



TOGETHER

In the Diocese of

Wagga Wagga

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FREE

FEBRUARY 2025



CREATING SAFER
COMMUNITIES

Fr Hans Zollner in Wagga Wagga:

Renowned international speaker
delivers keynote address at Diocesan
Safeguarding Symposium

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us to be the light to the
world and to be shining
examples of virtue, integrity,
and holiness (Mt 5:14).

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BISHOP'S VOICE



TOGETHER
IN THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

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Hope does not disappoint.

(Romans 5:5, quoted by Pope Francis)

Have you ever asked for something and not been given what you need – not just what you wanted but what you needed? I would think that all of us have hoped for some outcome and didn't receive it. So when you hear Pope Francis quote Romans and say "Hope does not disappoint", you might well think "Yes it does."

I think that such experiences can lead us not to risk hoping or to hope only for smaller things. This can be a defence mechanism to protect ourselves.

It might be that we are afraid that hoping will undermine our faith. We are concerned that we won't get what we ask for and that this will have implications for how we think of God and for our faith in God.

Perhaps we might think: "What would I need to think about God if he didn't give me what I asked for when I desperately needed it?" Would it mean that God didn't deeply care for me? Or that God isn't the Lord, able to do what he wanted?

Yet if we don't hope, we could just become despondent and then we shut our heart, becoming hard of heart and cynical.

I invite you to consider what (if anything) you find it scary to hope for and why.

When we are slow to hope we are slow to trust in God. Any Christian struggling with hope is a Christian struggling with God. Hope is risky because it is vulnerable. And Jesus in

his kindness encounters us right there.

Pope Francis and the Church are not asking us to put our hope in outcomes.

They are inviting us to hope in God who has poured his love into our hearts. And that will never go away. That will never disappoint us.

Begin again with hope. The jubilee is the possibility for everyone to start anew from God. With the jubilee we start a new life, a new phase.

(Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction)

Welcome to the pilgrimage. And if the year is a pilgrimage, this moment is an opportunity to take one step, perhaps a courageous step, in an area where you might be feeling resistance or hopelessness. Open your heart to the Lord and invite him to show you who he really is and to pour his grace into your heart.

God won't break any of his promises to you. He can't even conceive of not keeping his word. You can trust him.

Let us hope in God and his love. This is the hope that does not disappoint.

***Yours in Jesus Christ
and Mary Immaculate
Mark Edwards OMI***



PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY - PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS

For vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

Visit this link to hear the Pope deliver his monthly prayer:
<https://thepopevideo.org/>



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"We pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people called to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life."

At play in the human heart is the tottering interplay of the desire for greatness and the fear that one might not have the capacity to achieve such lofty aspirations. In a culture where success is often measured by relational status, financial security, and academic or career accomplishments, the possibility of leaving those behind in response to God's call seems increasingly absurd. But as a Church, we are called to receive, encourage, and cultivate the invitation of Jesus to say 'yes' to loving in a radical way, even if it makes no sense to the world.

A life of chaste celibacy for the sake of the kingdom, poverty, and obedience in imitation of Jesus can indeed be a fitting correspondence to the desire for greatness because it is a radical way of love. Perhaps the fear and doubt that creep in are less from the world and more from within the Church. Even parents and grandparents who attend Mass and raise their children in the faith can be unknowing obstacles to young

people who feel drawn to respond to a call to religious life and priesthood. Rather than nurturing the stirring desires and experience of a call, they sometimes magnify the fears and doubts with their own expectations for their children's success, leaving the young person to wonder if happiness is possible by living and loving in a counter-cultural way. The truth is, a life of radical love is always a way to happiness and fulfillment, even if it looks different than the way that mom and grandma have found it.

Our crucified Lord is the ultimate sign of contradiction who simultaneously stirs desire to love in a radical way and silently declares the truth of love that cuts through fear and doubt.

This month we pray that the Church can be a seedbed where the desire for greatness can be cultivated by the prayerful support of the faithful who will lift high the paradox of the Cross as a source of salvation while echoing the words of Jesus in the face of the doubts that arise and are the enemy of love: Do not be afraid.

Sr. M. Karolyn serves as the vocation director for the Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr St. George in Alton, IL.

JUBILEE 2025 - HOLY YEAR OF HOPE

On Sunday 26 January 2025, Bishop Mark Edwards OMI solemnly opened the Jubilee Year of Hope for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga by lighting and blessing the Jubilee Candle at the main Mass at St Michael's Cathedral, Wagga.

What is the Jubilee?

The Jubilee is a year-long special invitation to have a genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, our hope and the true hope of all the world. "Jubilee" is the name given to a particular year intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a "Holy Year," since it is a time in which God's holiness transforms us. Since 1470, the Jubilee Year has been celebrated every 25 years. There have also been "extraordinary" Holy Years: for example, in 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed the Year of Mercy as an extraordinary jubilee.

Over the centuries, people have experienced this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterised by the forgiveness of sins and the full expression of the mercy of God. You are invited to make a pilgrimage to a holy place, indicating to God and yourself by this external journey that you want to have a spiritual journey of growth in relationship. As our hard-heartedness and sins can block this grace, pilgrims make a good confession as well as going to Mass and praying for the Pope as a part of the pilgrimage.

To participate in the Holy Year, and potentially gain a plenary indulgence, you can:

Make a pilgrimage

- Either to Rome and visit at least one of the four major papal basilicas: St. Peter's Basilica, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, or St. Paul Outside the Wall; or
- Or to one of the designated Jubilee pilgrimage sites within the Diocese of Wagga Wagga such as:
 - * St Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga
 - * Saint Patrick's Church, Albury
 - * Sacred Heart Church, Griffith
 - * Saint Joseph's Church, Leeton
 - * Saint Mel's Church, Narrandera
 - * Saint Mary MacKillop's Marker on the Lincoln Causeway near the railway overpass in Albury
 - * The Mass Tree in Wahgunyah (across the river from Corowa)

**Or perform works of mercy.
Or Engage in spiritual activities.**

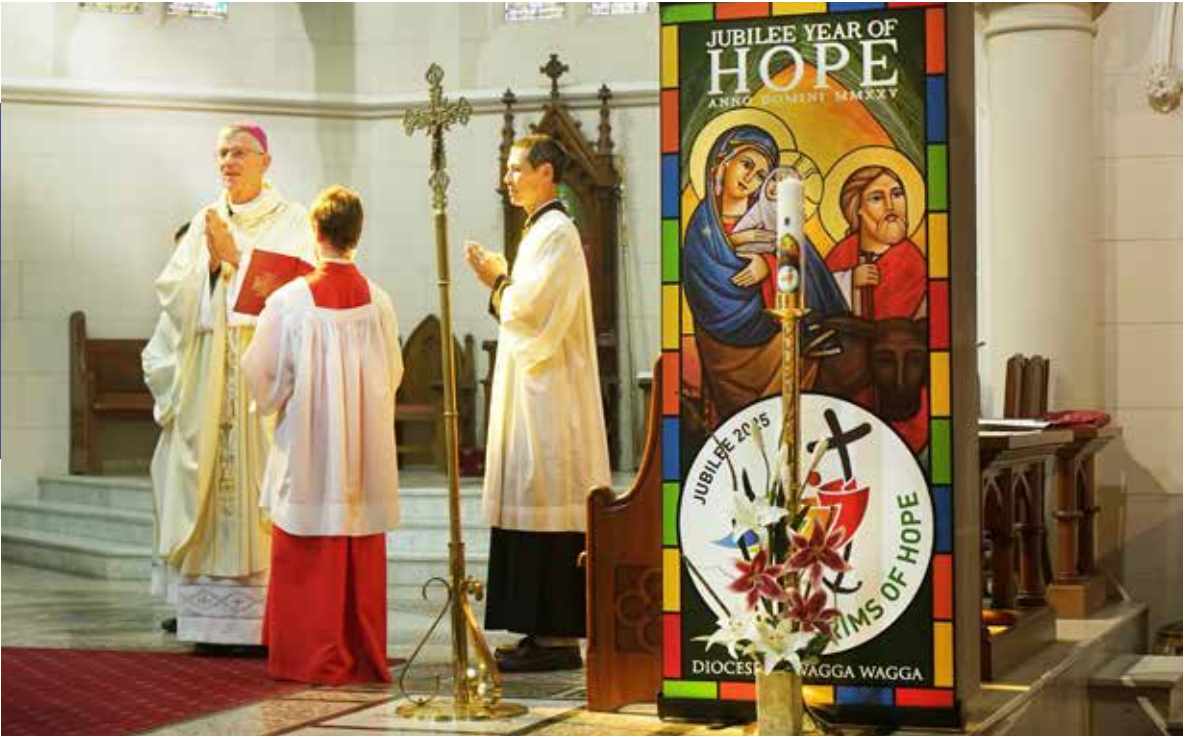
Calendar of Events

A series of events planned for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga throughout 2025 aim to acknowledge and appreciate the valuable contributions of specific groups within the Church and society. The events offer a chance for spiritual renewal and deepening of faith for the participating groups, and to foster a sense of unity and solidarity within the Church.

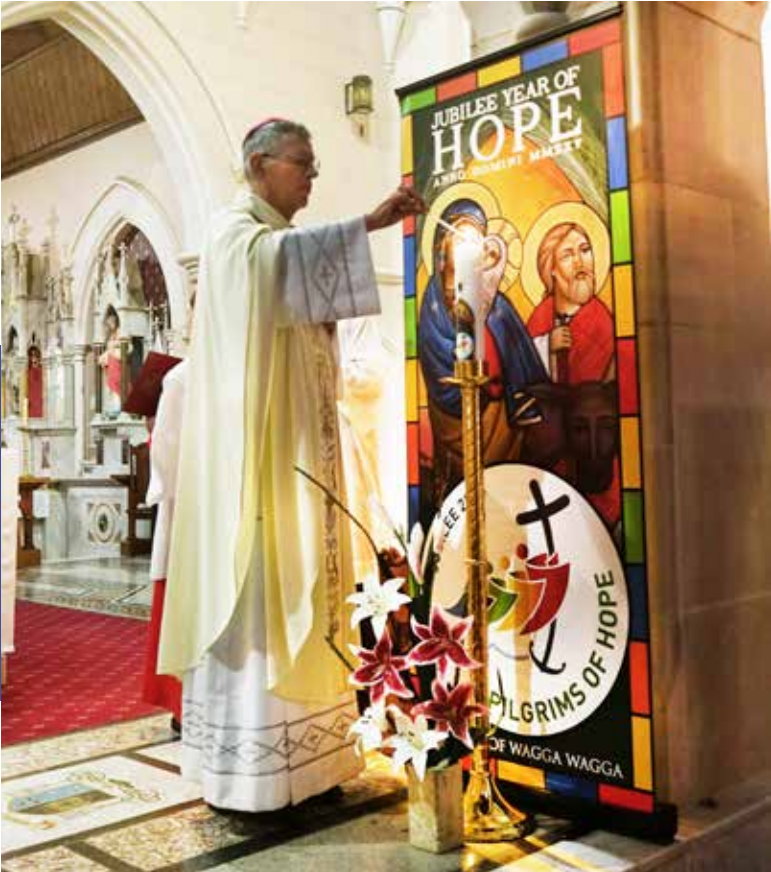
These events will also showcase the diversity and vibrancy of the Catholic Church and its commitment to serving humanity.

In particular, can I invite you to make a pilgrimage to a Church for the Night of Mercy on 28 March 2025. Through prayer, reflection, and shared experiences, individuals can strengthen their relationship with God and their commitment to their respective vocations.

Further details for particular events will be publicised on our website and throughout our parishes as the year progresses.



Above: Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI officially opens the Jubilee Year of Hope for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.



Above: Lighting of the Jubilee Candle at St Michael's Cathedral. Photos by Tom Denahy www.tomdenahyphotography.com

Vale FR ANTHONY LOTH

The Life of Fr Anthony Patrick Loth (known as Tony).

Tony was born in Wagga in 1935 the youngest child of Josephine and Michael Loth's eight children. His father Michael was the Superintendent of the Ambulance Service in Wagga and the family lived above the Ambulance Station in Johnston Street which was built with the generosity of the local community donating funds and goods and services. Fr Tony said "The Ambulance Station was a hub, attracting everyone and anyone in need of medical aid, and that didn't just mean people - people would also come to the Ambulance Station seeking first aid for their pets."

Bishop Henschke had a close connection to the Loth family and was a regular guest at the Loth household. The family attended Mass at the Cathedral and Tony was an altar boy and was often asked to assist the priest at a 7am weekday Mass.

When Tony's brother John joined the Christian Brothers, he considered joining too, but God had other plans for Tony. In 1951, Bishop Henschke nominated him for a place at Propaganda College, Rome, as a candidate for the priesthood. At 16, Tony left for Rome, where he studied

lived the gospels and passed on his learning to so many people. His biblical studies in Rome opened up the door to a new insight into Biblical Theology and his on-going personal study of Scripture was evident, as his library was filled with books, from top Biblical scholars from around the world. Knowing Greek and Hebrew and his pilgrimages to the Holy Land, enabled him to have a deeper understanding of the context of the Scriptures. Over the years he offered Scripture courses in the Diocese.

His first appointment in the Diocese was to help Fr Tom Desmond in Berrigan! What a change from Rome!! The following year he was appointed to Griffith Parish where his sister and her family lived and he became known to many students at the schools as Uncle Tony.

Over the next few years Fr Tony moved to Junee, Albury and then back to Griffith.

Life took a new turn for Fr. Tony with his appointment by Bishop Carroll as Director of Catholic Education from 1968-1973, during a time of change in education in NSW. Fr. Tony had an office in Baylis St with one secretary. He started a fund to support women and men studying at



history repeated itself as Bishop Carroll asked Tony to be the Parish priest in Berrigan. For the next 8 years he shared his wisdom, learning and spiritually with the people in Berrigan, South West Deanery and the Diocese. This was the era of post 2nd Vatican Council. The Wagga Diocese, under Bishop Frank Carroll, set up a Secretariat to involve laity, men and women religious, and priests to make decision about bringing the Diocese into a post Vatican II Church. Tony was invoked in drawing up this direction. Tony offered workshops on the Vatican Council documents for the teachers, religious and laity. Adult Faith Education and talks on Scripture were a priority for him, as well as Lenten programs, prayer days, introducing the Rite of Christian Initiation in the region as well supporting the catechists who went to Finley High School.

In 1985 Fr Tony was invited to take on the role of Director of the St Peter Centre for Clergy in Canberra, which provided three-month renewal courses twice each year for diocesan and religious priests.

During his time as Director, it was decided the St Peter Centre would accept priests from overseas. From 1986 participants came from the Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Indonesia, Hong Kong and USA. Tony in his overview of the program wrote "A diversity of culture and ethnic origins was highly evident among the clergy. This expanded the richness and diversity of experience which each group encompassed." Tony retired from the centre in 1990.

Fr. Tony had appointments to the parishes of Junee, Koorngal, and Albury, and in 1997, he went to Coolamon, where he cared for both Coolamon and Marrar until 2013. These years were significant as he was warmly welcomed by the community. Besides caring for the parish and school, Tony was asked to be Chaplain at Junee Correctional Centre. From 1990 to 2009, Tony went every Sunday to offer Eucharist to the inmates. This ministry was important to him, as his brother John had worked in prison ministry in Sydney, and Tony continued the Loth family's legacy of compassion. His father Mick, as Superintendent of the Ambulance

Station in Wagga, and his mother Josie visited families in need. Young Tony often went with his father on ambulance trips, especially to Tumbarumba on dirt roads. Unable to see out the window, his father made a raised seat for him to sit on.

Besides offering Mass at the to the inmates at June Correctional, Tony participated in the Kairos - Prison Ministry, attending their regular meetings and the Training Course that went over many weeks. He participated in the Kairos gatherings for the inmates. He did make a contribution to this wonderful ministry and many inmates remember his care of them many years later.

Due to poor health, Tony retired from Coolamon in 2013 and moved to Wagga. The house he acquired was around the corner from the Carmelite Monastery, and Bishop Hanna invited him to be the Chaplain for the Carmelite Sisters. Over the next few years, he celebrated Eucharist seven days a week for the Sisters and local people. This was a gift to Tony as Eucharist was central to his life. Gradually, the Sunday Eucharist was filled with people touched by Tony's faith, holiness, caring, and inspiration in his homilies, which broke open the word of God in ways that touched their lives. All were welcome at the Eucharist.

Fr Tony's health continued to decline and in June 2022 he moved to Settlers Village where he received very good care. The Divine Office and readings of the day nurtured him as did his family and friends.

On Tuesday 3rd December Tony was admitted to the Base Hospital for surgery and later he was transferred to Calvary hospital. Over the days due to other medical problems Tony became aware that he would not be leaving the hospital. Tony quietly prayed and surrendered his life to God with the mantra "Abba Father into your hands I commend my spirit." Tony died peacefully on Saturday 28th December surrounded with caring friends.

"Well done good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Mathew 25:23 (NKJV)



Above: Loth - Fr Tony - baptism of Great Grand Nephews Luca and Johnah Vian.

for seven years with 48 students from 22 countries. During this time, he immersed himself in his studies, participated in the choir, played double bass or cello with the orchestra, and had leading roles in plays and concerts. Tony always felt blessed for the rich faith and spiritual formation, as well as the lifelong friendships he made. This deeply influenced his faith and commitment to the priesthood. On the 22 March 1958 Tony was ordained at St John Lateran Archbasilica in Rome.

On Fr Tony's return to Australia in 1958 he was warmly welcome by his family and friends who had not seen him for 7 years.

Fr Tony, was man of the Gospels, he

Ballarat Catholic Teachers College. He also recognized the need for more formation among teachers, religious, and laity in the Diocese, so he organized workshops and invited guest speakers. During this time, Tony was also an assistant priest at South Wagga Parish and then Parish Priest at Koorngal.

Tony returned to Rome in 1974 to study, completing a Licentiate in Spirituality at the Gregorian University. Tony lived with the Benedictine Community at Sant' Anselmo in Rome and joined in the life of the community. Benedictine spirituality had always been an expression of his faith life so he felt at home.

In 1977 Tony returned to Wagga, and

Vale FR JAMES MCGEE

We give thanks to God for the extraordinary life and ministry of Fr James (Jim) McGee.

It is with great sadness that the Diocese of Wagga Wagga announces the death of Fr James Donald McGee, on 16 January 2025.

Jim McGee was born on 8 December 1936 in Scone, in the Diocese of Maitland, New South Wales, to Michael and Dorothy McGee. He was one of ten children, with Betty (Sr Mary Thomas Moore), Patricia, Fr John, Brian, Peter, Michael, Dorothy, Anne and Christine.

Fr Jim recounted the day he knew he would be a priest. It was his 8th birthday and, walking home in the town of Scone, he passed the Assistant Parish Priest Fr Ross who asked him about his day. When young Jim told him it was his birthday, Fr Ross became filled with joy and enthusiasm about that day being his birthday. Young Jim was so touched by Fr Ross's response, (he hadn't yet made the connection that he was born on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception), he knew immediately that he wanted to be like Fr Ross - he would be a priest.

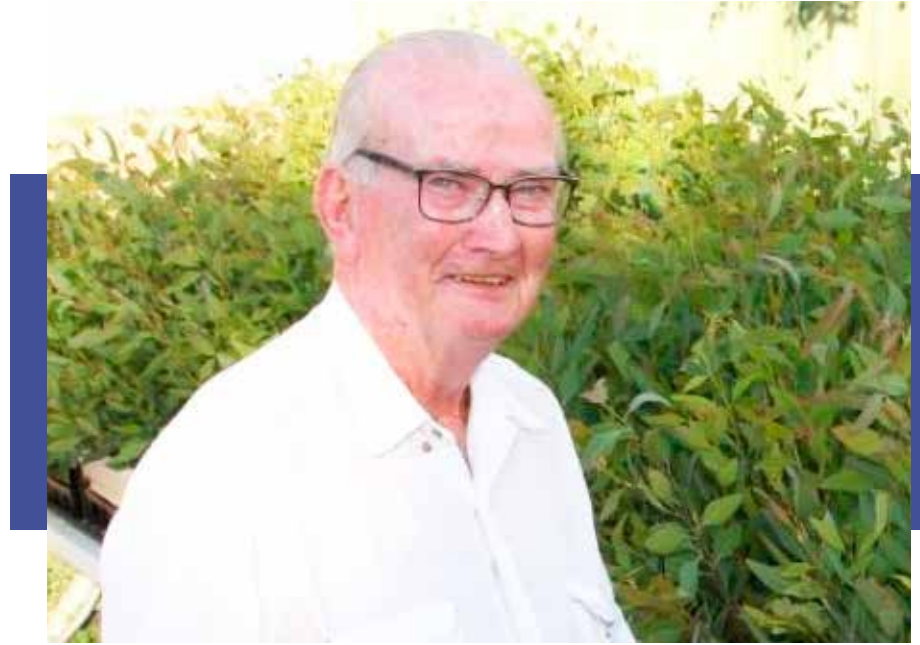
Educated by the Sisters of Mercy, Scone, and Christian Brothers, Albury, Jim McGee studied for the priesthood at Springwood and Manly and was ordained a priest by Bishop Henschke on 17th July 1961 at St Patrick's Church, Albury.

During his more than sixty years of priesthood, Fr McGee served the Diocese in the parishes of St Michael's Cathedral Wagga Wagga, Junee, North Albury, Leeton, Yanco, Tocumwal, Lavington, The Rock and Yenda-Yoogali-Hanwood. He also worked with the Chaplaincy team at Long Bay Gaol, and in March 1993 Fr McGee served as Chaplain at Junee Correctional Centre, which was the first Chaplaincy established within a private gaol in New South Wales.

Fr McGee took a sabbatical in 1982 making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he undertook a biblical course which he found to be an extraordinary experience.

Fr McGee was the Editor of the diocesan magazine "Together" for nine years where he worked with diligence, commitment and expertise. He produced the liturgical guide known as the MiniKalendars. These are still produced today and are distributed across Australia and New Zealand. He was also appointed as the Diocesan Director for the Pontifical Mission Societies and Project Compassion.

In December 2008, Fr McGee retired from his Priestly duties at Yenda-Yoogali-Hanwood Parishes, residing in Yenda until the great flood of 2012 inundated his home. Fr Jim and his plants



relocated to Wagga Wagga. The doors of his home were always open - upon knocking or calling out, visitors would be greeted with a booming "Come" as their welcome. Fr Jim loved his brother priests, and found profound purpose in the intimate and sacred act of hearing confessions and offering spiritual guidance and compassion to those seeking forgiveness. He was passionate about the Gospel and devoted to the Rosary, always keeping a set of Rosary beads next to his chair and by his bed.

Renowned as an avid gardener, for the occasion of the Diocesan Centenary in 2017, Fr McGee propagated the Eucalyptus Dwyeri (named for Bishop Dwyer who was the first to identify it.)

Fr McGee carefully tended the gardens at the various parishes he was appointed to. He had a keen interest in growing Rhipsalis (hanging plants), and made trips to Sydney to meet with others doing likewise.

Fr McGee was a model for continual learning, taking up painting in his later years, producing portraits of his siblings, his parents and his churches. Despite illnesses and challenges, Fr Jim always remained cheerful and positive.

From the prayer card for Fr McGee's ordination on 17th July 1961:

"Bless O Lord, all who have helped me, especially my family."



Above: Fr Jim with parents Dorothy and Michael.



Above: Fr Jim McGee with sisters Dorothy, Anne and Christine.

Fr. McGee had a deep affection for his art family. The below was written by his art teacher, Tahlia Keogh, to inform them of his passing.

Dear Friends,

It's with great sadness that I have to tell you that Father James McGee, or as we all called him at the studio, "Father Jim" passed away peacefully yesterday evening.

Father spent so much time with us in the studio that he referred to us as his art family. Father was very much family to me.

Father always showed his support in the studio and attended every event and exhibition, often

making aspiring artists dreams a reality by purchasing a painting or two. His house was like an art gallery itself, the only available wall space left was for the television so he could watch the cricket.

I know that we all have our own fond memories of Father from over the years, a classic of mine is when he accidentally mixed up his dates and turned up unexpectedly at a life drawing hens party - something we never let him live down.

Like many of us I loved having Fathers company in the studio, having a sneaky glass of red wine, listening to the political discussion he would be having with Robbie or the artistic discussion that was going on. The studio won't be the same.

Pour a glass of red wine and toast to Father Jim. A wonderful artist, a beautiful friend.

You will be very missed Father McGee.

Love Tahls



CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES: SAFEGUARDING SYMPOSIUM 2025

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga's Office of Safeguarding hosted a landmark symposium focused on *Creating Safer Communities* at the Riverina Playhouse, Wagga Wagga, on 10 February 2025.

BY KARENE EGGLETON
Editor of Together

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has long been committed to creating a culture of safety, care, and dignity for all members of its community. This commitment was prominently showcased at the Diocese's *Safeguarding Symposium 2025*, a pivotal event held to further the Diocese's dedication to safeguarding vulnerable individuals, particularly children and adults at risk. The symposium highlighted the Diocese's rigorous approach to safeguarding, as reflected in the *Commitment Statement* by the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI.

The *Commitment Statement* emphasises the Diocese's firm stance on a no-tolerance policy regarding abuse, discrimination, and harassment.

A Day of Reflection and Insight

The symposium began with a prayer and an official opening by Bishop Mark Edwards OMI, who welcomed attendees and reaffirmed the Diocese's ongoing commitment to safeguarding. Following this, participants were invited to reflect on the impact of safeguarding efforts through impact statements, which offered personal reflections on the importance of safeguarding within the Church community.

A dramatic reenactment, performed by Ms Melanie Hale and students from Kildare Catholic College, further brought the themes of safeguarding to life, providing a powerful reminder of the human cost of failing to protect those at risk.



Above: Fr Hans Zollner SJ, Virginia Pattison, Diocesan Safeguarding Manager and Bishop Mark OMI. All photos by Matt Humphrey.

Upon opening his address Fr Hans wanted us to take one thing away from the day.

"The one thing I'd like you to take from today is to ask: Why does God ask us to be here today? He asks us to be a community of faith, a community of mission and that our core responsibility is the sincerity for a safer church and workplace. This is the root of the gospel, to be committed everyday to what Jesus tells us to do. Love to self, love to community and love to God. We are all in this together."

He then provided a global perspective

and proactive measures to safeguard the most vulnerable in our communities.

Mr Steve Kinmond OAM's address on Child-Safe Standards

Another pivotal moment of the symposium was the keynote address by Mr Steve Kinmond OAM, the NSW Children's Guardian. Mr Kinmond, a leading advocate for child safety in Australia, spoke on the topic of *Reportable Conduct Within the Context of Faith-Based Organisations*. His insights emphasised the need for faith-based institutions to adhere to strict child-safe



Above: Bishop Mark unveiled the Acknowledgement of Survivors Statement. See the back page of this issue for the full statement.

Keynote address by Fr Hans Zollner SJ

This aligns with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, which were developed in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The standards guide the Diocese's actions in implementing comprehensive measures that ensure the protection and well-being of all individuals within the Diocese's care.

The first keynote speaker was Fr Hans Zollner SJ, an internationally renowned expert on safeguarding. Fr Zollner, a German Jesuit priest with expertise in theology, psychology, and psychotherapy, is the director of the *Institute of Anthropology: Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care* at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.



Above: Students from Kildare Catholic College performed a dramatic reenactment choreographed by Ms Melanie Hale.

on current developments in safeguarding, sharing insights from his extensive experience in the field.

Fr Zollner's work has contributed significantly to safeguarding initiatives within the Church, and his role as a consultant to the Diocese of Rome's Office for the *Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons* further highlights his expertise. His address shed light on the ongoing need for vigilance, collaboration,

standards, ensuring that all allegations of abuse or misconduct are reported and investigated thoroughly. He spoke of the permanency of safeguarding.

"Safeguarding is a permanent, integral part of what it is to be a church. Safeguarding is not something we do in passing."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

SAFEGUARDING SYMPOSIUM

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:



Hans Zollner, SJ

Hans Zollner, SJ, is Director and Professor of the Institute of Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care (IADC), at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is a member of the Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons of the Diocese of Rome and a consultor of the Dicastery for the Clergy.

Father Zollner is one of the leading experts on matters of safeguarding of minors and prevention of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. He holds a doctorate in systematic theology and is a licensed psychologist and psychotherapist. Author of numerous books and articles, he promotes and leads international research in his area of expertise to promote the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable persons in the Church and in society at large.

In 2010 to 2011 he was a member of the Scientific Working Group of the "Round Table on Child Abuse" commissioned by the Federal Government of Germany. He was also a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors from 2014 to 2023.

He has visited more than 75 countries to address workshops and episcopal conferences on the need for developing awareness and establishing safeguarding measures.

His work with the NSW Children's Guardian has been instrumental in holding organisations accountable for their responsibilities to protect children from harm.

Rev Dr Jake Mudge on Integrity in Ministry

The symposium's final keynote was delivered by Rev Dr Jake Mudge, Director of Pastoral Work at Corpus Christi College. Dr Mudge's address focused on the *National Code of Conduct for Pastoral Ministry in Australian Catholic*

Dioceses, highlighting the importance of integrity in all aspects of pastoral care. His presentation underscored the need for ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability in ministry, and the significant role that these principles play in fostering trust and safety within the Church.

Dr Mudge's presentation reinforced the Diocese's ongoing commitment to ensuring that all pastoral workers uphold the highest standards of integrity and care, in line with the National Code of Conduct.



Reverend Fr. Jake Mudge

Fr Jacob (Jake) Mudge is a priest of the Diocese of Sandhurst and a member of the Department of Systematic Theology and Pastoral and Spiritual Studies at Catholic Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne, where he lectures in pastoral theology and safeguarding. In 2019 he was involved in the curriculum writing and accreditation of the university's first Unit in Safeguarding, *Pastoral Leadership for a Safe Church*.

He completed doctoral studies in Fundamental Theology in 2019, writing a thesis on the theological anthropology of Luigi Rulla and Bernard Lonergan. His research interests include Christian Formation, Safeguarding and Lonergan Studies. In 2021 he was involved in the writing party for the combined CRA-ACBC Code of Conduct document *Our Common Mission*.

He has previously served as the Director of Pastoral Work at Corpus Christi College and is currently Parish Priest of St Therese's Kennington and the Director of Clergy Life and Ministry for Sandhurst.

Fr Mudge is a passionate advocate for cause or belief and is known for his positive qualities, such as compassion, intelligence, and leadership.

We are honored to have Fr Mudge join us to share his insights. His expertise and experience undoubtedly enriched the discussion.



Mr Steve Kinmond OAM

In 2023 Steve was appointed to the position of Children's Guardian. From 2019 until 2023, he was CEO of the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA), having previously served as NSW Community and Disability Services Commissioner and Deputy Ombudsman (Human Services).

Steve sees the role of the Office of the Children's Guardian is to support and strengthen organisations in their work with children. He will partner with government and non-government stakeholders to help improve the systems that are in place to support and protect children in NSW, especially the most vulnerable.

He has more than 30 years experience in investigation and regulation, having also worked as a solicitor and run his own consultancy practice.

Heading ACWA, Steve helped secure stronger funding for residential, statutory out-of-home care and championed the needs and special interests of vulnerable young people.

As Deputy Ombudsman, Steve led improvements in its oversight of community and disability services, and helped reform how the organisation reviews the deaths of children and young people with disability.

He was awarded the Order of the Medal of Australia (OAM) for service to the community through complaint investigation and resolution roles.

Conclusion and Mass

The day's discussions and reflections culminated in a solemn Mass at St Michael's Cathedral, where participants gathered to pray for the continued safety of all individuals within the Church community. The Mass, led by Bishop Mark Edwards OMI, offered a moment of collective reflection and commitment to safeguarding practices within the Diocese.

The symposium concluded with a dinner at The Gardens Café and Function Centre, where attendees had the opportunity to continue their conversations and share insights. The evening provided an opportunity for networking, strengthening relationships, and fostering a sense of unity among those dedicated to the important work of safeguarding.

Virginia Pattison, the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager at the Diocese of Wagga Wagga reflected on her learnings from the day.

"My key takeaways from the day are the importance of:

- Ongoing vigilance of safeguarding children and adults at risk in our diocese is absolutely necessary
- We speak and act from the heart, with hope and keep the dignity of the human person at the forefront of our mission

- We all have a responsibility in this space
- Safeguarding is an integral part of our day to day work, our mission

I am truly grateful to Bishop Mark, Fr Murphy our vicar general, the diocesan heads of agencies for their support in not only the vision of this event but safeguarding children and adults at risk as a priority. The atmosphere and collaborative feel of all the attendees (approx. 118) beautifully exemplified our shared purpose and a beacon of hope."

A Commitment to the Future

The Safeguarding Symposium 2025 was a powerful demonstration of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga's unwavering commitment to safeguarding and the protection of all members of its community, especially the most vulnerable. Through a series of insightful presentations, practical guidance, and reflections, the symposium reinforced the Diocese's resolve to uphold the safety, dignity, and care of every individual within its care. **As the Diocese continues to implement and strengthen safeguarding measures, the Symposium served as an important step in creating safer communities for all.**



Above: Mr Steve Kinmond OAM, the NSW Children's Guardian.

HOLY SPIRIT PARISH FAREWELLS FR PETER MURPHY

Fr Peter Murphy was appointed by Bishop Gerard Hanna in 2007 to Holy Spirit Parish Lavington following the retirement of Fr Patrick O'Connell who was the first parish priest of Lavington, appointed in 1970 and who built Holy Spirit Church in 1978.

Holy Spirit Parish Lavington incorporates the communities of Lavington, Jindera and Gerogery. It became apparent that there was a need for a church at Jindera, and in 2011 Fr Murphy oversaw the building of St Mary Help of Christians

Church to replace the hall on the same site that had been used for Sunday Masses.

The Good Shepherd Atrium has been a constant presence in the parish in Fr Murphy's time. The parish also operates a private cemetery at St Marys Jindera.



Right: St Mary Help of Christians Church Jindera.

Below: Atrium Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Lavington.



The parish has seen significant growth in the time of Fr Peter Murphy and is continuing to grow, helped by the establishment of an Independent Catholic school at Jindera in 2009.

Many connections have been made over the past 18 years and the parish and families will deeply miss their good and faithful Father Peter Murphy.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to Ross and Betty Catanzariti as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday, December 7. Bishop Mark blessed the couple after they renewed their wedding vows during the Mass.



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CARITAS PARTNERS RAISE CHOLERA ALARMS AMID SUDAN GENOCIDE DECLARATION

Following months of deliberation, the US government has formally declared its belief that the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are committing genocide.

A brutal civil war broke out in April 2023 between the RSF and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), resulting in the world's largest ongoing displacement and hunger crises.

Sudan now hosts approximately 11 million internally displaced persons with close to 2.5m people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries such as Chad. Over half of these displaced people are under the age of 18.

Caritas partners have been working in North Darfur, Gedaref, and the White Nile State, since the outbreak of war. These partners are providing protection services for those in need, as well as water, sanitation and health services, and multi-purpose cash assistance, which helps those fleeing with nothing purchase essentials.

Major challenges in delivering these

projects include required relocations due to military action which has interrupted water projects, as well as shortages of cash in Sudanese banks for cash assistance, and shortages of goods in market to support the material needs of projects.

A cholera outbreak in the country has posed fresh challenges, with over 5,000 cases in the White Nile project areas alone.

A report from program partners in the region stated that “The combination of cholera and hunger is becoming disastrous as hunger is greatly impacting the immunity of displaced people”.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Manager at Caritas Australia said, “The sheer scale of the suffering in Sudan is unimaginable. The number of displaced people is about half the population of



Above: Aid distribution at a transit camp for Sudanese refugees in Chad. Photo by Caritas Mongo.

Australia, with children making up the majority.”

“The food crisis is severe, with all displaced people experiencing a minimum phase 3 food crisis where malnutrition becomes an issue. 3.6m people are in phase 4 where malnutrition becomes acute. 755,000 are in phase 5 which is a famine, meaning people begin to starve to death.”

“We are incredibly proud of our

partners who continue, under extremely challenging conditions, to provide sanitation services that help prevent the spread of disease, while assisting vulnerable people with protection services and the means to procure lifesaving necessities.”

To support Caritas Australia’s Sudan Crisis Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/sudan or call 1800 024 413 toll free.



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Diocesan Outreach Assistants

Aid to the Church in Need – Wagga Wagga

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is an international Catholic Charity offering spiritual and pastoral support to suffering and persecuted Christians. ACN is looking for Diocesan Outreach Assistants (DOAs) to help spread the news of this work in Catholic parishes in 2024.

The Diocesan Outreach Assistant role is a part time position which consists of delivering 12 weekends of parish presentations across a year. The role also requires the capacity to undertake administrative work (pertaining to booking presentations in parishes e.g. phone calls, emails, etc.)

The primary tasks of the Diocesan Outreach Assistant are:

- To raise awareness of the suffering and persecuted Church by sharing the stories of our brothers and sisters who suffer or are persecuted for their faith. The DOA will encourage parishioners to sign up to receive the ACN’s Newsletter.
- To invite parishioners to pray for the persecuted and suffering Church.
- To inspire parishioners to take action to support the suffering Church and to join ACN in its journey to keep the faith alive.

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SHINE A LIGHT

The Forrest Centre’s *Shine a Light* photography competition has concluded, with the announcement of the 2024 winners, highlighting the diverse and enriching lives of older individuals.

BY HELEN SUPPLE
Executive Assistant - The Forrest Centre

The competition, aimed at challenging cultural perceptions and showcasing the beauty of ageing, has become an important platform for celebrating the contributions of older people to society.

Evan Robertson, CEO of The Forrest Centre, emphasised the importance of recognising older individuals as vital members of the community. "As an aged care provider, we have the privilege of working with older people every day. Older people are essential members of our community – they work, they volunteer, they create, they laugh, they love. Yet too often, their stories remain untold, and their contributions unnoticed," he said. "The Shine a Light photography competition is our way of saying it's time to break down stereotypes and shine a light on ageing in all its richness and diversity."

The *Shine a Light* competition invited photographers to capture the stories of older people in their lives, highlighting what it means to age well and celebrating

the strength, wisdom, and joy of older generations. This year’s winners, from a variety of categories, reflect the competition’s mission to honor the lives of older Australians in a fresh and impactful way.

People’s Choice Award

The 2024 People’s Choice Award went to local photographer Jypsie Cronan for her poignant photograph *Holding Onto The Next Generation*. The image captures her daughter holding the hands of her late great grandfather, symbolizing a moment of “transfer of knowledge and wisdom all held together by the endless love,” as Jypsie describes it. Jypsie, a long-time supporter of the competition, has entered every year since its inception, and this year, she also triumphed in the Professional Photographer category with *Just Like Grandad*, which features her father and his grandson riding matching motorbikes.

Category Winners

In addition to the People’s Choice Award, winners were announced in several

categories:

- Open Category – *John and Jimmy Friends* by Jeffrey Vaughan
- Over 70s Category – *Restful Gaze* by Bob Green
- Professional Photographer Category – *Just Like Grandad* by Jypsie Cronan
- Teen Photographers Category – *A Spot of Yellow* by Isabelle Armstrong
- Young Photographers Category – *My Doddie Makes Me Laugh* by Sienna Stuart
- Staff Category – *Aunty Marsha* by Helen Supple

The Forrest Centre extends heartfelt congratulations to all the winners and thanks to everyone who participated in this year’s competition. Special recognition also goes to the 2024 judging panel, which

included Rod Kendall, Christina Reid, Cristy Houghton, and Belinda Benson, for their invaluable contribution in selecting the winning images.

A Movement for Change

More than just a celebration of photography, the *Shine a Light* competition serves as a movement to challenge stereotypes about ageing and to highlight the incredible lives and legacies of older Australians. By turning the camera on the older members of our community, the competition invites us all to reflect on the richness of the ageing process and the vital role older people play in shaping our society.

The Forrest Centre looks forward to continuing this important conversation and celebrating the many stories of older individuals in years to come.



Above: Professional category winner. *Just Like Grandad* by Jypsie Cronan.

Below: Open category winner. *John and Jimmy friends* by Jeffrey Vaughan.



Above: People's Choice winner. *Holding on to the Next Generation* by Jypsie Cronan.

Below: Teen category winner. *A Spot of Yellow* by Isabelle Armstrong.



Below: Over 70's category winner. *Restful Gaze* by Bob Green



Above: Staff category winner. *Aunty Marsha* by Helen Supple.

Below: Under 13 category winner. *My Doddie Makes Me Laugh* by Sienna Stuart.



ALL SAINTS' DEBUTANTE BALL 2024

The All Saints' Debutante Ball took place on October 19th at the Tumbarumba Basketball Stadium in Tumbarumba.

Our special guest was **Mr. Glen McGrath**, accompanied by his wife Vanessa. Glen works for Snowy Valleys Council and is deeply involved in the Tumbarumba community, especially the Tumbarumba to Kokoda Trek. Glen, the son of John and Verna McGrath, grew up in Tumbarumba and completed his HSC at Hurlstone Agriculture High School before earning a Bachelor of Environmental Science at CSU Wagga. Vanessa has been an educator at Tumbarumba High School since 2009.

Mrs. Jemima Middleton, accompanied by her husband Craig, is the Acting Principal at All Saints for Term 4. The Middletons moved to Tumbarumba in 2010, and their four children completed primary education at All Saints. Jemima is a math expert and also coordinates the school's RE, sports, and chess programs.

Reverend Dr. Thomas Brancik has been the Parish priest of All Saints for 13 years. He holds a Doctorate in Church Law and is the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

Mrs. Susan Cox, President of All Saints P&F, is escorted by Dominic Chaffey. Susan, married to Gus, is the mother of Charlie, Alice, and Harry.

The Debutantes of 2024 are:

Kate Langfield partnered by Deegan Lesniak. Kate is inspired by her family and plans to study Sports Physiotherapy. Deegan enjoys Metalwork and wants to become a plumber.

Tayla Staub partnered by Taj Masters. Tayla loves music and history and dreams of visiting Finland. Taj enjoys English and wants to become a journalist.

Zahra Nurthen partnered by Diesel Allen. Zahra wants to become a midwife. Diesel plans to join the navy as a chef and dreams of traveling the world.

Ebony Drew partnered by Dominic Chaffey. Ebony enjoys Science and History and wants to become a nurse or police officer. Dominic is known for his unique talent of talking underwater with marbles.

Ginger Lyons partnered by Darcy Finnimore. Ginger plans to study engineering or architecture and dreams of visiting Antarctica. Darcy wants to become a plant mechanic and loves motorbikes and utes.

Ashley Hulm partnered by Lachlan Pearce. Ashley plans to study commerce and marketing. Lachlan is interested in SLR and wants to become an electrician.

Siana Battle partnered by Pacey Slater. Siana is skilled in money management and wants to volunteer in Africa. Pacey is inspired by his Mum's hard work and wants to address domestic violence against men.

Melissa-Rose Taylor partnered by Phoenix Richards. Melissa-Rose enjoys Food Tech and hopes to travel to Italy. Phoenix wants to become a competitive bodybuilder.

Amelia Wood partnered by Troy Perry. Amelia enjoys English and dreams of visiting Greece. Troy is doing a carpentry apprenticeship and wants to travel around Australia.

Tiffany Doughty partnered by Steven Houting. Tiffany dreams of traveling to New Zealand. Steven wants to be a butcher and travel to Holland.

The Debutantes and their partners performed four dances choreographed by Joerg Ernst and Charlee Blencowe. Siana Battle and Tayla Staub made a speech on behalf of the 2024 debutantes. Ebony Drew and Tiffany Doughty had the honor of cutting the cake.



Above: Ebony Drew and Tiffany Doughty.

Below: Siana Battle and Tayla Staub.



ARTS CELEBRATED AS PART OF JUBILEE 2025

Catholics are being invited to reflect on the importance of art and artists, as the Church marks the Jubilee of Artists from February 15-18.

The Jubilee of Artists is one of dozens of major events under the banner of the Jubilee year, which has the theme “Pilgrims of Hope”.

As part of the celebrations, the National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council - an expert advisory body to the Bishops Commission for Liturgy of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference - has issued an “Invitation to Artists”.

The document appeals to artists to take inspiration from God to “offer us the possibility of entering more deeply into the meaning and purpose

of all that exists”.

“Yes, art and artists can make a difference!

“The transformations wrought by artists begin with the material world. Clay becomes a ceramic. Stone becomes a sculpture. Pigment becomes a painting. Sound becomes a song.

“But the artist does more than engage with the material world. Your work changes our perspective, our way of seeing the world.”

The statement concludes: “We encourage parishes and support them in taking every opportunity to receive good works of religious and sacred art so that, having left your studio, they may inspire us in the Christian life.”

Bishops’ delegate to the council, Bishop of Toowoomba Ken Howell, encouraged parishes to engage more closely with artists and architects, and for artists to read and reflect on the invitation.

“Art is at its best when it is prophetic and brings inspiration,” Bishop Howell said.

“We should be harnessing the gifts



and insights of our artists in our worshipping communities, to better lead people to praise and worship God.”

Canberra iconographer Sue Orchison said artists who are welcomed into the life of a parish can contribute to the beauty of the liturgy and liturgical space by use of their unique and rich gifts.

“In many ways, art can play a part in helping to break open the Word as each artist brings colour and beauty to the visual encounter,” she said.

“Works of art provoke conversation, and provide a space for meditation, a place to stop and ponder, to ask a question or just to sit and soak in the peace.

“Art draws us beyond words,

beyond ourselves to hope and dream. It touches the part of us that yearns to understand the mystery of life.”

She said she delighted in working with parishes “to express a glimpse of the love of God”.

“As an iconographer, when working on a piece of art I spend much time researching the subject.

“This opens the path for me to delve into the lives of saints, for example. I get to know them and be inspired by lives that are expressions of their love of God.”

The Invitation to Artists can be found at the Australian Catholic Liturgical Art website *An Invitation To Artists - Australian Catholic Liturgical Art*





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CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Catholic Religious Australia marks this World Day of Consecrated Life by celebrating the lives of consecrated women and men, giving thanks for their generosity in the day-to-day challenges of ecclesial living and missionary service to Church and society.

Instituted by Saint John Paul II in 1997, the World Day for Consecrated Life invites us to offer prayerful support for all those who have committed themselves to consecrated life.

Coinciding with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, religious women and men are reflected in the lives of Simeon and Anna, the two prophetic figures in Luke's Gospel account who bear witness to the infant Jesus' consecration to the Lord. This depiction reminds the Church of the contributions of consecrated women and men, who remain vigilant and steadfast in their faith and courageous in their pronouncement of the Good News through the living out of consecrated life, in all its myriad expressions.

"The gospel text tells us that Anna,

a widow and representative for the dispossessed, prayed and fasted fervently at the temple. This is who our religious men and women are, making up vibrant and diverse communities who, through their charisms, gifts and ministries, nurture an ever-deeper relationship with Christ and proclaim the Gospel message by walking with people on the margins," said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

The celebrations this year carry added weight, occurring concurrently with the national celebration of the Jubilee for Consecrated Life, an integral part of the overall Year of Jubilee. The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL), has chosen to articulate the official motto of the Jubilee Year, "Pilgrims of Hope," in a special way for consecrated persons,



"Pilgrims of hope on the path of peace."

"This year's celebration offers an opportunity for we religious to renew our missionary commitment as consecrated persons who are messengers of God's peace. This Jubilee Year we are reminded of our call to accompany God's people, particularly in their time of need, endeavouring to bring the hope of Christ and fullness of life to all. The People of God have provided strong support to

consecrated religious across the country for which we are most grateful," said Gerard Brady CFC, CRA President.

As special Masses for consecrated life are celebrated around Australia, CRA asks the Australian Church to join with us in giving thanks for consecrated persons and the gifts they bring in their personal and community life, church life and as part of our wider society.

CRA CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA), the peak representative body for the Leaders of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Australia, is deeply distressed about the increasing rise and extremity of antisemitic attacks.

The discovery of a caravan of explosives in NSW, seemingly intended to target Jewish people, property and places of worship, is especially chilling and sinister, given the potential for large scale loss of life. Any antisemitic attack is despicable; attacks on schools and childcare centres are appalling.

"We utterly condemn these hateful attacks on the Jewish community," said Br Gerard Brady cfc, President of CRA.

"We urge our members to reach out to the Australian Jewish community in friendship and solidarity. Now more than ever, building up interfaith relations is essential to learn more

deeply about the hopes and fears of our Jewish sisters and brothers at this time, along with other people of faith in our local neighbourhoods, together finding ways to work together towards a common goal of a peaceful and harmonious Australia," he said.

"We commend all efforts to bring to an end this spate of antisemitic attacks, which creates fear and fragments our precious multi-faith and multicultural society. The rule of law must prevail, and the perpetrators be brought to justice," said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director. **"We continue to pray for peace, safety and the well-being of the Jewish community and all Australians."**



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ED BROWN RETIRES AFTER 33 YEARS OF SERVICE

A beloved Border school teacher who had the rare ability to make every student feel seen and heard is bowing out.

BY JODIE BRUTON
The Daily Advertiser

Ed Brown retired from his position at Xavier High School after an illustrious career, which spanned more than three decades in education.

A cornerstone of the Xavier High School community and Wagga Diocese, Mr Brown's impact on students, staff and the Albury community would be deeply missed.

Throughout his 33 years with the Wagga Diocese, Mr Brown held leadership roles including being principal at St Mary's Primary School in Corowa and St Joseph's in Finley, as well as being the Leader of Faith and Mission and Religious Education Co-ordinator (REC) at Xavier High School.

Affectionately known as Mr Ed by

many, his unwavering commitment to Catholic education and the betterment of students was evident in his exceptional work.

Xavier High School principal Nicole Morton acknowledged Mr Brown's significant commitment over 21 years at the Albury-based secondary school.

"Ed Brown is an inspirational faith leader and teacher in our community, and Xavier has benefited from his extraordinary service and compassion," she said.

"Ed knows every student in our school and has the ability to make every student feel known, respected and valued.

"He is an exceptional leader and models to all in our community, every day, the values in our Catholic school.



Above: Beloved teacher and leader Ed Brown retired from his position at Xavier High School. Picture supplied

"He has been instrumental in leading faith and learning in our school, as well as sharing a love and passion for the Kangaroos and golf!

"He is loved and respected by all he interacts with, and he will be missed."

Mr Brown's commitment to service also extended beyond the classroom.

He was instrumental in myriad school, parish, and community initiatives including Vinnies at School, Carevan, Winter Sleepout, Stations of the Cross, Immersion and retreat programs and various parish events.

His dedication to serving others has made a lasting impact on the lives of countless people.

Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Parish Albury, Father Martin Cruickshank, acknowledged Mr Brown's contribution.

"Ed served on Sacred Heart Parish Council as chairperson for six years, demonstrating collaborative and innovative leadership," he said.

"He also represented the Diocese at

the Plenary Council, contributing to the discussion and discernment process that will hopefully shape the future direction of the Church in Australia.

"Most significantly, he is a person of deep personal faith that is lived out every day in the life of the communities to which he belongs.

"Mr Brown's retirement marks the end of an era for Xavier High School.

"His legacy of dedication, service and compassion will continue to inspire the school community for years to come."

Humble throughout his extraordinary career, Mr Brown shared only a few thoughts publicly, mostly preferring to deflect the attention.

"Thanks so much for everyone's very kind and generous comments," he said.

"I feel very blessed and extremely grateful.

"I'm very excited about my next adventure which hopefully will include playing lots of golf and backing lots of winners."



Above: Ed Brown (far right) enjoying Xavier Day.



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A TRIBUTE TO FR MAURICE CARSE

In December, an episode of the ABC's *Pilbara Breakfast* show made a mention of the story of the legendary priest, Fr Maurice Carse, who spent his final years in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

BY FR RICK MICALLEF
Rector - Vianney College

Fr Maurice Carse was born in 1917 in Victoria. He did his schooling in St Patrick's College in East Melbourne and graduated top of his school in 1935. He served in the Australian Army between 1940-1941, he was then commissioned into the Royal Australian Air force and the United States Air Force. During this time, Fr Maurice fought in the Second World War and was awarded by US President Harry Truman for his bravery during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. It is said that, during the war, he promised God, "if you get out me out here alive, I will become a priest". He kept his word and following his return, he began his priestly formation in 1948, and was ordained

in Rome in 1956, where he was also awarded his License in Sacred Theology

Fr Maurice's priestly ministry took him across three states, but it was in Karratha in Western Australia's Pilbara region. In was there where he was most well known as a pioneering priest, being the driving force for the building of church halls, schools and eventually churches. Following postings in Victoria and New South Wales, his ministry then took him to the diocese of Wagga Wagga, where he served as Spiritual Director as well as lecturer in Philosophy in Vianney College Seminary, where he continued to make his impact on what would become many priests in the diocese. He then retired



in Khancoban, and passed away on Christmas Eve 2002. A plaque in Khancoban recording his service said that he was "esteemed by his parishioners".



Above: Mark Whybrow, Peter Stojanovic, Rick Micallef, Fr Maurice Carse and John Rovera. (John was a student for Armidale diocese. Mark, Peter and Rick are now all priests of the Wagga Diocese).



Above: Fr Maurice Carse, Rick Micallef, Brendan Lee, Andrew Grace and Steven Ledinich (students at the time, now all priests of the Wagga Diocese).

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CALLED TO SERVE: ARMING THE ARMED FORCES WITH A SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

Father Bradley Rafter is a familiar face in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. His conversion and vocation story is one many have delighted in, more recently it was featured in the Living Fullness Podcast.

BY EMILY SHAW

Vocations Committee Wagga Wagga

However, his vocational discernment did not stop after his ordination to the priesthood. I had the pleasure of interviewing him about his 'call within the call'; military chaplaincy.

In your own words what is military chaplaincy?

Military chaplaincy is quite a unique ministry. I parade 1-2 days a week at 1 RTB Kapooka and deal mainly with recruits who have joined the Army and are completing their basic training either in full time service or in a Reserve capacity. I also assist our Army staff (and their families) who work there and oversee the recruits doing their training. Most of my ministry is in two areas: pastoral care and giving classes in character formation and ethics. Our recruits need someone to talk to and the 'Padre' is usually the first person they will seek out. Our recruits also receive about 15 hours' worth of lessons from the chaplain in the field of character formation and ethics.

How long were you a priest when you first felt drawn to military chaplaincy?

When I was in my first year as a priest in 2013. Bishop Hanna asked me to go out to Kapooka for two consecutive Sundays to offer Mass at the chapel as the chaplain was on leave. This rekindled a dream I always had as a child – to join the Army. I waited about two years before finally approaching Bishop Hanna seeking permission to join and serve as a Padre.

How would you describe that 'call'?

Before joining I consulted several priests who were currently serving, or who had served, to get a feel for the ministry I felt called to. I remember one Army padre telling me that men and women join the Army for two main reasons: 1. To get fit and 2. To have a career. But it's not until many join and commence the vigorous basic training at Kapooka that they start to realise they could be called to war and potentially take a life, even lose their own life. This is often the time when they call upon the chaplain to work through this.

How long did you continue to ask Bishop Hanna before he eventually agreed? And what were his reasons in delaying this - he thought you needed more years under your belt as priest first?

I approached Bishop Hanna in 2015 asking for permission to become a full-time chaplain. He told me I didn't have enough experience as a priest and suggested I wait twelve months before approaching him again. I must admit that I was disappointed. However, in hindsight the bishop was right; I did need more experience. I waited a year and asked again; he gave me permission to join as a Reserve chaplain. The process of enlisting was quite drawn out and I eventually joined in mid-2017.



Above: Fr Bradley Rafter receiving his Service Medal from Colonel Deacon.

What does Army training look like for a 'Padre'?

I completed the Specialist Service Officers (SSO) course in 2018 at Duntroon Military College, Canberra. This is a 30-day course which involves basic training as well as leadership courses. Next, I completed the Chaplain's Initial Course (CIC) in 2019, again at Duntroon. Over the past seven and a half years I have completed the All Corps Captains Course (ACCC) as well as the All Corps Majors Course (ACMC) and many other courses specific to Military chaplaincy. I currently hold the worn rank as a Major.

What were your first impressions when you first started, and what do you find most enjoyable or worthwhile in this ministry now?

I realised on my first day at Kapooka that, as an officer with the rank of Captain, I outranked most of

the soldiers. It was very humbling to walk around the base and be saluted and called 'sir' by our service men and women who had accumulated many more years serving than me and many of whom had deployed to war zones, often on multiple deployments. I also realised quickly the great trust our Military have in the chaplain. From day one I was helping our soldiers work through any issues they were struggling with.

What I find most enjoyable is the pastoral care I can provide. Journeying with our soldiers and being invited into their lives to help them in whatever capacity is needed.

Any final words?

Overall, I have found Army ministry to be one of my most fulfilling roles as a priest. May God continue to bless our Military.

SUPPORTING FUTURE PRIESTS IN TIMOR-LESTE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE JUBILEE OF HOPE

In the spirit of the Jubilee Year 2025, dedicated to hope and renewal, Pope Francis has emphasised that "in the pilgrimage of Christian life, a new beginning is always possible."

Words that resonate particularly with Clintino, a seminarian in Timor-Leste. Growing up in a family where financial constraint was a reality, Clintino decided to follow his calling to service and start a new beginning despite the financial struggles. Inspired by the word of Jesus, Clintino hopes to become a priest and provide pastoral and tangible support to communities, ensuring everyone hears the word of God.

"The thing that inspires me every day is the word of Jesus, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'," says Clintino.

More than leaders in faith, priests play a vital role in supporting communities around the world through education, health, and social services. Despite the need, aspiring priests often face a long learning timeframe, and with limited resources

in the seminary, these hurdles become significant in completing their studies.

Timor-Leste, one of the most Catholic countries in the world, has a population that is 97% Catholic, reflecting the deep integration of faith into everyday life. Priests in Timor-Leste not only lead the spiritual life of this predominantly Catholic nation but also support community development, especially in remote and underserved areas.

Clintino is an example of how pursuing a calling can come with financial strain for seminarians and their families, as many families rely on future generations to become breadwinners. By choosing a different path, Clintino faces mounting struggles, including difficulties meeting the costs of seminary education.



Above: Clintino, a seminarian in Timor-Leste

Catholic Mission invites you to support future Church leaders like Clintino and their church communities. Your donation can help train seminarians, giving them the opportunity to pursue their calling and sustain the mission of hope and renewal that Pope Francis named as core to this Jubilee Year.

Visit online at:
www.catholicmission.org.au/lent
and help seminarians bring hope to communities in most need.



COUNSELLING SERVICES

Faith based Counselling Services

Centacare South West NSW is a Catholic Social Service Agency who exists to make a positive difference in people's lives. Our psychology, counselling, NDIS, school wellbeing, and education programs support children, individuals, and families.

Are you looking for a therapist who will incorporate your Christian faith? Our faith-based counsellor can support clients across the Wagga Wagga Catholic Diocese. We currently offer individual, and couples (including pre-marriage) counselling to adults. Together, we'll explore strategies and skills for managing stressors or challenges in your life and foster personal and relationship growth. Sessions can be in-person, by phone, or video conferencing.

What is Faith Based Counselling: Counselling is a supportive process where individuals and couples can confide in trained professionals who have a deep understanding of emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and relationships. It provides a safe space to navigate challenges, foster personal development, and enhance mental and emotional wellbeing.

Counselling takes a holistic approach to your mental health, and faith based counselling intentionally incorporates faith into the therapeutic journey. Faith based counselling incorporates an additional pillar into generalist counselling, including a special interest in your Christian faith that informs your sense of self, relationships with others and integration into the world.

About our counsellor: Stina Constantine is an AASW accredited Social Worker with qualifications in Psychology and Social work. She has close to 10 years' experience working with families of high conflict and family break downs and is trained in couple's therapy. Her passion points in practice are working with couples and trauma counselling.

Stina is a practicing Christian who has been actively involved in her church community. Her extensive experience in Church ministry has allowed her to meet and work with a variety of people including clergy, adults, children, and families.

Want to know more? Our website: www.centacareswsw.org.au or call 1300 619 379 or email your enquiry to: info@centacareswsw.org.au

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Pre-Marriage Counselling Program

Centacare South West NSW is a Catholic Social Service Agency who exists to make a positive difference in people's lives. Our psychology, counselling, NDIS, school wellbeing, and education programs support children, individuals, and families.

Are you getting married? Congratulations! It's an exciting time that comes with making a legal, emotional, and spiritual commitment. Pre-marriage counselling provides you and your partner an encouraging, unbiased space for genuine connection and open dialogue on the many aspects of your growing relationship.

Centacare South West NSW's pre-marriage counselling will encourage you as a couple to harness the strengths in your relationship as well support growth areas, giving you tools to manage many of the challenges that naturally comes with sharing a life with another person. Using the PREPARE & ENRICH inventory, our faith-based couples counsellor hopes to help provide you with some useful skills and tools that are tailored to YOUR specific relationship.

- This program focuses on:**
- Determining your shared goals & values.
 - Learning to manage conflict with respect and compassion
 - Increasing emotional connection and intimacy.
 - Negotiating commitments, responsibilities, and boundaries.
 - Strengthening communication and listening skills.
 - Working on trust, communication, and other areas of concern.

The sessions can cover a variety of themes including partner style and habits, financial management, leisure activities, affection and sex, family and friends, relationship expectations and children & parenting.

The sessions can be provided face to face (in Wagga), or via video conference across the South West Region of NSW.

Cost: \$450 (this includes access to your individual PREPARE & ENRICH Questionnaire, as well as 3 Sessions with our counsellor – further sessions available upon request).

BISHOP MARK VISITS VIETNAM

Bishop Mark's recent trip to Vietnam was focused on visiting the families of priests of Vietnamese origin and meeting with bishops to discuss vocation prospects for Vianney College.



Above: Bishop Mark with Br Joseph Hoat Nguyen CCS's family.



Above: Bishop Mark celebrated Mass in Xavier Sy Van Nguyen's parish in the Ha Tinh diocese.

One of the memorable experiences of his trip was his visit to Ha Tinh Diocese, where he had the privilege of celebrating Mass in Xavier Sy Van Nguyen's parish. The night before, Bishop Mark had dinner with Xavier's family, a warm and welcoming experience that deepened the connections between them. The trip was a meaningful opportunity for Bishop Mark to strengthen ties with the Vietnamese community and explore future opportunities for fostering vocations.



Above: Mass at the formation house and general house of a community of sisters (Holy Cross Congregation) in Vinh.



Above: Deacon John Baptist's family with his mother to Bishop Marks left.



Above: Bishop Mark meeting with Bishop Louis Nguyen of Ha Tinh, Fr Paul Lu and the Rector of the minor seminary of Ha Tinh.



Above: Bishop Mark with Fr Paul Lu's family.

THE LANE GIRLS OF LOCKHART

They are always in the front pews at Mass, they are very visible in the parish community, they are graceful, they are faithful, and there are five of them.

BY FR HENRY IBE

Administrator of St. Mary's Parish, Lockhart

They are the Lane Girls of St Mary's Lockhart: Irene Smyth (88), Pat French (85), Betty Quee (82), Brenda Sullivan (81), and Nola Webster (79). These holy women are siblings - five of the eight children of Daniel and Ina Lane of Lockhart. Their great grandfather arrived Australia from Ireland in the 1860s and settled at Benalla. Their grandfather, Tom Lane lived on a farm in Brookdale, while their father, Daniel Lane eventually moved to Lockhart where he raised his family with his Kiwi wife, Ina in Ferrier Street, Lockhart – across the road from the St Joseph's School/The Presentation Sisters' Convent/St Mary's Catholic Church. Sometime ago, I decided to sit down with them over lunch to share in their reminiscences of life and faith.

Parents: Dan Lane was a Catholic but not a super-active one. He used to take his children to Church and get them to sit in the front rows while he stayed in the back. His wife, Ina was born in New Zealand and raised in the Church of England, but she so diligently raised up her eight children in the Catholic Church. She would always urge the girls to go across and help the nuns in the convent to clean the brass in the church, etc. She herself used to help wash the sacred linens. Fortunately, the ladies recalled, during their Children of Mary meetings in those days, one of the nuns used to make an intercession of "One Hail Mary for the Conversion of Mrs Lane". This prayer was answered very many years later when Ina was received into the Catholic Church towards the end of her life, aged 94. On why she chose to become Catholic, she was emphatic that she wanted to be where her children were. At the time of her death Ina had 98 direct descendants.

Growing up: Dan and Ina had eight children in all: In addition to the five women already listed, there is Jim Lane (86) who lives in Wagga Wagga, Monica Edwards (who passed away at the age of 75), and Alan Lane (74) who lives in Canberra. Theirs was a happy childhood although they did not have much to spare. Alan, who joined us for lunch on the day of the interview, recalled how they ate a whole lot of rabbits for sustenance. Their dad used to set traps for rabbits to ensure a steady supply of meat for his family. They would skin the animals and sell the hide for an extra bit of income, while the excess meat was also sold for 6 Pence per rabbit.

The family lived in a very small house that had little heating, and the sleeping arrangement meant three girls in one bed.

Faith: The women, who were all taught by the Presentation nuns at St. Joseph's, Lockhart, see the Catholic faith as a very strong influence that has shaped their entire lives and kept them close-knit all these years. Their commitment to the faith means they are still working in the Church. Notwithstanding the burdens of age, the Lane girls have continued to help in gathering the Sunday collections and helping to rearrange the altar and the sacristy after Mass, all with an infectious smile. Over the years, they have been involved with the Children of Mary, playing the guitar and singing in the choir, the Catholic Women's League, and the banking of weekly collections.

Joys: There has been so much joy for them in life and so much to be grateful for. One such joys is the incredible fact that there has never been a "falling out" amongst the siblings, not even one. When I first spoke to Brenda about her relationship with her sisters, her response was: "People don't believe it, but we have never had a quarrel." This was corroborated by her husband of 61 "short" years, John Sullivan who considers himself blessed to be married into the Lane family. Having left home at 15 years of age, he felt like an adopted son of the wife's family. "When I met Brenda," he told me, "I was accepted in the family and her dad would always say 'put another leg of lamb on, John has just arrived.' Confirming this too was Mac Webster, married to Nola for 56 years. He too feels blessed to have been part of the Lane family story. Coincidentally, both John and Mac were life-long bankers and both men met their wives while working in the bank. Ironically, however, bank johnnies, rugby players and Poms were not their dad's favourite choice for future sons-in-law, but he ended up, without regrets, with two bank johnnies, two rugby players, and a Pom as sons-in-law.

Sorrows: The most somber moment of the afternoon was when Brenda broke down in tears as she recounted the tragic death of her son, Steven who was hit by a car in 1983 at the age of 17. The expression of grief on her face and on that of John (her husband) clearly showed the devastation they have had to deal with even after 35 years. Nevertheless, she was very grateful for the role played by faith in their journey



From left: Irene Smyth, Pat French, Betty Quee, Brenda Sullivan and Nola Webster.

with grief. If not for their Catholic faith and the support of her family, she didn't think she would have pulled through the pain the way she did. John himself had this to say about the tragedy: "You don't ever get over it, but with the help of the Lord you can find ways of dealing with it. You cannot get over it, but you learn to live with it. Sometimes I wonder whether the Lord is listening to me." Irene too had her own share of grief when her husband, Keith died in a tragic accident at the age of 53 in 1976, leaving her to raise their four children by herself.

All Back in Lockhart: On how all five of them ended up back in Lockhart, it happened that Irene never left – she continued living in the family home. Betty returned in 2000 with her husband, Brian, when he had PTSD from an active service in the army and needed a lot of care, and Lockhart provided the best environment for that. Pat returned in 2006 after her husband, Ray's passing in 2003. Brenda and Nola both came back with their husbands to retire in Lockhart. And this has proved a great blessing to each of them – being able to continue their childhood together in the very same neighbourhood they were raised and being able to serve in the same Church that nurtured them both spiritually and educationally.

No Whispering: On a lighter note, one other thing that three of the Lane girls have

in common is their ear problems - each has one hearing difficulty or the other. But that has never been an issue as verified by the two surviving husbands – John and Mac. Nevertheless, they are grateful to God for the gift of each other and for all the other blessings he had bestowed on them.

Regrets: Their biggest ongoing regret is that their own children, like most post-Vatican children in the Western world, have not kept up the practice of the Catholic faith. Another regret is the fact that their beloved sister, Monica is not with them anymore. They miss her sorely.

One thing that struck me when I first arrived Lockhart was that as soon as you met any of the ladies in the church, she was enthusiastic to let you know that "there are five of us." I had never met five adult sisters living in one parish before now, much less elderly ones like these. Therefore, it was a no-brainer that I had to do a bit of a story on this, in gratitude to God for the blessings that they have been to my parish community – a combined 415 years of love and Christian commitment. I always look out for them at every Sunday Mass – doing a silent headcount to be sure that all five are there. And whenever, that is not the case, I usually get a bit worried until I make sure that they all OK. **My prayer is that we may still have them all around here in Lockhart for a little bit longer. It's all in God's hands!**



Brenda and her husband, John Sullivan.



Nola and her husband, Mac Webster.

Centacare South West NSW



TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

We place a high value on mental health and recovery at Centacare. We offer a range of psychological services to people across the southern and western parts of region.

Centacare South West NSW is registered with Medicare Australia to provide services under the Medicare Benefits Scheme. Our professional team of psychologists provide assessment and treatment for people with mental health problems.

Referral by a general practitioner under a Mental Health Plan is required.

Psychological Services are available in Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Albury and Mulwala. We specialise in areas including:

- Learning difficulties
- Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)
- Anxiety / Depression
- Family issues
- School refusal
- Grief and loss
- Trauma
- Social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

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THERAPEUTIC Depending on the individual's needs and preferences, our team use a variety of evidence- based approaches including:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Mindfulness
- Acceptance and commitment therapy
- Narrative therapy
- Motivational interviewing
- Positive psychology
- Strengths based approaches



OUR GENERALIST COUNSELLING SERVICES

Throughout our lives we are all faced with stressful situations and difficult events, such as relationship problems (including family breakdown and separation), parenting stressors, the death of a loved one, school or work issues, mental health concerns and so on. We know that it can be helpful to talk to someone, such as a counsellor, who can support you through these challenging times.

At Centacare South West NSW we have professional and qualified counsellors at our sites in Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Albury and Mulwala. They work across the lifespan with individuals, couples and families with the overall aim of empowering people to achieve their goals and to improve their functioning and wellbeing.



PARENTING & CHILDREN

We offer a wide range of parenting and education programs and services that focus on building skills, strategies and knowledge so you can enjoy positive relationships.

Parent Education & Coaching

Helping parents understand their child's developmental, social and emotional needs by learning to navigate pivotal transitional phases throughout their child's life.

Individual Parenting Support


Our Individual Parent Support Services helps parents understand their child's developmental, social and emotional needs by learning to navigate pivotal transitional phases throughout their child's life.

Family Group Conferencing

Family group conferencing aids in the family-led decision making process to develop a plan of support for a child or young person.

Children & Youth Support Services

Children and Youth Counselling and Support for children to better manage emotions and difficulties with interpersonal relationships with families and peers.



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THE RED HAND FILES

2025 is coming. The world seems to be in such a catastrophic state. Where is the hope? What is hope?
Bailey, Seattle, USA

Happy New Year! 😊

Anon, Earth

BY NICK CAVE
redhandfiles.com

Dear Bailey and Anon,

It is understandable to feel alarmed by the current state of things, to feel fearful and depressed. We are presented with a constant communiqué of despair, that we exist in the worst of times, indeed, the end of times. Many feel impotent in this dreadful imminence - words like 'Happy New Year' ring hollow, like a hangover from a bygone better time. We become what we consume, living embodiments of a catastrophe foretold. We turn in on ourselves, trapped within the dark pathology of our time. Now, here we are at the beginning of a new year, and Bailey and Anon, like you, many feel 😊 and hopeless.

So, what is hope, and what is hope for? Hope is an emotional temper that emboldens the heart to be active, it is a condition, a mood, an aura of being. It is a feat of the imagination, both courageous and ingenious, a vitality that inspires us to take innovative action to defend the world. Hope is essential to our survival and our flourishing.

We achieve this vitality of spirit by rejecting the relentless promotion of despair and opening our eyes

to the beauty of things, however imperilled, degraded, or difficult to love the world may appear to be. We try to view the world not as it is packaged, presented and sold to us but as we imagine it could be. We do not look away from the world, we look directly at it and allow the spirit of hope - the necessary driver of change - to inspire us to action.

I wrote in *Faith, Hope and Carnage*, 'Hope is optimism with a broken heart'. This means that hope has an earned understanding of the sorrowful or corrupted nature of things, yet it rises to attend to the world even still. We understand that our demoralisation becomes the most serious impediment to bettering the world. In its active form, hope is a supreme gesture of love, a radical and audacious duty, whereas despair is a stagnant rejection of life itself. Hope becomes the energy of change.

Over Christmas your question went around in my mind, Bailey. I write this on New Year's Day, and Christmas has come and gone. Ours was a large, noisy family affair that revolved around my infant grandson, Roman. Magisterial in his highchair, I watched him being fed by his doting parents - this bright, new child - and your question seemed to melt into the vision of that little boy, his face covered in avocado, a radiant affirmation of that small word - hope. On that Christmas day, I saw the vitality of



hope in action.

Bailey, Anon, and everyone else - have a wonderful and joyful new year.

Love, Nick

PS. For Christmas, I was given Byung-Chul Han's *The Spirit of Hope*, a beautiful book on the nature of hope. It greatly informed this answer, and I highly recommend it.



Aged Care. Local care.

The Forrest Centre has been caring for the people of Wagga Wagga and the Riverina for more than 35 years.

We know this community well, just like we know the Aged Care sector. We provide the tailored support you need to live your best life at home with as much independence as possible, for as long as possible.

- Domestic help
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- Nursing care



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**Lean on
the locals.**

ACOLYTES FOR SACRED HEART, GRIFFITH

On Saturday, December 7, Bishop Mark Edwards celebrated the vigil Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Griffith, at which he instituted four new acolytes to serve in the Griffith parish. The four new acolytes are Gustavo Magalhaes Tercete, Bruno James Altin, Steven John Parisotto, and Ojas Thomas.



SCHOOLS IN OUR DIOCESE

Sacred Heart Primary, Wagga



First day back for all students at Sacred Heart Primary.



Holy Trinity Primary, West Wagga



Welcome back to our Year 1-6 students, so many smiling faces.



St Joseph's Primary, Jerilderie



You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!



St Joseph's Primary, Wagga

Welcome Kinder 2025! What a fabulous day you all had.



All schools enrolling now

St Joseph's Primary, Leeton



Kindergarten students ready to shine in 2025.



St Joseph's Primary, Finley



Kinder Day 1 2025! A wonderful day for these gorgeous little people and a big day for the people that love them!



St Michael's Primary, Coolamon



What a day! What a carnival! Thanks to everyone who made our day so successful. It was a hot one. Congratulations WHITE!



Mater Dei Primary, Wagga



Congratulations to our newly appointed House Captains for 2025, Johan, Kadie, Mikayla, Zara, Jess, Ishan, Izzy and Freddy.

Holy Spirit School, Lavington

Our final assembly and bell ringing of 2024! We farewelled Year 6 and a special farewell to Fr Murphy. You will be dearly missed.



SKIPPING OVER THE PLOT TWIST DIMINISHES YOUR STORY

We're all familiar with the Gospel account of the visit of the Three Wise Men. If we have the time to delve deeper, however, we might be surprised to learn a thing or two.

BY EMILY SHAW
Virtue Ministry Writer and Graphic Designer

In books we love a good plot twist. In our lives however, these are not always welcome. Especially if they're the kind of plot twist than can be categorised as a disappointment.

Life is full of disappointments, big and little. They vary in scale and magnitude; a less than flattering style at the hair salon, a job interview than didn't end with an offer, a relationship that broke down, the list is long.

When God throws in a plot twist, we often want to skip ahead to find out what happens next. But even if we did know how our story is going to play out in the end, skipping ahead negates



waiting. And, the thing is, there's growth in the waiting. It doesn't feel like it of course. When you've invested time, planned and prepared well, it is difficult to watch something stop, pause or worse, never start. There's a sense of loss; wasted time, effort and resources. There is disappointment, anger, embarrassment and even, blame.

In a word, there is suffering. Waiting and suffering is not a new concept for us. Ours is a faith often associated with both. The Hebrews waited years for a Messiah, much of which was spent in bondage and slavery – ie. suffering. They were still suffering at His first coming and long after. As we wait for His Second Coming, we're suffering too.

We know that suffering can be redemptive, that it can refine us, and make us more like Christ.

It is painful, and difficult to endure. But we can endure it. We hold onto a living hope, a promise that our sufferings are not for naught. That one day every tear will be wiped away, and there will no longer be mourning or pain. (cf. Revelation 21:3-4)

In his first letter, St Peter writes: "Blessed be

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter: 3-7)

This living hope does not take away our sufferings, but it helps us to look forward to a time where there will be none.

Don't be afraid to feel disappointment when things don't turn out the way that you planned. This period of suffering is also one of grace, if you're disposed to receive it.

So pause, pray and reflect. Avoid any rash or reactive decisions and instead discern what God's asking of you at this time.

Above all, hold on tight to the living hope.

It's a Jubilee Year of hope after all, seems like a timely reminder to me!

Living Fullness
WITH STINA CONNOR-TYNE & FR. SEAN BYRNES
A VIRTUE MINISTRY PODCAST

Top 3 Podcast Episodes in 2024

Season 05

Episode 02 - Conversion and Balance with Fr Bradley Rafter

Episode 10 - Is Flirting Immoral?

Episode 01 - Virtue of Humility

FEBRUARY VIRTUE CHALLENGE:

trust

Virtue MINISTRY

GOALS

WRITE DOWN:

3 practical and realistic ways in which you can grow in this virtue
as well as
3 obstacles you can forsee to growing in this virtue

EVALUATE:

Check your progress every night and see how you went and where you can improve.

SHARE:

Your progress with an accountability partner or with us on our Facebook page - we're doing this challenge too!

Three women are sitting outdoors at a small round table. They are engaged in conversation. One woman is wearing a yellow top, another a blue vest, and the third a white top. There are yellow flowers on the table.

MASS TIMES IN OUR DIOCESE

WAGGA WAGGA - CATHEDRAL

St Michael’s Cathedral
Church Street, Wagga Wagga
Monday - Friday 7:00am, 12:45pm
Weekend Masses
Saturday - 12:15pm
Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm
Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am and 5:30pm
Confessions
Monday - Thursday 12:30pm - 12:40pm
Friday 12:00-12:40pm & 6:30pm-6:45pm
Saturday 11:00am-12:00noon & 4:30pm-5:30pm
Rosary times
Monday to Thursday 12:25pm and Saturday 11:55am (before Mass)
St Mary’s Chapel
Vianney College, 17 Durack Circuit
Sunday - 9:00am
Mt Erin Chapel
Kildare Catholic College
Edmondson Street, Wagga Wagga
Sunday - 11:30am (1962 Missal Mass)
Confessions before and after Mass.

WAGGA WAGGA - KOORINGAL

Sacred Heart
Lake Albert Road, Kooringal
Weekend Masses
Saturday Vigil - 5:30pm
Sunday - 9:00am
Weekday Masses
Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 5:30pm
Tuesday and Thursday - 7:00am
Saturday - 9:30am
Reconciliation
Saturday - 10:00am - 10:30am
Changes to times will be on the Chapel door.
Anointing Mass:
Every second Thursday of the month at 10am in the Parish Church/Chapel
Mass at Caloola Court:
Every first Thursday of the month at 11:00am

WAGGA WAGGA - SOUTH WAGGA

Our Lady of Fatima
Bourke Street, Wagga Wagga
Weekend Masses
Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm
Sunday - 8:30am, 10:30am & 5:30pm (Syro-Malabar Rite)
Weekday Masses - Our Lady of Fatima
Monday to Friday 6:00pm (Weds & Thurs Syro-Malabar)
Wednesday - 10:00am

Weekday Masses - Calvary Hospital
Monday-Friday - 8:00am (except public holidays)
Aged Care Facility Masses Forrest Centre
Every Thursday - 11:00am

Monthly Masses
1st Tuesday 11:00am Signature Wagga Community Aged Care
2nd Tuesday 10:30am RSL Village
3rd Tuesday 11:00am Nan Roberts - The Haven
4th Tuesday 10:30am Anointing Mass Henschke Hall
Confessions
Saturday - 10:30-11:30am

WAGGA WAGGA - WEST WAGGA

Holy Trinity Church
Bardia Street, Ashmont
Monday to Saturday - 7:00am
Sunday - 9:00am, 10:30am & 5:30pm
Our Lady of the Blessed Eucharist Church
Benedict Avenue, San Isidore
Saturday - 6:00pm
Home of Compassion
Tuesday - 10:30am

ALBURY

St Patrick’s 515 Smollett St, Albury
Weekend Mass Times
Vigil (Saturday) - 5:00pm
Sunday - 8.00am, 10.00am & 5:30pm
1962 Missal Mass - Sunday 12 noon
Weekday Mass Times
Monday to Friday - 7:00am
Tuesday - 5:30pm
Thursday - 9:30am
1962 Missal Mass - Monday 5:30pm in the Adoration Chapel
1962 Missal Mass - Wednesday 7:00pm in the Adoration Chapel
First Friday - 5:30pm
Saturday - 9:30am
Confessions
Saturday: 8:20 - 9:20am and 4:00 - 4:45pm
Every first Thursday: 9:00am - 9:25am
Sunday: 30 mins prior to all Sunday Masses.
Weekday Masses: Fifteen minutes prior to all Masses (ends 5 mins prior to Mass)
Any other time on request.

ALBURY - NORTH ALBURY

Sacred Heart
Mate St, Nth Albury
Saturday Vigil - 6.00 pm
Sunday - 9.30 am
Weekday Masses
Wednesday & Fridays 9.30am or as printed in the weekly newsletter.
Confessions
Saturday - 5.15 - 5.45 pm

ALBURY - LAVINGTON

Holy Spirit
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Sunday - 8.00am, 10.00am
St Mary’s Jindera - 9.00am
Weekday Masses
Monday - Friday - 7.00am
Saturday - 9.15am
Confessions
Saturday - 8.15am, 5.00pm
St Mary’s Jindera - Sunday 8.30am

ALBURY - THURGOONA

Immaculate Heart of Mary
20 Hartigan Street
Thurgoona
Weekend Masses
Saturday Vigil - 5:30pm
Sunday - 9:30am
Weekday Masses
Monday - 8:00am
Tuesday - 10:00am
Wednesday - 8:00am
Thursday – 5:30pm (with Holy Hour at 4:30-5:25pm including Exposition and Benediction)
Friday and Saturday - 8:00am
Confessions
Saturday 8:30 to 9:00am after Mass
Saturday 5:00-5:25pm before Mass
Sunday 9:00-9:25am before Mass
Thursday - 4:45-5:15pm (during Holy Hour) Or anytime – just ask the priest
Baptisms and Marriages by appt.

BERRIGAN

St Columba’s
4 Corcoran Street
Berrigan
1st, 3rd, 5th Saturday Vigil 6:00pm
2nd, 4th Sunday - 10:00am
Weekday Masses refer to parish notices.
Confessions before weekend Masses.

COOLAMON

St Michael’s
Saturday 6.00pm
Sunday - 8.00am
Confessions
Saturday - 4.45 - 5.15pm
Weekday Masses

Wednesday - 8.00am
Thursday - 8.00am
Friday -10.15am
Marrar
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Confessions 1st Saturday - 5.30pm
Allawah Village
First Thursday of each month.
Mass at 9.15am

COROWA

St Mary’s Star of the Sea
Saturday Vigil - 6:00pm
Sunday - 9:00am
Weekday Masses
Refer to Parish Bulletin available in the Church or on the parish website
Confessions/ Reconciliation
Saturday - 11:00am-12:00, 5:30-6:00pm
St Pius X, Coreen,
1st, 3rd Sunday - 10:45am Mass

CULCAIRN

St Patrick’s Culcairn
1st, 4th Sunday - 8:00am
2nd, 3rd Sunday - 10:00am
5th Sunday - Vigil Mass 6:00pm (Saturday)
Henty
2nd, 4th Saturday Vigil - 6:00pm
1st Sunday - 10:00am
3rd, 5th Sunday - 8:00am
Walla Walla
1st & 4th Sunday - 6:00pm (Sunday)
Weekday Masses
Vary according to needs and are announced in the Sunday bulletin.
Anointing of the Sick within Mass every 1st First Friday of the Month at 10:00am.
Confessions
30 minutes before each weekend Mass.

DARLINGTON POINT

DARLINGTON POINT
St Oliver Plunkett
Hay Road
1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday - 8.30am
2nd, 4th Sunday - 5pm (Saturday Vigil)
Weekday Masses
Mon-Fri - 8.30am
COLEAMBALLY
St Peter’s
Cnr of Currawong Crescent & Kingfisher Avenue
1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday - 10.30am
2nd, 4th Sunday - 8.00am
Confessions 15 minutes before any Mass or anytime by request.

FINLEY

St Mary’s
1 Denison Street Finley
Saturday - 9:30am
Sunday - 10.15am
Weekday Masses
Tuesday - 5:30pm
Wednesday - 12:30pm
Friday - 5:30pm
Holy Rosary before every Mass.
Confessions
Friday - 4:30 - 5:30pm
Saturday - 10:00 - 10:30am

GANMAIN

St. Brendan’s Ganmain
Sunday Mass 10:00am
Weekday Masses
Monday - 5.30pm
Tuesday - 5.30pm
Saturday - 8.00am & 6.00pm
Confessions:
30 min. before all Masses.
Confessions:
30 min. before Mass

GRIFFITH

Sacred Heart
Warrambool St, Griffith
Weekend Masses
Saturday - 8.00am
Sunday - 7.30am, 9.00am, (Italian),

10.30am, 5.30pm
Weekday Masses
Monday - Friday - 7.00am, 5.30pm
Saturday Vigil - 5.30pm
Confessions
Friday - 4.30pm to 5.30pm
Saturday - 11.30am to 12.30pm
Marian Catholic College Chapel
185 Wakaden Street Griffith
Sunday - 9.00am

HOLBROOK

Our Lady of Sorrows
145 Albury Street, Holbrook
1st & 3rd Sunday - Saturday Vigil 5.30pm
2nd Sunday - 8.00 am
4th & 5th Sunday - 10.00am
Weekday Masses
Vary according to needs and are announced in the Sunday bulletin.
Confessions
30 mins before Mass and/or by requests.
Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday at 9:00am
Anointing of the Sick within Mass every 1st Thursday of the Month at 10:00am.
St Francis De Sales Church of the Pioneers
Hume Highway, Bowna
2nd Sunday - 11:30am

HOWLONG

St Brigid’s
Hovell St, Howlong
Church of the Good Shepherd
Queen Street, Walbundrie
Weekend Mass Times
Saturday - 6:00pm Vigil Howlong
Sunday - 9:00am Walbundrie

JERILDERIE

St Joseph’s
Coreen Street, Jerilderie
1st, 3rd, 5th Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm
2nd, 4th Sunday - 10:30am
Weekday Masses
Are announced in the Sunday bulletin.

JUNEE

St Joseph’s
21 Kitchener Street, Junee
Saturday Vigil - 6:00pm
Sunday - 9:30am
Weekday Masses
Tuesday - 10.00am Junee
Correctional Centre
Wednesday - 9:00am
Thursday - 7:00am
Friday - 9:30am
Confessions
Saturday - 10:30-11:00am;
Illabo and Junee Reefs Alternate
Sundays - 8:00am

KHANCOBAN

Church of St Joseph the Worker
Contact Tumbarumba Parish for Mass times.

LEETON

St Joseph’s Leeton
Wade Avenue, Leeton
Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm Standard time
6:00pm Daylight Saving time
Sunday - 10:00am (First Sunday of the month is Italian)
St Patrick’s Yanco
Sunday - 8:00am
Tuesday - 9:00am
Weekday Masses in Leeton
Tuesday (Yanco) - 9:00am
Wednesday - 9:00am
Thursday - 9:00am
Friday - 9:15am and 5:30pm
Sacrament of Penance
Friday - 4:45-5:15pm
Saturday - 4:20pm-4:45pm
Eucharistic Adoration
St Joseph’s Church Leeton
Friday - 4:30pm

LOCKHART

St Mary’s Church
55 Ferrier St, Lockhart
Weekend Masses
1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays - 6:00pm
Saturday Vigil
2nd & 4th Sundays - 7:45am Sunday
Weekday Masses
Tuesday - 9:00am
Friday - 10:00am
(Weekday Mass times are subject to change. Contact the Parish Priest.)
Confessions
Before Mass and any time upon request.

MULWALA

St Brigid’s
Havelock Street, Mulwala
Weekend Masses
1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday - 8:00am
2nd, 4th Sunday - 6:00pm Saturday Vigil
Weekday Masses
Refer to parish notices
St Joseph’s
Barooga
Weekend Masses
1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday - 10:00am
2nd, 4th Sunday - 8:00am
Weekday Masses
Refer to parish notices
Confessions Before weekend Masses

NARRANDERA

St Mel’s Church,
Audley St
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Sunday - 9:30am
Weekday Masses
Tuesday - 5:30pm
Wednesday & Thursday - 7:30am
Friday - 5:30pm
Saturday - 8:00am
(subject to changes announced in the Sunday bulletin)
Confessions
Saturday - 8:30 - 9.30am
Grong Grong
1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday - 8.00am
Galore
St Kevin’s Church
2nd & 4th Sunday - 8:00am

TARCUTTA

St Francis Xavier
Sydney St, Tarcutta
Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm
Confessions
Before all Masses.

THE ROCK

St Mary’s
96-102 Urana Street, The Rock
Weekend Masses
Saturday - 8:30am
Sunday - 8:00am (1962 Missal Mass)
Sunday - 10:00am
Weekday Masses
Monday - 7:00am
Tuesday - 6:00pm
Wednesday - 7:00am
Thursday - 8:30am
Friday - 6:00pm
Confessions:
Saturday 4:30-5:30pm, and before all Masses.

TOCUMWAL

St Peter’s
Charlotte Street,
Tocumwal
Saturday Vigil - 5.30pm
Sunday - 8.30am
Weekday Masses
Thursday - 9.30am
Confessions
Half an hour before weekend Masses

TUMBARUMBA

All Saints’
40 Murray Street, Tumbarumba
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Sunday - 9.00am
Weekday Masses
Monday & Tuesday - 7:30am
Wednesday-Friday - 5.30pm
Saturday 9.15am
Confessions
Friday 4.30pm - 5.15pm
Saturday - 8.00am - 9.00am
And 30 mins before weekend Holy Masses
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Tooma
4th Sunday - 7.30am
Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
Friday - 4.30pm & Saturday - 8.00am

URANA

St Fiacre’s Church 5 End St, Urana
Weekend Masses
1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday - 8:00am
2nd & 4th Saturday - 6:00pm Vigil
Weekday Masses
Posted on church notice board each week.
Oaklands - St Columba's Church
1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays - 10:00am
2nd & 4th Sundays - 10:15am

Confessions
Urana - Saturday 5:00-5:30pm
and 20 minutes prior to each weekend Mass (Urana & Oaklands)

YENDA - YOOGALI - HANWOOD

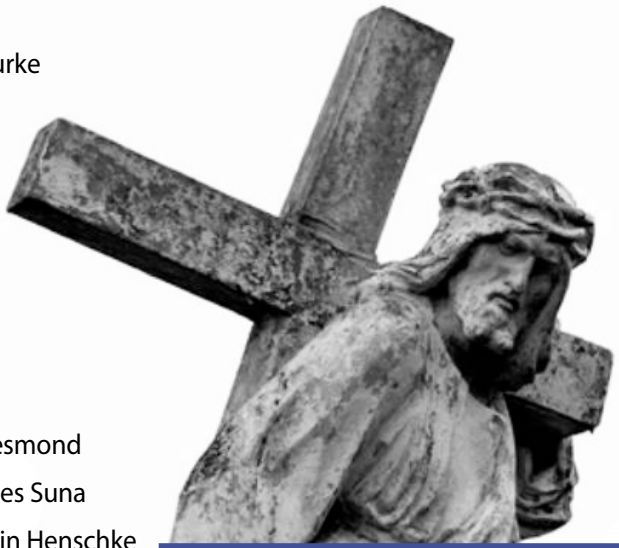
Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii
17 Edon Street, Yoogali
Friday - 9:30am
Sunday - 10:00am
St Anthony’s - Hanwood
Wednesday - 8:00am
Saturday Vigil - 5:00pm
Good Shepherd Chapel - Yoogali
Thursday - 11:30am
Saturday - 10:30am
St Therese’s - Yenda
Tuesday - 5:15pm
Sunday - 8:00am
Confessions
Hanwood - Saturday - 4:30pm
Yenda - Sunday - 7:30am
Yoogali - Sunday - 9:30am

Please note that Mass times were true and correct at the time of printing. For further clarification, please check parish bulletins and noticeboards closer to the date.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE PRIESTS WHOSE ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OCCURS IN

January and February

3 January 1933	Fr Patrick Hanrahan
10 January 1938	Fr James Hennebry
23 January 1937	Fr James Power O’Rourke
24 January 1882	Fr Cornelius Twomey
26 January 1941	Fr Martin Vaughan
27 January 1938	Fr Patrick Reidy
30 January 1946	Fr Patrick Gahan
4 February 1932	Fr John Campbell
12 February 1926	Fr Thomas L Ryan
14 February 1907	Mgr Michael Slattery
14 February 1982	Fr Thomas Aloysius Desmond
19 February 1948	Fr John Kenneth Charles Suna
24 February 1968	Bishop Francis Augustin Henschke



Junior Legion
Every Wednesday afternoon at 3:30pm
at St Mary MacKillop Colleges.
Senior Legion
Every Thursday evening at 7:30pm at
Bishop's House.
All welcome!
Come and join Our Lady’s Army and
help your Priest serve his parish!
Contact:
Caronne 0413 801 616



FAMILY REFLECTIONS

16th February 2025
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
Today's Gospel offers a contrast to many of the messages we hear in our society today. If we were to accept uncritically the “get ahead” messages of our culture, we would think that happiness means having money, being successful, and having many possessions. In this way, we are not unlike the people who heard Jesus teach on the day that he taught the Beatitudes. They too associated happiness with possessions and success. The report of the Beatitudes in Luke's Gospel, however, takes things one step further. Not only will we not find happiness through the “get ahead” messages of the world, but relying upon these messages will cause us harm. The warnings spoken are particularly challenging because they suggest that our way of life must change if we are to gain the lasting happiness of eternal life.
Talk together as a family about what society tells us makes a person successful. Make a list of the traits that you associate with a successful person. Then read together today's Gospel, Luke 6:17,20-26. Reflect on Jesus' description of blessedness in the Kingdom of God. Then consider the warnings. Why are these surprising and challenging? What, then, is the measure of success in the Kingdom of God? Together write prayers of petition based on your discussion. Pray these prayers together, asking God to help your family seek the blessings of the Kingdom of God.
Jeremiah 17:5-8 Psalm 1:1-4,6
1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20 Luke 6:17,20-26

23rd February 2025
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
It is easy to choose to be with others when they are acting politely and respectfully. I But children do not always act this way, especially with other family members. We can probably all recall a family meal in which such behavior was not observed. Yet we probably chose to sit through the meal anyway. We regularly give our children second chances—and often third and fourth chances—hoping that our generosity will be rewarded. That is how God acts with us. The ethic that Jesus describes seems like an impossible task: to give when asked and to do good to those who hate us. Yet family life is filled with opportunities to act generously and to love without measure. This is what we parents try to do every day. This is what we ask our children to learn. We are reminded that when we love

generously and gratuitously, we love as God loves us. This is the meaning of mercy.
As you gather as a family, identify some things that family members are expected to do each day (prepare meals, go to school or work; complete homework assignments, complete household chores, behave appropriately at school, at work and at home; and so on). Discuss whether it is easy to live up to these expectations. Why or why not? Then discuss the meaning of the phrase “go the extra mile” and what it would mean to go the extra mile in the expectations you identified. Introduce today's Gospel: In today's Gospel reading, Jesus describes how we are to act toward one another. What he says may sound like what we mean by the phrase “going the extra mile.” Read aloud today's Gospel, Luke 6:27-38. Discuss whether the actions Jesus describes are easy and consider why we might act in these ways if they seem difficult. Observe that today's Gospel challenges us to make choices based on God's standard; God loves us all the time by going the extra mile for us. During a time of quiet reflection, invite each family member to choose an action for the week in which he or she will go the “extra mile” for the family. Conclude in prayer by praying together St. Ignatius's Prayer for Generosity.
1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9,12-13,22-23 Psalm 103:1-4,8,10,12-13
1 Corinthians 15:45-49 Luke 6:27-38

2nd March 2025
Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C
The third and final section of Luke’s Sermon on the Plain begins: And he told them a parable. There are actually four parables, three of which we read today. They are all about how to be a good disciple.
The blind cannot lead the blind. And a disciple cannot be a good disciple unless he or she has learned from the teacher. Everyone who is fully trained is like the teacher who knows how to cure the blind. Before you can be a good disciple and teach others you must take care of yourself. Do not try to take a speck out of your brother’s eye until you have taken the board out of your own. Finally, only when you have purified yourself can you produce the good works that the teacher requires. Discipleship asks us to produce good deeds. But to produce them requires the integrity and purity of heart found in the teacher. When people see your good deeds they will know that this is because you have a good heart.

The final parable, which we do not read today, is about building on the solid foundation of rock and not on sand. This is the only way to face the difficulties a disciple will encounter and survive.
Sirach 27:4–7 Psalm 92: 2–3,13–16
1 Corinthians 15: 54–58 Luke 6:39–45

9th March 2025
First Sunday of Lent, Cycle C
In Luke's Gospel, the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert appears just after Jesus' baptism and before Jesus begins his public ministry. We can imagine this as a time of transition, a turning point in Jesus' life. Perhaps we can liken it to one of the important turning points in our own lives: the decision to marry, the birth of a child, the acceptance of a new job, or the decision to move to a new home. After the moment of decision, having reached the point of no return, we sometimes begin to wonder if we are prepared and ready for the task before us. Turning points can be times of doubt and insecurity. Jesus' response to the temptations of the devil offers an example for responding in faith when our doubts and insecurities tempt us to distrust God's sufficiency. Jesus rebukes the devil by quoting Scripture. Each citation is an affirmation of trust in God. We learn to trust in big things by practicing trust in little things. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving invite us to trust God in these small ways. They remind us that God will suffice for us. They prepare us to trust in God in all things, especially in moments of doubt and uncertainty.
As a family, talk about ways in which trust has been built among members of the family. Observe how being trustworthy in small matters enables us to trust one another in more important matters. Offer specific examples if possible (e.g., children who establish their responsibility in household tasks can be granted greater independence and freedom to choose how they perform these tasks). Today's Gospel shows us how Jesus trusted God in all things. Read aloud today's Gospel, Luke 4:1-13. Discuss how Jesus showed his trust in God when he resisted the devil's temptations. Invite family members to name times when they have trusted God in matters small or large. Write a family prayer together. You might write the prayer so that each line begins with a letter in the word “trust.” Pray this prayer together.
Deuteronomy 26:4-10 Psalm 91:1-2,10-11,12-13,14-15
Romans 10:8-13 Luke 4:1-13



Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SURVIVORS SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT STATEMENT

We, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, acknowledge your courage in coming forward and speaking your truth. We hear the devastating accounts of abuse you have endured within our community, and we are deeply sorry.

Your pain is real. Your trauma is real. The impact on your life, your family, your faith, and your ability to trust has been profound and far-reaching. We offer our heartfelt apologies, while understanding that words alone cannot heal the wounds you carry.

We acknowledge with deep remorse the times when you reached out and were not heard, when your experiences were minimised, or when you were met with silence or denial. What happened to you was wrong and it should never have happened.

Abuse in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable.

Today, we make these concrete commitments to you:

- We will listen when you speak
- We will support your journey of healing
- We will act decisively to prevent future abuse
- We will hold abusers and enablers accountable
- We will reform our practices and culture

Our commitment goes beyond words. We are implementing comprehensive safeguarding measures, providing support services, and working to create spaces where healing becomes possible. Every member of our diocese carries the responsibility to prevent abuse and protect those who have been harmed.

You deserve nothing less than our complete dedication to your healing, justice, and the restoration of your dignity. Your strength guides us toward a future where every person is safe, respected, and valued within our community.

We stand ready to listen and to act. Your voice matters. Your healing matters. You matter.

Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI
Bishop of Wagga Wagga



**CREATING SAFER
COMMUNITIES**