



TOGETHER

In the Diocese of *Wagga Wagga*

wagga.catholic.org.au

FREE

FEBRUARY 2024

INSIDE

- Night of Mercy p3
- Project Compassion p4
- Pope Francis' Message for Lent p11
- Schools In Our Diocese p20



PROJECT COMPASSION

Daniel & Rachel Woods
 (02) 69 218 218 - All Hours
 2 Station Place - Wagga Wagga

www.funeralsofwaggawagga.com.au

- ✦ Funerals arranged to suit your family needs
- ✦ Pre-paid and pre-arranged funeral consultants
- ✦ Member of National Funeral Directors Association



DANIEL WOODS
 — FUNERAL CARE —

INCORPORATING HORNIBROOK & SAMUELSON, FUNERALS OF WAGGA WAGGA

BISHOP'S VOICE



TOGETHER
IN THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

is published monthly, eleven times per year, and is available free at parish churches, schools, presbyteries and religious houses throughout the Wagga Wagga Diocese.

Publisher

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga
McAlroy House
205 Tarcutta Street
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Editor/Designer

Karene Eggleton

Printer

Newsprinters
1 McKoy St
West Wodonga Vic 3690

Submissions

TOGETHER would not be possible without the voluntary labour and cooperation of many contributors from within the diocese and beyond. Submissions for publication are welcome but not always guaranteed to be printed.

Advertisers

TOGETHER acknowledges with gratitude the generous support of advertisers. Please show your support to our advertisers where possible. Please note that products and/or services advertised in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by this publication nor by the bishop of this diocese.

Copy deadline

15th of the month prior to publication

Contact Us

All news stories, advertising enquiries, correspondence and subscriptions to:
Together
PO Box 473
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Email

together@wagga.catholic.org.au



Facebook
www.facebook.com/togetherwagga



Twitter
@togetherwagga

Phone 0437 738 726

Member of the Australasian Catholic Press Assoc.

Annual Subscriptions

\$33 Australia
\$44 Overseas

Who is Jesus inviting me to become this Lent?

Dear sisters and brothers,

Lent is our sacred time to move towards God. I invite you to be intentional and to have a plan for this Lent.

Much of our talk about what to do for lent is about things we give up or take up. Such things have an importance and can change us for life, for a little while or not much at all. For example, I gave up sugar in my tea one year and now cannot drink tea with sugar in it. The next year, I gave up milk but about 15 years later,

I went back to having milk. And there are countless other things that I have done that stopped only a few days after Easter.

Such actions are important, however, only to the degree that they change our hearts. If they are just something external that I do for God, they are relatively superficial. The Church prompts us with the message of the prophet Joel: "Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn." Unless our actions impact us

on the inside, they are only torn garments.

Lent is not about stretching ourselves, accomplishing something, having read a spiritual book or doing exercise. Or at least not at the deepest level. These are like outward garments.

I invite you to ask Jesus for the wisdom and discernment to know what part of your heart you should concentrate on breaking this Lent. Who is Jesus inviting you to become this Lent? Ask him to change

your heart.

Changing metaphors, I can't make the plants grow but I can remove the stones in the garden bed of my heart so that the plants God wants to plant can grow. What stone is God inviting you to work on this Lent?

I suggest that we look for one fault or flaw: It might be the need to be right, or the desire to be at the centre of attention. Perhaps, I am inflexible and need to soften my dealings with others. Maybe we look at people of the other sex in ways that are inappropriate or have trouble with what we see on our screens. For many of us, it will be to be patient with family members. Please ask Jesus what he wants for you this Lent.

I also invite you to be attentive to what God puts in your life this Lent. You might experience stress at work, trial, or hurt from a friend. See this not as a random event but as something in which God is at work and perhaps purifying you. Look for God in this and to what he is calling you. Be ready for God in such unexpected places this Lent.

God bless
Mark Edwards omi



PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY - PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS

For the terminally ill.

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

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



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

APOSTOLICAL OFFICE OF PRAYER
<https://www.popesprayer.va/>

FOR THE GIFT OF DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

St. John Paul II famously wrote in his encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, "the Church must breathe with her two lungs!" He was referring to the "lungs" of East and West, praying and hoping that someday the Church would be fully united in her rich diversity of rituals and traditions.

In many ways this has already begun to take place, as the Church in recent centuries has sought to repair the damage that was done in the past, healing the division between East and West.

What many Catholics don't realize is that the Church is very big and diverse, encompassing 23 distinct and unique churches, such as the Byzantine, Maronite and Coptic Rites to name a few.

Pope Francis this month urges us to recognize and appreciate this diversity. He spoke on this topic at a general audience in 2014.

"The most beautiful experience, though, is the discovery of all the different charisms and all the gifts of his Spirit that the Father showers on his Church! This must not be seen as a reason for confusion, for discomfort: they are all gifts that God gives to the Christian community, in order that it may grow in harmony, in the faith and in his love, as one body, the Body of Christ. The same Spirit who bestows this diversity of charisms unites the Church. It is always the same Spirit."

As we celebrate the Week of Prayer of Christian Unity, may we unite underneath the banner of the Pope and rejoice in the many different ways the Holy Spirit has inspired the Church throughout the centuries.

Philip Kosloski

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (United States)

NIGHT OF MERCY

Many people would like to be reconciled to God but they don't know how to do it, or they don't feel worthy, or they don't want to admit it, not even to themselves. This Lent is a time of reconciliation for everyone.

I invite you to experience Reconciliation at our annual Night of Mercy.

On Friday March 15 from 6pm-midnight across the diocese priests will be available to help you honestly share with your God what your major problems are, your sorrow for your sins, and your desire to change. Come to Sacred Heart Church, Griffith, St Patrick's Church, Albury and St Michael's Cathedral, Wagga and in various other Churches to experience God's forgiveness.

God has never failed to offer his forgiveness to us. Often we believe that our sins distance the Lord from us. It is true that in sinning we may distance ourselves from him, but, seeing

us in danger, he tries all the harder to find us. God never gives in to the possibility we could stay estranged from his love. All he needs is sign of repentance from us for our wrongdoings.

Jesus comes to find us like a good shepherd who is not content until he has found the lost sheep, as we read in the Gospel (cf. Lk 15:4-6). He rebuilds the bridge that connects us to the Father and allows us to rediscover our dignity as children. By the offering of his life he has reconciled us to the Father and given us eternal life (cf. Jn 10:15).

Let us be reconciled to God!



Come and take a chance on God and on the depth of his love for you.

A Night of Reconciliation

An Invitation to Experience the Sacrament of Confession



You are invited to come to Confession on the night of 15 March 2024 this Lent to experience the power, freedom and love of God and God's grace.

**Your priests will be waiting for you
Friday 15 March 2024 - 6pm to 12 midnight at:**

- St Michael's Cathedral, Johnston St, Wagga Wagga
- St Patrick's Church, Smollett St, Albury
- Sacred Heart Church, Warrambool St, Griffith

**and other churches around the Diocese.
Contact your local Parish for information.**

Don't give up on your dream of being close to God and those you love.

FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

Caritas Australia has announced the launch of Project Compassion 2024, its annual Lenten fundraising and awareness-raising appeal. For each of the six weeks of Lent, thousands of Australians come together in solidarity to help end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity. Caritas Australia helps over 1 million people in Australia and overseas every year - walking alongside those in crisis. This year, Project Compassion is built around the theme of 'For All Future Generations.' This theme asks us to reflect on the great yes that Mary said when the angel told her that she was to become the mother of Jesus. She freely accepted a unique place in the history of the human family. The great prayer she shared with her cousin Elizabeth says 'all generations will call me blessed.' Her yes is 'for all future generations.'



Ronita from Philippines

After the birth of her children, 22-year-old Ronita was at risk of having to leave school permanently. But with the support of Caritas Australia's partners in the Philippines, she resumed her studies and now has a job to support her family.



Alternative Learning System (ALS) program, Ronita was able to re-enrol in her studies, and continue learning in a safe and flexible environment – even with the arrival of her second child, Egzy Grey.

After completing the ALS class, Ronita attended senior high school classes. Despite the challenges, Ronita persevered with her studies in this environment. Often, she wouldn't get enough sleep as she had to take care of her children and study into the early hours of the morning, even skipping lunch at school as she was unable to afford it.

Ronita has now completed her

final high school exams and secured a job at a call centre, which required a Grade 12 Senior High School Diploma to apply. She hopes to earn enough income to continue her studies and support her family.

"One day I hope I will be school teacher, just like Ma'am Jen and Ma'am Grace (her former teachers at FCJ)," Ronita said. "I feel hopeful for the future... Now it's not impossible for me to achieve my dream... Thank you for that."

Watch Ronita's story at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89bJV-w_wXk

22-year-old Ronita lives in a barangay (native Filipino term for a local district), in Quezon City, the Philippines.

She lives with her husband Lean and their two children, Egzy Grey who is 3 years old and Clark who is 5 years old. Ronita's husband works seven days a week in waste disposal, from 3am to 9pm each day. It is exhausting, laborious work, made harder by the very hot climate. Despite this, Ronita and her husband are only able to rent a very small brick room (measuring around 10 square metres).

Growing up, Ronita's family faced many challenges. She grew up with

her mum, who worked three jobs because Ronita's father left their family. Ronita has two brothers who married young and never finished school.

Ronita left school when she became pregnant as a teenager. She was at risk of never re-entering the education system when she had her first child, Clark, at 17.

With the support of people like you, Ronita was given a second chance at completing her studies when she heard about the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), Caritas Australia's local partners in the Philippines. Through the FCJ's



PROJECT COMPASSION

Leaia from Samoa

Not having access to a reliable source of clean water was very difficult for Leaia and her family. But with the support of Caritas Australia, a water tank was installed at their home, improving their health and living conditions.



During the next phase of the program, Caritas Samoa will work to provide homes like Leaia's with hygienic toilets with septic tanks, which will improve the health of rural communities. This will only be possible with the generosity of Australians supporting Caritas Australia's partnership with Caritas Samoa.

Watch Leaia's story at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hP4tqINIWY>



old fridges. When their water ran out, she had to walk with her young children to collect water in buckets and containers from a neighbour down the street.

With the support of Caritas Australia's local partner, Caritas Samoa, a water tank was installed in Leaia's home to harvest rainwater. This means that her family can now have access to clean water to drink and bathe. The time that was previously used to collect drinking water can now be used for other essential tasks and, most importantly, her children don't have to miss out on school.

Prior to having the water tank, Leaia's children would sometimes miss school during the dry season. Without enough water at home, Leaia would keep her children back as they could not bathe before school.

The school water supply was also unclean. "If there isn't enough water the kids can't go to school because the water supply at school isn't clean... Part of their morning routine is to shower before school, so if there's not enough water, they can't attend school. It becomes unhygienic for them." Leaia said.

In rural areas of Samoa, poverty rates are strongly linked to lower levels of education. Caritas Samoa is installing water tanks in crucial areas of communities, such as schools and family homes, to prevent children from missing out on their right to an education.

Samoa may be a country surrounded by water, but access to clean drinking water is scarce in some areas, with many families facing extreme hardship as a result.

Leaia lives with her five children, husband, brother, and sister-in-law on the island of Upolu in Samoa. Not having access to clean water for their daily lives has caused Leaia a lot of worry.

Leaia's family built the home entirely out of recycled scraps collected from a nearby recycling plant, as not to waste precious income and provide for her children.

Their home is not connected to a piped water system, so they used to rely solely on rainwater collected in

Memory from Malawi

As the eldest child in a low-income farming family, Memory faced many barriers to her education. But with the support of Caritas Australia and CADECOM, she enrolled in a technical school and became the first female carpenter in her village.



services to households in her community. As the only female carpenter in her village, she is also a role model and trailblazer for other young women who want to pursue a career in a male-dominated industry.

"In the future, I want to build a house for my parents because the one they are using now is in a bad condition.

I also want to own my own workshop so I can help the community and employ others in the community," Memory said.

"Being a female carpenter sets an example to others in my community. They see a woman can do what a man can do."



Watch Memory's story at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hP4tqINIWY>



Memory grew up in the Mwanza district in southern Malawi, with her parents and four siblings. Her parents are subsistence farmers who depend on their crops for survival.

As the eldest child in her family, Memory faced many challenges in her daily life. She had to support her family with domestic chores such as farming, carrying water, cooking and cleaning, alongside her education efforts.

"Growing up in the village was not easy. My parents don't have a job, so they depend on farming. When the season goes wrong, we suffer a lot and become food insecure. Sometimes we need to bathe without soap.

Sometimes we need to walk without shoes," Memory said.

Economic opportunities for girls in Malawi are constrained by high levels of early school dropouts and women typically tend to work in lower paying jobs, or stay at home.

After being identified by local leaders in her village as a capable candidate for a vocational skills course, Memory was referred to a technical college near the city of Blantyre with support from CADECOM, Caritas Australia's local partner in Malawi. Through the A+ program, CADECOM supported Memory with the provision of logistical support like tuition and boarding fees with funding from Caritas Australia.

Memory decided to pursue vocational training in carpentry to prove to her community that women are capable of working in a male-dominated industry.

"In my community, most people think that only men can be carpenters, so I want to prove to my community that women can do it as well," Memory said.

After three years, Memory graduated with an advanced certificate in Carpentry and Joinery. With the skills acquired, she secured a job as a carpenter at one of the largest hydroelectric power companies in Malawi.

Memory's dream is to open her own carpentry workshop in her village and help provide carpentry

POPE'S WORLD DAY OF SICK MESSAGE: HEAL RELATIONSHIPS TO HEAL THE ILL

Pope Francis releases his message for the 32nd World Day of the Sick, and calls for a 'therapeutic covenant' between people who are ill and their caregivers, family members, and God.

BY DEVIN WATKINS

www.vaticannews.va

In his message, the Pope explores the fundamental importance and healing power of our relationships with others and with God.

Drawing on God's words about Adam in the Biblical Book of Genesis, he notes that God's first thought for the first man was that

in moments of vulnerability, illness, and insecurity, which are often caused by the onset of a serious illness.

Therapeutic covenant

Pope Francis points out that the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing wars have isolated many people.

Yet, he says, even countries

"fundamental right to health and access to healthcare" by turning healthcare into a mere "provision of services" and wounding the dignity of the human person.

The Holy Father calls for healthcare systems to be accompanied "by a 'therapeutic covenant' between physicians, patients, and family members."

God's project of communion for humanity

Returning to God's words—"It is not good for man to be alone"—Pope Francis says human sin wounds a person by severing their relationships "with God, with themselves, with others, with creation" and going against the "profound meaning of God's project for humanity."

"Such isolation causes us to miss the meaning of our lives," he says. "It takes away the joy of love and

God, with others—family members, friends, healthcare workers—with creation and with themselves."

Healing wounds of solitude and isolation

Each of us, says the Pope, came into the world because our parents welcomed us, and we were each "made for love" and are called to communion and fraternity.

The best therapy for those who are ill, he adds, is to offer them our love and communion, despite the pace of our own frenetic lives.

"To those of you who experience illness, whether temporary or chronic, I would say this: Do not be ashamed of your longing for closeness and tenderness!" says the Pope. "Do not conceal it, and never think that you are a burden on others."

In conclusion, the Holy Father invites Christians to draw inspiration

Below: Pope Francis embraces a young person with an illness (Vatican Media Divisione Foto)



Above: Pope Francis embraces a sick boy during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

he should be in communion and relationship with other beings.

"Our lives, reflecting in the image of the Trinity, are meant to attain fulfilment through a network of relationships, friendships and love, both given and received," says the Pope. "We were created to be together, not alone."

This relational aspect of humanity, he adds, retains its importance even

living in peace and enjoying greater resources have a large number of people who face solitude and even abandonment due to old age and sickness.

Our "throwaway cultures" exalt productivity and individualism at the cost of those unable to produce an economic gain.

Politicians, says the Pope, are thus tempted to water down the

makes us experience an oppressive sense of being alone at all the crucial passages of life."

The Pope therefore invites everyone to offer compassionate and loving closeness to those who are ill, following the example of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37).

"To care for the sick thus means above all to care for their relationships, all of them: with

from Jesus' compassion-filled gaze through prayer and the Eucharist, so as to "heal the wounds of solitude and isolation."

"The sick, the vulnerable, and the poor are at the heart of the Church," concludes Pope Francis. "They must also be at the heart of our human concern and pastoral attention."

ASH WEDNESDAY

This year Ash Wednesday is on February 14, 2024 marking the first day of Lent.

What is Ash Wednesday?

Lent is the forty days (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter. The number forty is significant as it refers to Jesus' forty days in the desert prior to beginning his ministry of teaching.

On Ash Wednesday, Catholics and some other Christian denominations receive ashes in the shape of a cross on their forehead or sprinkled on top of their head. These ashes are created from the palms used during the previous year's Palm Sunday Mass. They symbolize penance, which is appropriate as Lent is a season of

The History of Ash Wednesday

Ashes have a place of prominence throughout the Old Testament. They are an outward sign of an internal state of penance or mourning. You can find some scriptural references below:

"Therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes." - Job 42: 6

"Daughter of my people, dress in sackcloth, roll in the ashes." - Jeremiah 6:26

"I turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." - Daniel 9:3

"When the news reached the

and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands." - Jonah 3: 6-8

And the practice continued after the coming of Jesus. The practice of public penance was common in the Early Church. After making a confession a person would receive ashes on his head from the priest. The practice of using ashes to mark the beginning of Lent is first recorded during the time of St. Gregory the Great. The Gregorian Sacramentary has the earliest known record of it, then called the "Day of Ashes." Pope Urban II recommended the practice be used universally throughout the Church in 1091.

Is Ash Wednesday a Holy Day of Obligation?

beginning of the Lenten season.

Can you eat meat on Ash Wednesday?

No. Unless you have a medical exemption, Ash Wednesday is a day of Fasting for Catholics.

Make It Personal

Ash Wednesday is a great day to reflect on how you can grow spiritually throughout the Lenten season. Set aside 15 minutes to think about how you can embrace prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Is there a daily prayer, like the rosary or Morning Offering, that you want to start? Can you go to Daily Mass at least once a week? When did you make your last Confession? What habits or indulgences can you resist for forty days? Is there a charity or nonprofit organization close to your heart that you can either donate to or volunteer with?



penance, and remind us of our own mortality. During the Mass, as the priest or lay minister applies the ashes, he says "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." Anyone who attends a Mass can receive ashes, not just practicing Catholics.

king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh:* "By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man

Holy Days of Obligation are days Catholics should attend Mass and do their best to avoid unnecessary work. Contrary to popular belief, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics. While it's not an obligation many Catholics choose to attend Mass and mark the

Focus on one or two things you can really commit to and ask God to help you grow powerfully this season. You'll be amazed at the outcome!

To find out more visit:
www.dynamiccatholic.com/lent/ash-wednesday

LMD 6808 - Channel13 UHF

Hydraulic hose manufacturers and suppliers
Steel supplies, engineering and welding supplies
Dealers for Robin & Delta stationary engines

SMITH'S MOTOR GARAGE

58-60 GREEN ST LOCKHART

PH 02 6920 5556

- Authorised Mitsubishi Dealers -



Help make Together the best newspaper it can be



Let us know what is happening in your area.

Together relies upon your stories to make it relevant and meaningful. We want to know what is happening in your local area so that we can share that news with the rest of the diocese. We are always looking for local contributors who can write 250 to 350 words about local church projects, initiatives or school events. Include a couple of high resolution photos and you are well on your way to being published in Together.

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

POPE FRANCIS MESSAGE FOR WORLD MISSION DAY

"Go and invite everyone to the banquet"

Matthew 22:9

Dear brothers and sisters!

The theme I have chosen for this year's World Mission Day is taken from the Gospel parable of the wedding banquet (cf. Mt 22:1-14). After the guests refused his invitation, the king, the main character in the story, tells his servants: "Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find" (v. 9). Reflecting on this key passage in the context of the parable and of Jesus' own life, we can discern several important aspects of evangelization. These appear particularly timely for all of us, as missionary disciples of Christ, during this final stage of the synodal journey that, in the words of its motto, "Communion, Participation, Mission", seeks to refocus the Church on her primary task, which is the preaching of the Gospel in today's world.

1. "Go and invite!" Mission as a tireless going out to invite others to the Lord's banquet

In the king's command to his servants we find two words that express the heart of the mission: the verbs "to go out" and "to invite".

As for the first, we need to remember that the servants had previously been sent to deliver the king's invitation to the guests (cf. vv. 3-4). Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Tireless! God, great in love and rich in mercy, constantly sets out to encounter all men and women, and to call them to the happiness of his kingdom, even in the face of their indifference or refusal. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and messenger of the Father, went out in search of the lost sheep of the people of Israel and desired to go even further, in order to reach even the most distant sheep (cf. Jn 10:16). Both before and after his resurrection, he told his disciples, "Go!", thus involving them in his own mission (cf. Lk 10:3; Mk 16:15). The Church, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles.

I take this opportunity to thank all those missionaries who, in

response to Christ's call, have left everything behind to go far from their homeland and bring the Good News to places where people have not yet received it, or received it only recently. Dear friends, your generous dedication is a tangible expression of your commitment to the mission ad gentes that Jesus entrusted to his disciples: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). We continue to pray and we thank God for the new and numerous missionary vocations for the task of evangelization to the ends of the earth.

Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the "crossroads" of today's world. "Today's drama in the Church is that Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out! Often we end up being an 'imprisoning' Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as 'its own', whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries" (Address to Participants in the Conference organized by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, 18 February 2023). May all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!

To return to the king's command in the parable, the servants are told not only to "go", but also to "invite": "Come to the wedding!" (Mt 22:4). Here we can see another, no less important, aspect of the mission entrusted by God. As we can imagine, the servants conveyed the king's invitation with urgency but also with great respect and kindness. In the same way, the mission of bringing the Gospel to every creature must necessarily imitate the same "style" of the One who is being preached. In proclaiming to the world "the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead" (Evangelii Gaudium, 36), missionary disciples should do so with joy, magnanimity and benevolence that are the fruits of the Holy Spirit within them (cf. Gal 5:22). Not by pressuring, coercing



or proselytizing, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in this way reflecting God's own way of being and acting.

2. "To the marriage feast". The eschatological and Eucharistic dimension of the mission of Christ and the Church.

In the parable, the king asks the servants to bring the invitation to his son's wedding banquet. That banquet is a reflection of the eschatological banquet. It is an image of ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God, fulfilled even now by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, who has given us life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), symbolized by the table set with succulent food and with fine wines, when God will destroy death forever (cf. Is 25:6-8).

Christ's mission has to do with the fullness of time, as he declared at the beginning of his preaching: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15). Christ's disciples are called to continue this mission of their Lord and Master. Here we think of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the eschatological character of the Church's missionary outreach: "The time for missionary activity extends between the first coming of the Lord and the second..., for the Gospel must be preached to all nations before the Lord shall come (cf. Mk 13:10)" (Ad Gentes, 9).

We know that among the first Christians missionary zeal had a powerful eschatological dimension. They sensed the urgency of the preaching of the Gospel. Today too it is important to maintain this perspective, since it helps us to evangelize with the joy of those who know that "the Lord is near" and with the hope of those who are pressing forward towards the goal, when all of us will be with Christ at his wedding feast in the kingdom of God. While the world sets before us the various "banquets" of consumerism, selfish comfort, the accumulation of wealth and individualism, the Gospel calls

everyone to the divine banquet, marked by joy, sharing, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others.

This fullness of life, which is Christ's gift, is anticipated even now in the banquet of the Eucharist, which the Church celebrates at the Lord's command in memory of him. The invitation to the eschatological banquet that we bring to everyone in our mission of evangelization is intrinsically linked to the invitation to the Eucharistic table, where the Lord feeds us with his word and with his Body and Blood. As Benedict XVI taught: "Every Eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the Eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. Is 25:6-9) and described by the New Testament as 'the marriage-feast of the Lamb' (Rev 19:9), to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of the saints" (Sacramentum Caritatis, 31).

Consequently, all of us are called to experience more intensely every Eucharist, in all its dimensions, and particularly its eschatological and missionary dimensions. In this regard, I would reiterate that "we cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people" (ibid., 84). The Eucharistic renewal that many local Churches are laudably promoting in the post-Covid era will also be essential for reviving the missionary spirit in each member of the faithful. With how much greater faith and heartfelt enthusiasm should we recite at every Mass: "We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again"!

In this year devoted to prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025, I wish to encourage all to deepen their commitment above all to take part in the celebration of Mass

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

and to pray for the Church’s mission of evangelization. In obedience to the Saviour’s command, she does not cease to pray, at every Eucharistic and liturgical celebration, the “Our Father”, with its petition, “Thy kingdom come”. In this way, daily prayer and the Eucharist in particular make us pilgrims and missionaries of hope, journeying towards everlasting life in God, towards the nuptial banquet that God has prepared for all his children.

3. “Everyone”. The universal mission of Christ’s disciples in the fully synodal and missionary Church

The third and last reflection concerns the recipients of the King’s invitation: “everyone”. As I emphasized, “This is the heart of mission: that ‘all’, excluding no one. Every mission of ours, then, is born from the heart of Christ in order that he may draw all to himself” (Address to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies, 3 June 2023). Today, in a world torn apart by divisions and conflicts, Christ’s Gospel remains the gentle yet firm voice that calls individuals to encounter one another, to recognize that they are brothers and sisters, and to rejoice in harmony amid diversity. “God our Saviour desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). Let us never forget, then, that in our missionary activities we are asked to preach the

Gospel to all: “Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, [we] should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 14).

Christ’s missionary disciples have always had a heartfelt concern for all persons, whatever their social or even moral status. The parable of the banquet tells us that, at the king’s orders, the servants gathered “all whom they found, both good and bad” (Mt 22:10). What is more, “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Lk 14:21), in a word, the least of our brothers and sisters, those marginalized by society, are the special guests of the king. The wedding feast of his Son that God has prepared remains always open to all, since his love for each of us is immense and unconditional. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have life eternal” (Jn 3:16). Everyone, every man and every woman, is invited by God to partake of his grace, which transforms and saves. One need simply say “yes” to this gratuitous divine gift, accepting it and allowing oneself be transformed by it, putting it on like a “wedding robe” (cf. Mt 22:12).

The mission for all requires the commitment of all. We need to continue our journey towards a fully synodal and missionary Church in the service of the Gospel. Synodality

is essentially missionary and, vice versa, mission is always synodal. Consequently, close missionary cooperation is today all the more urgent and necessary, both in the universal Church and in the particular Churches. In the footsteps of the Second Vatican Council and my Predecessors, I recommend to all dioceses throughout the world the service of the Pontifical Mission Societies. They represent the primary means “by which Catholics are imbued from infancy with a truly universal and missionary outlook and [are] also a means for instituting an effective collecting of funds for all the missions, each according to its needs” (Ad Gentes, 38). For this reason, the collections of World Mission Day in all the local Churches are entirely destined to the universal fund of solidarity that the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith then distributes in the Pope’s name for the needs of all the Church’s missions. Let us pray that the Lord may guide us and help us to be a more synodal

and a more missionary Church (cf. Homily for the Concluding Mass of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 29 October 2023).

Finally, let us lift our gaze to Mary, who asked Jesus to perform his first miracle precisely at a wedding feast, in Cana of Galilee (cf. Jn 2:1-12). The Lord offered to the newlyweds and all the guests an abundance of new wine, as a foreshadowing of the nuptial banquet that God is preparing for all at the end of time. Let us implore her maternal intercession for the evangelizing mission of Christ’s disciples in our own time. With the joy and loving concern of our Mother, with the strength born of tenderness and affection (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288), let us go forth to bring to everyone the invitation of the King, our Saviour. Holy Mary, Star of Evangelization, pray for us!

Rome, Saint John Lateran,
25 January 2024,
Feast of the Conversion
of Saint Paul



PRINT SOLUTIONS

SCANNING SOLUTIONS

DIGITAL WORKPLACES

MANAGED SERVICES



PRINT AND TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

As an authorised FUJIFILM Business Innovation dealer, we offer hardware solutions that range from a single office copier or multifunction device, through to a managed print fleet with integrated document-management systems, all designed to improve productivity and reduce costs.



Viatek Southern

1/509 Spencer Street, Albury NSW
20 Olympic Street, Griffith NSW
1/93 Copland Street, Wagga Wagga NSW
enquiries@viatek.com.au | 1300 842 835



Aged Care. Local care.

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

- We know this community well, just like we know the Aged Care sector. We provide the tailored support you need to live your best life at home with as much independence as possible, for as long as possible.
- Domestic help
- Shopping and meal preparation
- Transport
- Social support
- Nursing care



Forrest Community Services
02 6932 3009
forrestcentre.com.au

Lean on the locals.

LAUNCH OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL SYNOD CONSULTATION



Catholics around Australia are being asked to contribute to a global discussion on the future of the Church.

At a local (diocesan) level, consultation contributing to the next session of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will start on February 1.

Groups of Catholics will gather and reflect on the question of “enhancing the differentiated co-responsibility in the mission of all members” and provide feedback. The discussion will focus on identifying the paths to follow and the tools that could be adopted in different contexts and circumstances to enhance the unique contribution of each baptised person.

The dioceses will then report their findings.

Dioceses are also encouraged to provide a two-page testimony of their experiences of synodality, including any best practices that they consider significant.

As well, Catholics will be encouraged to promote new initiatives which will help to grow as a synodal church on mission.

“This work does not require restarting the synodal process again in dioceses but rather it is built upon the outcomes of the synodal experiences from previous stages of consultation,” said Australian

Catholic Bishops Conference president, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe.

National Centre for Pastoral Research Director Dr Trudy Dantis said: “In responding to the questions, dioceses and groups are invited to focus on the ‘how’ and to choose aspects that enable them to make contributions based on their own situation, character and experience.”

Catholic leaders will also reflect at a national level on the question of the “differentiated co-responsibility”, particularly on the relations between Churches, between groupings of Churches at different levels and with the Bishop of Rome.

Diocesan contacts and Synod group leaders will receive training in February, led by the National Centre for Pastoral Research, and an online submission portal will be set up in late March to collate feedback from dioceses.

A synthesis report of the diocesan and national reflections and a collation of diocesan testimonies will be sent to the Vatican by May 15.

The next session of the Synod - which was initially held from October 4-29, 2023 - will be staged in October in the Vatican.



PARISH APPOINTMENTS FOR 2024

The following appointments, took 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 Ledinich

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 2023.

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 their new assignment.

Yours in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate

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

CSSA APPLAUDS GOVERNMENT'S REVISION TO STAGE 3 TAX CUTS

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) has long argued that the Stage 3 Tax cuts legislated in 2019 would exacerbate income inequality and should be either abolished or substantially reconfigured. CSSA welcomes the Labor Government's announcement today that the tax cuts will be restructured to better support low and middle-income Australians.

CSSA's criticism of the original Stage 3 Tax cuts was that they provided only minimal cost of living relief to people earning under \$120,000 per annum, with the greatest benefit going to those earning over \$180,000 per annum, representing just the top 5% of earners. Two-thirds of these high-income earners are men, further exacerbating the unfair nature of the cuts.

“The way the original tax cuts were structured would have weakened our progressive tax system and would have exacerbated income inequality,” said Monique Earsman, Executive Director of CSSA.

“We applaud the proposed changes and call upon the Government to further consider what they can do in the upcoming Budget to lift the rate of working-age social security payments to at least meet the poverty line (to around \$76 a day).”



The revised package of tax cuts, effective from July 1st this year, will see more than 12.5 million taxpayers receive a tax cut, a significant increase from the initial model that would have benefited around 2 million of our nation's people.

By recasting the tax cuts to assist lower-income taxpayers, the Government is taking a crucial step toward mitigating economic disparities, particularly relevant in the post-COVID-19 era, which is marked by global conflicts and economic uncertainties.

CSSA endorse these amendments, recognising their potential to support Australians in meeting the cost-of-living crisis, which has the most significant impact on low-income Australians.



Faith Cookies

COOKIES MADE WITH LOVE

Give the gift of cookies made for the reason for the season

- Easter • Christmas • Baptism
- First Communion • Wedding • Birthday

Customised orders and beautifully presented gift boxes available

Made with love in a fully licensed and council registered home based kitchen in Wagga Wagga. Postage available.



0419 715 618



MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR LENT 2024

The following is the text of the Message of the Holy Father Francis for Lent 2024, on the theme: *“Through the desert God leads us to freedom”*:

Dear brothers and sisters!

When our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:2). These are the first words of the Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Those who heard them were quite familiar with the exodus of which God spoke: the experience of their bondage still weighed heavily upon them. In the desert, they received the “Ten Words” as a thoroughfare to freedom. We call them “commandments”, in order to emphasize the strength of the love by which God shapes his people. The call to freedom is a demanding one. It is not answered straightaway; it has to mature as part of a journey. Just as Israel in the desert still clung to Egypt – often longing for the past and grumbling against the Lord and Moses – today too, God’s people can cling to an oppressive bondage that it is called to leave behind. We realize how true this is at those moments when we feel hopeless, wandering through life like a desert and lacking a promised land as our destination. Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea – the place of our first love (cf. Hos 2:16-17). God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind and experience a Passover from death to life. Like a bridegroom, the Lord draws us once more to himself, whispering words of love to our hearts.

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to open our eyes to reality. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and

to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:7-8). Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another.

During my visit to Lampedusa, as a way of countering the globalization of indifference, I asked two questions, which have become more and more pressing: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9) and “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). Our Lenten journey will be concrete if, by listening once more to those two questions, we realize that even today we remain under the rule of Pharaoh. A rule that makes us weary and indifferent. A model of growth that divides and robs us of a future. Earth, air and water are polluted, but so are our souls. True, Baptism has begun our process of liberation, yet there remains in us an inexplicable longing for slavery. A kind of attraction to the security of familiar things, to the detriment of our freedom.

In the Exodus account, there is a significant detail: it is God who sees, is moved and brings freedom; Israel does not ask for this. Pharaoh stifles dreams, blocks the view of heaven, makes it appear that this world, in which human dignity is trampled upon and authentic bonds are denied, can never change. He put everything in bondage to himself. Let us ask: Do I want a new world? Am I ready to leave behind my compromises with the old? The witness of many of my brother bishops and a great number of those who work for peace and justice has increasingly convinced me that we need to combat a deficit of hope that stifles dreams and the silent cry that reaches to heaven and moves the heart of God. This “deficit of hope” is not unlike the nostalgia for slavery that paralyzed Israel in the desert and prevented it from



moving forward. An exodus can be interrupted: how else can we explain the fact that humanity has arrived at the threshold of universal fraternity and at levels of scientific, technical, cultural, and juridical development capable of guaranteeing dignity to all, yet gropes about in the darkness of inequality and conflict.

God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:2). Lent is a season of conversion, a time of freedom. Jesus himself, as we recall each year on the first Sunday of Lent, was driven into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted in freedom. For forty days, he will stand before us and with us: the incarnate Son. Unlike Pharaoh, God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters. The desert is the place where our freedom can mature in a personal decision not to fall back into slavery. In Lent, we find new criteria of justice and a community with which we can press forward on a road not yet taken.

This, however, entails a struggle, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, “You are my Son, the Beloved” (Mk 1:11), and “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is

a road well-travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyze us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us. Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

companions and fellow travelers. This is God's dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind.

The Church's synodal form, which in these years we are rediscovering and cultivating, suggests that Lent is also a time of communitarian decisions, of decisions, small and large, that are countercurrent. Decisions capable of altering the daily lives of individuals and entire neighbourhoods, such as the ways we acquire goods, care for creation, and strive to include those who go unseen or are looked down upon. I invite every Christian community to do just this: to offer its members moments set aside to rethink their lifestyles, times to examine their presence in society and the contribution they make to its betterment. Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance that so dismayed Jesus. To us too, he says: "Whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting" (Mt 6:16). Instead, let others see joyful faces, catch the scent of freedom and experience the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and those nearest to us. This can happen in every one of our Christian communities.

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this" (Address to University Students, 3 August 2023). Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward.[1]

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.
FRANCIS

[1] Cf. CH. PÉGUY, *The Portico of the Mystery of the Second Virtue*.

2024 SHROVE TUESDAY AND ASH WEDNESDAY

The staff at McAlroy House enjoyed a feast of delicious pancakes on Shrove Tuesday in preparation for Lent.

The following day, 14th February, Bishop Mark celebrated the Ash Wednesday Mass at St Michael's Cathedral.



LILLYPILLY

Lillypilly Wines
Family Owned Boutique Winery

Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm
visit us and have a taste

47 Lillypilly Rd, Leeton NSW 2705
Tel: 02 6953 4069
www.lillypilly.com
www.facebook.com/lillypillywines

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
ROB GEDDES MW
Australian Wine Vintages 2015
Lillypilly Noble Blend

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
JAMES HALLIDAY -5 STARS
Australian Wine Companion 2015

huon HOOKE .com 95
Lillypilly 2011 Noble Blend

ga LEETON

GOLDEN APPLE SUPER STORE
A GOOD PLACE TO SHOP AND SAVE

OPEN DAILY FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE
ONE-STOP SUPERMARKET

Part of the Local Community Since 1960

THE GOLDEN APPLE SUPER STORE

SUPA IGA bp

YANCO ROAD, LEETON Tel:69532000

H. FRANCIS & CO.
STOCK STATION AND REAL ESTATE AGENTS
rma network. Accredited Member

4/41-43 Moorong St
Wagga Wagga
Ph: 6921 6366
Fax: 6921 6493

We sell Cattle at the Wagga Livestock Marketing Centre every Monday and Sheep and Lambs every Thursday and also offer a range of services:

- Paddock sales, over the hook sales and direct to feedlot sales
- On farm Stud Sales
- Auctions Plus Sales
- Clearing Sales
- Rural property sales

For any of your livestock or property needs contact one of our friendly agents:

Tim Francis	0428 263 852
Alex Croker	0428 326 810
Matt Hawker	0418 861 320
Sam Sutton	0448 080 607
David Kosa	0432 064 188
Helen De Costa	0448 353 764

Email: livestock@hfrancisandco.com.au
www.hfrancisandco.com.au

NEW PODCAST SERIES EXPLORES THE POWER OF PRAYER

In a year that has been dedicated to prayer by Pope Francis, Majellan Media has launched a new podcast series titled *Prayer is Life* featuring Redemptorist priest Father David Hore CSsR.

Fr Hore believes whether you're a person of faith, or simply someone at a 'crossroads in life', the podcasts can offer a deep reflection on how prayer can lead us to more "responsive and fulfilling lives, embodying the notion that prayer is life".

Topics will include new ways of praying; simplifying prayer; how God presents to us in our daily lives; the challenges of praying; God's need for our love; how do we know if we are praying properly and tips on how families can be more fully engaged in prayer.

Fr Hore says praying is simply a conversation with God. "Praying can take place anywhere and at any time. A prayer can last a few seconds while walking along a street, sitting in a park, gazing at a waterfall or soaking in a beautiful sunset. But prayer is also about listening and importantly how we listen and interact

with God?"

Fr Hore says that a person's life and prayer can't be separated. "Prayer becomes the 'workshop of life'. In this sense work and prayer are intertwined. It's also about a deeper journey of discovery and not just saying a prayer but having a greater appreciation and understanding of our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others, and with the world around us."

Majellan Media CEO Tony Biviano hopes *Prayer is Life* will also interest people of no faith. "Unfortunately, the number of people who believe in God is falling, especially amongst the young but the aim of this series is to engage more people and families in prayer.

"Fr David shares his personal journey and insights, and draws upon the wisdom of the Redemptorists' founder, St Alphonsus Liguori. Majellan Media began



developing the idea of the series before Pope Francis announced a 'Year of Prayer' in 2024. It is a wonderful coincidence."

Pope Francis says a 'Year of Prayer' will lead the Catholic Church into its Jubilee Year in 2025, calling on the faithful to pray for Christian unity and world peace.

The first 15-minute podcast titled, *Introduction to Prayer*, is now available at <https://majellan.media/prayer-is-life-podcast/>

or on Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/show/5vRkRYt6h8wIBGelpg7SNt>

as well as Apple and other podcast outlets.

About David Hore CSsR:

David Hore CSsR is an Australian Redemptorist Missionary priest who was ordained in 2004.

Following his ordination, he was involved in faith formation and preaching over four years in the Dioceses of Geraldton, Port Pirie, Townsville and Cairns.

In 2011, he was sent on mission to Sri Lanka, where he ministered in the large Redemptorist parish of St Theresa's in Colombo. He also preached retreats to clergy and Religious and conducted faith education programs for people. While at St Theresa's he also worked as a confessor and counsellor. Fr Hore returned to Australia in mid-2023.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

World Day of Prayer is held annually on the first Friday of March. It is an international ecumenical Christian movement initiated by women in 1926. The purpose is *'to see national change and lives impacted by God through prayer and financial assistance.'*

The international committee selects countries, themes and Bible passages for upcoming years.

The World Day of Prayer (WDP) believes that "Prayer is rooted in listening to God and to each other" (Guiding Principle #2). The listening that we seek is an active and demanding listening. It requires a stillness that can allow another to speak, as we hear and feel with another's pains and joys. Our listening is both personal and in community. Our conviction is that WDP opens a window to the voices of women in a different part of the world each year—sometimes near, sometimes far away. Always, we join our prayer with theirs.

We are committed to honoring the prayers offered by women who develop our liturgy each year for a common day of prayer on the first Friday of March. The women who write are selected at an International Meeting held every 5 years, which includes voting delegates from every country in our movement. At the 2017 International Meeting in Brazil, WDP Palestine was selected to write the 2024 program, followed by WDP Cook Islands in 2025 and WDP Nigeria in 2026. The liturgy is developed through a rigorous writing process that starts 4 years before the day when the world will gather to pray that liturgy. This liturgy

is developed with our Executive Committee, a group of women elected to represent each region of our movement.

On March 1, 2024, our global ecumenical movement will pray a liturgy developed by our sisters from WDP Palestine. World Day of Prayer has a strong and vibrant history in the Middle East, especially in Palestine. Women from various denominations in Palestine have faithfully prayed together every year for decades. Several women from WDP Palestine have been elected by the Middle East region to serve as Regional Representatives for our WDPIC Executive Committee. We are grateful for the dedication of our Palestinian sisters over the years to strengthen connections between Christians around the world.

Our WDPIC office has been approached in the past year, particularly since the Israel Gaza war has brought devastation to the region following the violent attack on October 7, 2023. We have been asked if there will be any changes made to the liturgy in light of the current situation. Our response has been consistent with our practices as a movement for many years. We believe that the liturgy offered each year is a profound gift, and one that we receive in its fullness. We stand with the liturgy offered



by our sisters from WDP Palestine, and we encourage all local celebrations around the world to honor those voices as they are offered.

The event can be attended at the following churches on 1st March:

St Columba's Church - Berrigan - 10.00am

St Brigid's Church - Howlong - 10.00am

St Joseph's Church - Junee - 10.00am

St Mel's Church - Narrandera - 7.00pm

St Peter's Church - Tocumwal - 10.00am



Lester & Son

Funeral Directors

A tradition of personal, professional care since 1907



Cherie, Tony, John

359 Wantigong St
Albury
02 6040 5066

49 Thomas Mitchell Dr
Wodonga
02 6056 1700

www.lesterandson.com.au

All Hours • All Areas • Pre-planned Funerals Available

St Joseph's Mens Group

- Wagga Wagga -

Recollections - Spiritual Talks - Retreats and more!

Come and see at: stjosephsmensgroup.com



CEREAL, OILSEEDS, PULSES

"It all begins with seed"

- Insist on Hart Bros quality assured seed
- Growing, cleaning, sales and distribution of all broadacre seed varieties



- Cleaning, treating and sizing farmer's retained canola seed



office@hbseeds.com.au • www.hartbrosseeds.com.au
Phone: 02 6924 7206 • Fax: 02 6924 7271
Coffin Rock Lane, Temora Rd Junee 2663

"Remember: Hart Bros Seeds Spring Field Day is 2nd Wednesday in October"



We try harder.



- Cars
- Trucks
- Buses
- Utes

6921 9977

6-10 Edward St, Wagga Wagga www.avis.com.au

TRIBUNAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- 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 Wagga Wagga Office of the Tribunal

Phone: 6937 0017 Email: tribunal@wagga.catholic.org.au



Vinnies

Find your nearest Vinnies Shop

- Albury Shop** Ritz Arcade, Dean St Albury
- Corowa Shop** 143 Sanger St Corowa
- Griffith Shop** 101 Banna Ave Griffith
- Jerilderie Shop** 36 Jerilderie St Jerilderie
- Junee Shop** 85 Broadway St Junee
- Lavington Shop** 321 Urana Rd Lavington
- Leeton Shop** 42 Kurralong Ave Leeton
- Mulwala Shop** 47 Melbourne St Mulwala
- Narrandera Shop** 181 East St Narrandera
- Tumbarumba Shop** 16 The Parade Tumbarumba
- Turvey Park Shop** Turvey Tops Shopping Centre, Fernleigh Rd Wagga Wagga
- Wagga Wagga Shop**
15 Peter St Wagga Wagga



SAINT MARY MACKILLOP COLLEGE

Albury



- K to Year 12 with small classes sizes
- Located in a rural residential setting
- Part of a thriving Catholic community
- Academic excellence and committed staff

Phone 02 6045 9422
office@smmc.nsw.edu.au
197 Urana St, Jindera NSW 2642

NOW TAKING 2024 ENROLMENTS

An independent school offering traditional education and instruction in the Catholic faith, promoting virtue and excellence of character in a personal and nurturing environment

NEW BOOK ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO BE FRIENDS WITH JESUS

Car trip conversations can be a source of great discovery. Carpooling to a retreat with a woman I had never met before resulted in a very enriching conversation.

Especially given our shared experiences of family life and an interest in children's literature.

As it turned out that I was travelling alongside a soon to be published author. Now, just a few months later, I have Melissa Shiberras book in my hands, but only when my children haven't got it in theirs!

Melissa Shiberras is a speech pathologist now based in Thurgoona, where she resides with her husband and their three children.

Despite the demands of her full life Melissa was able to make time to work alongside an editor, a designer and an illustrator to create the aptly titled 'Next To Me'.

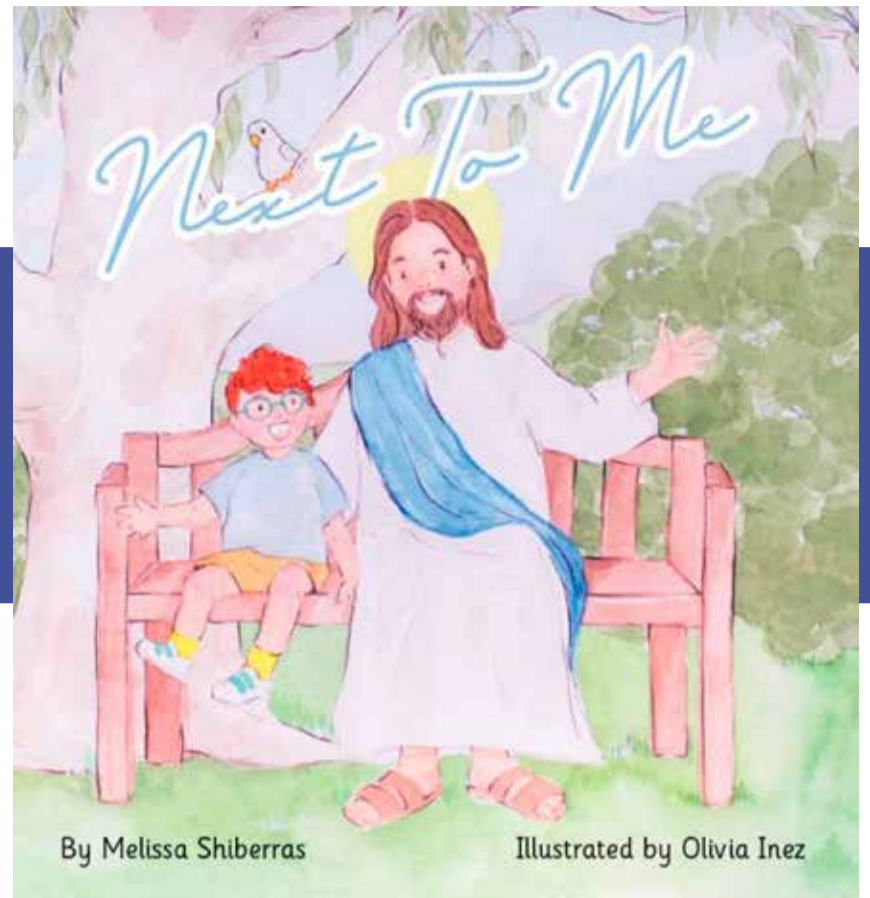
The premise of 'Next To Me' is both simple and profound and perhaps best articulated by the author.

"This book is written as a conversation between a child

and Jesus," explains Melissa. "It encourages the child to develop their relationship with Jesus and draw closer to Him through the day."

The text employs repetition, leading to a quiet rhythm that echoes those that underscore everyday lives. It articulates emotions through both word and illustration to give a concrete picture of Jesus' continued presence in the lives of children. A deliberate choice by the author, born out of desire to raise and form her children in the grounded reality of the Catholic faith and its integral relationship with Jesus Christ.

Aided by sweet watercolour illustrations, culminating in an exploration of Jesus' Real Presence, this book is a lovely resource for families. Though written for children, reading this book alongside our children is a good reminder for all of



us to call to mind Jesus' presence in our own lives.

Matt Fradd of Pints With Aquinas says, in his endorsement of 'Next To Me', "Let's embrace Christ in our

families by reading this book."

I'm certain I can't recommend this book more eloquently than that.

'Next To Me' is available through Parousia Media for \$24.99.

A PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN'S ACCOUNT OF TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE

Common Home TV spotlights the unique perspective of a Palestinian Christian amidst the Gaza crisis.

Common Home TV presents a thought-provoking conversation with psychotherapist and activist Hammam Farah. Hammam is a Palestinian Christian residing and working in Toronto, Canada. Hammam's background in trauma, provides a unique perspective on the unfolding events in Gaza, shedding light on the experiences of the Christian community in the region. Tragically, Hammam's family is currently sheltering in Holy Family Catholic Church, the site of the murder of two unarmed women at the hands of IDF snipers.

A Palestinian Christian's account of trauma and resilience is available at: <https://www.commonhome.tv/interview/war-in-gaza-a-palestinian-christians-account-of-trauma-and-resilience/>

The interview explores various aspects of the ongoing crisis, delving into the intersection of trauma, faith, and the impact of this conflict on Palestinian Christians. Hammam's insights offer a compelling narrative, dispelling misconceptions and addressing the nuances often overlooked in mainstream discourse.

The interview explores pivotal aspects of this war, spanning from the fatal shooting at the Holy Family Church in Gaza, to highlighting the importance of acknowledging the shared experiences of Palestinian Christians and Muslims. The discussion further delved into the profound trauma impacting both Palestinians and Israelis, underscoring the crucial need for a comprehensive understanding of the root causes propelling the conflict.



Above: Psychotherapist and activist, Hammam Farah.

Everyone who remains in Gaza is being traumatised by this war of attrition. No one is safe from the possibility of death, and the violence of this war will have a lasting effect on the hearts and minds of its most vulnerable people. Hammam challenges the world to walk with empathy in the shoes of ordinary Palestinians who cry out for an end to war, and for help to negotiate a just resolution of their grievances. Without

empathy, there can be no trust and no desire to find common ground, or develop a common home.

- John Hodgson CSsR,
Provincial, Redemptorists of
Oceania

As a Redemptorist apostolate, Common Home TV continues its mission to promote inclusivity and understanding.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA RESPONDS TO GAZA FAMINE WARNING AS CONFLICT REACHES 100 DAYS

After 100 days of conflict, Gaza is suffering from the worst current hunger crisis with the growing risk of famine, as it is home to 80 per cent of the global population at catastrophic risk of starvation and death.

Since the conflict began, over 23,000 Palestinians and 1,200 Israelis have been killed, with over two thirds of casualties being women and children.

At least 70 per cent of all housing in Gaza has been damaged or destroyed and only 13 of its 36 hospitals remain partially functioning. The Gaza Strip also remains under an electricity blackout. In the West Bank, thousands of people have lost their jobs or had work permits go unrenewed, with those that used to work in Israel also losing income sources as they can no longer cross checkpoints.

Caritas Australia can confirm partner agencies are continuing to work on increasing their operational capacity, which includes establishing a new office in Rafah with an adjacent warehouse. Our partners are also working with an existing network of supermarkets, established as part of long-standing work in the region, with supplies being distributed from Rafah and Deir el-Balah. Work is also being undertaken with the World Food Program, leading to the distribution of 3,380 food parcels to families.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Emergencies Lead at Caritas Australia said, "Food deprivation in Gaza has reached extreme levels with the entire population at imminent risk of famine. Residents are also enduring a lack of access to medical care, safe shelter, and clean water. Meanwhile those in Jerusalem and the West Bank



Palestinians evacuate the area following an Israeli airstrike on the Sousi mosque in Gaza City on October 9, 2023. Image: Mahmud Hams/Getty Images. Image obtained by Caritas Australia.

are under increasingly dire economic stress due to widespread loss of income, leaving families struggling to cover the cost of basic needs such as food and medicine."

Since the start of hostilities, Caritas Australia's partners have also distributed bedding supplies to 2,938 families, shelter supplies to 3,755 families, and provided multi-purpose cash assistance to 21,197 households in Gaza. Support continues to be offered to four Church premises providing shelter to displaced households.

In Egypt, bedding kits and hygiene kits have been procured for 1,360 families as well as shelter items for 480 families. Meanwhile in Lebanon, 72,437 people have been displaced due to hostilities along the southern border with Caritas Lebanon being supported by partner agencies to provide cash assistance to 470 displaced families, as well as 2,985 food kits and 246 hygiene kits.

"The need across the region is extensive, with the ongoing compassion and support of the international community set to become increasingly essential as conflict displaces people in other areas of the Middle East," said Thomas.

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



 **Caritas**
AUSTRALIA

SAIGON restaurant

Specialises in **Chinese** and **Vietnamese** cuisine

- Open 6 days - lunch & dinner
- BYO
- Banquets and group bookings
- Takeaway and business lunch menu

[P] 6921 2212 89-91 Morgan St, Wagga Wagga



Image obtained by Caritas Australia.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO RELIEVE COST OF LIVING PRESSURES, SENATE COMMITTEE TOLD

National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins addressed the Senate Select Committee hearing on the Cost of Living today highlighting the impacts on Catholic school communities and relief for families.

Ms Collins said there are specific challenges for Catholic and other non-government school families who are expected to make a contribution to their children's education, with families in public schools asked to only make a voluntary contribution.

"Our families are expected to make a contribution towards their children's education which is income-tested through the Capacity to Contribute measure," Ms Collins said. "This means non-government schools only receive a portion of the Schooling Resource Standard.

"For Catholic schools, government funding made up 74 per cent of educational costs with around \$4 billion in after-tax dollars from parent contributions.

"Catholic school families also contribute nearly 90 per cent of the costs required to support school buildings and other capital works in Catholic schools or around \$2 billion.

With increasing cost of living pressures, Ms Collins said Catholic schools and systems are taking a range of measures to relieve the burden on families, with many being long-standing arrangements.

"To combat the financial burden on families, we have a range of measures

including sibling discounts, automatic fee reductions for Health Care Card holders, fee relief for financial hardship, scholarships and bursaries," Ms Collins said.

"As an example, in one of our state systems over 40 of students received some form of fee concession or relief measures.

"Catholic Education in South Australia, as another example, has frozen their school fees for three consecutive years.

"While these measures help to relieve some pressure on families, it is carried by the school community, which goes unrecognised in assessments of government funding."

Some of the concerns raised to the Senate Select Committee included:

- Maintaining appropriate indexation on school funding
- Taking a sector-neutral approach to funding and support for programs addressing the national teacher shortage crisis and disadvantaged communities
- Capital support for non-government schools to build and maintain school and early learning infrastructure with Catholic schools only receiving around 11% government funding against a backdrop of increased land and construction costs.



"Recently the Productivity Commission canvassed the removal of the deductible gift recipient (DGR) status for faith-based schools which would have a dire effect on the ability of our school communities to raise funds for school infrastructure," Ms Collins said.

"This would further impact on the educational opportunities of families who seek a Catholic education in their local area, as well as create increased challenges for Catholic schools to maintain and renew aging infrastructure or facilities to provide a contemporary and fit-for purpose learning environment for our students."

Ms Collins acknowledged the commitment of successive governments, both Labor and the Coalition, in their ongoing support for Catholic schools.

Also appearing at the public hearing representing Catholic education was past president of the Australian Catholic Secondary Principals Association Ann Rebgetz.

Ms Rebgetz said secondary school access and equity are crucial to societal outcomes.

"As Catholic secondary principals we are at the heart of family stories and are constantly challenged to support those in need - we need to all work together on this for greater societal outcomes.

"Catholic secondary schools are renowned for their diverse pathways and providing a bridge to the equity gap.

"Cost of living has an enormous impact on educational provision so support of resourcing by government is crucial to enable all to benefit."

Catholic education is the largest provider of education in Australia outside of government, enrolling one in five, or nearly 794,000 students, and employing over 104,500 staff. Around 40 per cent of Catholic schools are located in regional, rural and remote areas, and 41 per cent of students are funded for disadvantage.



MOUNT ERIN HERITAGE CENTRE

Open every Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 2pm and also by appointment

Parking: Please use Mt Erin Boarding School entrance.

Email: mounterinheritagecentre@gmail.com Telephone: 0438 711 229



www.mounterinheritagecentre.com.au



Saint Mary MacKillop College

WAGGA WAGGA

www.stmarymackillop.nsw.edu.au

- Small class sizes - K to 12
- High standard of pastoral care
- Classical education in the fullness of Catholic faith and western civilisation
- Pursue academic excellence and Christian virtue
- Scholarships available

ENROL NOW FOR 2024



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.

Advanced

AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRICS

1866701w
For all your Auto Electrical Repairs

- Exchange Service
- Breakdown Service
- Air Conditioning
- Repairs & Servicing

Jamie Morley
6925 4242

ARC Century Time MTA

Unit 5, 73 Dobney Ave, Wagga Wagga
Mobile: 0428 254 211

Albury Accounting Pty Ltd

- All Tax Returns
- GST & Taxation Advice
- Financial Statements
- Superannuation

www.alburyaccounting.com.au
596 Hume St, Albury
Phone Suryan Chandrasegaran on 02 6041 2010

Amcal+
Expert advice for every Australian.

- Prescriptions
- Health & Medication checks
- Sleep Apnoea Services
- Flu Vaccination Service
- Webster-pack Medication Management
- Diabetes Australia Agent (NDSS)
- Be Good to Yourself Weight Management
- Fine Fragrances

PAT ZIRILLI AMCAL CHEMIST
398 - 400 Banna Ave, Griffith
Ph: (02) 6962 3596 Fax: (02) 6962 4931

Ken & Mary Morley Pty Ltd, Trading as
Ken Morley

SMASH REPAIRS

Auto Measuring Systems
Baked Enamel
Courtesy Car Available

We are recommended repairer for:

Elders SUNCORP Insurance GIO AAMI

24 hour towing
69 215 251
0431 290 725
19 Houtman St, Wagga Wagga
Lic No: MVRL47719

IT'S BACK AND MORE CHALLENGING THAN EVER!

It is a truth universally acknowledged that virtuous living is not for the faint of heart. Trying to navigate living in the world, without being too corrupted by it, is wearying.

BY EMILY SHAW

Virtue Ministry Writer and Graphic Designer

Never fear, Virtue Ministry's popular monthly 'Virtue Challenge' is back.

Doesn't a Virtue Challenge, by its very definition, denote a lot of hard work? Yes, it sure does. But you'd be willing to take on a bootcamp, or less intensive diet and exercise regimen to improve your physical fitness and physique – and your overall health wouldn't you?

So why not consider this as your spiritual bootcamp? Or a spiritual re-boot.

Interested? Of course you are, there's no fence sitting if you want to grow in the virtues. Time to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty!

What it involves:

Each month the VM team will be focusing on a particular virtue that we'll all be working on. That's right – we're all doing it too – making this more of a team effort than an individual event.

We'll provide plenty of content for you to mull over. In addition to our regular column in Together, we'll also be featuring a couple of blog posts each month that feature differing perspectives on the monthly virtue, from varying team members.

Our socials will feature more tips, quotes and links to content that will encourage you to come along with us for the ride.

Take Courage

We're kicking off the Virtue Challenge with...drum roll please...courage.

Ah, courage. What is courage?

The Meriam Webster dictionary defines courage as: mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and

withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. I quite like the sound of that.

When Moses died, the leadership of God's chosen people fell to Joshua, son of Nun. God encouraged him: "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Which is obviously a good thing, the wandering Israelites were something of a handful, the success of their exodus did not depend on them, but on God working through His chosen instruments. No doubt Joshua could have been completely overwhelmed by the challenge.

Of course, we know now that he wasn't and would succeed in leading the Israelites into the promised land – even though walking around the walls numerous times seemed questionable at the time.

What Joshua's leadership demonstrates the ability to use his moral strength to persevere, withstand difficulties including rogue Israelites and the impressive walls of Jericho, secure in the knowledge of God's presence.

We should be trying to emulate this. That doesn't mean that we need to perform grand gestures, courageous feats that bowl others over with their incredibility.

Nor are we even looking for obvious outward signs of inward transformation. I think we all know that virtue is more subtle than that.

Rather, we're looking for small – perhaps otherwise hidden – areas in which we need to exercise courage. Perhaps it's summoning the courage to have that hard conversation we've been putting off for a long time now, or having the courage to forgive and move on from a hurt that we've been carrying around unnecessarily.

When I describe courage to my own children I try to keep it simple: courage is doing the right thing even when we're scared. Sounds simple, but difficult to do in practice.

This month, consider some areas in which you have been avoiding doing the right thing because you're afraid, or not prepared to persevere. You might be avoiding any of these areas because of fear of other people's reactions or censure, fear of retaliation or even just fear of people not taking you seriously or belittling your concerns.

I get it. It's very easy to pass over these types of situations by telling ourselves that 'we're no good at saying these things on the spot', or, 'I'm no good at confrontation' or even, 'this isn't my place, someone else can do it'.

Maybe the most courageous thing you can do now is to embark upon the Virtue Challenge, and see the whole month out.

What you need to do:

Join in! Getting started is half the battle.

Pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten you to the areas in your own life where you need to exercise a little more courage.

Examine your progress daily, as part of your nightly examen, but don't be discouraged by your progress, or lack thereof. Each day is a fresh slate so don't be afraid to get up and try again.

Find an accountability partner. This can be a friend who will help you stay on track and you can provide the same support for them.

Follow Virtue Ministry on your favourite socials for more inspiration and guidance to cultivate virtue!

Virtue MINISTRY FEBRUARY VIRTUE CHALLENGE: **courage**

GOALS
WRITE DOWN:
3 practical and realistic ways in which you can grow in this virtue
as well as
3 obstacles you can foresee to growing in this virtue

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

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

Thomas More Centre
autumn school

SAVE THE DATE...
April 19 to 20, 2024

St Patrick's Catholic Church, Albury
Key speakers:
Clergy of the Wagga Wagga Diocese,
Anna Krohn & Stina Constantine

TRUTH & THE BEAUTY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND VOCATIONS

More details to follow

SCHOOLS IN OUR DIOCESE

Holy Trinity School, West Wagga



Above: A great start to the new school year with Holy Trinity School's Opening Mass held on February 9th.

Below: Students also provided the hospitality for staff from the Wagga Wagga Deanery after their Welcome and Commissioning Mass for new staff and to mark the beginning of the new school year.



St Patrick's Primary, Holbrook



Above: St Patrick's staff and students following their Ash Wednesday blessing.

Below: Father Jomer, the staff and students of St Patrick's School had a pancake feast on Shrove Tuesday.



Sacred Heart Primary, Wagga



On 16 February Sacred Heart Primary celebrated their Opening School Mass and their 2024 School Leaders received their leadership badges.

St Joseph's Primary, Finley



The Mini Vinnies and Year 6 student leaders had a great day on Shrove Tuesday 'Flipping into Action' for Project Compassion. Shrove Tuesday is the day before the commencement of the Lenten season and traditionally the Catholic community eat pancakes to use up the perishable foods before we enter into the time of fasting. It reminds us of how Jesus fasted and then ultimately gave his life for us.



St Joseph's Primary, Culcairn



Students and staff of St Joseph's Primary after their Ash Wednesday Mass.

St Joseph's Primary, Leeton



Well done to St Joseph's students for participating in 5 Cent Friday.

St Joseph's Primary, Wagga



On Ash Wednesday students began the season of Lent. With ashes we show our desire to turn away from sin and follow the Gospel.

Father Byrne challenged the students to give up something that is difficult to give up during this time.



St Michael's Primary, Coolamon



Students at St Michael's Primary enjoyed their Shrove Tuesday Pancakes. Thanks to all who contributed to the fundraiser.



Holy Spirit School, Lavington

Students marked the beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday. Lent is a season of penance, reflection and fasting which prepares us for Easter.



St Joseph's Primary, Jerilderie



This year, as part of their School Improvement Plan, St Joseph's were looking at ways to give their students more agency. The first way they are doing this is through the introduction of their first ever Student Representative Council!

These students are voted in by their peers and hold the position for their class for Semester 1.

Congratulations to: K/1/2 - Marlee Shaw, 3/4 - Franky Bryce, 5/6 - Harry Rorato and School Captains- Lexie Bryce and Tony Gurciullo.

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 Uranquinty
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 - 8.00am
Confessions
Saturday - 4.45 - 5.15pm
Masses
Wednesday - 8.00am
Thursday - 8.00am
Friday -10.15am
Marrar
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Confessions 1st Saturday - 5.30pm

Allawah Village
First Thursday of each month.
Mass at 9.15am

COROWA

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

CULCAIRN

St Patrick's Culcairn
1st, 4th Sunday - 8:00am
2nd, 3rd Sunday - 10:00am
5th Sunday - Vigil Mass 6:30pm (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 10:00am
Weekday Masses
Monday - 5.30pm
Tuesday - 5.30pm
Saturday - 8:00am
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, Holbrook
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 Tumberumba 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, Tumbarumba
Saturday Vigil - 6.00pm
Sunday - 9.00am
Weekday Masses
Monday & Tuesday - 7:30am
Wednesday-Friday - 5.30pm
Saturday 9.15am
Confessions
Friday 4.30pm - 5.15pm
Saturday - 8.00am - 9.00am
And 30 mins before weekend Holy Masses
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Tooma
4th Sunday - 7.30am
Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
Friday - 4.30pm & Saturday - 8.00am

URANA

St Fiacre's Church 5 End St, Urana
Weekend Masses
1st, 3rd & 5th 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 JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

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



Junior Legion

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

Senior Legion

Every Thursday evening at 7:30pm at
Bishop's House.

All welcome!

Come and join Our Lady's Army and
help your Priest serve his parish!

Contact:

Caronne 0413 801 616

SoulSpace Saturdays

An opportunity for quiet awareness
and sharing in the ErinEarth Garden

Open to all, regardless of religious,
traditional or cultural beliefs

Free event | Complimentary Tea & Coffee

1 Kildare St, Turvey Park
9.30am - 11am
on the 4th Saturday of the month

FAMILY REFLECTIONS

18th February

First Sunday of Lent, Cycle B

The announcement that Jesus makes as he begins his preaching in today's Gospel is recalled on Ash Wednesday at the signing with ashes: "Repent and believe in the gospel." This is our challenge for Lent; indeed, it is the challenge of our entire life. During Lent, we are invited to strengthen and to renew the promises that we made at our Baptism, to reject Satan and sin so as to live as children of God. Through the grace of God that we received at Baptism, we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit and know that with Jesus' help, we will be victorious over sin.

As you gather as a family, talk about the importance of Baptism. At our Baptism, our sins were forgiven, and we promised to live as children of God. As part of the Rite of Baptism, we rejected sin and Satan. Read today's Gospel, Mark 1:12-15. During Lent, we renew the promises of our Baptism, turning again from sin and promising to follow God. Light a candle, perhaps a candle used at one of your family member's Baptisms, and pray together the Act of Contrition.

*Genesis 9:8-15 Psalm 25:4-5,6-7,8-9
1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15*

25th February

Second Sunday of Lent, Cycle B

Every family has special moments that they remember and share again and again. In sharing these stories, the meaning and importance of these events develop and deepen over time. This is how it was with the disciples' remembrance of Jesus' Transfiguration. The full significance of what they had seen and experienced could only be understood after Jesus' death and Resurrection. As they told other believers about this event and recorded the

story for us in the Bible, our understanding of what it means to call Jesus God's own Son has also deepened.

As you gather as a family, think about some special family memories that your family tells over and over again. Talk about why these memories are important to you. Recall that in the Bible we find many important memories about Jesus that have been recorded for us so that we can believe that Jesus is God's Son. Read today's Gospel, Mark 9:2-10. What do we learn about Jesus from this Gospel? (He fulfills the promises God made to Israel through the Law and the prophets. God glorified Jesus in his Resurrection. Jesus is God's Son.) Conclude in prayer together that as we continue to read the Bible, we will deepen our understanding of and our love for Jesus. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

*Genesis 22:1-2,9a,10-13,15-18
Psalm 116:10,15,16-17,18-19 Romans 8:31b-34
Mark 9:2-10*

3rd March

Third Sunday of Lent, Cycle B

Today's Gospel invites us to reflect upon our worship of God. For Jesus and his Jewish contemporaries, the Temple was an important, holy place where they gathered to worship God. The Christian understanding of worship was transformed in light of Jesus' Resurrection. In the Christian understanding, God is worshiped in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. As we read in today's Gospel, Jesus is himself the Temple that will be destroyed, but in three days God will raise him up again.

As you gather as a family, talk about places and times when you have experienced God's presence. After his Resurrection, Jesus' disciples understood that Jesus was present with them as they gathered to pray and especially when they gathered to share a meal. Read together today's Gospel, John 2:13-25. Jesus teaches us in today's Gospel that

he is God's presence with us. Thank God for Jesus' presence with us, especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

*Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19:8,9,10,11
1 Corinthians 1:22-25 John 2:13-25*

10th March

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B

Parents whose children are afraid of the dark are struck by John's observation that darkness is preferred to light. Perhaps this is as it should be. God made us to live in the light of his love. But this original friendship with God was corrupted by sin. Our sin causes us to shy away from Christ, the light that has come into the world. During the season of Lent, we try to fight this tendency by remembering God's great mercy and the salvation that we have received through Jesus. We do not fear confessing our sins, knowing that God forgives us, and so, during Lent, we seek out opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

After your family gathers, sit for a time in darkness, then light a candle. Invite people to talk about what it felt like to be in the darkness and to compare that to their feelings when the candle was lit. What are we able to see by the limited glow of the candlelight that we couldn't see when we were sitting in darkness? Read today's Gospel, John 3:14-21. John's Gospel teaches us that Jesus was the light that came into the world. In this light we know ourselves to be sinners, but we are not condemned. Instead we have been saved because we have been forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Conclude in prayer together, thanking God for the great gift of forgiveness we have received through Jesus. Pray together the Act of Contrition.

*2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23 Psalm 137:1-2,3,4-5,6
Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21*

THANK YOU PROJECT COMPASSION

FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS



**RONITA,
PHILIPPINES**



**LEAIA,
SAMOA**



**MEMORY,
MALAWI**



DONATE NOW



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity



caritas.org.au/project-compassion



1800 024 413



#projectcompassion



Printed on a sustainable, purpose-grown fibre and fully recyclable. ABN 90 970 605 069. PA324