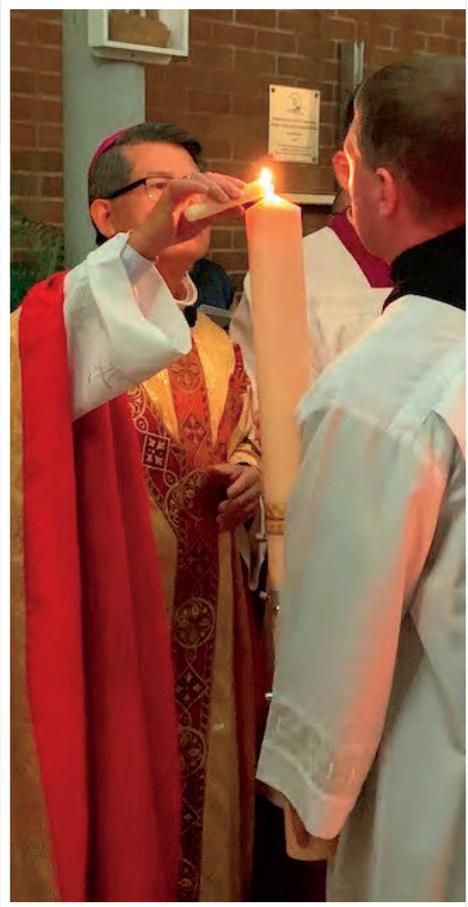


# ST PAT'S MATTERS

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



*Christ Our Light  
Alleluia!*

## EDITORIAL

**Christ is Risen!  
Let us rejoice! Alleluia**

This edition's first pages tell of sacrifice, salvation and new life promised by the Risen Christ. as we revisit the profoundly-moving liturgies of Holy Week; the aim being to remind readers of our dying and rising to live the Easter experience of true communion with God and our neighbour.

Articles on the following pages cover a variety of subjects that we trust will whet readers' interest.

See what 92-year old Margaret Mullholland Cooper finds exciting to write about.

Join Fr Robert as he continues the second instalment of his vocation story and in a separate article answers questions posed about certain rituals. Fr Chris puts us in the picture about his extra duties beyond his role as assistant priest.

It was Fr Chris who suggested the feature on our Seminarians and their Rectors, and most importantly to remind parishioners to constantly pray for them.

Faithful contributor, Judith Dunn, continues to present characters from our colonial past. See who stars in this issue. Read also her concerns about damage to St Francis Mortuary Chapel and her plea that something needs to be done. Who will take up the challenge to be a Friend?

On a lighter note check out the review on the parish gathering in honour of our patron saint St Patrick and the launch of a Seniors' Ministry.

Be impressed by Bernadette Ching's article as she takes us outback in her report on *Mission to Wilcannia*.

In writing about being diagnosed with cancer and coping with subsequent treatment, Khush Jilla wants to show the importance of faith and prayer in coping with illness.

The spread on *The Good Friday Night Walk* highlights elements crucial in a faith community: service and witness — from young and old.

To conclude: St Augustine is credited with saying, **"We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song."**

So let's show we believe by our lives.

*M Polizzi*

# HOLY WEEK: *In Faith we walked with Jesus*

## Palm Sunday



And so the drama of Holy Week unfolds yet again, and in faith people gathered on Palm Sunday for the ceremony in the cloister prior to the 11am Solemn Mass. Deacon Matthew read the Gospel recalling Jesus entering into Jerusalem for the final time. It is a triumphant entry, the common people joyfully greeting Him with shouts of *Hosanna!* laying their cloaks on the road along with "greenery which they had cut in the fields", as a sign of respect. They completely misconstrued His coming as that of a political messiah, rather than as the Prince of Peace.

It was hard to comprehend how these same welcoming crowds will soon fall silent, changing tune when they realise Jesus is not the warrior king they were expecting to free them from Roman rule. And indeed they would cry out for him to be crucified.

The next part of the ritual is the blessing of the palms. Bishop Vincent told people to hold up their palms as he did a circuit of the cloister to sprinkle them with holy water. (Usually people gather on the grass, but because of the rain-soaked grass from weeks of La Nina's deluge, this year everyone congregated on the concrete)

With palms blessed, and acknowledging Jesus as our Saviour, the choir led the procession into the Cathedral for Solemn Mass, where the faithful would listen to the reading of the Passion, the full story of Jesus' suffering and death, to make us realise, that as Christians, in our lives victory will not be ours unless we are prepared to accompany Jesus on the way of the cross.

Jesus, entering Jerusalem, is humble, innocent, afraid, but ready.

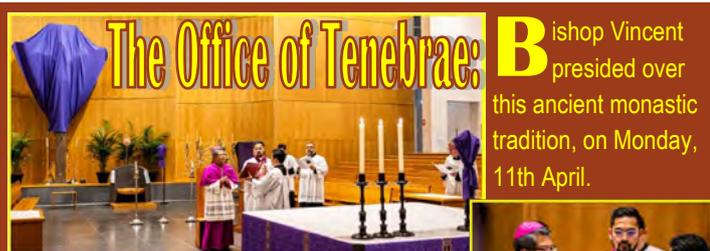
May we, too, always be so.

***BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!***

**May we look to Him, to be open-hearted, that we may know the power of silence over angry words, of peace over the clenched fist, of love over vengeance.**

# HOLY WEEK: *Liturgies that directed our focus to Jesus*

These two stirring liturgies on Monday and Wednesday of Holy Week should not be missed.



## The Office of Tenebrae:

**B**ishop Vincent presided over this ancient monastic tradition, on Monday, 11th April.



Processing in with him were Fr Robert Riedling, Fr Peter Williams, Deacon Matthew Dimian, Fr Chris del Rosario, MC, Acolytes, Servers, Seminarians and the Cathedral Choir with the Director of Music, Bernard Kirkpatrick.

For centuries, the name *Tenebrae*, (Latin for *darkness* or *shadows*), has been applied to the combined Offices of Matins and Lauds of the last three days of Holy Week. In medieval times they came to be anticipated on the preceding evenings.

This year's service was based on the Office-of Readings (Matins) and Morning Prayer (Lauds) of Tuesday in Holy Week in the present Divine Office. In addition to the psalms and readings, Lamentations from Jeremiah were chanted three times, each followed by a responsory, sung by the Cathedral Schola.

A seminarian, at specific parts of the service, extinguished a single candle on the hearse until fourteen were put out, one lit candle remaining as the symbol of Christ.



The Christ light was taken from the Cathedral, and for a brief time towards the end of the service, all present remained in darkness, given time to reflect upon the mystery of Christ's death and the apparent victory of darkness and evil in our lives. Suddenly, a loud noise (*strepitus*), symbolising the earthquake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28:2), broke the silence.



The Christ Light was then restored to its rightful place atop the Tenebrae hearse, and by its light, all prayed briefly before departing in silence.

Never attended the Office of Tenebrae? Come next year. Be

immersed in a truly spiritually-uplifting, prayerful liturgy, enhanced by the soulful chanting of Nocturns by the Cathedral Schola, and the sung Lamentations of Jeremiah. The memory of the experience is sure to assure your presence at this liturgy during future Holy Weeks.



## Chrism Mass



**P**riests and people from the Diocese's 47 parishes and various chaplaincies once again filled St Patrick's Cathedral to capacity for the annual Chrism Mass on Wednesday 13th April.

What sets this apart from the usual liturgy of the Mass?

### 1. The Renewal of Priestly Promises to the Bishop.



### 2. The Blessing of Oils and Consecration of The Chrism.

The oils to be used throughout the Diocese for celebrating the Sacraments are processed to the Bishop in this order: the **Oil of the Sick** and the **Oil of Catechumens** for blessing, then the **Sacred Chrism** for blessing and consecration, (the priests extending their hands in the act of co-consecration with the Bishop.) The Sacred Chrism is used for anointing in Baptism and Priesthood.



### 3. Presentation of Holy Oils:

Pre COVID, priests and parish representatives received the Holy Oils from the Bishop on behalf of their communities. Then their long line would extend into the Chapel before they turned to lead the procession from the Cathedral. Regrettably last year and this year that impressive, unforgettable sight was replaced by the Oils being distributed in the Cloister by Sr Mary Louise after Mass. Is it likely that in 2023 the Assembly will get to witness the former ritual?



# THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM:

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

Beginning on Holy Thursday with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, The Triduum reaches its pinnacle in the Easter Vigil and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

## Holy Thursday:

**SOLEMN EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER** has three focal points:

**THE 'MANDATUM' — The Great Commandment** recalls Jesus washing the feet of His Apostles — this act of humble service bears out His calling of them, and us today, to be true disciples in ministering to others: *"to love one another as I have loved you" ...*



And so it was that at this Mass — as bishops world- wide would also do — Bishop Vincent, emulated Jesus' humble act by washing the feet St Pat's parishioners: this year it was four married couples who were recipients of this enactment of Jesus teaching us how to serve others.

## THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST AND PRIESTHOOD:

At His final meal Jesus makes the Apostles sharers in His Passover: As a pledge of His love, He



offers the bread and wine as *'my body, given up for you'* and *'my blood, poured out for you'* entreating them to *'do this in memory of me,'* thereby constituting them as priests of the New Testament.

To this day we celebrate the Eucharist as the memorial of His death and Resurrection.

After Holy Communion the Blessed Sacrament was processed to the Altar of Repose in the Hall, for believers to "watch and pray" with Jesus, reflecting on His Agony in Gethsemane and His impending, ultimate sacrifice for love of us; remembering too how Jesus appealed to those with him, *"could you not watch with me one hour?... Watch and pray so that you will not enter into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*



## Good Friday:

**THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS** A crowd in excess of 600 came at 10am to walk the Stations in the Cloister, using prayers and reflections from Pope Francis.

## SOLEMN COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION:

The service began in silence; the procession entered the cathedral packed to overflowing; the priests and deacons double genuflected before the altar, while the Bishop prostrated himself as a sign of total submission to the power and grace of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.



The Passion was sung, with Bernard Kirkpatrick taking the narrator's role.

As the cross was being carried in by Deacon Matthew for veneration, the Crucifix was slowly unveiled, while the choir chanted the Responsory, *'Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the Saviour of the world.'* three times.



The clergy were first to venerate the Cross, then four long files



of the Faithful queued either side of the altar to also venerate the Cross, a truly powerful spectacle to behold.

Good Friday is the only day of the year when the Eucharist is not celebrated throughout the world. Therefore pre-sanctified communion was brought to the altar in the cathedral for distribution to the Faithful at the end of the liturgy. As the service had begun, so it ended — in silence.

# THE EASTER VIGIL: CENTRE OF THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

The Congregation assembled in the darkening Cloister for

## I. THE SERVICE OF LIGHT: The Lucernarium



After blessing the new fire, Bishop Vincent prepared the Easter candle, cutting a cross into it, plus the symbols of **Alpha** and **Omega** and the year 2022 saying,

*Christ yesterday and today,  
the Beginning and the End,  
the Alpha and the Omega  
All time belongs to him and all the ages  
To Him be glory and power  
through every age and forever. Amen*

Then five grains of incense, were inserted in the candle, representing the five glorious wounds of Christ.



Lighting the candle from the new fire, the Bishop prayed:  
**May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.**

The Paschal Candle was carried in procession into the dark Cathedral and people's candles lit from its flame. Then Deacon Dimian sang The Easter Proclamation (**Exsultet**)

which in brief, invokes God's blessing, traces the salvation history of God's people and praises the candle as a burnt-sacrifice representing Christ as the Morning Star.

**II. LITURGY OF THE WORD:** Four readings from the Old Testament — Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah and Ezekiel — took place in darkness, each interspersed with a Responsory sung by the choir and a Prayer by the Bishop. Then the Cathedral was fully illuminated and the Gloria burst forth, bells ringing jubilantly to signify the joy of Christ's Resurrection. In the light, the Epistle (Romans 6:3-11) and the Gospel (Luke 24:1-12) were proclaimed, before the Bishop delivered his homily.

## III. BAPTISMAL LITURGY:

As the Elect, James Owen was led in procession to the Baptistry, the Litany of Saints was chanted. Then for **The Blessing of the Baptismal Water**, Deacon Matthew lowered the Paschal Candle into the font 3 times as the Bishop prayed: **May the power of the Holy Spirit, O Lord, come down through Your Son into the fullness of this font so that all who have been buried with Christ by Baptism into death may rise again to life with Him.....** as the candle was lifted from the font, led by the choir, all acclaimed,



*'Springs of water, bless the Lord,  
praise and exult him above all forever.'*



## INITIATION into the CATHOLIC FAITH:

**JAMES OWEN** renouncing sin and making the Profession of Faith, walked through the font to be baptized by the Bishop, **"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."**



Then the Assembly also renewed their Baptismal Promises renouncing sin and professing their Faith, after which they were sprinkled with holy water by the Bishop.



James, now clothed in Christ (symbolized by his white garment), returned to the cathedral, to be presented with a lighted candle, (a sign of moving from death to life in Christ), lit from the Paschal Candle by Sarah Abboud, his Sponsor/God-parent.

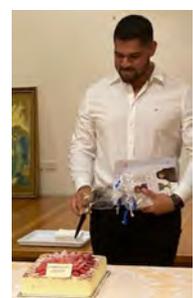
The **SACRAMENT of CONFIRMATION**, began with the **Laying on of Hands** by the Bishop. Then in the **Anointing with Chrism**, he made the sign of the cross on James' forehead with the words, **'James, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'**, and touching his cheek, continued **'Peace be with you.'**



In receiving First Holy Communion, James completed his initiation into the Catholic Faith.

At supper afterwards, he received a gift from Bishop Vincent before cutting his celebratory cake.

**Welcome,  
Neophyte!**



## A Matter worth Reflection



After becoming a Catholic in May 2021, Margaret Mulholland Cooper at age 92, shared her remarkable journey in the July issue [107] of *St Pat's Matters*. When Deacon Rod Pirotta, (who walked the last stages of the journey with her), recently visited Margaret, she showed him the article below that she

wrote for her parish bulletin. (St Mary Immaculate, Quakers Hill).

He suggested her reflection was worth publishing in *St Pat's Matters* as a follow-on story of *A NEOPHYTE – ONE YEAR LATER*.

### WHAT'S EXCITING?

Towards the end of a long and eventful life, past the "use by" date, what could there possibly be left in life to get excited about? Travel, seeing fresh places? Have had enough of that. New clothes? Not really with a wardrobe still full of "old favourites" and where would I go to wear them? New foods? Pointless with my failing appetite and sense of taste and smell rapidly diminishing. New friends and acquaintances? Certainly enjoyable, but I would hardly describe that as exciting! While my greatest excitement is yet to come when I shall see my Lord face to face, I found something unexpected to get excited about while I am still here on earth, when I was initiated into the Catholic Church in May 2021.

During my Protestant years I had two very dramatic encounters with God. But when I was received into the Catholic Church, I did not expect, nor receive any such experience. Instead, there was a joyous assurance that I had come home. This is where I belonged. Then over the following months I noticed that I was seeing new truths in familiar Scriptures that I had not previously seen. It seemed that a veil was being lifted from my eyes. How could this happen? It was so strange!

As I puzzled and prayed over these new thoughts God led me to 1 Cor.1:10-17 and also 1 Cor.3:1-9. Then I saw it and I was amazed! How could I have been so blind! In these two passages of Scripture St Paul strongly condemns the divisions and dissensions in the Corinthian Church, which he clearly states has prevented their spiritual growth from a milk to a meat diet. (Heb.5:12-14).

Over the centuries, in direct violation of the call to Christian unity given by the Apostles (Eph.4:2-6) it seems to me that thousands of Christian groups (of which I had always been a part of one or another) have continually split and chipped away at fragments of truth from the whole Rock on which Jesus said He would build His Church. Matt.16:18. In so doing they have blocked the work of the Holy Spirit as the teacher of the Church. John 16:12-14. Eph.4:30. 1 Thess.5:19.

Now, no longer part of an "off-cut", sipping milk in the kitchen, I am free to enjoy new meat dishes at the banquet table. (Song of Sol.2:4). **Wow!**

***Surely this is something to be excited about at any age!***

## Taking Stock Matters

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT FROM FLOYD ORIBELLO

**T**here was once a rich man who was near death. He was very grieved because he had worked so hard for his money, and he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So, he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him. An angel hears his plea and appears to him, "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you."

The man implores the angel to speak to God to see if He might bend the rules.

The man continued to pray that his wealth could follow him. The angel reappears and informs the man that God has decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man gathers his largest suitcase and fills it with gold bars and places it beside his bed. Soon afterward, the man dies and shows up at the Gates of Heaven to be greeted by St Peter. Seeing the suitcase, St Peter says, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here!"

But the man explains to him that he has permission, asking him to verify his story with the Lord. Sure enough, St Peter checks and returns saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through." Peter opens the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that the man found too precious to leave behind and with surprise exclaims, "You brought pavement ?!!!" \*\*

The story above allowed me to visualise a pleasant picture of what the journey to heaven might be like, as before I didn't really pay much attention to the Gospels and my focus was purely on what I can do here on earth — to go about my duties, to earn for myself and my eventual family.

However, when close family members required prayers, I decided to start re-attending Holy Mass, and soon realized there's a wealth of wisdom within our faith that is worth discovering. Therefore, familial prayer needs was the ignition which got me to attend Mass, but then deep theological curiosity became the fuel to the fire to keep me searching. I acquired a new perspective and saw that there was more to just working and going through life the way many people do.

Realising that life is a journey and GOD is the destination, I then asked myself these questions:

- ◆ Where & how can I find GOD?
- ◆ What should I bring?
- ◆ But what about my obligations on earth?

Especially during this time of Lent, these questions have been a constant reflection, examining whether my thoughts, actions and deeds are aligned towards heaven above — understanding that worldly and materialistic goals should only be a vehicle to amplify GOD's glory, using the wisdom, HE bestowed upon us to prioritise and balance spiritual and materialistic duties daily.

This will be a never-ending endeavour of human self-discovery, as I believe GOD in heaven is far greater than any wealth we obtain here on earth and that to travel lightly, free of sin and worries, would make this journey of ours called life, so much more enjoyable.

\*\*The man in the story, valued his golden bars on earth but arrived to discover that heaven's pavements were made of golden bars.

## FR ROBERT'S VOCATION STORY CONTINUES....

*In St Pat's Matters, edition 109, Father Robert shared "something of my upbringing in a home with no explicit religious activity, focusing particularly on my memories of family Christmas celebrations". This sparked readers' desire to learn about Father's journey to the priesthood, especially when he didn't have the usual 'Cradle Catholic'*



*background.'*

*In edition 110 he wrote the first part — experience of Scripture lessons at state schools; then at university being put off by 'religious groups seemingly interested only in proselyting'; to an epiphany moment he describes as "God reaching out to me despite my lack of interest in Him"; from which he realised, that for the experience to go anywhere, he needed to associate with a Christian community living out a meaningful and loving relationship with God; to thoughts of Baptism. And now read on.....*

I left off my vocation story in the February edition of *St Pat's Matters* [110] at the point where I got cold feet just as I was considering baptism into the Anglican Church and decided it was wise to investigate other Christian denominations before taking such a big step in my faith life.

Following my short time with the Anglican Church, I went for a few Sundays to the local Salvation Army citadel in Blacktown, but didn't find the worship style to my taste and ultimately found my way to a Presbyterian Church which met in a public school hall in Doonside each Sunday morning. This church had a very informal style of worship with a congregation that numbered a couple of dozen people and a minister who dressed casually and focused the services on preaching and prayer interspersed with some modern Christian music led by a few instrumentalists playing guitars, drums and the like. I remember that just a few times a year at most there would be a commemoration of the Lord's Supper which would involve small glasses of unfermented grape juice, one for each person, though I can't recall if there was any bread involved.

I enjoyed my time at this church which I attended for a year to eighteen months. Being a Protestant Church with a strong emphasis on the Scriptures, I started to become familiar with the Word of God and got to know some lovely people of faith, realising that they were perfectly normal people with the same joys and struggles as anyone else. I credit this church with giving me a firm foundation not only in scripture but also an understanding of the importance of community in building and strengthening one's faith.

Over the years that I was attending various churches I had been curious about Catholicism. I suppose when one is considering which church one wants to join, Catholicism has to be a part of that choice by virtue of its size and influence. Though I never raised the issue of the Catholic Church in conversation with people in the churches I attended, I have no doubt that the response would have been lukewarm at best, these churches being very much focused on the Scriptures and nothing else. I believe that the advice would have been for me to "tread carefully", if not an outright "stay away".

Nonetheless, I needed to satisfy my curiosity about Catholicism. My interest in Catholicism was piqued primarily by popular culture (where would the film industry be without the Catholic Church?) and its rituals. This being the case, my knowledge was very superficial and undoubtedly largely mistaken, so I took the plunge and investigated ways I could get some accurate information.

Some readers of *St Pat's Matters* may remember The Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC), run by the Archdiocese of Sydney for many years and based in Maroubra. The CEC used to advertise in various popular publications and used the tagline "**What Do Catholics Believe?**" One day I cut out the coupon from a publication lying around at home, sent it off by post (we are talking pre-internet days here!) and waited for the first of a series of brochures to arrive, each focusing on a different aspect of the Catholic Faith.

All-in-all, twenty brochures were sent to me over a few months and gave me a good idea about the beliefs of the Catholic Church, prompting me to look more seriously at the prospect of becoming a Catholic.

But I wasn't going to give into this impulse too easily...  
*(Fr Robert has intimated that his vocation story will definitely run to a third and possibly a fourth part! So keep a look out in future issues.)*

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*Can you spot him in the midst of revellers at a Parish Christmas Party way back in 2001, in the lovely old parish hall, pre demolition? As a young seminarian he was spending time at St Pat's. Merely by chance I came across the photo in Issue 23 of St Pat's Matters, February 2002. It's a scanned image, hence the poor quality. Whereabouts of the original photo is a mystery! Back then little did he realise that one day he would return as Dean of the Cathedral!*

Editor



## PRIESTLY MATTERS



*In the last issue of St Pat's Matters we congratulated Fr Chris del Rosario on his appointment as Director of Vocations for three years from 1st February 2022. He already serves as Diocesan Master of Ceremonies.*

*At our request he explains what each of these roles entails.*

Hi everyone,

After three and half years as a priest in the Diocese I am still the new kid on the block. I say that as I'm still the most recently ordained priest, alongside Fr. Jessie Balorio, Fr. Galbert Albino & Fr. Jack Green, here in Parramatta. Usually the new kid is given time to settle in his new environment. When I was in seminary I was told that the first five years of ordination are crucial as it shapes how one lives as a priest. Naturally I assumed that a newly ordained priest is given five years to settle in; he is not to be given any other duties other than his appointment as an assistant priest in a parish... gosh I was wrong.

Within a year of my ordination I received a letter from Bishop Vincent that I had been appointed as the Diocesan Master of Ceremonies, succeeding Chris Ohlsen. Recently I was asked by the Bishop to take on the role as Director of Vocations, succeeding Fr. John Paul Escarlan. Please know I am not, in any way, complaining about the extra work, (even if I did complain, no one would listen, ha ha ha).

I'm honoured to be considered suitable for such roles in the Diocese. Upon reflection these appointments have actually helped shape the priest I am today. Both have allowed me to settle into my priestly vocation as I'm doing that which I love; reverence to the sacred liturgy and vocations promotion. With that, the editor of St. Pat's Matters has asked me to write a small piece on my roles in the Diocese.

As Master of Ceremonies I'm charged with preparing and directing liturgical celebrations, mainly presided over by the Bishop, to ensure proper and smooth conduct. Whilst this may sound like a daunting task, it's actually quite simple. Since the inception of the Diocese in 1986 Parramatta has maintained a high liturgical standard due to the work of Fr. Peter Williams, the Diocese's first Master of Ceremonies (MC). All succeeding MCs have diligently maintained the Diocese's high liturgical standard. As such my role in preparing and directing liturgical celebrations has been made simple through my predecessors.

Director of Vocations, however, is not as simple as following the rubrics in the Roman Missal. As Director of Vocations it is my job to promote vocations and journey with those discerning God's vocation for them. In saying that, I am tasked to focus specifically on Priestly Vocations. This for me is a large task as this role is dependent on God's call to individuals to the ordained ministry. It's not about the quantity of seminarians but rather the candidates' willingness to be formed for the priesthood. In this role I'm still finding my feet but I trust the Lord will guide me in my actions to promote priestly vocations.

In both these roles I ask you to pray for me. I've mentioned on many occasions that prayer is the best support you can give to a priest. Without it we struggle. So please pray that I remain a faithful priest of Jesus Christ, and that I do both roles justice as my predecessors have before me.



As in past years, Jesuit Refugee Services again made their Lenten appeal to the Cathedral Parish to support their Foodbank, which serves people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants on

temporary visas, who are experiencing food insecurity due to financial hardship, including many who are ineligible for Centrelink and many who do not have work rights.

The people the JRS help through the Foodbank Program may also be experiencing additional vulnerabilities, such as health or mental health concerns, disability or mobility issues, pregnancy, and domestic and family violence.

JRS requested the donation of 6 essential items:

Basmati rice, cooking oil, dried chick peas and lentils, tinned coconut milk, shampoo and conditioner, laundry powder and dishwashing liquid.

After JRS collected the donations above (photo taken 30th March) more bags of goods began to accumulate, all of which will considerably augment Foodbank supplies. (see store below). Our Lady Help of Christians watching over the scene is surely smiling on all the generous givers who acted with compassion.



# Meet the Seminarians of Parramatta Diocese and pray for them.



Tom Green



Jack Elkazzi



David Sebastian



Macky Amores



Luke Huynh



Patrick Laurent



Paul Tran



Menard Gaspi



Jose Valentine Lim



Victor Atuhura



Deacon Andrew Rooney



Deacon Adam Carlow



Deacon Matthew Dimian

The three deacons, although undertaking pastoral duties in their assigned parishes, still return to the Seminary on occasion for formation sessions and spiritual recollections, e.g. retreats, and also to catch up with fellow Seminarians.

Now they are one step away from the next momentous milestone in their vocational journey: Ordination to the Priesthood.



Meet Fr Paul Marshall, Rector and Fr John Frauenfelder Vice-Rector of Holy Spirit Seminary, Harris Park. As Rector, Fr Paul sees the role as *“forming the seminarians into shepherds for the Diocese”* through the emotional, psychological, pastoral and spiritual development of the students, in which duty he will be ably assisted by the Vice Rector, Fr John.



Mass celebrating the beginning of the Seminary Academic Year: 20.2.2022. Bishop Vincent with the Dean of the Cathedral, Rector & Vice-Rector of the Seminary, Diocesan Director of Vocations, Deacons and Seminarians.

Every fourth Friday of the month, at 6:30pm, a Holy Hour takes place in St Patrick's to pray for Vocations. This is a time of prayer and reflection before the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration, and concluding with Benediction. All are welcome to join.



**Judith Dunn OAM** yet again ushers readers into our colonial history, detailing the life of one, John Hodges who owned the *Hope and Anchor* (now Brislington). How many have walked past Brislington House, at 10 George Street, the oldest building in Parramatta CBD, completely unaware of its history as a residence, inn, doctor's surgery, nurses' home, for many years incorporated into the former Parramatta District Hospital, but now serving as the Medical and Nursing Museum. After reading Judith's article about John Hodges, for whom Brislington was built, you might agree with her comment that 'he was a bit of a character'.

## History Matters

### JOHN HODGES OF BRISLINGTON

On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1805, John Hodges, together with Edward Mahon and John Rumball was sentenced to death for assault, theft and extortion. This was later commuted to transportation for life and he spent time on the convict hulks before arriving in the colony per *Duke of Portland* in 1807.

The colony not being quite to his liking, one year later, with another convict, he stowed away on a whaling ship, *Sarah*, which was headed towards Timor. Unfortunately for them, within one day's sail of Timor, they were discovered. Passing another ship headed towards Sydney, the escapees were transferred mid-ocean from *Sarah* to *Elizabeth* and returned to Sydney.

Hodges settled down and stayed out of trouble, marrying a "native born"<sup>i</sup> wife, Elizabeth Williams, in St Johns Church in January 1810. His life's progress from then on was quite rapid. In July 1813 Hodges received his ticket of leave and in 1814 is listed as being in the service of Edward Shackley, the Government gardener at Parramatta. Coincidentally, Shackley had also arrived on the *Duke of Portland* so they may have been acquainted.

In 1814, William Cox was placed in charge of building a road across the mountains to access the newly-discovered pasture land beyond. Ever on the lookout to advance himself, Hodges provided a horse and cart to help dispatch supplies for the road gangs in the mountains, and in January 1816 he received a Conditional Pardon. He dealt in spirits in Parramatta and was granted a publican's licence in 1818 but forfeited it soon after for keeping a disorderly house and selling sly grog. He held licences also in 1821, 22, 27 and 1832 but reports by the local constabulary were scathing about his character. "extremely bad and has often been brought forward for keeping a disorderly house"<sup>ii</sup> and for selling spirits without a licence."

The whereabouts of the 1818 inn is unknown but by 1821, Brislington was completed and known as the *Hope and Anchor*. Governor Macquarie had declared that a leasehold became freehold if a brick building was erected for the sum of £1,000 on the site. This was a great incentive to erect substantial buildings. The lease was lot 98 on the corner of George and Marsden Streets. Local legend has it that he won money at a game of euchre at the *Woolpack Inn* which assisted with the erection, with the winning hand immortalised in decorative brickwork. Laid in a pattern of burnt bricks on the back wall of the inn is the six of diamonds. Confirmation of his grant came in 1823.

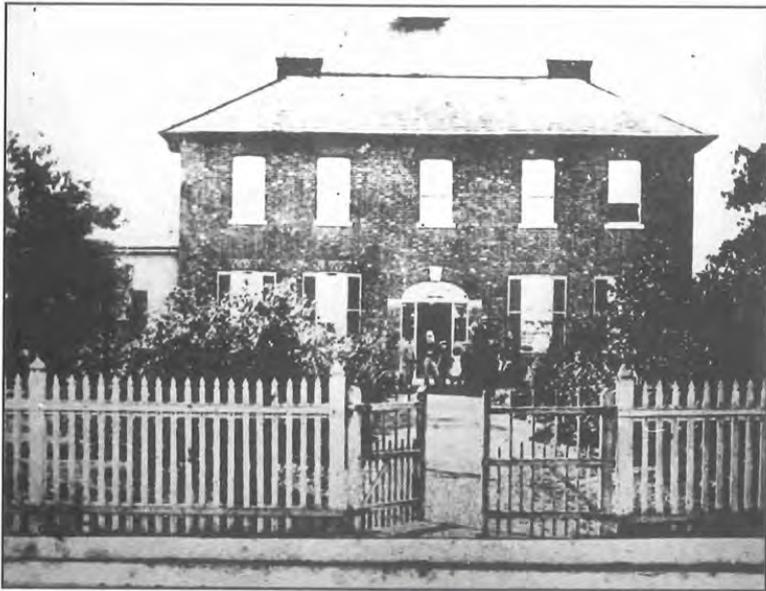
In the 1822 General Muster, John Hodges is listed as living with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Margaret aged 3. However, the marriage was not doing well. In 1820 Elizabeth had left the marriage. John advertised that she had absconded from his house and acted unbecoming as a wife. No one was to give her credit as he would not settle any debts she contracted after September 1820. By the 1822 muster she was obviously back with him, but the 1828 Muster shows him living with his 10 year old daughter and 3 servants, with no mention of a wife. She did not return and her whereabouts from this time is unknown.

From 1816, Hodges was a very busy dealer in property. In that year he bought the *Pig and Whistle Farm* at Seven Hills, adding the adjoining 60-acre farm in 1818. By 1821 he was holding 100 acres of rural land with 2 horses, 50 head of cattle, 8 hogs, 5 bushels of wheat and 20 of maize. During the 1820s he was supplying wheat and meat to the Government Store and by 1828 held 220 acres of land with 9 horses and 200 head of cattle with 3 assigned servants.

Property he owned in Parramatta included a 6-room brick house on Church Street as well as a log house in the same street and a substantial 7-room house with stockyard and piggery, opposite his town house (Brislington) as well as a 4-room cottage. He also dabbled in horse breeding, standing horses at stud at the *Anchor and Hope*, mainly a well-bred horse, Young Hector, whose sire was Hector, owned by Darcy Wentworth<sup>iii</sup>.

This is the picture of a man doing very well indeed but he continued to live on the edge of respectability. In giving evidence at the Bigge Enquiry<sup>iv</sup>, Reverend Samuel Marsden said about Hodges. "I know a man named Hodges I always thought him, and still think him, a bad character. He kept a regular brothel near my house at Parramatta..... He was frequently brought before the magistrates for receiving stolen goods from gentlemen's servants and for receiving women from the Factory to meet them and for keeping a drunken and disorderly house."

Hodges continued dealing but it was sometimes rather shady. In 1844 he served twelve months gaol together with his servant Thomas Lynch for stealing flagstones from the mortuary of the hospital next door to pave the inn yard. His property was sold for £3,000 including "the goods, chattels, merchandise, debts, credits, horses, cattle, sheep, household furniture, carriages, plate, jewels and all other personal property." The purchaser was John Ryan who allowed Hodges to live in the house until his death on 14 June 1849.



Brislington before the addition of the front verandah.



John Hodges vault in St Patrick's Cemetery

Was this the same John Ryan who was, at this time, Inspector of Liquor and Distilleries? If so, he would have known Hodges well from past dealings at the inn. Did he allow Hodges to live in the inn as a gesture of kindness to a fellow Catholic? It is unknown exactly when Hodges became a Catholic. All early records record him as Protestant, but it was expedient at that time to be 'protestant' in a Church of England colony, particularly in business dealings. He may have been an undisclosed Catholic all the time. Hodges is buried in an impressive vault in St Patrick's Cemetery, close to the mortuary chapel and not far from the grave of John Ryan.

Sources: Musters, Sydney Gazette and Bigge Report

- i. Native born meaning born in the colony
- ii. Disorderly house, meaning a brothel
- iii. Dr Darcy Wentworth of Wentworthville
- iv. The Bigge Report was an enquiry into the conduct of the Colony

**Judith notes:**

The bicentenary of Brislington, (built by John Hodges as the Hope and Anchor Inn) was celebrated on 9th April.

I am organising a plaque for Hodges grave (guiding it through Council) in St Patrick's Cemetery near the chapel. In due course there will be a ceremony unveiling the plaque.

On page 21: An ever vigilant Judith raises the alarm on damage to the Mortuary Chapel in St Patrick's Cemetery.

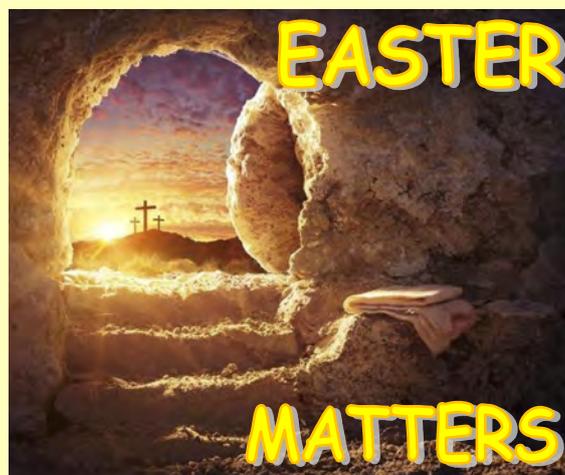
17 April 2022

It took the shock of the empty tomb for Peter and John to realise that the resurrection had to happen — that the Holy One of God must rise from the dead!

Such a great revelation! Death could not hold Him; death cannot hold us.

The beautiful reading from Colossians 3 shows how living as Jesus did brings us fully and truly alive. The world will not give us much heed, so our lives will be hidden as was that of Jesus.

But we are in God. So truth, love, forgiveness, redemption, resurrection and life everlasting will all be ours.



The Resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the Acts. The Resurrection, and its consequences, were the "gospel" or good news which the Christians brought: what we call the "gospels," the narratives of

Our Lord's life and death, were composed later for the benefit of those who had already accepted the *gospel*. They were in no sense the basis of Christianity: they were written for those already converted.

The miracle of the Resurrection, and the theology of that miracle, comes first: the biography comes later as a comment on it. Nothing could be more unhistorical than to pick out selected sayings of Christ from the gospels and to regard those as the datum and the rest of the New Testament as a construction upon it. The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection.

**Daily Gospel Reflections**  
From the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn



# Our Knowledge of Rituals Matters

## The Dean explains: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO.

In the February edition of *St Pat's Matters*, the editor "got the ball rolling" on some questions about the celebration of Mass that might be of interest to parishioners, questions that might satisfy the curiosity of even those who have been attending Mass for many, many years.

The first question asked was: Why does the priest bow to the altar?

Every time Mass is celebrated in the Cathedral, you will notice the clergy and the servers bowing to the altar, so the action is not restricted to clergy. The servers then move to their places whilst the clergy venerate the altar on the western side by kissing it. More on the kissing of the altar in the next question. The clergy and servers bow to the altar because the altar signifies Christ, the Living Stone, and a bow signifies reverence and honour shown to Christ, as represented by the altar.

Second, as alluded to above, it was asked why the priest kisses the altar at the beginning and end of Mass.

In fact, this action is again not restricted to priests since deacons will kiss the altar

at the beginning and end of Mass too. Clergy kiss the altar as a sign of their love for Christ (bearing in mind, as mentioned above, that the altar represents Christ), also as a sign of their love for the saints whose relics are contained within the altar. The altar is revered in this way at both the beginning and end of Mass just as we might kiss someone when we meet them and when we farewell them!

Another question that was asked concerned the incensing of the altar during Mass. Of course, incense is not used at every Mass and here at St Patrick's Cathedral it is usually only used at the Solemn Mass at 11:00am on Sundays. The other point to make is that at Masses where incense is used it is normally used at several points of the Mass, including the proclamation of the Gospel, the preparation of the gifts and during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Incensing is essentially a gesture of purifying and sanctifying. With regards to the incensing of the altar by the priest (or Bishop when he is present), it signifies both these things in preparation for the sacrifice of the Mass. It also symbolically signifies the desire that our prayers will,

like the smoke from the incense, rise to heaven. In this sense, the ambience of heaven is created as we gather to celebrate the heavenly liturgy.

With regard to the next question which concerned the reason the acolyte incenses the celebrant(s) and the assembly, this essentially highlights the sanctifying purpose of incensing as alluded to above. Sanctification is about making or declaring something to be holy and since the Mass is one of the chief means by which we make progress in holiness, incensing is a symbolic manner of recognising this.

Finally, it was asked why we genuflect to the tabernacle and bow to the altar. A genuflection (always done by bending the right knee to the ground) is a sign of adoration and, of course, this explains why we genuflect to the tabernacle, housing as it does, the Body and Blood of Our Lord. The altar signifies Christ and so we bow in reverence; the tabernacle contains Christ and so that is why we genuflect in adoration.

I look forward to answering some more questions in the next edition of *St Pat's Matters*, so please keep them coming!



# Senior Matters: ministry launched on



*"...they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright ...."*  
**Psalm 92:13-15**

**M**any of us have experienced the joy of having a grandparent or a significant older person in our lives. Whether it's warm hospitality, sharing words of wisdom, a listening ear or sharing God's love in difficult times, seniors have an important role in the Church. A senior's ministry will greatly benefit our parish community.'

This statement headed the notice appearing in the bulletin over several weeks promoting the launch of St Patrick's Seniors' Ministry. Appropriately, St Patrick's Day, 17th March, a Thursday, was chosen for the launch, in the form of a Seniors' Breakfast from 7:30am onwards.



Some parishioners doubted that seniors would take up the invitation, due to the early am start. But determined Mili Lee, spearheading the initiative, was on hand outside the Cathedral the Sunday prior, canvassing for seniors to come for the launch of a ministry that was for their benefit.



So, on our Patron Saint's Feast Day, the senior guests arrived to behold beautifully set up, beflowered tables, plus an impressive breakfast buffet, equal to that of any first class hotel. (Thanks to the culinary skills of Pat Preca and Mili Lee.) Thanks also to Donna Missio, Office Receptionist and parishioners Cathleen Touche and Iris Falzon for their help in setting up, serving and cleaning-up afterwards.

Although there is no photographic record of their presence, the Dean, Fr Robert was on hand to launch the event, and later on he, Fr Chris and Deacon Matthew helped with serving and then chatting with the 'guests' over breakfast.

A survey form was on hand for seniors to offer their feedback as to the kind of activities they would like to see happen and how often.

The original intention of charging \$10 per person was able to be waived, thanks to the generous gift of \$200, made by an anonymous donor.



And because it was St Patrick's Day, what more appropriate finale could have been chosen than entertainment by two talented performers, showcasing their prowess in Irish Dancing. Icing on the Launch's Cake!



**Those who completed the survey liked the idea of a Seniors Group being formed.**

**Re suggested activities, interest was shown in having lunch or dinner gatherings and bus trips organized on a monthly basis.**

**So when the first activity is offered maybe more seniors, apart from those who attended the Launch, will take the opportunity to join fellow retirees and enjoy each other's company. Community building.**



# Parish Community Matters: honouring St Patrick, our Patron Saint



**S**unday, 20th March, what a wonderful day it was, weather-wise!

Maybe our dear patron saint put in a good word for us 'upstairs', seeing we were gathering in his honour. To see the sun smiling on the cathedral precinct after weeks of horrendous weather brought smiles to people in the Cloister enjoying the BBQ al fresco, with a can of drink. Also on offer was a cup of tea or coffee with home-made cakes, thanks to generous parishioners who are regular 'sweet' donors when special events take place.

These social gatherings owe their success to the community spirit of the many St Pat's volunteers, ever ready to lend a helping hand when needed.

So thanks to the many contributors who made the day such a happy and successful social occasion: workers behind the scenes in the kitchen; the 'chefs' cooking the barbecue; the servers and 'cleaner-uppers'.

How encouraging to see parishioners, who hail from so many diverse nationalities and cultures, join as one to honour glorious St Patrick as our Patron Saint, whose heritage is of Ireland.

**St Patrick pray for Us.**

**St Patrick's Day celebrations this year marks the 3rd anniversary of the dedication of the Burramattagal Plaque at the front steps of the Cathedral.**





*Yeah!  
Let's  
celebrate!*



So before the BBQ was even fired up, the hall doors were opened up to people after 8am Mass to

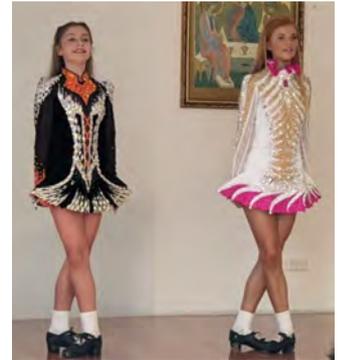
check out what bargains the Pop-up Shop, our fundraising venture for the parish, had to offer. The steady stream of people continued after 9:30am and 11am Masses, and during the BBQ at noon.



Thanks to people's patronage the parish coffers were augmented by \$1 157.95. Credit for the fundraiser's success goes to the volunteers who 'manned the tables', urging folks to buy! Buy! Buy!



A Jumping Castle kept the young'uns happy and then later on they joined the adults in the hall to be entertained by two beautifully-costumed girls perform Irish Dancing. Afterwards, the children of course jumped at the girls' invitation to join them on stage for free lessons on how to do the intricate Irish toe tapping.



So, who knows maybe some of them might just be smitten by the desire to begin Irish dancing lessons in earnest. Apart from talent, those interested will need perseverance and hard work to succeed.





I joined the mission to give glory to God and to make His Word known.

Our Mission began with Mass at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Orange — how apt, since it was St Joseph's Feast Day. Fr Greg Bellamy blessed us eight volunteers and the mission, which was to assist in baptising our brothers and sisters in the Outback. Continuing our journey, we knew we were in the Outback when the soil became reddish in colour; we knew we were near our destination when we lost our internet connection; we knew we'd arrived when I came face to face with a humongous green mosquito. I never imagined a mosquito could be that large and shiny green! So that was our journey to Wilcannia to mission, answering the call of Franciscan Brother Dominic Levak from the beautiful farm chapel of Christ the King<sup>1</sup>.

When I first met Brother Dominic Levak his joyful, childlike innocence reminded me of St Cupertino. He has chicken and goats following him, without a leash, while he walks. It was an absolute surprise and delight to also meet Brother Louis Schmidt who was visiting from Melbourne and joining the mission. He gave me very good answers to two difficult Catechetical questions I had. His prayers were solemn, his stories were all inspiring. I'm blessed to have met them both. (*Tip: Do not sit beside these two brothers during meal time. They are so funny, you will get indigestion, if you are able to eat.*)

Aside from assisting Fr Vincent of the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese with the Sacrament of Baptism, we manned the evangelisation booth, distributed food and clothing donated by the faithful. Then we went to the cemetery, to place statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the graves of deceased members of families, who welcomed the blessed statues. Brother Louis, who led this solemn occasion, blessed all the tombs and we prayed for the faithful departed.

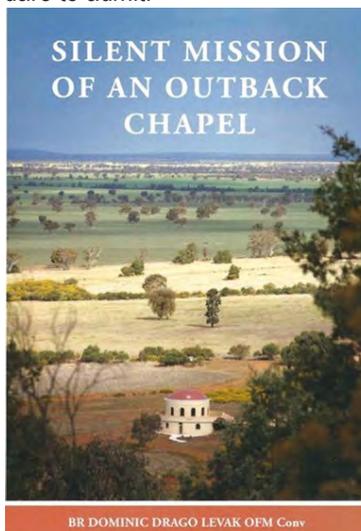
After the mission, we stayed at BOLO farm, hosted by Karen and Tom and their children. Father Getulio Goncalves Neto, Parish Priest of St Joseph's, Condobolin, not only celebrated Mass, but gave us the opportunity to go to Confession. We felt intensely God's love.

After dinner, Brother Dominic played the organ, Gabriel the guitar and Brother

Louis belted out hymns, with his Pavarotti voice. Before singing, Brother Dominic reminded us when we sing, we are talking to God. *Focus on the prayer, not on the notes, voice or singing itself. Talk to God when you sing.* So, from our hearts and souls we sang *O Jesu Mi, As Gentle as Silence and Ave Maria.*

### How this mission started: A smile, Our Lady and the accidental mission.

In 2013, Brother Dominic decided to live as a hermit in the Outback in extreme isolation and prayer. He said it was initially difficult, as he is a city person. In his book, **"Silent Mission of an Outback Chapel"**, Br Dominic shares his story openly and gladly in the hope that it encourages readers to deepen their trust in a Loving God, who is closer to us than we dare to admit.



(Brother's book is freely available at St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta Gift Shop.)\*\*

One day, Brother Dominic needed some supplies and had to drive 50 km to Lake Cargelligo. He was wandering around and came across a shop where aboriginal ladies were doing crafts. Brother smiled and one smiled back. He was invited in and after about four months an Elder, named Iris, took him under her wing and introduced him to some people in the community. Iris also showed him the cemetery and pointed out who was in those graves and told him many young men commit suicide. There is no counselling or support given to the aboriginal community. After two weeks of introducing Brother Dominic, Iris said, "You are on your own".

Brother asked the Aboriginal community what they needed. They asked for food

as it is expensive there. Whenever he goes on holiday to Kellyville, people are ready with items they want — often more than what he can take back. Brother Dominic became the outback community's comfort. — Many young men drink themselves to death, and Brother often stays with them at the time of their death. Later, he asked one of the families if they wanted a statue of Our Lady placed on their son's tomb.

Although they happily received the statue they did not know who the lady was. They thought she was a beautiful angel. So Brother Dominic explained that she is Mary, the Mother of God and explained the theology of Christ and Mary. Then, every-one wanted a statue! Ninety statues of Our Lady were distributed in that cemetery. The people themselves then sent statues to other cemeteries all over the Outback. Since the community was now aware of the love of Jesus and Mary, Brother Dominic asked if they wanted to be baptised.

About two years later, Josephine, another Elder, started introducing more people to Brother Dominic. They said that no one cared about them like Brother does. The initial 13 baptisms increased as more people wanted to be baptised, so Brother asked for volunteers. In 2019, the first batch of volunteers came to help. In 2021, nineteen people were baptised in Menindee; on this Wilcannia mission there were about thirty. In between many others were baptised, with sixty-eight Baptism in Lake Cargelligo alone. Now, people themselves are calling Brother for Baptism; with more baptisms scheduled for July, this year.

### Culture of the Aboriginal Community

When I first joined the mission, I heard many comments like *'they are lazy, or self-entitled, or be careful of this and that'*. Meeting the aboriginal people first-hand I had a different perspective. Like any other community I've met the aboriginal community do not initially trust outsiders. Unlike some other volunteers, this was my first time, and I did not know the people. So at first I struggled even giving books about Saints away. But, after a few hours, I was able to teach two children how to make the sign of the cross. →

## Wilcannia Mission cont'd

Brother explained these people have experienced abuse, murder and injustice, even to the present time. Their culture is different from ours. We cannot force our structured culture upon them. In my research, they are historically gatherers and hunters. They are smart people. We should not expect them to do or think like us as they are different. In his prayer at the cemetery, Brother Louis described the afterlife with our Lord as a world of peace and unity, without prejudice. Some of the aborigines even repeated what Brother Louis said. Brother Dominic said that once someone is there to guide them, they are hard workers. I saw them happily carry heavy loads to deliver to the community hall.

Everything is for the community. In other missions I saw people grab everything they can. But here, they only took what they needed; often taking items for someone else in need in their community.

### Vegemite Story:

When we were leaving, one of the people heard a volunteer was looking for Vegemite. So, even though they were on their way to hospital, they came back, just to give the volunteer that jar of Vegemite. They said to Brother, "You have given us a lot and we just want to give something back." What a touching gesture a small jar of Vegemite can be.

### God's plan vs Brother Dominic's plan.

Brother wanted a quiet life of prayer in silence and extreme isolation. He still does this, but when God calls, God will organise things where there is a need..... It started with a smile, for a stranger, then the people's acceptance of Our Lady, who brought Jesus to them and their desire to belong to God through Baptism.

This mission in the Outback started from nothing. Brother Dominic described it as going to the unknown and trusting God. I can't help remembering what St Mary Mackillop, the Australian Saint of the Outback said: **"Never see a need without doing something about it."**

## Volunteer Testimonies

### Gabriel:

*One night as I was having a conversation with a Christian Elder, he said, with a look of deep concern in his eyes, 'I saw Satan and he is laughing and bringing people there.' [pointing in the direction on my right. When I asked what was there, he responded, 'It's the cemetery.' I got such a joy in helping out in this mission. We should never forget the face of Christ in the spiritually poor and needy. He is calling each of us to be missionary.*

*Marie: I'd like to speak about the volunteers. I couldn't but notice the great energy, the excitement, the willingness to give to others selflessly, and especially the love and joy that volunteers showed within the group and towards others. Such beautiful moments on the shuttle bus, praying, singing and praising the Lord, sharing stories and embracing the beautiful nature around us. Another great moment is sitting together around the dinner table at Bolo Farm to enjoy the delicious meal prepared by Brother Dominic, as one big family sharing stories and laughter.*

*Then came the playing of the guitar, the organ, the singing of Brother Louis along with us missionaries. It was a night to be remembered. God was present within us, in the people around us and the surroundings. He gave us love and joy in the amazing colours of the sunset, in the beautiful sunrise, in the twinkling stars, the large enlightened moon, the great views and the silence of the outback. There was great harmony and unity. Praise and thanks be to God always.*

*Silva: Last year we went to Menindee, 112km S.E. of Broken Hill. It is the first town established on the Darling River. This year, by the Grace of God, I went on mission to Wilcannia, 155 km N.W. of*



Brother Dominic & Iris, April 2021, Two months before she died



Brother Louis



An aboriginal girl is baptised by Fr Vincent



Silva, to Brother Dominic's right with aboriginal people and mission volunteers.

*Menindee. Both missions showed me how much we need to get outside of our comfort zone, to meet the warm, beautiful Aboriginal people, the first nation; to evangelise, and share the faith with them. I saw how little these people of the land have and yet how happy they were. This made me realise and appreciate what I have. The Mission takes place every year, around St Joseph's Feast Day.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bacaustralia.com.au/assets/bacaustralia/pages/farm-chapel-christ-the-king/content/FARM-CHAPEL-FLYER.pdf>

Although Brother's book is free, many people wish to donate. Proceeds will help fund the mission and Pro-life Shrine of the Holy Innocents, Kellyville. Account name Craig Grimson BSB: 062313 Account number: 10344456



1. Ninety statues were distributed in the cemetery.



2. Brother Louis blessing the statues.



3. The procession around the cemetery.

## In Sickness, Faith and Prayer Matter

Thanks Khush for agreeing to share just part of your battle with cancer. Parishioners who know the full story have been amazed at your joyful demeanour throughout the whole experience.



We feel good about God when all our needs and wants, physical, material, emotional or spiritual are met. When everything in life is going as what one expects, God can become secondary. We go to church more out of habit, rather than love for the Lord. Our love for Him becomes lukewarm. Some people tend to seek God in times of great difficulties and calamities; others feel betrayed during difficult times and go the other way. I want to share with readers my experience of becoming aware of God's Mercy and Love in my fight against cancer, of understanding Him at a different, deeper level.

In July, 2020 when I was diagnosed with cancer, I was shocked and shattered on hearing that word -- Cancer. Fear and dismay crept into me. I have lived alone in Sydney almost most of my life and never felt as lonely as I did that night. I could not sleep. I have always walked with Jesus, He has always been my most intimate companion. I began to think, 'where did I go wrong to be so afflicted?' I am an active person, full of life, don't carry emotional baggage, am always laughing, smiling and feeling the joy of the Lord in my heart. Back home in Mumbai India, my huge extended family and my siblings are all healthy, well-settled and happy in their lives. No one has any lifestyle diseases or cancer. Discovering I was the first of my family to get cancer, evoked that thought, "So, what went wrong?"

After much time spent in contemplation, I came to truly believe God does not give us sickness. He gives us a wonderful life to be enjoyed, celebrated and embraced. So I believed the Lord wanted to use my sufferings for a bigger and better purpose and once that purpose was achieved, I'd be healed completely. Before my diagnosis, I'd believed in **HOPE, FAITH AND JOY but now I was determined to try living that belief in its true sense.** So I started offering my sufferings and pain for the souls in Purgatory, for the holy priests and for all the churches worldwide. Every step of my treatment there were problems: sometimes, the dye didn't work, creating screening issues; infection created due to porta-Cath; anaesthetic problems, further treatments and delays. With each obstacle and accompanying extreme pain, I kept praising God, joyful that He would use me for His Greater Glory. The more I offered, the more my physical pain increased. The nurses and doctors were amazed at how I kept smiling through the pain, most times my Rosary wrapped in my hands, my eyes on the Cross. Both my surgeries, which were supposed to be around 11 am and 1pm were delayed to 3pm, which I could connect to Holy Hour and the Divine Mercy time.

All my surgeries took place in the Prince of Wales Hospital, which is 30 kilometres away from St Patrick's Parish. One day while still in hospital, craving to receive the Eucharist, I asked the Lord, 'Please send me a priest'. That same day, for some reason my bed was changed to a different ward and a priest came up to my bed and asked, 'Did you request to receive Holy Communion?' Surprised at how quickly my request was heard, I answered, "Yes, please."

After the priest had spoken to me, prayed over me, and given me the Eucharist, I asked him how he knew I wanted to see a priest? He said a nurse had called him. Much later I learnt it was the previous patient in bed 6, (which was now my bed), who had

asked for the Eucharist! She had been discharged and I was transferred to her bed. How great and loving Thou art! — Ask and you shall receive.

So, I started sharing my joy with the three other patients in the ward: all three were Catholics and had metastatic cancer. I was the youngest and the only one able to walk around. I used to sit on my bed and pray the Rosary. This attracted the other three, who asked if I had spare rosaries and if I could teach them how to pray it. Despite my friends not being able to visit me due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was able to get three rosaries from one of the hospital staff and soon three of us were praying — unfortunately one lady was not in a strong enough state to pray. Slowly the other two gained confidence getting out of bed, and walking with a walker on the long balcony outside our ward. Nurses and doctors were not only happy but also amazed to see the change in them. Upon my discharge from hospital, I left glad that I had had the opportunity to spread joy and hope to these wonderful ladies experiencing much greater suffering than I was. How light was my cross compared to others around me!

After surgery, prior to facing sixteen chemo sessions, I was informed about the side effects of Chemotherapy and of the toxins which will destroy both good and bad cells of the body. Every time I went for Chemo, I would pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The nurses always had difficulty finding my veins, and this made the procedures extremely painful to endure. My first four sessions were delayed by two hours and ended up starting around 3 pm. As I continued to pray with my eyes closed, wrapped in Patti's prayer shawl\*\* and rosary in my hand, I would begin to feel our Lord's presence and despite all the discomfort of the chemo I felt certain 'this is going to cure me and heal me'. I came to trust the delay in chemo was in God's plan, as I was sharing my faith with other cancer patients and nurses. It's amazing how God works when we surrender to Him, completely.

I realised there has to be a holistic approach for healing to take place, that is, the cleansing of mind, body and spirit needs to be balanced. I went for Confession to seek forgiveness and to forgive others. I believe emotional detox is very important to keeping the channel open for the Lord to heal us. Going to Confession removed all the emotional and spiritual blockages, opening my heart to receive our Lord's mercy and wonderful graces. Being anointed with holy oil by St Pat's priests after 6:30 morning Mass prior to treatment sessions, greatly strengthened me. It was like wearing the armour of the Lord.

After one year of surgeries and treatments, I am now in remission for the next five years. My conclusion? God has given me a second chance, which many people don't get. I'm blessed to have had a warning and given additional years. He reveals the mysteries of Life to us in His own tender ways. I now have a second chance to live a meaningful life with a sense of His purpose, not merely earning money and paying bills.

Life is a wonderful gift from God. His love is kind and merciful.

Editor's note:\*\* The making and giving of the prayer shawl to Khush by Patti Murphy was featured in Issue 105, February 2021.

# HOSPITALITY MATTERS

Great occasions for serving God come seldom  
Little ones surround us daily

Members of St Pat's Hospitality Team serve by the motto above.

Unfortunately, the promised **Who's Who's** of all team members will have to wait till the next edition.



Meanwhile, check out these happy servers. (all L-R) Denise Mendonca, Danielle and Nestor Montesco and Patti Murphy doing café duty after 9:30am Mass.



These lovely ladies above serve morning tea after 11am Mass. Here, they pose, duty done, ready to go home. Elvira Almario, Pat Tenido, Nellie Younan and Patricia Batistic.

Likewise below Edward Genobili, Dorothy Soh, Mary Gene de La Pena and the Cutajars, Andy and Carmen have finished their duty and ready to head home



All have been volunteers for some years, but Dorothy and Pat might have the longest tenure, back in the days at St Pat's in the Field! (pre 2003!)

# Children's Liturgy Matters:

Meet more people involved in this ministry, so vital to the faith development of the children in our parish.

## Danielle Fleming:



I joined the Children's Liturgy team way back in 2012. I wanted to have my daughter baptised at St Patrick's and Sister Anne welcomed us with open arms. Because of this I wanted to give back to such a welcoming parish community, so when I saw that they needed volunteers for Children's Liturgy

I applied to join the leadership team.

My partner was Rosie until 2020 when COVID-19 struck, halting the liturgy. So when we resumed, and Rosie decided not to return, I convinced my husband Mitchell to step in to assist me.



The Children's Liturgy makes the Gospel accessible for the children at a level they can understand, and we are able to make direct links between the words and actions of Jesus and their own lives. I always manage to find a storybook that contains a similar theme or value to that which is in the Gospel. This also helps the children to relate.

I am always surprised at what thoughtful responses the children give.



This collage was created in a Children's Liturgy lesson led by Grace and Sarah. They encouraged the children to write on leaves how they would **Listen to Jesus**

# Caring for our Heritage matters: St Francis Mortuary Chapel

**Thank God for people like Judith Dunn!**

**On 4th March, being a concerned advocate for all things heritage, she sent the following email to the editor:**

*Marian, I had my suspicions all was not well with St Francis Mortuary Chapel in St Patrick's Cemetery.*

*On Friday in pouring rain, I got up from lunch and told my husband I was going to check out the cemetery. Only a mad woman would splash around a cemetery in torrential rain. I am that mad woman.*

*To my dismay my gut instincts were right. The chapel floor was completely awash. Rev. Nicholas Coffey, Mons. O'Reilly, McGovern and Rigney's graves in the floor, completely under water. I was up to my ankles in places.*

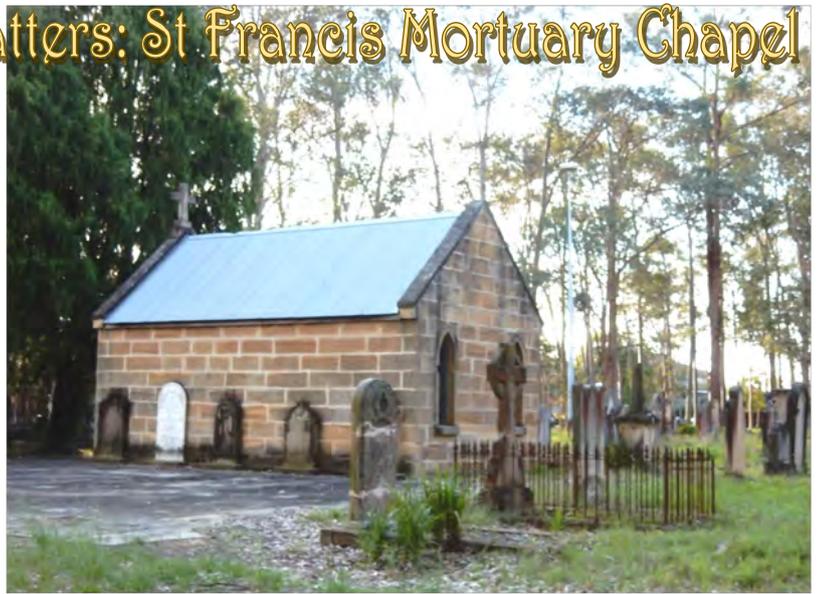
*My suspicions were raised some months ago by some green moss beginning to grow inside the chapel on the lowest level of sandstone blocks and the floor appearing damp sometimes when I go in to get rid of leaves that have blown in. So this is not a one-off flood in our current wild weather, but something that happens after each episode of heavy rain.*

*The old St Patrick's Cemetery Committee (long since disbanded) had worked hard for the refurbishment of the chapel, the oldest mortuary chapel in Australia, built in 1844. At that time it was re roofed and a gravel surround placed around the chapel to keep it dry on two sides. The other side nearest Pennant Hills Road is the courtyard placed there by a past Parramatta Council. Some wooden formwork was placed at the chapel front facing Church Street and the intention was to put drainage to Church Street. Because of proposed changes to Church Street the drainage was not completed and the wooden formwork is now acting as a moat and holding water back. When it has built up sufficiently, water is flowing back under the grill door and flooding the floor.*

*This is not the only water problem. When several trees were blown over in a major storm event many years ago, one tree landed on the corrugated iron roof. The holes in the ridgeline have never been repaired. I have also taken photos of rain entering via the gable end nearest Church Street and running down the walls. The courtyard designed and placed by Parramatta Council many years ago is on a higher level than the chapel floor. Water is also seeping through the sandstone blocks of the building from the courtyard.*

*I have spoken to Terry O'Brien, retired structural engineer and Cathedral parishioner, who was on the original committee with me and discussed these issues. I have taken photos of all this rain damage and had a meeting with City of Parramatta Council today but it has been cancelled due to flooding. We are trying for a meeting next week.*

*I feel a bit dispirited at present as I am just one little (oldish!) lady trying to keep a watching brief on the cemetery and report issues to Council which I have done since 1985 while writing the book, **The Parramatta Cemeteries – St Patrick's.***



*It is perhaps easy to brush aside a little old lady but an active committee would have more sway. Maybe it is time to re institute a St Patrick's Cemetery Committee to keep a watching brief on the cemetery generally and report these issues to council for remediation, to drive repair works on chapel and memorials and advise Council on issues as they arise.*

*I have attached photos to show the damage. Sandstone is a soft stone and needs dry feet, otherwise the stone will deteriorate and our chapel will not last into the future, honouring as it does those priests who died in office. It was also where prayers for the dead were recited and we continue that practice on All Souls' Day.*

*A tired Judith Dunn*



The sky reflected in flood water covering the floor



Memorials seen through floodwater

**ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE to take on Judith's suggestion? Do you care enough about our heritage? Maybe it is time to re institute a St Patrick's Cemetery Committee to keep a watching brief on the cemetery generally and report these issues to council for remediation, to drive repair works on chapel and memorials and advise Council on issues as they arise.**

# Youth Matters



**GENEVIEVE LEE**  
reporting

## St Pat's Youth Retreat

**B**ack in March, over the weekend of 19th-20th, the Teen Credo Youth Group embarked on their first Credo Youth Retreat at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre at Varroville.

The retreat theme was **GREATER**, the group journeying with the Bible passage from John 3:30:

**"He must increase, and I must decrease",**

over the weekend, to learn how to let Christ grow even more in their everyday lives.

Fr Chris and Deacon Matthew led the formation and the young people also heard talks as well from Chris Lee and Qwayne Guevara (from Catholic Youth Parramatta). The group also undertook community building activities and engaged in prayer, Mass and Adoration.

Overall, the camp was a great success and an absolute gift to be able to grow closer with Christ as a group.

Also a HUGE shout out to choir member, Marty, for driving us to and from the retreat's location. Much appreciated!



# Sharing Matters

*The Good Friday Walk and Talk  
with the Lord  
through the eyes of a senior citizen*



**PATRICIA BATISTIC** wrote this reflection after participating in the Good Friday Walk back in 2013. Since then it's worth noting that many other seniors have followed her example eager to witness to the faith by participating in the walk.

**W**hen I saw the advertisement in our local church inviting young people up to the age of 35 to walk on Good Friday night from St Patrick's at Blacktown to St Patrick's Cathedral at Parramatta, I became enthusiastic and wanted to join in.

Alas, I am 34 years older than the cut-off date, so I did not think I had a chance in joining in. Nevertheless, I phoned the organiser, Father Suresh Kumar, whom I had never met and asked if I could join in. He asked me my age and when I told him I am 69, there was a deathly silence from his end of the phone. "Are you still there Father?" I asked. He meekly replied, "Yes", then advised me, that whilst he could not stop me from participating, he would not be responsible if anything happened to me (e.g. heart attack, falling over and not being able to get up, etc.)

Because I am a reasonably fit person I decided to go. I was accompanied by Nicholas Hood who is old enough to be my grandson. (Nicholas is the son of my dear friend Fran Hood who has since moved from Blacktown to the sunny seaside at Old Bar on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.) I was very pleased that he could keep up with me. Also keeping up with us was Sophie, the gorgeous Labrador belonging to Father Pat Mullins from Emerton. She padded along beautifully and we loved having her with us.

Along the way as I reflected on the true meaning of this walk it took me back to my time in the Holy Land last year where I walked on the land where Jesus had walked, preached and eventually walked to his execution. I was filled with profound contemplation.

Unfortunately, many of the young people were talking and laughing too much and this disturbed me as the walk took us along suburban streets where people were asleep in their homes. (The walk began at 10.30 pm and ended at 7.30 am the next day.)

The night was balmy as our walk took us to the various churches along the way. It was at St Monica's at North Parramatta where I was surprised when Bishop Anthony Fisher, who had seen me at the start in Blacktown, approached me to give me some encouraging words and congratulate me on completing the walk. I was even lucky enough to carry the Cross from St Monica's almost to St Pat's Cathedral, when another walker came and asked to carry it.

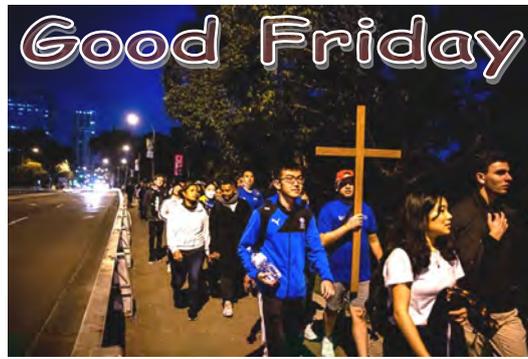
I am happy to say I was one of the first in the Cathedral precinct and did not feel any ill effects from the 20 kilometre journey. What I would like to see is the age bar removed so that fit older people can join in. If they fall by the wayside, so be it. And in such a situation 000 can be phoned for an ambulance to take anyone in need to the nearest hospital emergency department. After all, EVERYONE has a mobile phone which works 24/7.

## ABOUT THE GOOD FRIDAY WALK

Catholic Youth Parramatta (CYP) facilitates the annual Diocesan Good Friday Night Walk, which is 18 km in length.

The initiative has been supported by their partners and collaborators for over 10 years involving parishes, youth leaders, multiple Councils, Local Area Police Commands and the Blacktown Division of St John's Ambulance alongside the Diocese of Parramatta, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta and CYP's private security team.

This year's overnight pilgrimage of young Catholics (aged 14-35) started at



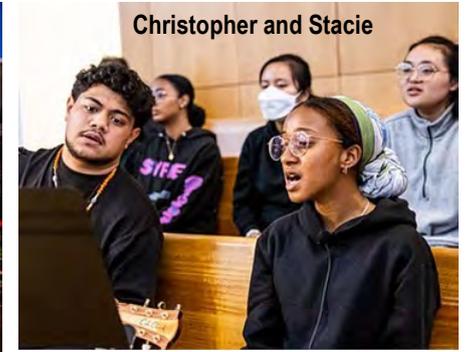
## COMMENTS FROM SHEFIN CREDO YOUTH LEADER

In the annual Good Friday Night Walk, I had the pleasure of addressing the Youth of Parramatta upon their arrival at St Patrick's Cathedral after their 8 hour pilgrimage. Since the Cathedral was the last station, we were focusing on Jesus' death on the cross and his relationship with His Mother, Mary.

Rachel Touche, one of our Credo Youth Leaders, shared a part of her testimony on how she has experienced God's mercy in her life. Her testimony lead us into singing our last decade of the Divine Mercy Chaplet which was beautifully led by Christopher Solo and Stacie Touche.



Shefin and Rachel



Christopher and Stacie

St Patrick's Church, Blacktown at 10pm and ended at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta at 6am on Holy Saturday, stopping enroute at four additional parish churches — Seven Hills, Toongabbie, Wentworthville and Harris Park — for prayer and reflection.

**With each year's pilgrimage it is the aim of CYP to reach out to young Catholics, to promote a renewed source of faith, hope, and unity through the spiritual journey and lens of Holy Week.**



From the beginning of the pilgrimage and at every church we stopped at along the way and throughout the walk we prayed for different intentions.

At the end of the walk everyone had the opportunity to spend some time in St Patrick's Cathedral to bring to mind the intentions that they had been praying for throughout the walk. Everyone was asked to write these intentions down and place them in baskets at the foot of the altar, where Deacon Matthew blessed their prayer intercessions.

The gathering in the Cathedral concluded the Good Friday Night Walk 2022 and the pilgrims headed to the hall to enjoy some pancakes made by our lovely St Patrick's community.





At 5:00am on Saturday morning, 16th April, the lights went on in the cathedral hall as cheerful volunteers arrived to roll up their sleeves ready for THEIR MISSION... the mixing and cooking of pancakes for the approximately 500 hungry young pilgrims expected to arrive at St Pat's. about 6:00am.

*Servants preparing to feed the Witnesses from the Good Friday Walk*

Then of course Phase Two kicked in as the volunteers tended to the young pilgrims' need for nourishment, by the serving of pancakes .... of course topped with lashings of maple syrup.

Apart from thanking the helpers on the day, the Parish Team acknowledges those who answered the appeal for the necessary ingredients of flour, butter, eggs, sugar etc. They were overwhelmed by people's generosity.

St Pat's community spirit powering on.



*Well done, good and faithful servants!*



# He is RISEN

**The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection.**

**The New Testament writers speak as if Christ's achievement in rising from the dead was the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe.**

**He is the 'first fruits', the 'pioneer of life'.**

**He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man.**

**He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death.**

**Everything is different because He has done so.**

**This is the beginning of the New Creation:  
a new chapter in cosmic history has opened.**

**from *Miracles* by C.S.LEWIS**