister Aiden would take our Latin Class onto the verandah which overlooked Villiers Street. Years later it was declared unsafe and demolished.)

Then there was Miss Patterson who taught Elocution while Miss Page looked after Physical Education.

All our teachers were excellent in their subjects. I do not know how they gained their qualifications as Teachers' Colleges did not exist until the early 1950s.

At the time I was at OLMC it was still a Boarding School. The boarders occupied the third floor of the College where their dormitories and their study and recreation rooms were located.

We were all taught respect for our teachers and each other and woe betide us if we left school without wearing our blazers, hats and gloves!

I left OLMC at the end of Third Year after passing my Immediate Certificate, having made many friends during my time there.

I still remember OLMC's beautiful chapel, and our school song *Alma Mater*. But being taught in the Catholic School system, gave me a great love of the Catholic Faith and for that I am truly grateful.

WORDS OF WISDOM from THOMAS MERTON

**"We are not at peace with others
because we are not at peace with ourselves,
and we are not at peace with ourselves
Because we are not at peace with God."**



Patti Murphy's recollections of school days

The year before I started school officially, — 1941— I was in the country with Mum and my two sisters where my Dad was shearing. My sister Kath was an asthmatic and Mum had hoped that some months in the country might help her. The two girls had been up at Girilambone for six months when Mum and I came up to bring them back home. They had been going to school on the property Gleneden, where there was a small school, Keeley, which ten children from the surrounding properties attended.

As I was to start school in two months, Mum thought it might be a good idea for me to try it at Keely. The teacher who taught there lived one term each with the families of the pupils. That year it was a Mr Laurie, who was a tiny bit hard of hearing. Mum sent me off with Kath and Freda. I remember the school being fairly stark and smelling of chalk. There was also a small fire burning brightly. I don't know if it was a combination of not wanting to go, or my lack of freedom, or Mr Laurie coming close and asking you to "say again", but I hated it. So when Mr Laurie rang the bell for playlunch, I hightailed it home and no amount of coaxing on anyone's part could get me to return. The grown-ups were very embarrassed, but the kids thought I was a heroine.

I started my schooling at St Monica's School, North Parramatta, when I was four and a half. There I made a memorable first day, in as much as I took rather a fancy to a red-headed boy, called Terry Sheehan, and I chased him around the school yard until I caught him and kissed him. What a traumatic way for him to commence his schooling! I don't recall him being in evidence very much after that first day. Poor Terry! I often wondered what happened to him and what my "attack" had on his psyche.

At that time St Monica's was a two-room school. Boys and Girls. The boys only went to third grade, then into Parramatta to the Marist Brothers, which at that time was next to St Patrick's Church. We had two teachers and six classes in the two rooms. There was only one building divided into two large rooms. Each classroom had an exterior door, plus an interior one. There was a long verandah, useful on wet days. At one end of the verandah was the room where we left our hats and coats. We also left our lunch in there. No tuckshops back in those days.

We were taught by nuns. Usually one of them was only a novice. We had Sister Assissium who incidentally, as a novice, taught my mother and then as a nun, my two sisters, as well as myself. We also had Sister Martha, but I cannot remember the names of the other nuns. It was a happy little school and Father Phelan was our Parish Priest.

All the nuns were lovely, although they would not tolerate any nonsense. They would come and visit our home at weekends and it was exciting when the "Sisters" were coming. My only complaint about school was this: at the beginning of each year, as I had the same nuns who had previously taught Kath and Freda, they always told me I would never be as clever as my sisters. Well, after I heard that a few times, I decided to be myself. Pass my exams, but enjoy school.

I remember my First Holy Communion. It was a very memorable day and I felt very holy and close to Jesus; all of us felt a lot of excitement as the special day approached. We were all little angels and had a lovely Communion Breakfast afterwards with Father Phelan and the nuns. We also were confirmed at St Monica's and very excited when the Bishop came.

It was 1½ kms to school, and I walked unless it was raining. We were used to

the distance as we had no car. We also walked to Mass each weekend.

I didn't really have a problem with school. We had to learn our Catechism from cover to cover, also our 12 times tables — which I still remember to this day. I loved History and Geography, but Maths was never a strong subject for me and still isn't. I loved English and had a particular fondness for Australian Poetry.

Going into high school at St Patrick's School in Parramatta from St Monica's was an adventure. It was decided that I would do a Commercial Course learning Shorthand and Typing and I was happy to do that.

I liked sport. We played a ball game that I really enjoyed. I think it was called Rounders. We also had physical culture, which was always fun.

We had music with Sister Pascal who wanted us to be able to sing our hymns properly. Before each lesson she would remind us that it was important for us to remember to use "The tip of the tongue, the teeth and the lips" How odd the things you recall.

In sewing we also learned to draft patterns. That was weird, as we made clothes with paper — which did seem silly — BUT was beneficial as I certainly did an enormous amount of sewing in my life, including my wedding dress, going-away outfit and lot and lots of children's clothes.

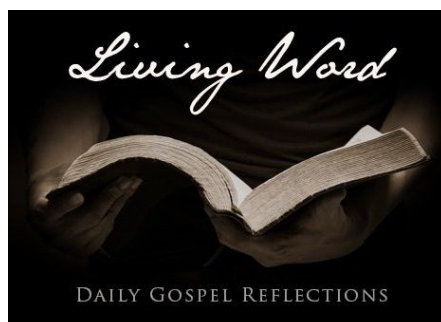
When I finished 3rd Year at St Pat's I went to Business College at Murrays Limited in Parramatta for 6 months and then onto work. My first job was with Dr George Malouf at his home in Albert Street, then I went down to Macquarie St and worked with Dr Joe Malouf and Dr Phil Malouf until I was married. They didn't employ us girls after we were married! (Incidentally, the Malouf Family has a long history with St Pat's Parish.)

I've very fond memories of my school days and the many friends I made there.

WORTH REFLECTION

Sociologists have discovered that even in difficult, dysfunctional families, there's 'no place like home.'

The feast of saints Martha, Mary and Lazarus, (29th July) highlights the importance of the 'domestic church.'



Yes, Jesus Christ is fully present in our family homes, but, like Martha, we need to welcome him into our homes on a daily basis (Luke 10):

God, bless our home,
Abide with us
Through every day and night
That we may live in love and peace
And in your blessed light.

What simple, faithful, familial practices do we have, aiding communion with God and each other? Amen.

The Delta Variant of COVID-19 has hit residents of Greater Sydney, and subsequently regional NSW, particularly hard. Coping with severe restrictions imposed through lockdown since June have taken their toll on families financially, mentally, emotionally and physically. And yet, MODERN MARY finds inspiration in the coping mechanisms of women in her network, during this difficult time of uncertainty.

September, 2021

I can't say I miss the daily turmoil of extra-curricular drop-offs or Book Week costumes. I've quite enjoyed the reprieve from the sheer chaos of attempting to leave the house each day.

Instead, us mothers are now affixed to the media, waiting for them to throw us any sign of an end to home-schooling or a hope for some freedom to move. A new research paper, news of more vaccines, findings from an international study on the impacts upon children, modelling about when we can expect to travel again. We eat up every little morsel, desperate to define our lives and respond to change.

Corporates in suits, known for facilitating change management training sessions, often tell you to *'thrive through change'*. An entirely redundant notion for those facing income uncertainty, or fantasising about throwing their child's laptop out the nearest window. I challenge you, Geoff, in your navy blue suit and open collar, to survive just 10 minutes of Maths with my 5-year old. But I must admit, those theories *do* have an ounce of truth behind them. They describe our varied responses to change, based on our personality types.

Those who *'drive and thrive'* on change are only one type of responder. They're sickeningly enthusiastic and supportive of the leadership. They're often named Vicky and are early-adopters of change. Vicky packs a bag full of extra masks and 3 miniature bottles of sanitiser 'just in case' she bumps into someone short on supplies in the shopping centre carpark. She's ready to take on whatever the pandemic throws at her and tells all of her friends about the latest rule change each morning at 11:01am.

Then there are those who show an initial resistance to change and need time to prepare. They'll be right soon, but they just want to make a few lists and ask a few questions first. That's Cathy, who needs to travel to every K-mart within a 25km radius to gather craft supplies, puzzles and emergency homewares. She's not convinced of the reality of this thing, but will eventually get on board when she's filled her linen cupboard with cleaning products.

Then we have Rita. Rita is full of concern about the effects of change. She's cautious and is weighing the pros and cons very carefully. These personality types focus on assessing their risks. They want to ensure that they're not rushed into a decision that will impact upon their quality of life. They question others for their viewpoints and ask to see the health advice behind each policy decision.

We all transition through change differently. But generally, we travel from an initial denial, fear or shock, on towards a state of trust and acceptance. Somewhere in the middle, during that transition, we might be confused and unsure of where to direct our energy. Do I start baking bread again? Do I need to bulk buy supplies?

Watching other mothers, I can see how those who cope best with change focus on the elements within their influence, the things that they can actually take action against.

Normally, I would tell Geoff the facilitator to hold on to my child's laptop and throw himself out the window along with it. But it really has been fascinating observing the resilience these experts write about playing out in the lives of mothers around me. They may not realise it, but they've dealt with this change remarkably and continue to inspire me every day. They all have their own strategies for moving through transition phases. Some need to speak to others to

sound out their thoughts, while others block out the noise and focus on pooling all their resources. But we're all moving through it!

Watching other mothers, I can see how those who cope best with change focus on the elements within their influence, the things that they can actually take action against. They reframe the event and ask solution-focussed questions: what's within my control? What does a 'good day' look like? What do I want to achieve and what resources do I need to achieve it? They're all doing their best with what they have at hand. It's very inspiring to watch the women in my network holding things together as our broader community travels through change. Each in their own way.

If this resonates with you, share your stories with us at modernmarymums@gmail.com Join the conversation about how on earth to survive the challenging vocation of motherhood as modern Christian women.



Motherhood is messy.
And challenging.
And crazy.
And sleepless.
And giving.
And still unbelievably beautiful

Rachel Martin



SACRAMENTAL MATTERS UPDATE

LOCKDOWN STRIKES AGAIN:

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation has constantly been thwarted since lockdown came into force in June.

Anyone reading the Sunday Bulletins online would feel empathy for Meg Gale who, as the Sacramental Co-ordinator, has continually had to inform parents about constant changes to the programme, thanks to the enforcement of COVID restriction measures.



In the Bulletin, 29th July Meg reported:

Sadly, though not unexpectedly, things have changed with regards to lockdown, so the parish is having to move to "Plan B" to achieve our aim of having the children enrolled in the Confirmation programme receive the sacrament this year.

All those families concerned should have received an email detailing the process as it now stands, all of which will, (God willing!) take place in October. The first meeting, for parents, is now scheduled for Tuesday, 05 October at 7:30pm in the Parish Hall. We thank you for your understanding and patience at this time

But then.....

In the following week's bulletin, 5th September, Meg had to inform parents of yet another change:

Unfortunately, with all the uncertainty surrounding the extent of the current lockdown and the months ahead, the parish has made a decision to postpone the sacramental program until next year.

We recognise that the last few weeks have been confusing and frustrating for all involved and, though we were determined to try and celebrate Confirmation this year, this will not be possible. A revised schedule will be publicised in the near future.

We apologise for this disruption and the disappointment it will inevitably engender and thank you in anticipation of your understanding.

Praying Matters



Holy Family of Nazareth, make us more mindful of the sacredness of the family and its beauty in God's plan.

Pray with us that our families will be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.

Enjoy IAN GATES touch of humour re praying, in his Pearly Gates cartoon



Matters Unbelievable, but True

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days.

Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial.

They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up.

Hence the custom of 'holding a wake'.

The country is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave.

When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive!

So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night — the graveyard shift — to listen for the bell.

Thus, someone could be saved by the bell, or was considered a 'dead ringer'.

And that's the truth....

Now, whoever said History was boring?



LOVING THE EARTH GOD LOVES



An Ecological Examen

HOW DO I RATE IN MY RELATIONSHIP TO ALL GOD'S CREATION?

All creation reflects the beauty and blessing of God's image.

Where was I most aware of this today?

Can I identify and pinpoint how I made a conscious effort to care for God's creation during this day?

What challenges or joys do I experience as I recall my care for creation?

How can I repair breaks in my relationship with creation, in my unspoken sense of superiority?

As I imagine tomorrow, I ask for the grace to see the Incarnate Christ in the dynamic interconnections of all Creation.

Examen by Joseph Carver SJ.



*Renewing, repairing
and restoring*
our commitments to God,
to one another
and to all of creation.

