



THE CatechistNET

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they left their nets at once and followed him" (Matthew 5:19-20)

Volume 9, Issue 3 28 SEPTEMBER

Message from the Director...



Diocese of Wollongong Catechists Welcome the new CCD Regional Faith Education Officers

In July, the Diocese happily announced the appointment of Mr Peter Gilmore and Miss Patricia (Trish) McCarthy as CCD Regional Faith Education Officers for the Diocese of Wollongong.

The CCD Regional Faith Education Officers have responsibility for assisting the CCD Diocesan Director in providing Religious Education for around 10,000 Catholic State School students seen by Catechists each and every week in our Diocese. Mr Peter Gilmore has been allocated responsibility for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region and Miss Patricia McCarthy for the Macarthur-Highlands region.

Peter Gilmore has a strong commitment to the evangelising mission of the Church, particularly as it relates to young people. He has worked in Catholic and State Schools across a number of Dioceses in Australia, offering faith formation for young people. Peter's qualifications and experience in Information Technology and Graphic Design have equipped him to design programs that engage young people with the Gospel message. Among other projects, he has developed web based faith formation programs and promotional material for Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA) and Youth Mission Team Australia (YMT). In addition, Peter has significant experience in forming volunteer teams to assist with catechesis and evangelization in schools. Prior to taking on this full time position, Peter worked in a temporary capacity as CCD Regional Coordinator for the Macarthur-Highlands region.



Trish McCarthy's working life has been predominantly in the field of faith formation for young people, a reflection of her belief in and commitment to the evangelizing mission of the Church. She holds a Bachelor in Education and a Certificate of Religious Education and has had significant involvement in the design and delivery of programs for young

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CONFRATERNITY of CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

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PO Box 2087, Wollongong NSW 2500
Ph: (02) 4225 0137
Email: peter.gilmore@woll.catholic.org.au

Other Support Organisations

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

Religious Education Resource Centre -
Xavier Centre
Anne Russell, Resource Centre Coordinator
2-4 Bond Street Bellambi NSW 2518
All correspondences, please mail to:
Catholic Education Office, Resource Centre
Locked Mail Bag 8802
Wollongong NSW 2500
Ph: (02) 4285 0911 Fax: (02) 4285 0922
Email: anne.russell@dow.catholic.edu.au
URL: <http://oliver.dow.catholic.edu.au/rc>

Just **1**
hour a week
Volunteer to be a Catechist

If you think you could be a teacher,
support person or have skills that
might assist this ministry in some
way, please contact us at CCD or
your Parish Coordinator.

Important Calendar Dates for Term 4

Parish Coordinator Meetings	10.00am – 11:30am
Illawarra-Shoalhaven Region	December 2

Campbelltown-Highlands Region	November 28
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(NB: There will no longer be a single combined final meeting)

IT skills for Catechists	9:30am – 12:30pm
Campbelltown	October 17

CCD Centre, Micah House	
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Illawarra, Xavier Centre Bellambi	October 24
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*This course is an introduction to Microsoft Word & Powerpoint
Individual Parish Formation: Through Negotiation with Regional FEO*

Smartboard Skills	9:30am – 12:30pm
Unanderra	October 14

Individual Parish Formation: Through Negotiation with Regional FEO

Catechist Retreat Day	9:30am – 2:30pm
Illawarra-Shoalhaven	October 28

Gerringong Parish Hall	
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*Led by Fr Grahem Schmitzer, this is a chance to retreat for a day of
prayer and reflection. The theme for the day is Eucharist: Source and
Summit of our Faith.*

Catechist Sunday	
Diocese Wide	November 6

*(NB: Individual Parishes may elect to run Catechist Sunday promotions
from anywhere Mid October till end of November. Members of the CCD
team are eager to assist with promotions in individual parishes)*

Annual Catechist Award Mass	10:30am - 1:00pm
St. Brigid's Parish, Gwynneville	November 12

(Corner of Gipps Road & Vickery Street. NB: Venue & Time Change)

**For bookings at these courses/events,
please contact your regional coordinator
or Helen Bennett on 4253 0934 or
helen.bennett@woll.catholic.org.au**

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Message from the Director...

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people in Catholic and State Primary and Secondary Schools. Trish has also been responsible for the development and presentation of seminars and reflection days for adult volunteers working in evangelization and catechesis in a number of Dioceses. In addition, Trish brings to the position experience in working with children and young adults with disabilities and special learning needs. She has training and experience as a Catechist.

I am really grateful for the way Peter and Trish have been warmly welcomed by both Clergy and Catechists as they collaborate with them in the graced work of evangelization and catechesis of children and young people in the State Schools of our Diocese. They have hit the ground running since their appointment, conducting numerous

visits to parishes and schools to support Catechists, organising the upcoming Catechist Retreat Days, IT and Smart-board in-services, Level III Certificate Course, Secondary School Seminar Days, CCD webpage refurbishment and the development of resources to support the work of Catechists in Primary Schools.

The Diocese looks forward to benefiting from the skills and enthusiasm brought to the roles of Regional Faith Education Officer by Trish and Peter, as they contribute to the mission to be "Bearers of Christ's Love".

Regards,

Mr Jude Hennessy

Diocesan Director CCD

A Catechist's Tale

Name: Sonia Mowlam

Parish: Varroville

Teaches: Yr 3

My Story

I am one of seven children and grew up on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. I'm a happily married mother of three wonderful kids and we have lived in the Campbelltown area for 16 years. I was a stay at home mum for 12 years when my kids were younger and was asked to be a Catechist by a friend who I met at our Varroville Parish playgroup. I studied for 6 years part time to be a midwife but continued to be a Catechist for all but 1 of the last 15 years when I was studying. I absolutely love my family, going to the beach, swimming, reading and sowing. Everyone at work knows that my nursing shifts need to be juggled around my Wednesday morning Scripture Classes!

What I love about being a Catechist?

I am so grateful for my own gift of faith and I always wanted to be a teacher, so when one of the girls from our Varroville Parish playgroup asked me if I wanted to do Catechist teaching with her, it seemed natural to say yes. It was wonderful to have such a good group of friends at the playgroup who were passionate about being Catechists. Every week there would be a group of us who would prepare the lessons together and it really cemented our faith and friendships. I find being a Catechist a really enjoyable and easy thing to do, and it allows me to be an instrument of God. I trust God works through me to give the kids an understanding of God's love for them. I am continually amazed and enthused by what the students come out with and how faith and trust in God seems to come so



Sonia Mowlam (Right) with FEO Trish McCarthy at the recent Catechist Retreat

easily to kids. It is incredible to see them grow in their faith, and you feel part of God's plan. I always see the kids around the local community and many of my own teenagers friends, remember me teaching them scripture. I absolutely love it, and I feel very blessed and honoured to be able to share my faith with young people. Sometimes when I see an adult who is struggling or being really unchristian, I think how things might be different for them if someone had been able to share faith with them. The harvest is ripe, but the workers are too few! I'm certain we have a real impact on the lives of kids.

Thanks Sonia for sharing your story. Do you have a Catechist's Tale to share or know another catechist who might? We'd love to hear it! Please contact Jude Hennessy on jude.hennessy@woll.catholic.org.au.



Generous Donations from Catholic Club for CCD

In early August, Trish McCarthy and myself met with the CEO of the Campbelltown Catholic Club, Mr Michael Lavorato, to thank the Club for the generous support they have given Catechists of the Macarthur-Highlands Region over a number of years. The meeting allowed us to discuss with Mr Lavorato the amazing work of Catechists in the Region and throughout the Diocese, and to present a letter of thanks and a request further support from the Board of Directors. Pleasingly, the Board at its last meeting approved over \$42,000 in funding for the work of CCD with \$13,000 going to the Resource Centre and the rest to Parishes to use for the Resourcing of SRE and the work of Catechists.

This is a most generous donation that greatly enhances our ability to support the work of Catechists with over 10,000 kids weekly. It will allow the Resource Centre and Parishes to purchase material that further enhances the wonderful work of Catechists in our state schools. On an even brighter note, the board has promised not only to match but to increase this donation over the next few years. I am sure all Catechists in the Diocese would join with me in thanking the Campbelltown Catholic Club for this wonderful support of this ministry.

Mr Jude Hennessy



Over the course of the last three months we have been able to provide a number of SmartBoard and Technology training days. Designed to progress from 'the basics' to producing your own resources, these courses have been incredibly successful for those that have attended.

The courses cover important points such as why we would consider using technology in the classroom, familiarisation with Smartboard technology and Word documents, demonstration of and exposure to resources that are available for catechists to use as well as the opportunity to create your own resources.

The feedback has been very positive with catechists 'beaming' at their successful use of technology in their lessons and the added dimension to lessons that enhances the learning experience for young people. Congratulations to all those who have participated and 'explored' the world of technology.

While SmartBoards are a good tool for us in classrooms, they are just one of many strategies and resources Catechists can use. Your greatest and most powerful tool in bringing kids to faith is your personal authentic witness to the love of God and you certainly don't need to use a SmartBoard do that effectively.

Good numbers for 2011 Level III Catechist Formation.

Congratulations to all of our LEVEL III participants for 2011. The course ran over 6 weeks at Both the Xavier Centre Bellambi and Micah House Campbelltown. We were blessed with fantastic input from very experienced and knowledgeable presenters. For many of the Catechists, who participated in the course, this represented the culmination of their completion of their Diploma requirements. It was wonderful that some members of our Diocese completed the course for their own faith formation, without actually being linked to the work of Catechists.

Many thanks to Fr Ken Cafe, Fr Graham Schmitzer, Fr Michael Healey, Fr Ronan Kilgannon and Fr John Frauenfelder for the wonderful input they delivered to participants during the course.



Illawarra-Shoalhaven Report

After working with the catechists in the Macarthur/Highlands Region for a number of months and getting a feel for Jude Hennessy's style of leadership and passion for the ministry, I knew that I wanted to apply for the position. This mission of Bishop Peter Ingham is dedicated to sharing the Gospel week in and week out with young people who desperately need to hear it - this is the kind of place that I want to be and the kind of work that I want to do! I'm incredibly thankful to have been successful in my application and I am committed to serving our Bishop and you, the catechists.

Since commencing the fulltime position, I have been assigned to the Illawarra-Shoalhaven region and have found a new home at the CCD Office on Harbour St in Wollongong.

Prior to applying for the position, I had already committed to and paid for a pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Spain - it would have me out of the country for the entirety of the month of August. The pilgrimage was definitely unforgettable. One of our destinations was one of the many Christian catacombs just outside the walls of Rome. This one housed the tombs of an estimated 50,000 Christians from the first few centuries - a number of Popes, a dozen or so Bishops and many martyrs bodies found their rest here. The theme for World Youth Day 2011 was "rooted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the Faith" and as I stood

in this hallowed place, ten metres below ground, this scripture took on new meaning for me - we belong to a Church with a rich history of real men and women who believed that we have a truth that is worth both living and sometimes dying for. We possess a faith that should transform our lives and lead us to be witnesses of God's great love for us. I write this to you because I have become aware that this is our story - you, the catechists of this Diocese, know that you possess truth that brings joy and freedom, and week in and week out, you share it. You share it through your words, you share it through your actions and you share it through your love. Thank you for your courage and witness.

The Level 3 Catechist Training Course began in the Illawarra region on July 22nd and we were very pleased with the great numbers we had for the duration of the course. The thirst for truth amongst catechists is infectious! Because of your zeal, I even took my Catechism with me to Europe so that I could keep reading along with the content while I was away. Thank you Jude for running another



The remains of a marble inscription from the tomb of a Christian in Rome.

successful Catechist Training Course while I was away at WYD!

We ran a successful day of SRE in Dapto High on Friday, 2nd of September. There were 5 back to back seminars with classes

from 7 to 11 throughout the day. The message was a simple one - God is love - and we explored it through video,

drama and personal sharing. The young people responded very positively and we have seen an increase in attendance at every school we have returned to.

We have also run an IT in-service in Nowra and a SmartBoard in-service in Wollongong. Both days were a lot of fun and those who attended seemed to enjoy the days whilst learning valuable new skills. We look forward to running more days in 2012 and to finding new ways to explore the technology and empower you to use it.

The third parish coordinators meeting for the Illawarra/Shoalhaven region was held on Monday the 12th of September. It was definitely a positive experience for me to get a chance to meet some more of the coordinators. We were able to discuss some important topics and Jude reaffirmed our determination to focus on primary SRE and recruitment.

As a final note, I have had the pleasure of meeting with a number of coordinators and catechists - Thank you to Sue Clarke, Kevin Grew, Fr David Catterall and Carla Azar for your hospitality and time! Thank you to the catechists in those areas too who made me feel very welcome. I would love an opportunity to come and visit more catechists and coordinators. I appreciate the honesty and openness of catechists to express their support needs and their hopes and dreams for the ministry.

*Peter Gilmore
Faith Education Officer
Illawarra-Shoalhaven Region.*

Please don't hesitate to call me if you need help or support in this important work of the Church - 02 4225 0165.

Curriculum Materials Links resources
Forms **ccdwooll.org.au** Support
training Calendar
A website designed to serve Catechist's needs...

Macarthur-Highlands Report

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the Faith Education Officer for Macarthur-Southern Highlands. Having completed my first two months, I can already see the amazing work that has been and continues to be done through this vital ministry and I can't wait to delve deeper into it.

A few words about me as way of introduction... I was born in Camden and grew up in Helensburgh. I have lived there all my life although have spent some time throughout Australia including Adelaide and Perth (working) as well as travelling the Nullabour and west coast of Australia. I love outdoor adventures and value learning and new experiences. I enjoy the company of people, hearing their journeys (and wisdom!) as well as being refreshed by times of solitude, silence and simplicity.

It has been fairly fast paced having kicked off in the middle of a year that was already up and running and I have been so grateful for the welcome and reception I have had from all those Catechists and Coordinators I have met so far and those they are representing... Thank You!

Following my first Coordinators meeting

in July I, have had the opportunity to be involved in some exciting endeavors. Firstly, numerous school visits where I had the chance to meet some of the dedicated catechists as well as the students they minister to. What an uplifting and encouraging experience! And many found out... I'm not that scary! It was a privilege to see you in action and I'm looking forward to getting out and about a little more.

We had a number of people graduate from the Level 3 course as well as earn their Diploma. We had some inspiring and thought provoking input from our presenters and the feedback was positive in that catechists felt ministered to and engaged on a personal faith level.

I have also had the privilege of being involved with (and running) SRE seminars in our State Secondary Schools. They have been well received and so rewarding. We've run them at Dapto, Mt Annan, Eagle Vale and Woonona High Schools. These young people, like the thousands of young people we see in Primary Schools, are grateful and excited to hear the Gospel message presented in a refreshing and relevant way.

It was also wonderful to meet so many Catechists from the region at our annual Retreat Day at Mount Carmel on September 19. I think it is safe to say we all walked away feeling refreshed by allowing our body to catch up with our souls, after all the sowing of Gospel seeds throughout the year.

At time of this article going to press we are in the process of employing a Resource Centre Assistant for Micah House. This will not only mean improved support for Catechists in our Region, but will give me greater flexibility in being able to get out and meet with and support Catechists throughout the Region in Term 4, while ensuring that the Resource Centre is open Monday to Thursday, 9am-3pm.

Trish McCarthy
Faith Education Officer
Macarthur-Highlands Region

Please don't hesitate to call me if you need help or support in this important work of the Church - 02 4640 8550

Annual Catechist Awards Mass Invitation

A reminder to all Catechists and their families that the Annual Catechist Awards Mass will be held on November 12 at St. Brigid's Church in Gwynneville*.

Mass will commence at 10:30am and will be followed by a light luncheon in the St. St. Brigid's School Hall at the conclusion of Mass. Our annual mass is not only an opportunity for Catechist of the Diocese to come together to pray for each other and the ministry, but to acknowledge significant Service milestones of Catechists who have achieved 10 year Service awards, 15

Year Bishop Citations, 20 Year Papal Blessings, 25 Year Mary MacKillop Awards and 30 Year Life Memberships of CCD. Additionally, Bishop Peter will present the candidates who have successfully completed their Catechist Diploma, with their Certificates.

Please come and join us on November 12 for the Annual Catechist Award mass. All Catechists being presented with special Service awards or Certificates will be contacted personally and are asked to RSVP by Thursday October 28.

*Please note that venue & time change is due to building issues at St. John Vianney's Hall in Fairy Meadow.

Annual Catechist Awards Mass

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10:30am

November 12

St. Brigid's Parish

Gwynneville

(Cnr of Gipps rd & Vickery St.)

...

Mass commences at 10:30am followed by a light luncheon.

Street Parking Only

Macarthur Highlands Retreat Day 2011

I anticipated our retreat day was going to be blessed but still was a little overwhelmed by just how good a day it was! Thirty participants eagerly descended upon the grounds of the Carmelite Fathers in Varroville and wondered about what was to unfold for the day...

We started with prayer which inspired creativity, wonder and awe and an encouragement to open our minds and hearts to the wonderful ways God was to move that day. Fr Shemil shared some insights on the Eucharist sprinkling his own personal experience through the input to bring to life some of the points he was making. Morning tea allowed us to connect with each other and touch base with our fellow catechists from 'around the grounds' sharing our experiences and journey, laughing and chatting, being fed and watered.

As our input session continued, the anticipation built as we prepared to enter into the pinnacle of our Faith- the Eucharist. There were some challenges thrown out to firstly 'let God love us' and secondly to ask God to reveal Himself in a NEW way. That we would experience His Love in a way that we have never done before... and He delivered!

Opportunity for Reconciliation and time before the Blessed Sacrament provided excellent preparation for Mass. The Eucharist was enriching, and the Readings of the day were perfect for the content of our day of reflection and input. We were reminded in Scripture to be 'a light to the world' and as we prepared to take Christ with us again, back into our daily lives, we paused to conclude by sharing with each other the highlights of the day and the things that touched us most. Slowing down. Worthy to be loved. Connection. The beauty of the woman's heart. Creativity in prayer. Not letting things get in the way of where God wants us/ is calling us to be. Being 'surprised' by God. Allowing God to love us.

Thank you to all those present, who shared the gift of themselves and who contributed to making the day possible. With gratitude and joy, Trish.



Strengthening our place in schools



In recent months I have been pleased to have been involved in behind the scene discussions with key members of the NSW Parliament as part of the Inter Church Commission of Religious Educators in Schools (ICCOREIS) working to enhance the place of SRE in Schools. Meetings have been conducted with the Education Minister Adrian Piccoli and his key advisors as well as with Rev Fred Nile and the Christian Democrats to ensure that effective strategies are implemented so that the wonderful contribution made by Catechists around the state continues to be a strong feature of the NSW education system.

Key politicians have been presented with an assessment of the minimal impact of Ethics classes on the delivery of SRE in schools and an explanation of the decision made last December by major Churches to move ahead in a cooperative manner and work with Ethics providers. It was explained that while major Christian denominations worked hard to 'prevent' ethics classes in a necessary battle in 2010, 'removal' of ethics classes is a different proposition, and one that is not in the best interests of SRE providers.

The Liberal-Nationals made some key commitments regarding SRE in the lead up to the March state election and negotiations with them since that time have reaffirmed the commitment the Government has to ensuring SRE remains an attractive strength of the State's Education system. The Minister has been presented with a list of specific strategies that key providers regard as critical to ensure that this is brought to fruition.

ICCOREIS, the peak body representing SRE providers, has received firm guarantees on a number of issues including that that the impending National Curriculum framework, would not interfere with the place of SRE in the NSW schools. Further to this, key discussions have commenced around a variety of points that will enhance the work of Catechists, including greater clarity in the process of enrolment in SRE for families, ensuring that appropriate time allocations for SRE are provided by schools, and ensuring proper enforcement of the SRE guidelines by School Principals. Importantly, the Education Minister is keen to implement an annual event to celebrate the achievements of SRE in NSW and to recognise the efforts of Catechists.

A number of Catechists from our Diocese will be invited to the celebration in the New Year to recognise their significant contribution to NSW Education as SRE Volunteers.

Jude Hennessy



Did you know...

Every week in our Diocese, around **500 Catechists and Helpers** share the Good News of God's Love with **over 10,000 Catholic students in public schools!** There are thousands more Catholic students we could be reaching if we had more Catechists. *Can you help?*

Quick Secondary SRE Update

Members of the Youth Mission Team and a core group of Catechists keen to be involved in Secondary School Seminars will in 4th term be involved in presenting Seminars on The Reason for the Season, to highlight with secondary students the key event in History, God becoming man in the person of Jesus. We have been very pleased with the numbers and response of students in our expanded Secondary program in Schools throughout 2011 but ask for the prayers of all Catechists as we continue to do this work and look at expanding its reach even further in 2012.

At the start of each term, the Secondary Seminar Team rehearse the content presented as part of the seminars delivered to Secondary School students with members of the team making themselves available to go into schools by nominating availability for one or two of the various dates.

If you, or someone you know might be interested in being involved in the delivery of the Secondary Seminar program, please contact **Helen Bennett** on **4253-0934** or **helen.bennett@woll.catholic.org.au**

Just 1 hour a week
Volunteer to be a Catechist

It is only when we forget ourselves, that we do things that will be remembered.
Bishop Peter Ingham DD

Become a Catechist

Visit our website or contact your Parish Priest or Catechist Coordinator to volunteer

www.ccdwoll.org.au

Get involved in one of the most vibrant ministries in the Diocese!

We always are looking for more Catechists to be part of Parish Teams that go into our State Schools. It is very rewarding work where you bring understanding of the love of God to students and often their families. If you think you could be a teacher, classroom helper or have skills that might assist this ministry in some way, please contact us at CCD or your Parish Coordinator. If you know someone in your Parish who you think might love working as a Catechist, encourage them to contact us! (Call Helen on 4253 0934)