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IN THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

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God's unconditional love

Dear sisters and brothers,

At Christmas, we celebrate that God is not aloof or distant. God loves us and comes to us. He comes down from heaven, takes on human flesh, lives completely with us and ultimately ends all suffering. That story has altered the entire course of human history. Its power is unmatched.

Jesus becoming a human being invites us to accept God's passionate love for us, a love so ardent that God become one of us. We celebrate that God's love for you and me, for our whole human race, is so overwhelming that God became one of us with all the consequences of that. Christmas celebrates

Christ's birth into our vulnerable, weak, lonely, incomplete and needy human flesh.

Being loved is the most marvellous magic of life. Christmas and what it leads to, Christ's life, death and resurrection, demonstrate God's unconditional love. Unfortunately, experiencing that we are passionately loved by God is a long way from being the central experience of many Christians. Our words say this but our lives often aren't lit by it.

Reality can be harsh and Christmas does not ask us to pretend. The incarnation does not promise us heaven on earth. It promises heaven in heaven. Here, on earth, it promises

us something else – God's presence in our lives. The incarnate God is called Emmanuel, a name which means God-is-with-us. When God is with us then pain and happiness are not exclusive of each other and the agonies and riddles of life do not exclude deep meaning and joy.

Christmas is an incredible event. As we celebrate it with presents, food, memories, tinsel, lights, songs, kisses and drinks all around, we are invited again this year to let its joy take over our lives.

**Happy Christmas
God bless**

Mark Edwards omi



PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER - PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS

For persons with disabilities.

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

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



Pope Francis' prayer intention coincides with the International Day of People with Disability. The theme of the International Day puts disabilities into a broader context of how society affects them and must change to meet them. Pope Francis focuses on people's personal needs. Both approaches are necessary.

Some disabilities affect individual persons but are made doubly disabling by society. A person who has lost the use of their legs in an accident, for example, should be able to have the same educational opportunities as someone who can walk. But if their school provides only stairs and not ramps or lifts, they will not be able to attend class and so will be doubly disadvantaged. Similarly, a young person with an acquired brain injury that affects their mobility and communication but not their intelligence will be doubly disadvantaged if placed in a home for people with dementia. Society can either help overcome the effects of disadvantage or intensify them.

In neither of these cases were the school architects nor health officials necessarily cruel. They probably just did not notice. For that reason, Pope Francis prays that people living with disabilities should be the centre of attention in society, and not placed at its edges to be thought of when everything else was decided. If they are at the centre, schools and hospitals will be built in a way that caters for their needs, facilities provided for their special needs, and supportive communities shaped around them.

Pope Francis also insists that it is not enough for us to provide facilities for

people. We must also enable them to reach their full potential as human beings by taking possession of their lives and contributing actively to society. In our own society, the publicity given to athletes with various disadvantages and the public celebration of their success recognises this need. We are encouraged to see them, not as different from or lesser than ourselves, but as one with us as they tell their stories of what they had to overcome to reach their goals.

This emphasis on participation in society has also been a blessing for many persons with intellectual and other disabilities. For many years they were housed together in separate institutions and the object of people's care and not as persons who can take some responsibility for making choices about their own lives. Now they are more generally encouraged to live and study with other children in school and to see themselves as valued and active members of the school community. Their presence may help other children to value people who are different so that both they and the children with disabilities benefit.

Underlying the Pope's prayers and the theme of the International Day for People with Disability is the need in all societies to see people with disability as persons like us, with the same desires and feelings. When confronted with people who are different, we can easily feel uneasy and afraid of them. That leads us to stay away from them and to join others in mocking them. We then become less humane, they become less able to trust, and we all cease to grow. At the heart of our faith is that they are, and should be loved, like ourselves.

ALL SAINTS DAY CELEBRATION

All Saints Parish and Primary School in Tumbarumba celebrated the feast of All Saints with a unique "Parade of Saints."

The children of the community spent some time researching a variety of saints and then chose to dress up as one that they admired. There were some great costumes and some fantastic explanations about why children dressed up as the Saint of their choice. It is lovely to see children thinking about the good qualities of others and how they would like to emulate the good works that people have performed over the ages.

Traditionally on this day, the Bishop comes and confers the Sacrament of Confirmation on the children from the school and parish community who have been preparing throughout the year. This

year Mary Middleton from All Saints Primary School, Violet Shore from the Public School, Noah V'rbiak from The MacKillop school and two adults, Candace and Joel Von Thrum received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop Mark Edwards presided over the ritual and ensured that everybody felt included and knew their role in the ceremony. It was a lovely day where all of the Confirmation Candidates had a lot of support from family, friends and the wider parish community. **A delicious cake was baked and beautifully decorated by Simone Francis and was a fitting marker of the special nature of the day.**

Below: Dan Francis, principal of All Saints Primary School speaking with Isabelle Forrest, Henry McGrath and Agnes DeBono.



Below: Children from All Saints School and Parish dressed as their favourite saints.



Above: Mary "Philomena" Middleton and Bishop Mark Edwards.



Above: Back row: Joel and Candance Von Thrum, Bishop Mark Edwards and Noah V'rbiak. Front row: Mary Middleton and Violet Shore. Cake supplied by Simone Francis.

REFLECTING ON THE FIFTH PLENARY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

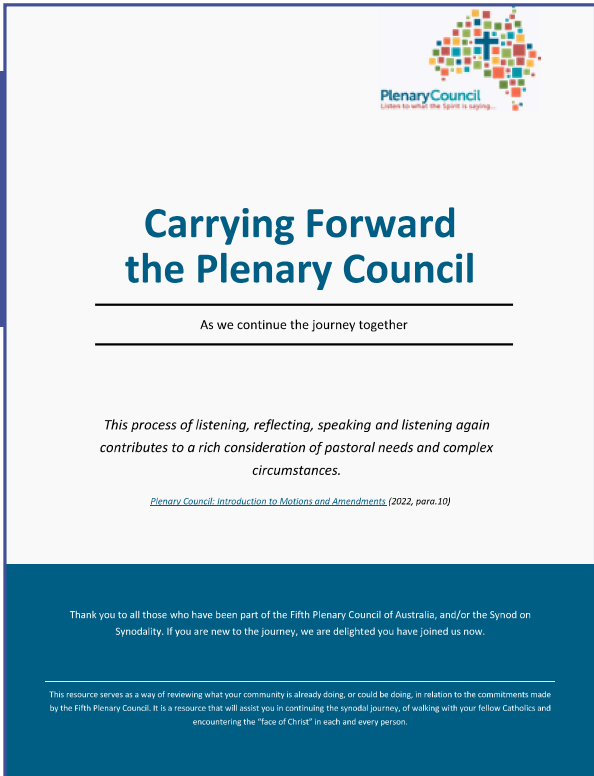
On the Solemnity of Christ the King, celebrating the sovereignty of the Kingdom of God, we give thanks for the many different ways by which the Spirit of God leads the Church forward both in fidelity to its Tradition and in creativity of Mission.

In particular, we are mindful of the significant event of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, recently completed in Rome, with its theme: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.” Though it will be some time before the conclusion of the Synod in October 2024, and the Holy Father’s response thereafter, the invitation to the Church to consider how it might develop synodality at all levels of its life is now unmistakably before us. Synodality means “walking together”. It means renewing structures and processes by which all the Baptised might participate in a shared mission to bring the Good News of the Lord to a society hungry for the Word of Life. This Mission is not just for some, but for all Christ’s Faithful.

In Australia, the nature of synodality was at the very heart of the processes and conduct of the Fifth Plenary Council which concluded in July 2022. This was represented by

the broad preliminary consultation at the service of the Plenary Council, by its representation of members, and by its methodology of ‘Conversation-in-the-Spirit’ which guided the conduct of the Second General Assembly of the Council, especially. The Australian experience has been of assistance to the recent Synod of Bishops, which has adopted a similar framework for its discernment.

The five volumes of Acts and Decrees of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia were presented to the Dicastery for Bishops of the Apostolic See in January 2023, following their approval at the Australian Bishops Conference Plenary in November 2022, in accord with the Statutes of the Plenary Council. We await the recognitio of the Apostolic See. The Decrees of the Council may be promulgated only after the grant of the recognitio, in accord with Canon 446 of Universal Law. Subsequently, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference will establish measures



Carrying Forward the Plenary Council

As we continue the journey together

This process of listening, reflecting, speaking and listening again contributes to a rich consideration of pastoral needs and complex circumstances.

Plenary Council: Introduction to Motions and Amendments (2022, para.10)

Thank you to all those who have been part of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, and/or the Synod on Synodality. If you are new to the journey, we are delighted you have joined us now.

This resource serves as a way of reviewing what your community is already doing, or could be doing, in relation to the commitments made by the Fifth Plenary Council. It is a resource that will assist you in continuing the synodal journey, of walking with your fellow Catholics and encountering the “face of Christ” in each and every person.

to assure the effectiveness and accountability of the implementation phase of the Plenary Council.

Notwithstanding, in line with the intention of the Ninth Decree of the Plenary Council, the Bishops consider it helpful to provide an interim report on the Plenary Council’s implementation as 2023 comes to its conclusion. Much work has been done in anticipation of the receipt of recognitio by the Apostolic See. Some of this work has been formal; much has been informal, organically assumed in diverse local contexts which have taken up the impulse of the Plenary Council and sought to apply it in myriad situations. Throughout, it is evident that there has been a revitalisation of the way in which we engage with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, with a deeper commitment to listening and accompanying one another, providing a greater understanding that we are co-responsible for our shared mission to proclaim the Gospel.

On a national level, the General Introduction and the Introductions to the first eight Decrees of the Plenary Council were translated into a pastoral study guide that was published for

Pentecost 2023, *Carrying Forward the Plenary Council: As we continue the journey together*. The resource invited Catholic parishes, schools and other communities to pray about, reflect upon and review what they are already doing, or could be doing, in relation to acting on the commitments made in the Decrees of the Plenary Council. This has been a very helpful means to invite further the People of God in Australia into the synodal pathway.

In addition, each article of the 10 Decrees of the Plenary Council has been entrusted for consideration to one of the Bishops Commissions. These Commissions have been for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; for Liturgy; for Professional Standards and Safeguarding; for Catholic Education; for Social Justice, Mission and Service; and for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry. In addition to these, the Bishops’ Permanent Committee, the Episcopal Panel for Canon Law and the National Centre for Pastoral Research have also been involved,



Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney and Jacinta Collins, national Catholic Education Commission chair, talk during the final day of the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church in Sydney on July 8, 2022. (CNS/The Catholic Weekly/Giovanni Portelli)

as have the numerous Councils of lay advisors that support that work of the Commissions. Each of these groups has acted as a study circle for the Decrees and their articles, considering effective pastoral strategies by which the Decrees may be implemented. Reports from the Commissions were received at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Plenary in November 2023. This work will be of special assistance for attaining the objectives of the Plenary Council. It shall achieve greater form between the time of the promulgation of the Decrees and when they take effect six months later.

It has been a particular grace of the Plenary Council to stimulate and to encourage many initiatives throughout Australia. For example, Diocesan Synods or Assemblies have been conducted in the Dioceses of Adelaide and Parramatta. Others are also in the planning stage for such forums. The Archdiocese of Brisbane is currently preparing for a Synod in August/September 2024. The Archdiocese of Perth is preparing to re-establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council and is undertaking a journey of discernment that has included a Diocesan Assembly Formation Day in 2023 and now looks towards the hosting of a Diocesan Assembly in 2024. The Diocese of Broken Bay has initiated regional pastoral discernments, while the

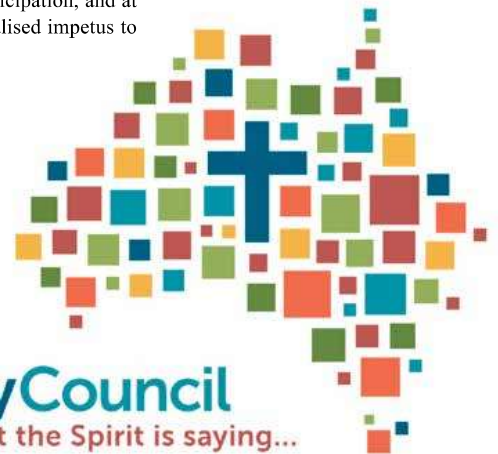
Archbishop of Sydney has held small gatherings over a meal where Christ's faithful can discuss openly matters of interest and concern. The Diocese of Sandhurst formed a Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Council in April 2023 after a synodal preparation process including a diocesan assembly. The Diocese of Sale has appointed a Facilitator for Synodality and Mission to engage people in a discernment process of how to become a more synodal, missionary Church and is preparing for a Diocesan Assembly in 2024.

Many parishes throughout Australia are also considering innovative processes and structures to nurture the practice of synodality. Indeed, throughout the country, people have been drawn into reflection on the themes emerging from the Plenary Council. We think, for example, of the 2023 national conference of Catholic Mission, "One Heart Many Voices". Others have continued to network through online gatherings such as those provided by Garratt Publishing and Yarra Theological Union, and in so doing are contributing to a shared Mission. Individual Religious Institutes and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (who conduct many of our education, health and social services) have welcomed speakers and established groups to engage with issues addressed in the Plenary Council and related to its various Decrees. It is clear that there are many participants

on a shared journey which continues to unfold.

In providing this report, the Bishops of Australia share their commitment to honour and implement the remarkable work of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. It remains fresh and alive in our planning for the future. We look back in gratitude for the breadth of engagement on every level of the life of the Church and for the experience of encounter, listening and discernment (which lies at the very centre of a synodal framework) afforded by the experience of the General Assemblies of the Plenary Council. We look forward with anticipation and hope that, with the promulgation of the Decrees of the Plenary Council, the Church in Australia will be graced with both a deepened experience of Communion, and Participation, and at the same time a revitalised impetus to Mission.

This report was prepared by a group of Plenary Council members and others nominated by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association of Ministerial P.J.P.s, which gathered on November 10 to review the implementation of the Plenary Council: Sr Monica Cavanagh, Hon. Jacinta Collins, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, Miss Monica Doumit, Archbishop Anthony Fisher, Dr Ricki Jeffery, Ms Cathy Jenkins, Ms Kathy McEvoy, Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Ms Catherine Nguyen, Archbishop Patrick O'Regan, Bishop Anthony Randazzo and Fr David Ranson.



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Lean on the locals.

STUDENT LEADERS' DAY

On Monday 20th November, 22 student leaders from our 5 secondary Catholic schools and two boarding schools gathered at Mount Erin Boarding School, Wagga Wagga, for the Student Leaders' Day.

The workshop, which focused on becoming confident, courageous and capable captains, was expertly facilitated by Steve Lawrence from the Altum Leadership Group. Steve shared his knowledge and life experiences by telling stories that captured the values, attitudes and behaviours that are needed for effective Catholic student leadership. The students had opportunities to reflect on the ideas they heard and set goals for how they will incorporate this thinking during the year.

The day concluded with a student-led Mass which was celebrated in Mount Erin Chapel by Bishop Mark Edwards, and an opportunity was provided for reconciliation and adoration. The students and their school leaders gathered for dinner at La Porchetta in the evening.

A very special thanks to:

- Dr Andrew Watson and our CEDWW Secondary Principals for supporting our student leaders with such a wonderful opportunity;
- Bishop Mark Edwards, Wendy Brentnall and the staff from the Catholic Diocese Office;
- John Bussenschutt, Amanda Hilton, Dave Lugton and the MEBS staff;
- Steve Lawrence from the Altum Leadership Group
- Leaders from each school who came to support their student leaders: Tonetta Iannelli, Christie Scutti, Mel Cramp, John Bussenschutt, Shinead Kilroy, Jacob Dal Nevo, Billy Morton.



MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December is for persons with disabilities. The following is his message from last years International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Dear brothers and sisters!

All of us, as the Apostle Paul would say, hold the treasure of life in earthen vessels (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). The International Day of Persons with Disabilities invites us to recognize that our frailty in no way obscures “the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ”, but instead reveals that “its extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us” (2 Cor 4:4,7). Everyone, apart from any merit or distinction, has received the Gospel in its entirety and, with this, the joyful task of proclaiming it. “All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 121). Sharing the Gospel, in fact, is not a duty entrusted only to some, but an absolute necessity for all those who have encountered Jesus and enjoyed his friendship. [1]

Trust in the Lord, the experience of his tender love and the comfort of his companionship, are not the privilege of a few, or the prerogative only of those who have received a lengthy and thorough formation. Rather, his mercy makes itself known in a particular way to those who, instead of trusting in themselves, feel called to abandon themselves to the Lord and to empathize with their brothers and sisters. This brings with it a wisdom that gradually increases our awareness of our limits and allows us to appreciate all the more God’s loving decision to help us in our weakness. An awareness that frees us from sorrow and lament – even for good reason – and opens our hearts to praise. The joy that radiates from those who encounter Jesus and entrust their lives to him is no illusion or the fruit of

naiveté; it is the power of his resurrection penetrating lives marked by fragility.

Truly, we can speak of a magisterium of fragility that, if heeded, would make our society more humane and fraternal, enabling all of us to understand that happiness is bread that is not eaten alone. How much would a better awareness of our need for one another help us to have less hostile relationships with those around us! And how much would the realization that entire peoples cannot save themselves prompt us to seek solutions to the senseless conflicts we are experiencing!

On this Day, we want to be mindful of the sufferings of all those women and men with disabilities who live in the midst of war, or have been themselves disabled as a result of warfare. How many people – in Ukraine and in other theatres of war – remain imprisoned by ongoing conflicts, without the possibility of escape? They need to be given special attention and their access to humanitarian aid facilitated in every possible way.

This magisterium of fragility is a charisma by which you – dear sisters and brothers with disabilities – can enrich the Church. Your presence “may help transform the actual situations in which we live, making them more human and more welcoming. Without vulnerability, without limits, without obstacles to overcome, there would be no true humanity”. [2] For this reason, I am pleased that the synodal journey is proving a favourable occasion to listen at last to your voices, and that an echo of your participation can be found in the preparatory document for the continental stage of the Synod. There we read that: “Numerous reports point to the lack of appropriate structures and ways of



Pope Francis embraces a person with disabilities at the general audience on January 27, 2016. (Photo by Daniel Ibanez / CNA)

accompanying persons with disabilities, and call for new ways of welcoming their contribution and promoting their participation: in spite of its own teachings, the Church is in danger of imitating the way society casts them aside. The forms of discrimination listed – the lack of listening, the violation of the right to choose where and with whom to live, the denial of the sacraments, the accusation of witchcraft, abuse – and others, describe the culture of rejection towards persons with disabilities. They do not arise by chance, but have in common the same root: the idea that the lives of persons with disabilities are worth less than others”. [3]

The Synod, above all by its invitation to journey together and to listen to one another, can help us understand how in the Church – also with regard to the disabled – there can be no us and them, but a single us, with Jesus Christ at the centre, where each person brings his or her own gifts and limitations. This awareness, founded on the fact that we are all part of the same vulnerable humanity assumed and sanctified by Christ, eliminates arbitrary distinctions and opens the door to the participation of each baptized member in the life of the Church. What is more, in those places where the Synod has been truly inclusive, it has permitted

us to dispel deep-rooted prejudices. Encounter and fraternity break down the walls of misunderstanding and overcome discrimination; this is why I trust that every Christian community will be open to the presence of our brothers and sisters with disabilities, and ensure that they are always welcomed and fully included.

We come to realize that we exist as an us and not a them whenever disability, whether temporary or due to natural aging, affects ourselves or someone for whom we care. Then we begin to look at reality with new eyes and we see the need to break down even those barriers that at first seemed insignificant. Nothing, however, can detract from our certainty that no disability – temporary, acquired or permanent – can change the fact that we are all children of the one Father and enjoy the same dignity. The Lord loves us all with the same tender, fatherly and unconditional love.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for the initiatives taking place on this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and I accompany them with my prayers. I bless you all from my heart and ask you, please, to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran,
3 December 2022

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For more information about making contributions to Together or to submit your article contact us at: together@wagga.catholic.org.au

REFLECTING ON STUDENTS MISSION WORK OVER 2023

As we are concluding the last school term of this year, it is time to reflect on the great work of Mission achieved by the students across the Wagga Wagga Diocese.

This year more than ever, students engaged their hearts and minds in Mission work in collaboration with Jane Plum, Catholic Mission Wagga Wagga Diocesan Director.

With the intention to include the principles of Mission, established in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Catholic Education Charter, at the heart of their work, the school engagement program focused on "Enabling students to achieve high levels of Catholic religious literacy, learning excellence, wisdom and commitment to the Common Good."

Supported by Sandra Harvey, Head of Evangelisation & Religious Education for Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga (CEDWW), Catholic Mission's Mission Ambassador Program (MAPs) was offered to Year 5 students across the Diocese.

"MAPs program provides an incredible platform for students to truly engage in the work of Mission and become the hands and feet of Jesus," said Jane Plum, responsible for implementing the Program on a Diocesan level.

This initiative had a great response from the schools, with twelve schools of the twenty-four Catholic Primary Schools jumping on board this year. The schools of all sizes and

locations came together on six different occasions in terms 3 and 4.

"The MAPs program is a great way to talk about what you think mission means (whilst meeting new people and doing activities with them," said Isabella, a student from Holy Spirit, Lavington, who took on board MAPs this year.

This experience is also an opportunity to encounter one another, and to recognised that we are all called to be missionaries.

"I enjoyed and appreciated the MAPs session because of all the important stuff we learnt about, and we all got to make new friends. My partner and I had a lot in common" shared Phoenix, a student from St Michael's, Coolamon.

This year's program was structured in three phases to best accompany the students in their journey of becoming Christ's witnesses. They started their journey by understanding the importance of the work of Mission.

Students were invited to become storytellers and to reflect on Pope Francis' World Mission Sunday message "Hearts on fire, feet on the move". As they reflected, they started to realise that they were embodying the message.

As student's hearts were more engaged



Above: Lachlan Markey, Baxter Graham (who spoke at Mass at Holy Spirit), Isabella Trippett, Milla Steiber, Ella Yeo and Mia Webb-Hunt.

than ever, they set themselves into action and were invited to share the stories of the people of Timor-Leste in parish masses, a unique opportunity for them to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Those speaking opportunities were possible thanks to the parishes, school staff, parents and students' engagement in being witnesses, with religious leaders in schools generously giving of their time to support the students in their preparation and being with them when they spoke.

As they prepared to be the messenger, many students gained significant public speaking and communication skills as they were passionate about the stories they shared.

The third stage of the journey was to

provide the students with a safe space for discussion and reflection on their journey as missionaries.

Ella, a Year 5 student from Holy Spirit, Lavington, shared "I put my name down for being a missionary because I knew that I was going to be able to help out, not only around the school, but also around my community."

"It has been an amazing journey with the students, as they all came from different schools and all different backgrounds, but they really came together in their missionary work as they embodied the importance of being Christ's witnesses," said Jane Plum, "after this year's success, I hope for next year that more schools across the Diocese will join us and take part in MAPs."



Above: Coolamon - Sienna Dyce (dark hair) Claire Cruikshank, Dustin Foley and Charlotte Hard.

Below: St Joseph's Wagga Wagga.



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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Join ACRATH and the international community for 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

The United Nations 16 days of activism began on 25th November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the anniversary of the brutal assassination of Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa Mirabal, three activists in the Dominican Republic in 1960.

It ends on 10th December – Human Rights Day, the day on which the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Individuals and organisations worldwide use it to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. This year ACRATH is joining the global campaign by asking you to join us each day as we offer a different focus on the 16 days of activism.

- Join us
- Reflect with us
- Take action with us

Please check our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts daily for the focus and how you can take action with us.

Pope Francis reminds us:

“It is not possible to remain indifferent before the knowledge that human beings

are bought and sold like goods!”

Join the ACRATH Campaign

There are a number of ways you can join us as we stand up for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence such as:

1. Spread the Word

Have our informative posters printed in your school, workplace, church or community news bulletin. Tag us on socials or send us an email with your posters on display at: networks@acrath.org.au to be featured on our socials.

2. Join our Daily Reflections and Call to Action

Download your copy of our 16 days calendar and join us for our daily reflections and calls to action via our social media channels.

3. Read and Share Stories of Activism

Read ACRATH's 16 Days of stories about people and projects combating human trafficking here in Australia and globally. Access stories here.

4. Pray and Reflect

Join An Ecumenical Holding the Light Service remembering Victims and Survivors of Family Domestic Violence.



Prayers of Intercession:

Leader: Let us pray together that God's justice and right will break forth in our time.

We pray for the Christian Communities around the world, for the strength, fortitude and vision of all their leaders and members in addressing the issues of human trafficking. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray for world leaders that they will confront human trafficking in all its forms, by dedicating their time, energy and resources to eradicating it. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray for those in bonded labour, in agricultural fields, mines and factories who have been reduced to tools for production and commodities rather than human beings. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray for women who are estimated to make up 80% of human trafficking victims and for changes in societal attitudes that deny the equality and dignity of women. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray for the development of impoverished nations so that their peoples may know a decent standard of living, have meaningful opportunities for education and employment and thus escape the desperate circumstances that make people vulnerable to human trafficking. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray that the demand for trafficked people will reduce. May men and women grow in appreciation of the dignity of every human person so that we can live in a world where no-one is enslaved. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

We pray for all who have died as a result of their exploitation and slavery. Response: God of compassion, let justice and right break forth.

Leader: Awaken our hearts and deepen our commitment to work for a world where all people are free and able to live with dignity and freedom. We ask for conversion of heart for traffickers and for strong laws to protect victims. Give us wisdom and courage so that together we

will find ways to ensure Your freedom is the gift for all people. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Source: ACRATH (Prayers written by Claire Griffin csb based on US sisters' reflection)

5. Use ACRATH Campaign Hashtags

Use one or all of our hashtags and remember to tag us in your posts for us to share your messaging.

#ACRATH #unite #activism #reflection#standwithus#16days#standup #eliminateviolence #humanrights #16daysagainstgenderbasedviolence

6. Consider a Donation to ACRATH

ACRATH needs funds to continue our work in advocating, educating and supporting the victims and survivors of human trafficking now and in the future to sustain our many programs.

This year with the help of our amazing donors, we have been able to:

- Engage with senior members of the incoming Australian government to address five key advocacy issues.
- Support 36 trafficked women and their 45 children within our Companionship program.
- Facilitate eight online training sessions for healthcare workers across Australia and Timor Leste to raise awareness of human trafficking and what healthcare workers can do to identify and safely refer potential victims/survivors. We have just heard that a healthcare worker trained recently by ACRATH recognised a trafficked woman and was able to safely and effectively refer her on for support.

Please consider a donation to help us continue our valuable work into the future. We depend on you to help us in this work against Human Trafficking and Slavery. <https://acrath.org.au/support-acrath/support-acrath-donate/>

We hope you can take the time to reflect, share and join our campaign to empower you to stand against gender-based violence.

If you would like any more information on how you can help, become a member, sign up for our newsletter or donate to ACRATH please contact: networks@acrath.org.au



Everybody has a role in stopping gender-based violence

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!



www.acrath.org.au



#16Days
#orangetheworld
#NoMoreMissingRights

Images depict actors/models

HENTY PARISH WELCOMES FR JOMER

The Henty community celebrated the arrival of Fr Jomer to their parish with a morning tea on 5 November. Fr Jomer

Calma was appointed as Administrator of St Patrick's, Culcairn and Our Lady of Sorrows, Holbrook in October.



PRAYING FOR A LASTING PEACE



A statement from Australia's Catholic Bishops.

The Australian Catholic Bishops, gathered in Sydney this week, join with the Australian Catholic community in expressing our grief and anguish over the suffering of people in the Holy Land.

These are not simply news stories or television dramas: they are the stories of real people. All are children of God.

We pray for our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and hold them and their suffering in our hearts.

Remembering the long history that has led to the current violence in the Middle East is the first step to finding a way beyond the violence to a just end of the conflict.

Peace can come only from justice.

We call people of faith to pray with us for a lasting peace and the triumph of human dignity.

As we turn to God in prayer, we also encourage acts of charity and generosity to provide for the material needs of people who are isolated and facing the greatest hardship. The need is urgent.

Properly administered aid could mean the difference between life and death for innocent civilians, and so we call for immediate access for humanitarian agencies.

The sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam share a longing for peace and harmony, and this we seek together as one human family.



PARISH APPOINTMENTS FOR 2024

I announce the following appointments, to take effect from Wednesday 17 January 2024.

Fr Andrew Grace

Parish Priest of Sacred Heart, Koorungal

Fr Henry Ibe

Parish Priest of Sacred Heart, Griffith

Fr Steven Lednich

Parish Priest of St Patrick's, Albury

Fr Justin Darlow

Parish Priest of St Mary's, The Rock

Fr Blaise Kurek

Parish Priest of St Brendan's, Ganmain, and Administrator of St Michael's Coolamon

Fr Cyprian Onuorah

Administrator of St Oliver Plunkett's, Darlington Point and St Joseph's, Jerilderie

Fr Jomer Calma

Administrator of St Patrick's,

Culcairn, and Our Lady of Sorrows, Holbrook, continuing on from his already announced appointment which commenced in October.

Fr Connell Perry

Assistant Priest, Sacred Heart Griffith

Fr Michael Perry

Assistant Priest, St Patrick's Albury - continuing appointment.

Fr Bradley Rafter

Returns to Vianney College to resume the role of Vice-Rector and 1st Year Formator.

I thank the priests involved for their work at their previous appointments and for their generosity and trust in God in accepting this new assignment.

**Yours in Jesus Christ and
Mary Immaculate**

**Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI
Bishop of Wagga Wagga**

MCC CELEBRATES DIWALI FESTIVAL

Diwali is a significant religious festival in Sikhi, Hinduism and Jainism. It is also popularly known as the "Festival of Lights" and embodies the triumph of light over darkness and signifies the victory of good over evil. It is a period for spiritual purification and fresh starts. During Diwali, people wear their finest clothes, illuminate the interior and exterior of their homes with saaki (earthen lamp), diyas and rangoli, perform worship ceremonies of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and wealth, light fireworks, and partake in family feasts, where mithai (sweets) and gifts are shared

Thank you to the Balinder and Harnek Dhanoa, Raj Kaor and Shruti Sharma for bringing in the

beautiful food for our staff to share in celebration of Diwali.



XAVIER CATHOLIC COLLEGE GRADUATION

Xavier Catholic College students celebrated their graduation from Year 12 on Friday 9th November.



KILDARE CATHOLIC COLLEGE GRADUATION

On Friday 17th of November, the students of Kildare Catholic College commemorated their graduation.



ST FRANCIS DE SALES REGIONAL COLLEGE GRADUATION

On Friday 3rd November, St Francis celebrated the remarkable Class of 2023 with a wonderful formal graduation evening.

Thank you to every member of our College and Boarding community for their contributions to this special occasion. Particular thanks to Mr Travis Doyle, our Year 12 Leader for his commitment and

dedication to this wonderful cohort of students over the past six years, and for his meticulous preparation and organisation of this event. Best wishes for a wonderful and prosperous future Class of 2023!



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MATER DEI CATHOLIC COLLEGE GRADUATION

On Friday 10th of November, Mater Dei Catholic College celebrated the graduation of its Year 12 students with an award ceremony, where several students were honored for their outstanding achievements.



Above: College Captains - Ellie Clarke and Joshua Shaw.



Above: Boarding Captains - Catherine Oakes and Zara English.



Above: Nano Nagle Award - Elora Guirguis.



Above: Edmund Rice Award - Samuel Culley.



Above: Bishop of Wagga Award - Ellie Clarke.



Above: ADF Long Tan Award - Joshua Shaw.



Above: ADF Future Innovator Award - McKinley Hamblin.



Above: Reuben F Scarf Award - Ivan Sokolov.

MARIAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE YEAR 12 GRADUATION

On Friday 10th November, 80 Year 12 students celebrated their graduation at the Bagtown Function Centre in front of 261 guests.

The Year 12 cohort are to be congratulated on successfully graduating from six years of High school. A place where they have made strong friendships, gained resilience, experienced challenges, made mistakes and overcome everything to celebrate their own successes

To the parents and families, thank you for your unwavering support, love and sacrifices you have made while contributing to your child's journey. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr Ludicke, Mrs Segrave, staff and the YR 12 Homeroom team of Mr Mason, Mrs

Abdala, Mrs Turunen, Mr Matheson, Mrs Duncan and Mrs Dumbleton, for your support, patience and encouragement in guiding Yr 12 in their academic growth.

Mrs Renae Savage (Year 12 Pastoral Leader for Year 12) shared the following statement in her speech - Thankyou for supporting me as your Pastoral Leader for 2023, it has been an absolute privilege and I am very proud of everyone of you. May the future hold boundless opportunities and success for each and everyone of you.

Dare to dream big and work hard to achieve those dreams.



PROPOSED ALBURY CLUB DRAWS RESISTANCE

A proposal to build a strip club in the heart of town has caused a stir in the Albury community. More than 1,200 people have signed an online petition opposing the establishment citing concerns about its proximity to Albury's main street.

Local business owner, Jacob Wolki, said a strip club had no place in a community such as Albury.

"My main concern is its location and the effect it will have on local families just trying to go about their normal daily lives," he said.

"I don't want to be the person getting in the way of anybody exercising their rights, but I think there's a time and place where all behaviours are either appropriate or inappropriate.

"And I think having a strip club in the CBD of Albury, where families frequent, is inappropriate."

He was one of many community members pushing back against the proposal.

More than 1,200 people have signed an online petition circulated by the owner of The Olive Health Foods, Rachael Hart. She is concerned about the impact the strip club will have on her business and the wider community.

Ms Hart pointed to the potential for vandalism and anti-social behaviour and said she would not feel safe visiting her business at night-time if a strip club was operating nearby.

She also noted she employed a number of local people and questioned whether the venue would be doing likewise.

Like Ms Hart, many fear such an establishment would undermine the family-friendly atmosphere.

Farrer MP Sussan Ley has also criticised the proposal, saying the adult entertainment industry demeaned women.

The petition argues such an establishment would be detrimental on the grounds of community wellbeing, economic impact, gender equality and safety.

It states "the presence of a strip club can erode the sense of community" and "strip clubs often attract criminal activity and can lead to a decrease in property



Above: Younger members of the Albury Catholic community protesting outside the proposed site on 18 November.

values, which can be detrimental to local businesses" whose patrons may avoid the area.

The petition declares "strip clubs perpetuate the objectification of women, perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes and inequalities, reinforcing harmful views and attitudes".

It then added "strip clubs have been linked to issues of human trafficking, drug abuse, other criminal activities".

The petition acknowledges "every business has the right to operate" before calling on the council to "act in the best interest of our community" and reject "the establishment of Emberz strip club in Albury".

Signatories to the petition cover various demographics, including the elderly, those with children and the religious-minded.

**To sign the petition visit:
www.change.org/p/opposition-to-emberz-strip-club-in-albury
or scan the QR code below.**



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).



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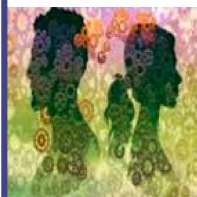
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- Diocese of Wagga Wagga -



Marriage breakdown is a traumatic experience for all those concerned. The Church reaches out in support of those who are divorced, while upholding the permanence of a true Christian marriage. The Wagga Wagga Office of the Tribunal extends an invitation to any divorced person who would like to talk about the annulment process. You can be assured that your privacy will be respected. Should you choose to apply for an annulment, you will be guided and supported through the process.

For further information please phone the
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HOW TARYN BRUMFITT FOUND THE COURAGE TO 'SAY THE THINGS THE WORLD NEEDS TO HEAR'

Taryn Brumfitt's hair is casually swept up into a pony tail, she's wearing white sneakers, a skirt and a black T-shirt that says "crew", along with the rest of her team.

BY JODIE O'SULLIVAN
The Border Mail

The 2023 Australian of the Year is mingling with the group of 70-plus students who've gathered for her ACTIVATE youth event on the leafy grounds of Wodonga's La Trobe University campus.

It's a warm day on the Border and the leading body image activist is busy bopping about from one group to the next; she laughingly remarks that she's actually getting rather sweaty.

It's a far cry from her fancy foray to the White House at the end of last month, where she was invited to dinner by US president Joe Biden and the First Lady, Dr Jill Biden, in honour of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The invite was such a surprise honour that her mother thought it was a scam, Brumfitt reveals.

Taryn Brumfitt's acceptance speech at the 2023 Australian of the Year awards. Footage: ABC News.

"(But) If you know me at all you'll know that when opportunity knocks, I'm always standing right behind the door ready to answer," Brumfitt posted to Instagram a few weeks before her US trip.

"I know from experience precisely how one meeting, one conversation, one idea sparked between two minds can change your trajectory, and the world.

"I'm thrilled I'll also have my colleague Dr Zali Yager travelling with me to network in with other global body

image experts, and to work with me to use our brief visit as the springboard to taking the *Embrace Kids* message around the globe."

The bubbly Brumfitt, who says she wore a sparkly sequined suit to the prestigious dinner, rocked up to meet the president with a copy of her "big yellow book".

She describes the experience as "fun and a bit surreal".

"But nothing brings me more joy than being with you guys here today," Brumfitt said at the conclusion of her Border event on November 22.

She chose Albury-Wodonga as the first regional cab off the rank for the ACTIVATE series she plans to take around the country - to inspire young people to move, nourish, appreciate and be kind to their bodies.

Young leaders from 20 schools across the region and a group of key stakeholders took part in a series of workshops around body image, self-compassion and leadership and watched a screening of the *Embrace Kids* documentary.

"Did you enjoy the film?" Brumfitt asked. "We made it for you."

She reflected that it was 302 days since the Australian of the Year honour was bestowed on her.

But it's been a more than 10-year effort to get body positivity on the map.

Ten years where she has learnt to



Above: From the White House to the Border ... 2023 Australian of the Year Taryn Brumfitt says her real joy is found in working with people to embrace their bodies. Picture by James Wiltshire

overcome her fear of public speaking and "find the courage to say the things the world needs to hear".

In a whirlwind wrap-up of the day, Brumfitt pointed to key themes raised in the *Embrace Kids* film - indeed, she says, the film "does most of the heavy lifting" in terms of covering the subject matter.

She reminded the day's participants of the dogs in the film.

"We don't ask a sausage dog to round up sheep on a farm," she says.

"We never ask dogs to be anything other than what they are."

And we need to adopt the same approach with people.

"All bodies are different and it's our differences that make us special," Brumfitt says.

"Let me tell you, the very least interesting thing about you is how you look!"

Learning to embrace your body is a super-power, according to Brumfitt.

"It's an edge (in life) to have a great relationship with yourself and your body," she points out.

"People who embrace their bodies are much more likely to be happier and healthier."

So how do we do that exactly?

Brumfitt's mission through the *Embrace Collective* is to reach one million Australian children sharing resources based on four key themes:

Celebrate diversity - which reinforces that everybody is worthy of love and respect;

Functionality - so run, jump, dance, play, hug, swim, be creative because our bodies are extraordinary and they can do so much; so move your body "for pleasure not punishment";

Be kind to yourself - you can dial up or down the mean voice in your head; and

Real role models - look at what people are doing not what they look like!

Brumfitt implored students to make a pact with their friends - to "never say

anything negative about ourselves or other people's bodies".

She urges young people, parents and, well pretty much everyone, to take a much tougher stance and "be discerning" about who we follow on social media.

Take a leaf out of actor and influencer Jameela Jamil (who features in the film) and adopt the mantra: Block, Mute, Delete, Repeat anything or anyone who makes you feel bad!

"Fill up your feeds with role models who make you want to be a better person."

And she urges young people particularly to beware "comparison-itis".

"We are so good at comparing ourselves on social media - (where) everyone is showing up in their best lives," Brumfitt explains.

"Then we compare our 'behind the scenes life' and it can make us feel a bit lousy."

Brumfitt says you don't have to love your body but you do have to re-frame pointing out the negative bits.

"I hope you will leave here learning to embrace your body a bit more than before you walked in at the start of the day," she told her new disciples, who she charged with the task of spreading the word - and the love!

"I feel so much hope from watching you today and hearing your stories."

For those who missed the opportunity to engage with this event, Brumfitt insists there's one thing parents, teachers and all of us can do to help kids stop hating their bodies.

Role model self-love in front of them.

Stop pointing out the wobbly bits, the saggy bits, the any bits of your body you don't like - and start celebrating what your body can do instead.

Oh, and watch the *Embrace Kids* film as a family.

"It's a real opportunity for families to have open, frank and heart-led conversations about the big subjects," Brumfitt says.



Above: Australian of the Year Taryn Brumfitt with (left) artist Kirrily Anderson and (right) designer Emily Savage and students from the region in front the mural painted at the ACTIVATE youth event. Picture by James Wiltshire

WAGGA SERRA CLUB: CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH PRAYER AND SERVICE



Christmas is a significant event in the Christian calendar, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Local Serrans, who are also members of the Serra Council of Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific and the Serra International, are lay Catholics who dedicate themselves to promoting and fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Throughout the year, they pray for vocations and feel part of the increased spiritual engagement needed during the Christmas season.

During the year, in addition to their prayers, Wagga Serrans actively support the ordination process. They provide catering services after ordination ceremonies, contributing

to the communal aspect of these events. Their involvement doesn't stop at ordinations; they meet once a month for Mass, preparing events and sharing a meal. They also, pray at Eucharistic Adoration and offer support at the start and end of the academic year ensuring that those called to religious life receive a warm welcome amongst the Wagga Diocese.

As we enter the Christmas season, we extend our heartfelt blessings to all. May this Christmas bring joy, peace, and unity amongst our family, friends, and communities.



Merry Christmas

OUR GRATITUDE FOR SUPPORT

On Saturday 25th November the West Wagga- San Isidore Refugee Committee organised a Fundraiser to support Humanitarian Needs in Gaza and Ukraine.

The event, held at San Isidore, came together at very short notice and was quickly advertised through the parishes in Wagga Wagga, Multicultural Council network and Amnesty International. There were sales of donated locally made ceramics, candles and wood work, handmade cards, Ukrainian artifacts, books and special items from the Holy Land: including crosses and rosary beads hand made by Palestinian Christians. There was a sausage sizzle and tea and

coffee.

Prizes were donated for a raffle on the day: \$100 meal voucher donated by the Saigon Restaurant was won by Grace Marwood, Eliza Tout won the handknitted woollen rugs, Sr Barbara Webber the handcrafted wooden bowl and Jaqui Stemp the bottle of wine.

Despite the rain and inevitable clashes with other events we were touched that so many still made the effort to support people suffering in these tragic wars.

The result of this small effort has allowed our committee to send \$2000 to the Caritas Gaza Appeal and another \$2000 for Humanitarian needs in Ukraine.

RED FOR RED WEDNESDAY

St Michael's Cathedral, Wagga was lit up in Red for Red Wednesday, an annual initiative organised by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to acknowledge and pray for Christians around the world who are persecuted for their religious beliefs.

The diocese joined other Churches, government buildings and landmarks around the world which were flooded in red in solidarity including the Palace

of Westminster, Westminster Abbey, the Colosseum, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Washington, DC, and many more.

While Christians in Australia are largely free from persecution, there are 28 countries, home to 4.03 billion people, where religious persecution was evident and we pray for and stand in solidarity with these people.

INVITATION TO PRAY FOR PEACE:

During Advent our committee will continue their regular weekly Thursday Prayer Vigils for Peace.

These are special times of preparing for Christmas:

Thursdays: 7th, 14th and 21st December, 2.30pm in the San Isidore Church.

The service lasts about 40 minutes with a short scripture reading and reflection as we pray for Peace in our hearts, families, communities, nation and the world.

ALL WELCOME TO ATTEND



VIANNEY BULLETIN

Wind-down Shenanigans

With exams done, dusted and ditched, the seminarians enjoyed a wind-down week prior to the beginning of their Advent pastoral placements.

The wind-down week is a chance to rest body, mind & spirit after a long semester's work of study, pastoral works, and the hustle-and-bustle of everyday seminary life, and also gives the seminarians a chance to spend quality time with one another, free of the pressures which a busy academic term brings.

First up, the seminarians & Fr. Rick packed up the van and took a day trip to the lovely Adelong Falls, situated in the beautiful Snowy Mountains region.

A rosary, good company, and fresh beats blasting through the van stereo made for a speedy and enjoyable drive. There, the seminarians had a go at being mountain goats, attempting to scale & hop about on steep rocks. Some were better at this than others. Others enjoyed

exploring the ruins of the old Gold Mill and absorbing a lot of local history & beautiful 19th century architecture.

Very luckily, one of the seminarians had expert local knowledge regarding the picturesque Adelong Falls and led the gang on a climb towards a secret waterfall and pool; where the seminarians enjoyed a swim and a splash in the freezing cold alpine water.

The next day, the seminarians enjoyed a relaxed day for rest & community activities back at the seminary. Another highlight of the wind-down week was a chance to be hosted for a barbeque and fishing session out at the property of the loyal and revered Serra Club Members Andrew & Di Kennedy. In terms of how the fishing went, please pray for us that when we are priests, we do not fish souls like we fish fish.

While rest of body and mind is so important, a real blessing during the wind-down week was the chance for us all to pray together, especially in the



Above: Fr. Rick and the gang at Adelong Falls.

evenings in which we had a daily Holy Hour, where we got to sit with Jesus and really receive from Him that soul-nourishing grace. The opportunity to sit with Jesus provided us with a space to really go through our year with God & allow Him to love us again through those blessings we've received and

correct us anew through the different mistakes we've made, and lessons we've learned.

Now that we are all freshened up spiritually, physically and mentally – please pray for us as we come to a parish near (hopefully) you!

In Support of Vianney College:

Vianney College Seminary in Wagga Wagga, was established in 1992 by the late Bishop William Brennan (R.I.P), to form and educate Australian priests in a rural setting with sound Catholic faith. Since then, the fruits of prayer have been very beneficial as we have seen a large number of men who have entered the seminary, many of whom have been ordained, now ministering in our diocese and beyond. As the sixth rector of Vianney College, I am blessed to be able to carry on this mission in the training of men for the ministerial priesthood, with a limitless source of joy and fulfilment.

In light of this, just like prayer, financial giving is a way to directly and cosmically support the seminarians in their vocation. Funds in donations help to relieve the financial strain in the general works of operation. i.e. board, meals, tuition, administration,

staff wages, insurance etc. as well as contributions to the Vianney College Building Fund, which is tax deductible.

I would sincerely like to thank all our past and present donors for your generosity and loyalty over the years in support of Vianney College.

So, if you feel a call or a stir to materially support these men in training, please visit our diocesan website showing methods of payments at: <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/giving/>.

You can also choose to remember us by leaving a bequest in your will.

God bless you all, and thank you very much for taking the time to fully read the bulletin, as well as this postscript.

Fr Rick Micallef,

Rector of Vianney College Seminary

Prayer for Vocations

O God our Father, through the intercession of Your beloved priest, Saint John Vianney, we beg You to call to the sacramental priesthood generous men who will desire nothing more than to serve You in imitation of Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

Mary, Mother of priests, and example of faithful, humble, and joyful acceptance of God's will, help all those who are called to the priesthood to open their ears and hearts to the gentle call of the Holy Spirit. Amen.




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ENROL NOW FOR 2024

CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS CALLS FOR INTENSIFIED DIPLOMATIC ACTION AMID FEARS OF FURTHER CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Caritas Australia has echoed a statement from Caritas Internationalis, which expresses deep concern about the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, unfolding in the Holy Land.

In a statement Caritas Internationalis has reflected on the desperate severity of humanitarian need in Gaza and the devastating impact of the conflict on civilians, especially children. The statement drew attention to growing fears of wider conflict in the Middle East, noting the forced displacement of tens of thousands of people in southern Lebanon as an example of this coming to bear.

The situation in the West Bank was also called out, with Caritas Internationalis stating that it is “deteriorating rapidly with increasing threats to civilian lives, restrictions of free movement, arbitrary detentions and widespread degrading treatment of Palestinian populations, as documented by the United Nations.”

Karam Abi Yazbeck, Regional Coordinator for Caritas Middle East and North Africa said, “Our partners on the ground in Gaza have just days of water, food and fuel remaining. If humanitarian workers are on their final supplies, then it is hard to imagine the situation for those most vulnerable in Gaza. What we need to see now is immediate political decisions that align with humanitarian needs.



A religious tapestry among the rubble following an air strike. Both photos by Caritas Jerusalem.

“We remain deeply concerned too about the threat of wider regional conflict, which would lead to further displacement and loss of life in the Middle East. Humanitarian priorities must see us calling for an immediate cessation of violence, and an end to international division,” he concluded.

Caritas Internationalis continues to appeal to all parties in the conflict, and to the international community, to intensify diplomatic action to:

- Urgently implement an immediate ceasefire;
- Urgently grant unimpeded safe humanitarian access to and across all of Gaza, and allow large scale aid operations, including through the reopening of the Karem Abu Salem crossing;
- Protect civilians, distinguish between civilians and combatants in adherence to the principle of distinction;
- Preserve civilian infrastructure and immediately restore services essential to the survival of the civilian population, including

but not limited to water, food, health, fuel, and power systems;

- Respect the protection and security of humanitarian personnel, their assets, and relief items;
- Rapidly facilitate the evacuation of patients requiring medical treatment or protection from Gaza, while also ensuring their right to return to their homes as soon as they wish to do so;
- Work towards a durable two-State solution, echoing Pope Francis’ call.

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



Remaining structure of a church among structural damage from air strikes.

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Christmas Mass Times 2023

Cathedral Parish

St Michael's Cathedral
 24 December - 6pm and 9pm Christmas Eve
 25 Dec - Midnight 12am, 8am, 10am & 5.30pm
 Mt Erin Chapel
 25 December - 6am Christmas Day (Latin)
 St Mary's Chapel - Vianney College
 25 December - 9am Christmas Day

Koorlingal Parish

Mater Dei Primary School Hall
 24 December: 5pm Christmas Eve
 Sacred Heart Church
 24 December: 7pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

South Wagga Parish

Henschke School Oval
 24 December: 7pm Outdoor Mass
 Our Lady of Fatima Church
 24 December: 9pm Christmas Eve
 24 December: 10.30pm Syro-Malabar Mass
 25 December: 10.30am Christmas Day
 St Patrick's Church Uranquinty
 25 December: 08.30am Christmas Day

West Wagga Parish

Holy Trinity Church
 Confessions: 23 December 6-7pm,
 24 December 11-12pm & 3-4pm
 Christmas Eve Mass: 6pm at Holy Trinity
 School, enter via car park.
 Christmas Day: 9am
 San Isidore
 25 December: 8am
 Home of Compassion Residents
 25 December: 10.30am

Albury Parish

St Patrick's Church
 24 December: 6pm, 8pm & 10pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 12am (Latin), 7am (Latin), 8am
 & 10am

Berrigan Parish

St Columba's Church
 25 December: 10am Christmas Day

Coolamon Parish

Marrar - St Patrick's Church
 24 December: 8pm Christmas Eve
 Coolamon - St Michael's Church
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

Corowa Parish

24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

Culcairn Parish

Culcairn
 24 December - 7pm Christmas Vigil Mass
 Henty
 25 December - 10am Christmas Day
 Walla Walla
 25 December - 8am Christmas Day

Darlington Point Parish

Coleambally
 24 December - 8:00pm Christmas Eve
 Darlington Point
 24 December - 6:00pm Christmas Eve
 (See also Jerilderie Parish)

Finley Parish

24 December: Christmas Carols 6.30pm
 24 December: 7pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 10.15am Christmas Day

Ganmain Parish

Ganmain
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Vigil
 24 December: 10pm Night Mass
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

Griffith Parish

Sacred Heart Church Griffith
 21 December: Reconciliation 7pm (2nd Rite)
 24 December: 6pm & 10pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 7.30am, 9am (Italian), 10.30am
 & 6pm Christmas Day
 Marian Catholic College Chapel
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

Holbrook Parish

Bowna
 24 December - 5:30pm Christmas Vigil Mass
 Holbrook
 24 December - 8:30pm Christmas Vigil Mass

Howlong Parish

St Brigid's Howlong
 24 December - 6:00pm Christmas Eve
 Walbundrie
 25 December - 9:00am Christmas Day

Jerilderie Parish

25 December: 9am Christmas Day
 (See also Darlington Point Parish)

Junee Parish

St Joseph's Church Junee
 24 December - 6:00pm Christmas Eve Mass
 25 December - 9:30am Christmas Day Mass

Khancoban

Church of St Joseph the Worker
 25 December - 5:30pm Christmas Day Mass

Lavington Parish

Holy Spirit Church Lavington
 24 December: 6pm and 9pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 8am and 10am Christmas Day
 St Mary's Church Jindera
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9am Christmas Day

Leeton Parish

St Joseph's Church Leeton
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Vigil
 25 December: 10am Christmas Day
 St Patrick's Church Yanco
 25 December: 8am Christmas Day

Lockhart Parish

St Mary's Church Lockhart
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 8am Christmas Day

Mulwala Parish

St Joseph's Church Barooga
 25 December: 8am Christmas Day
 St Brigid's Church Mulwala
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve

Narrandera Parish

Narrandera
 24 December - 6pm Vigil Christmas Eve
 25 December - 12am & 9.30am Christmas Day
 Grong Grong
 24 December - 7.30pm Vigil Christmas Eve
 Galore
 25 December - 8am Christmas Day

North Albury Parish

St Francis Xavier Hall, Xavier High School
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 Sacred Heart Church
 24 December: 9pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 9.30am (Will be live-streamed)
 Christmas Day

Tarcutta Parish

Ladysmith
 24 December - 6:00pm
 Tarcutta
 25 December - 8:30am

The Rock Parish

The Rock - St Mary's Church
 24 December: Carols 6pm Christmas Eve
 24 December: Mass 6.30pm Christmas Eve
 24 December: Carols 11.30pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: Mass 12am, 8am and 10am

Thurgoona Parish

24 December: 7pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 12am and 9.30am Christmas Day

Tocumwal Parish

24 December: Carols 5pm Christmas Eve
 24 December: Mass 5.30pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 8.30am Christmas Day

Tumbarumba Parish

24 December: 6pm Vigil Christmas Eve
 25 December: 12am and 9am Christmas Day

Urana Parish

Oaklands
 24 December: 6pm Christmas Eve
 St Fiacre's Church Urana
 24 December: 8pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 8am Christmas Day

Yenda Yoogali Hanwood Parish

Yoogali
 20 December: 6pm Communal Penitential
 Service with Reconciliation
 24 December: 7pm Mass Christmas Eve
 25 December: 10am Christmas Day
 Hanwood
 24 December: 5pm Christmas Eve
 25 December: 8am Christmas Day
 Yenda
 24 December: 6.30pm Christmas Eve

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

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.



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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HIS MANGER, MY HEART

Christmas is known by many monikers: the festive season, the most wonderful time of year. Commercially speaking, it's also the most expensive – and over marketed - time of the year.

BY EMILY SHAW

Virtue Ministry Writer and Graphic Designer

For many, Christmas is a time of family get-togethers. The busy anticipation of a day – or more – spent eating good food, drinking good wine, enjoying good company, and good cheer of course.

For some, Christmas this year will be a year of firsts. Perhaps it's the first Christmas celebrated as a married couple, following their nuptials earlier this year; the first with a new baby, a child or grandchild in whose honour Christmas celebrations take on another level of cherished family milestones; the first Christmas in a new house or the first Christmas in awhile where every member of the family can be in the same room at the same time.

For others, however, Christmas time can be a time of stark pain or loss. There are families who gather together and feel keenly the presence of empty seats around their festive table.

The lonely, the grieving, the estranged and uninvited experience afresh the pangs of their hurt as they suffer through Christmas. Some, their first without loved ones who have passed away since last year's festivities; the first Christmas since they quarrelled, irreparably it would seem, with family members or friends; the first Christmas they did not have enough funds to continue their long established Christmas traditions; the first Christmas inside the nursing home; the first Christmas living out of their car because they can't find affordable housing.

Christmas comes, regardless of our joy or our sorrows.

Just as, on that first Christmas, when Joseph and Mary welcomed our Lord and Saviour following an arduous journey. Tired and weary, resting in a stable, for there was no room to accommodate them elsewhere in Bethlehem, they welcomed Jesus in a place far from home and their loved ones. They had not even a bed for Him, though they improvised, turning a manger into makeshift crib. The angelic chorus had extended an invitation to the motley crew of shepherds, who travelled to pay their respects, and the small stable is full to the brim: saints, shepherds and animals in close quarters.

Hardly a picture-perfect Christmas.

What's in a name?

The Prophet Isaiah, of the Old Testament, made several prophetic statements that refer to the coming of Jesus Christ, including:

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. His authority shall grow continually,



and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

This quote forms part of the readings for the Christmas Night Mass and is used as a preparatory work in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium for children aged 3-6 years. At first glance, it is both familiar and perhaps for some, uninspiring.

But here in this reading is the hope, the promise of a Christ-child who will serve us in a myriad of ways. Wonderful Counsellor will guide us with His Wisdom, He being the most perfect teacher and His knowledge much greater than that of man; Mighty God will fight for us, defend us against our enemy and will never surrender; Everlasting Father will exercise His paternity forever, promising us a home with Him in Heaven once this earthly life is complete; and Prince of Peace will restore our relationship with God, and usher in a tangible and everlasting peace.

A son has been given to us indeed, a Son of God, and at Christmas we have the opportunity to welcome Him again.

My heart, His manger

Our hearts are far from perfect. Burdened by the cares of the world, our sorrows and grievances, our failures and limitations. Like the crib in Bethlehem all those many years ago, our hearts are imperfect mangers, containing tufts of straw, nibbled by the animals stabled nearby.

Perhaps our hearts are slightly better, or sparsely, padded than those around us. The straw – each tuft a prayer, an act of devotion or thanksgiving offered to God – varies daily, even hourly as we struggle through this valley of tears.

But these mangers – our hearts – are capable of providing a place of loving repose for the Lord of the universe. Despite the lacklustre presentation, craftsmanship - or smell – we can open our hearts and lives in order to welcome again the Baby Jesus. We can cradle Him, delighting in the newborn promise of a Messiah who humbled Himself out of love for us.

This Christmas, find comfort and hope in the Holy Family, who trusted in God's providence despite the apparent inadequacies or underwhelming circumstances. Seek solace and peace, guidance and strength from the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Yes, you may still feel the pain of loss over the Christmas season, but you might just experience the joy of His birth, and His light will guide you out of darkness and into His healing love.

From all the team at Virtue Ministry, may Christmas find you welcoming Our Emmanuel without reservation, celebrating His birth with your nearest and dearest, and growing in virtue in order to spread His love to those around you, in the capacity He has gifted you, and you alone.

A promotional graphic for a podcast. At the top, it says "Listen to the Podcast" in white text on a blue background. Below this are logos for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, iHeart Radio, and Podbean. In the center, there is a photo of a woman (Emily Shaw) on the left and a man in a clerical collar (a priest) on the right. Below the photos, it says "JOIN OUR COMMUNITY" in white text. At the bottom, there are social media links for Patreon, Instagram, and Facebook, along with the website VirtueMinistry.org.au.

SCHOOLS IN OUR DIOCESE

Kildare Catholic College, Wagga



Above: Kildare's Open Boys Rugby team won the Ramsay Cup Grand Final on November 20 against Koorungal High School 42-14. Congratulations!

Below: Congratulations to the Kildare Golf Team on winning the CWWHSSA Steve Elkington Cup for the second consecutive year. Well done to team members - Will Palmer, Jesse Barac, Josh Allen, Finn Shaw, Isabella Johnson & Coach Mr McNamara.



St Peter's Primary School, Coleambally



Dr Andrew Watson, Director of Catholic Education, visited St Peter's Primary School, Coleambally. He enjoyed the opportunity to discuss with students their learning and enjoyed lunch with the staff.



St Anne's Primary, North Albury



Year 6 students from St Anne's recently went on an excursion to Canberra.



Marian Catholic College, Griffith



Noah Beltrame, an advocate for people on the autism spectrum, has graduated from year 12 at Marian Catholic College Griffith with early entry offers from four different universities. Region Riverina caught up with him to reflect on his advocacy, time at school and plans for the future. Read more about Noah at regionriverina.com.au.



Our wonderful and caring boarding students are making a difference to the lives of our beautiful elderly residents. There are no words that can describe how very proud our whole school community feels about this amazing group of

St Francis DeSales Regional College, Leeton



young people. May Christ our saviour continue to watch over you all and continue to guide you all in your amazing work. Read the full article in The Irrigator.



St Patrick's Primary School, Griffith

Year 5 students had a fun filled excursion to Ballarat last month.



Henschke Primary School, Wagga

The infants classes led a whole school liturgy today to mark the beginning of the season of Advent. Thank you to the many parents and friends who joined them.



St Patrick's Primary, Holbrook

Students from St Patrick's Primary were invited by the local Probus Club to sing at their annual Christmas lunch. The children loved it (and their chocolates).



St Joseph's Primary, Narrandera



School Captains, Charlotte and Andrew, led the Remembrance Day ceremony at St Joseph's Primary. On the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, we honour those who served and died for our country.
~ We will remember them ~

SCHOOLS IN OUR DIOCESE

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)
St Patrick's Uranquity
Sunday - 8:30am
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
Saturday - 9:30am
Vigil (Saturday) - 5:00pm
Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am, and 5:30pm
1962 Missal Mass - Sunday 12 noon
Weekday Mass Times
Monday to Friday - 7:00am
Tuesday & Thursday - 9:30am
Latin Mass Mondays - 7pm in the Adoration Chapel
First Friday - 5:30pm
Rosary before Mass
Saturday - 9:10am and 4:30pm
Sunday - 7:40am and 9:40am

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 - 5:00pm during Standard Time (approx. April til Sept)
Saturday Vigil - 6:00pm during Daylight Saving (approx. October til March)
Sunday - 9:30am all year round
Weekday Masses
Monday - 8:00am
Tuesday - 10:00am
Wednesday - 8:00am
Thursday - 5:30pm (with Holy Hour at 4:30pm including Exposition and Benediction)
Friday and Saturday - 8:00am
Confessions
Saturday 4:30-4:55pm (or 5:30-5:55pm during Daylight Saving)
Sunday 9:00-9:25am
Thursday - 4:45-5:15pm (during Holy Hour) Or anytime - just ask the priest.
Baptisms and Marriages by appointment

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
Sunday - 9:00am
Confessions
Saturday - 4.45 - 5.15pm
Masses
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday - 7.30am
Thursday - 10.15am
Saturday - 9.00am
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 6:30pm (Saturday)
Henty
2nd, 4th Saturday Vigil - 6:30pm
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.
Confessions
Before each weekend Mass.

DARLINGTON POINT

DARLINGTON POINT
St Oliver Plunkett
Hay Road
1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday - 8:30am
2nd, 4th Sunday - 6:00pm (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 9:00am
Weekday Masses
Monday to Friday: Usually 7:30am or 5:30pm (call parish to confirm)
Saturday: 8:00am (usually in the convent except 1st Sat. in the church).
Confessions:
30 min. before all Masses.
St. Patrick's Matong
6:00pm Saturday
Confessions: 30 min. before Mass

GRIFFITH

Sacred Heart
Warrambool St, Griffith
Weekend Masses
Saturday - 8.00am
Sunday - 7.30am, 9.00am, (Italian), 10.30am, 6.00pm
Weekday Masses
Monday - Friday - 7.00am, 5.30pm

Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
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
125 Albury Street, Holbroook
1st & 3rd Sunday - Saturday Vigil 6.30pm
2nd Sunday - 8.00 am
4th & 5th Sunday - 10.00am
Weekday Masses
Phone parish for details
Confessions
Before Mass on weekends
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 - 6:00pm
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 - 7:00am
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
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
102 Urana Street
The Rock
Weekend Masses
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 and after 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, Tumburumba
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 weekends - 8:00am
2nd & 4th weekends - 6:00pm Vigil
Weekday Masses
Posted on church notice board each week.
Oaklands - St Columba's Church
Each Sunday - 10:15am

Confessions

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

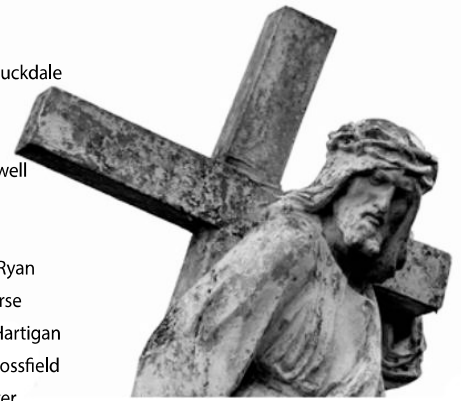
YENDA - YOOGALI - HANWOOD

Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii
17 Edon Street, Yoogali
Sunday - 10:00am
St Anthony's - Hanwood
Saturday Vigil - 5.00pm
Sunday - 8.00am
St Therese's - Yenda
Saturday Vigil - 6:30pm
Weekday Masses
Tuesday - 8.00am - Hanwood
Wednesday - 8.00am - Hanwood
Thursday - 5.00pm - Yenda
Saturday - 9:30am - Yoogali (first Saturday of the month only) - with Anointing of the Sick
Confessions
Yenda - Thursday, before Mass
Yoogali - Sunday, before Mass
Hanwood - Saturday - 4:30pm
Or by arrangement with the priest.

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 DECEMBER

4 December 1991 Mgr Leo Cecil Hatswell
10 December 2016 Fr Jan Stankiewicz
11 December 1952 Fr Robert O'Dea
17 December 1993 Fr Thomas Michael Buckdale
19 December 2015 Fr Rafe Beltrame
20 December 2009 Fr Robert Leaver
21 December 1975 Fr John Leighton Edwell
21 December 2017 Fr Kevin Flanagan
22 December 1930 Fr John Bonnar
23 December 1960 Fr Edmund Bernard Ryan
24 December 2002 Fr Maurice James Carse
27 December 1952 Mgr Patrick Joseph Hartigan
28 December 2015 Fr Warren Thomas Mossfield
31 December 1948 Fr John Corbett Glover



These faithful servants, Lord, put their wholehearted trust in you - Grant that they may live in your love.



Junior Legion
Every Wednesday afternoon at 3:30pm
at St Mary MacKillop Colleges.

Senior Legion
Every Thursday evening at 6:00pm 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



The team at
TOGETHER
would like to wish you a very
Merry Christmas
and to thank you for your support
throughout the year.

Please remember that there will be no issue of Together in January 2024. The next issue will be available in February 2024.

FAMILY REFLECTIONS

10th December

Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

The season of Advent invites us to renew our lives in preparation for the coming of Jesus. The people who heard the message of John the Baptist repented for their sins and were baptized as a sign of God's forgiveness. In Baptism, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our life of discipleship. Led by the Holy Spirit, we use this Advent season to renew our lives so that we, like John the Baptist, might prepare the way for Jesus.

As you gather together as a family, talk about ways in which the example of others has called you to be a follower of Jesus. Name the people who have been examples to you of Christian discipleship and describe their characteristics that you have tried to emulate. Read together today's Gospel, Mark 1:1-8.

As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, Baptism commissions us to prepare the way of the Lord. The gift of the Holy Spirit leads us to continually renew our lives so that we might lead others to Jesus. As a family, identify at least one action that you will take this week to try to be more faithful followers of Jesus. Conclude in prayer together that God will receive this action and use it to lead others to Jesus. Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

*Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11 Psalm 85:9-14
2 Peter 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8*

17th December

Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

In family life, we learn to trust other people for protection and care. This experience of trust within the family enables children to believe us when we testify about our faith in Jesus. John the Baptist was believed by those who heard him because he helped them to recognize Jesus in their midst. In our family life, we hope and pray that we lead one another to recognize Jesus' presence in our world.

As you gather as a family, recall that during the Advent season we are invited to pay particular attention to the signs of Jesus' presence in our world. Consider some of the signs of Jesus' presence that you have experienced. During Advent, we remember how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Read together today's Gospel, John 1:6-8,19-28. Discuss the signs of Jesus' presence in our world that you named and explain what these signs tell us about God and God's love for us. Pray together that your family will be led to recognize that Jesus is present among us. Read and pray together the psalm for today's Mass, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

*Isaiah 61:1-2a,10-11 Luke 1:46-50,53-54
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8,19-28*

24th December

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

One of the challenges of faith is to recognize God's plan for us and to remain open to God's will and God's actions in our world. Filled with God's grace, Mary models for us the kind of faith that is needed to cooperate in God's plan of salvation. Like Mary, we are given the awesome opportunity to cooperate in God's saving plan. On this final Sunday of Advent, our Gospel invites us to consider how our preparations for Christmas have made us more aware of God's grace working in our lives.

Gather together your family and talk about what you have been doing as a family to prepare for Christmas. How have these preparations helped you to better celebrate the central mystery of Christmas, the Incarnation? Our Gospel today talks about how Mary was prepared for her role in Christ's birth. Read today's Gospel, Luke 1:26-38. Consider the question: What enabled Mary to say yes to God? Which of your Advent activities have made you more aware of God's grace in your life? Conclude in prayer together that God's grace will enable your family to be more faithful and obedient to God. Pray together the Magnificat.

*2 Samuel 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16 Psalm 89:2-5,27,29
Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38*

31st December

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, Cycle B

Today's celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family highlights the importance of family in our religious life. We know that Mary and Joseph's faithfulness to God enabled them to cooperate in God's plan for our salvation by accepting the responsibility to raise God's Son, Jesus. From his parents, Jesus learned how to be a faithful believer in his Jewish tradition. Simeon's prophecy about Mary's sorrow alerts us to the importance of a family's commitment to one another, a commitment that is expressed in both good times and bad.

Gather as a family and recall times when your family showed its commitment to one another in good times and in bad. Recall times when your immediate family was supported by members of your extended family. Note that today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, and we see in the family of Jesus an example for our own family life. Read together today's Gospel, Luke 2:22-40. Joseph and Mary expressed their faithfulness to God through their observance of the Law of Moses. Simeon prophesied the grief that Mary would experience at the foot of Jesus' cross. One of the blessings of family life is our commitment to one another, sharing good times and supporting one another through difficult times. Conclude in prayer together thanking God for the grace expressed in your family's commitment to another. Write a prayer together, thanking God for your family life and asking God to strengthen your family's commitment to one another. Pray this prayer together.

*Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3 Psalm 105:1-6,8-9
Hebrews 11:8,11-12,17-19 Luke 2:22-40*



Vinnies Christmas Appeal



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

donate.vinnies.org.au/christmas-appeal



**You can help a family
put food on the table
this Christmas.**

This year, Christmas is something Anna can't even think about. Not when she can't even afford to put food on the table each day.

Your support this Christmas will help provide food, clothing, living expenses and crisis support for vulnerable people like Anna who have been struggling with the cost-of-living crisis for over a year.



Food for hungry children

Your donation can help provide food so a parent like Anna can feed her children this Christmas. It doesn't have to be a big Christmas meal. Anna just wants to put food on the table.



Help with the essentials

Your donation can help give vulnerable people like Anna and her family the essentials they need to survive – from clothes and school uniforms to help keeping on top of fuel and utility bills.



Support with the home

Your donation can help cover a vulnerable family's rent so they can keep a roof over their heads. With rents skyrocketing, your gift is needed to help protect vulnerable people from homelessness.