

# CatechistNET

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE • DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

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VOLUME 17 • ISSUE 1 • APRIL 2019



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**Going into  
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and Support Personnel

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Lisa Metcalfe and Trish McCarthy.  
Edited by Darren McDowell.

# Message from the Director



**Be Encouraged!  
Your work  
matters**

Dear Catechists and supporters throughout the  
Diocese of this wonderful work,

I hope the year has started well for you. It has  
been encouraging to hear of the many new  
Catechists who have put their hand up to  
embrace the mission of the Church to make Jesus  
known and loved and who are nearing the end of  
their training. Your contribution to this mission  
and to the lives and families and young people is  
highly valued by so many, indeed it is a feature of  
public education that boldly proclaims that faith  
and spirituality are a core part of life. In the same  
way, people who do not choose faith formation  
via SRE for their children have other options  
during this time, as they should have, including  
Special Education in Ethics or other supervised  
work.

It is for this reason that I want to note the stance  
recently taken by the Teachers Federation Union  
for state school teachers in NSW. I want to name  
it and ask that you do what you can to oppose it.  
Left unchallenged such ideological stances have  
the potential to insidiously undermine many  
good features of society, in this instance SRE.

It is important for you to be aware that Bishop  
Mascord has been designated a lead role for  
SRE and the work of Catechists in NSW. As a  
former Primary School teacher, he speaks with  
a high level of knowledge and authority about  
the quality and contribution of SRE and faith  
formation in the lives of young people. In his  
media responses he notes that 'the stance of  
*NSW Teachers Federation* in advocating to remove  
Special Religious Education (SRE) from schools, is  
in contradiction to numerous worldwide studies  
that overwhelmingly affirm the positive impact  
that religious education has on the well-being  
of young people.' Further, he noted that given  
the outcome of the ARTD Review of SRE and  
the even higher expectations and commitments  
of providers to deliver quality curriculums and  
training of SRE teachers that 'any reasonable

person would expect that this parental choice should be celebrated in a multicultural and multifaith society such as ours.'

In the same way, I was personally happy to join with members of the Inter Faith Special Religious Education Committee (IFSRE), my colleagues from the Bahai, Jewish, Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu faiths in confidently stating in media responses that 'the formation of quality teachers and curriculums remains a priority so parents can continue to confidently choose SRE knowing their sons and daughters will receive all of the benefits from spiritual formation in the faith of their family that any quality education system would make provision for'.

Monica Doumitt wrote incisively in the Catholic Weekly about the stance of the NSW Teachers Federation (10 February p13), noting this was their attempt to make schools "completely secular" and concluding that "if the Teachers Federation wants to campaign for the removal of SRE in the classroom, then they have a right to do so. But they should not pretend they are motivated by inclusiveness or classroom time. They are seeking to replace religious belief with their own belief system because they are motivated by ideology. At least

they could be honest about it."

The position of the *NSW teachers Federation* lies in stark contrast with numerous studies, most specifically the findings of Associate Professor Zehavit Gross, the UNESCO /Burg Chair in Education for Human Values, Tolerance and Peace, Bar-Ilan University, Israel who outlined in 2018 numerous benefits of SRE in NSW including that SRE teaches the students to "to be critical, to question things, to explore things and to discover new horizons." Further, she expressed her fear "of a world where religiosity will not be exposed explicitly, on the table, because in this kind of world people are going to be ignorant... I think that the minute you provide religious education in government schools, you practically multiculturalise schools because it enables you really to teach students to respect the other."

All members of All Faiths SRE (AFSRE) embrace such outcomes as a unique and huge positive for Education, that should be replicated around Australia, not torn down by narrowmindedness. It is troubling that the NSW Teachers Federation is ignoring such benefits and the validity of this choice for parents. Nevertheless, all major faiths remain committed to the delivery

of high quality SRE for NSW Government schools and parents and look forward to working alongside the vast majority of people of goodwill who understand its clear benefits.

I encourage you to take the time in the lead up to the NSW State election to let your local candidates know of your attitude of the important place of SRE. Do so after the election too. A simple letter noting some of the points above speaks volumes to our political leaders and invariably trumps the position of ideologues and media who so often denigrate SRE unfairly. Please take 20 minutes or so to hand write a letter – they matter and make a difference.

Be encouraged! Your work matters and it is making a big impact on the lives of young people, the mission of the Church and the richness of public education.

*Mr Jude Hennessy*  
 Director  
 Office of Renewal & Evangelisation  
 Diocese of Wollongong

## DISCOVER SRE IN SCHOOLS

**CHRISTIAN SRE**   
 QUESTION. EXPLORE. DISCOVER.



### Benefits of Special Religious Education (SRE)

#### Connect

SRE builds tolerance in schools around diverse communities and promotes multiculturalism through joint celebrations of different faith groups and the recognition of different cultural heritages.

#### Succeed

SRE contributes to a well-rounded education and provides students with a values perspective to make informed ethical choices.

#### Thrive

SRE is community building and helps connect schools with the local community.

- ARTD Review of SRE and SEE

### Better Balanced Futures

Better Balanced Futures is about creating and maintaining better training and curriculum standards for SRE, helping to equip our children for a more certain future, by teaching positive values and providing a solid foundation and balance in their lives.

"Spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose. It can include our connection to culture, religion or community and includes the beliefs, values and ethics we hold"

- NSW Dept. of Education Framework



THERE ARE:

**101**  
SRE providers



REPRESENTING:

**29**  
faith groups



# Committed to Safeguarding

Written by  
The Office of Professional Standards  
& Safeguarding

*In the last edition of CatechistNET, we laid out the seven point plan being implemented by the Professional Standards & Safeguarding team. Over the next seven issues of CatechistNET, including this one, we will explore each point in the plan.*

## **Overview of the Diocese of Wollongong's Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People**

The Diocese of Wollongong's commitment to creating a child safe organisation is a shared responsibility that requires all personnel to work together within a strong governance framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

The Diocese of Wollongong is committed to safeguarding all people in the Diocese, in particular children and vulnerable people. The Diocese works to implement the Office of the Children's Guardian child-safe standards, Royal Commission learnings and best practice models to create environments that support the safety and wellbeing of all persons in the Diocese. We recognise the strong need for continuous development of individual and organisational capacities to understand risk, recognise harm, and take action, in order to ensure the ongoing effective prevention of risks to all persons undertaking and receiving services through the Diocese of Wollongong.

The Diocese has established the Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (OPSS) to oversee the

delivery of a number of projects and services to persons undertaking and receiving services through the Diocese. Additionally, the Diocesan Professional Standards and Child Protection Team (PSCPT) has been established to drive a safe institutional culture across all Diocesan entities and provide advice to the Bishop on matters of Professional Standards and Child Protection. These bodies are a forum for the opinions of industry experts on complex matters to be heard, consideration to be given to current issues of the diocese, and development of projects which aim to enhance diocesan policy and cultural actions. The Diocese also has departments within its Education and Welfare agencies who have a specific focus on the protection of children and vulnerable people.

Ultimately, the objective of the OPSS, PSCPT and the agencies of the Diocese is to create a culture that promotes, understands and implements effective practices in the areas of prevention, compliance, risk management, professional development, supervision, and responses and support for survivors.

The next issue will explore how the diocese is developing and implementing a culture of prevention through informal and formal means to ensure our ongoing commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

# THE 3 Rs

If you receive information indicating a possible risk of immediate harm to, or a report of current or historical abuse of a child or adult, then follow these 3 steps:

## 1. REASSURE

- They did the right thing by telling you
- They are not in trouble
- You will tell someone who can assist them
- Everyone has a right to feel safe and protected.

## 2. RECORD

- Immediately (or as soon as it is practical) anything that you are told or that you observe
- Only the facts (no subjective statements)
- Include the date, time, parties involved
- Sign the record

## 3. REPORT

- Children regarded as being currently at risk of harm
- Any form of abuse (including physical or sexual assault, ill-treatment or neglect, psychological harm)
- Professional misconduct in the workplace (including sexual misconduct, crossing professional boundaries, violence, bullying, harassment)

– Office of Professional Standards  
and Safeguarding

# Thank you to the Bible Society

*Written by Jude Hennessy*

The Bible Society Australia is committed to giving access to the Bible across the world. For a number of years they supported the work of Catechists in the Diocese of Wollongong with the provision of Bibles for our use with Year 6 children. In doing so they have helped to make our sharing about Jesus vibrant and real by giving young people access to the scriptures.



The Bible Society do incredible work in translating the Bible into the world's languages, including in Indigenous languages and sign language (Auslan) in Australia. They provide free Bibles and Scripture to Mission groups, Chaplains of hospitals, prison & defence force as well as to SRE. The Bible Society also champion the importance of Christianity and the place of SRE in schools with high quality and well-researched print, video and audio material about the relevance of Christianity in the 21st century. At Christmas they provided 10,000 copies of the Really Good News of Christmas book to the Diocese of Wollongong for any Parishes who wanted to give it to children and encourage parents to read to their kids to share faith easily. This Easter they will be supporting us in the same way with the Story of Easter booklet for kids. Thanks to the Bible Society for your amazing work.

You can read more about the Bible Society at [biblesociety.org.au](http://biblesociety.org.au)



YOU ARE INVITED



*Catechist Retreat*  
**2019**

facilitated by  
**Fr Bernard Gordon** VG

**Illawarra-Shoalhaven Retreat**  
St Mary Star of the Sea  
Gerringong  
Friday, October 18th  
10:00am-2:00pm

**Macarthur-Highlands Retreat**  
Mt Carmel Retreat Centre  
Varroville  
Monday, October 21st  
10:00am-2:00pm

RSVP to Cindy Oliver 4640 8550 or [cindy.oliver@dow.org.au](mailto:cindy.oliver@dow.org.au)  
Morning Tea provided, BYO Lunch

# Palm Sunday

Visual Resource



## Lent & Easter Find-a-word

F	K	S	P	C	L	L	T	L	A	Q	G	H	T	M
L	V	A	J	U	R	E	T	V	R	D	Z	U	O	S
Z	V	U	T	H	T	O	N	C	R	I	B	Z	K	L
J	W	U	H	Z	E	B	W	T	D	Q	O	N	S	C
G	X	X	X	A	M	X	X	N	V	U	N	R	W	B
K	V	S	Q	L	P	U	L	C	Y	Y	Y	Q	N	J
W	S	P	A	I	T	S	H	J	E	S	U	S	R	P
B	X	Q	A	V	L	A	T	J	U	F	J	H	B	E
H	M	B	T	E	I	T	H	O	R	N	S	Q	N	L
T	B	W	X	V	R	O	I	B	N	A	Z	Y	A	J
P	C	R	O	S	S	Y	U	J	I	E	G	D	O	Y
P	L	B	E	D	E	S	E	R	T	X	T	E	T	S
F	A	L	Z	A	W	Y	P	I	U	L	O	S	I	Z
Q	D	L	G	W	D	N	B	M	F	H	M	F	X	C
I	T	F	M	A	R	Y	F	C	R	Q	B	O	H	W

LENT  
 ASH  
 DESERT  
 TEMPT  
 STONE  
 BREAD  
 PALM  
 JESUS  
 CROSS  
 CROWN  
 THORNS  
 TOMB  
 MARY  
 ALIVE  
 SAVIOUR

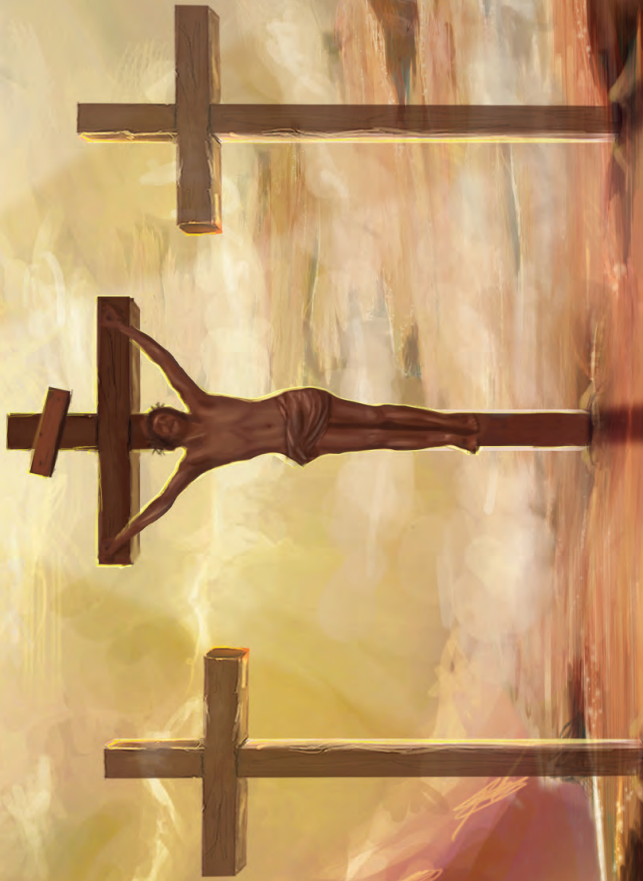


“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life..”

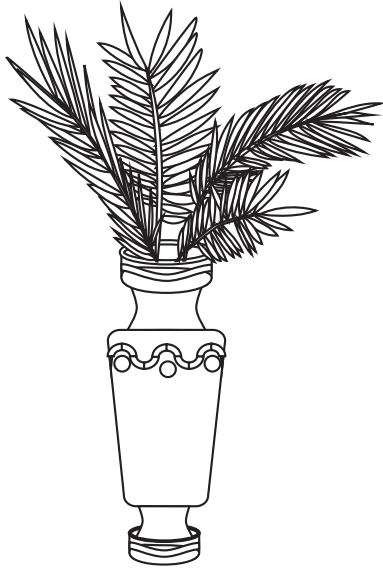


# Good Friday

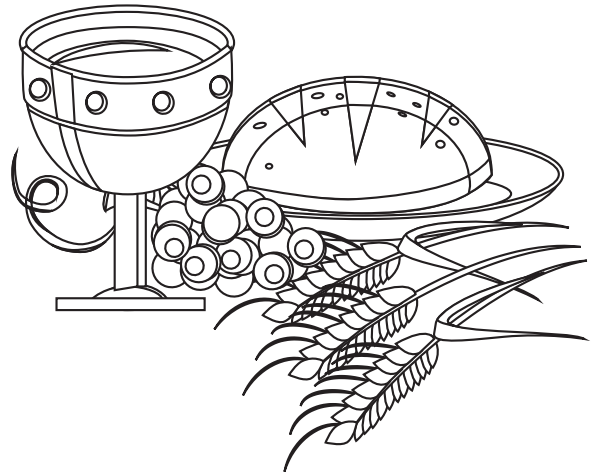
Visual Resource



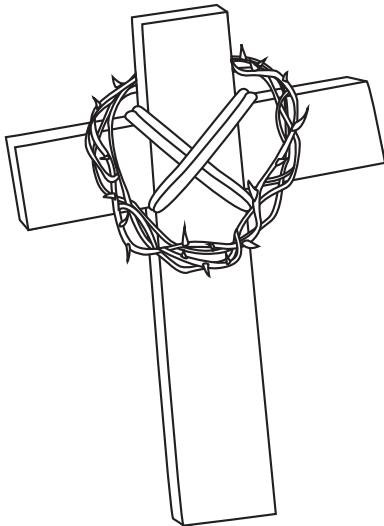
# Holy Week



\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday



\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday



\_\_\_\_\_ Friday



\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday

**Word Bank – Holy Palm Good Easter**



# Catechist Profile

## Trudy Scremin

Catechist  
Dapto Parish

*How long have you been a Catechist?*

I have been a catechist for 38 years and of course seen many changes in that time!

*What inspired you to become a Catechist?*

Originally, when my children were making their sacraments, I got to know Sr Lorraine who with her team were instructing children in the Sacraments. Sister approached me and asked if I would like to be a catechist.

At first, I refused because I didn't think I was knowledgeable in my faith enough to teach others. So, I said, "no" but a few weeks down the track it wouldn't leave me alone and she asked if I had thought about it. The rest is 38 years of loving it!

*What do you enjoy about teaching SRE?*

At first, I was really nervous, and my knees were shaking but I thought this is a responsibility and you have to learn more about your faith, so you can answer questions when they come up and pray more! So, over the years with the help of the team and of course the Holy Spirit – the teacher of all truth – it became easier and I began to love it. The courses were very helpful, and I distinctly remember at one of them Sr. Catherine said, you just have to 'pass on your faith' and love the children.

*What do you find most challenging?*

So, over the years when a problem arises and I don't now the answer, there are plenty of good religious people to ask and help. It keeps you always close to the church.

*Do you have a particular talent or skill that you make use of in the classroom?*

I do love the children and also, teaching them from the wonderful Christ Our Light and Life, what a great and easy guide to follow. I must say the children really have come to love the activities in these books!

*Describe a lesson that went particularly well? What happened?*

At the beginning of each lesson we bless ourselves with Holy Water and pray a decade of the Rosary. I have a container with Rosary Beads and they are put back when we're finished for the following week. The Rosary – mysteries which change every week – are a great way to learn the story of the life of Jesus and the Holy Family. I love to hear their intentions.

*What warms heart when you are in the classroom?*

I guess these children have some funny stories for which we all pray. Like a dog that's sick, a guinea pig, a cat, a bird or something that they love. Their Nanna or Pop who's had an operation or their sick Dad or Mum. These are the moments that are special.

*Your best tip for other Catechists.*

The best tip for other catechists is just love the children and give them the 'true faith'. Once a priest said to me, this could be the only time they hear about it. What a great responsibility. I love it!

***Want to share  
your story in the  
ministry?***

We'd love to hear from you.  
Please contact  
[cindy.oliver@dow.org.au](mailto:cindy.oliver@dow.org.au)

# Catholic SRE Wollongong Website Launch

Written by Peter Gilmore

Over the last few months we have been quietly working away on a new online home for Catholic SRE in the Diocese of Wollongong. This has been partly in response to the new requirements placed on us as an SRE Provider but also out of a desire to create a more attractive and easy to use “front facing” web presence.

In the past our website was first and foremost inward looking – it mostly sought to serve the needs of Catechists. Subsequently, any outsider would have a tough time finding the information they needed about SRE delivered by the Catholic Church in our Diocese.

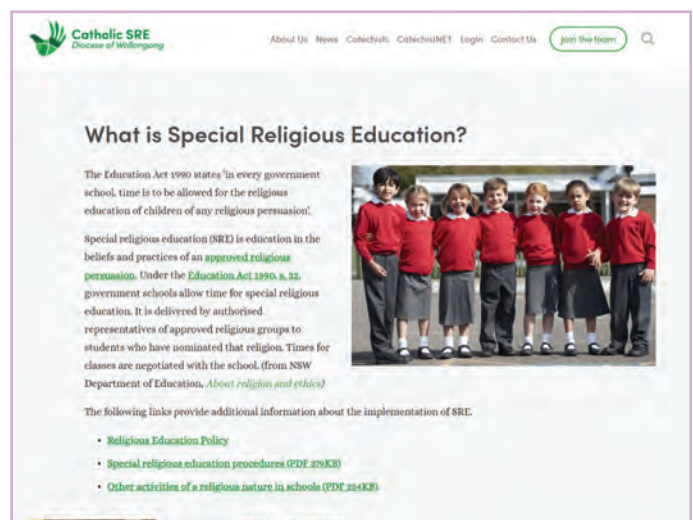
Now our focus is firmly fixed on serving visitors first. Increasingly, visitors to our website will be

schools and parents of children who are wanting to know, “what are the children being taught?” or “what is Special Religious Education and who are the CCD?” With this in mind, the homepage greets visitors with four main options – ‘What is SRE?’, ‘Curriculum Information’, ‘Become a Catechist’ and ‘Feedback & Complaints’.

That’s not to say that this website will sacrifice serving Catechists well. In all respects, information and support that Catechists need (like calendars, courses and resources) are even easier to find and navigate. Additionally, there is also a dedicated section with digital versions of the CatechistNET magazine.

We’re also incredibly pleased with how the Parish Coordinator support section is coming together. This private area of the website has access to important forms and other key pieces of information that Parish Coordinators need in fulfilling their important role.

We hope you take the time to visit our new site (you can find us at **www.ccdwollongong.com**). Feel free to drop us an email with any feedback and comments. We’d love to hear what you think of our new home on the web.



[www.ccdwollongong.com](http://www.ccdwollongong.com)

# Divine Renovation

## Living Discipleship

*Written by Darren McDowell*

Do you remember the experience of falling in love? The excitement of discovering that one person with whom you could share the journey of life? Do you remember the experience of being committed through thick and thin to that one person, or to a friendship over many long years because of the love, trust and surrender you have to the wellbeing of the other and your relationship with them?

At the heart of these relationships is potentially an even stronger, longer lasting love. Jesus invites us into such a relationship with him and God the Father through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew's gospel we read that Jesus' name, 'Emmanuel', means 'God with us' – he is not only with 'us' but also with 'YOU' and wants to be in deep relationship with you always. As in John's Gospel Jesus said, 'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full'.

Pope Benedict XVI describes the relationship in this way: "Faith is above all a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus, and to experience his closeness, his friendship, his love; only in this way does one learn to know him ever more, and to love and follow him ever more. May this happen to each one of us."

As I've grown in this relationship with Jesus, I find the words of Pope Benedict to be true. The more I experience a deep encounter with Jesus, the more I'm drawn to reflect on scriptures every day and to attend the sacraments even more regularly. I'm drawn to a deeper kind of love and care for those around me and a desire to give more of my time, talents and finances to the mission of the Church.

What is a disciple? One who having encountered Jesus surrenders their life in order to follow him, to be with him. As in any relationship a disciple keeps this relationship as the central element of life, involving him in every activity out of the love, enjoyment, energy, peace and wisdom that it brings to everyone.



# “Let us at any cost be faithful”

## A Thank you to Sr Joan Goodwin rsj

*Written by Peter Gilmore*



When St Mary of the Cross Mackillop said, “let us at any cost be faithful” (1873), I often wonder whether she had Sr Joan in mind. “Anything for the Catechists, you know that, Peter!” This is a phrase that Sr Joan has said to me so many times and, more than words, it is a phrase that is lived out in her life. Sr Joan has given her life for Catechists and the children we teach. She has performed the role of teacher, principal, diocesan CCD coordinator, parish CCD coordinator and trainer but Sr Joan has always been a Catechist. Being a Catechist isn’t something you do, it’s someone you are

and, through her vocation to consecrated life in the Josephites, Sr Joan lived out her calling as a Catechist – one who shares and instructs others in our Catholic faith.

But I misspoke. Yes, Sr Joan has given her life for Catechists and the children we teach – this is true. However, it is a response to the great love of God she has found in Jesus that has compelled her to action. A love that is “too strong for me not to cling to” (St Mary of the Cross Mackillop, 1873). Whenever I speak to Sr Joan, it is more and more clear that this isn’t a fling or part-time relationship. This isn’t action born out of a sense of obligation. This is love. Sr Joan knows she is loved by God and how else could she respond except in love?

“When did you enter the sisters, Sr Joan?” I asked. “In 1954”, Sr Joan replied with a smile. “And when did you become involved in CCD?” “1955”. 65 years a sister, 64 of them serving in CCD (Except for one year when Sr Joan studied abroad – we all need time away

every now and then). A life poured out in love for others.

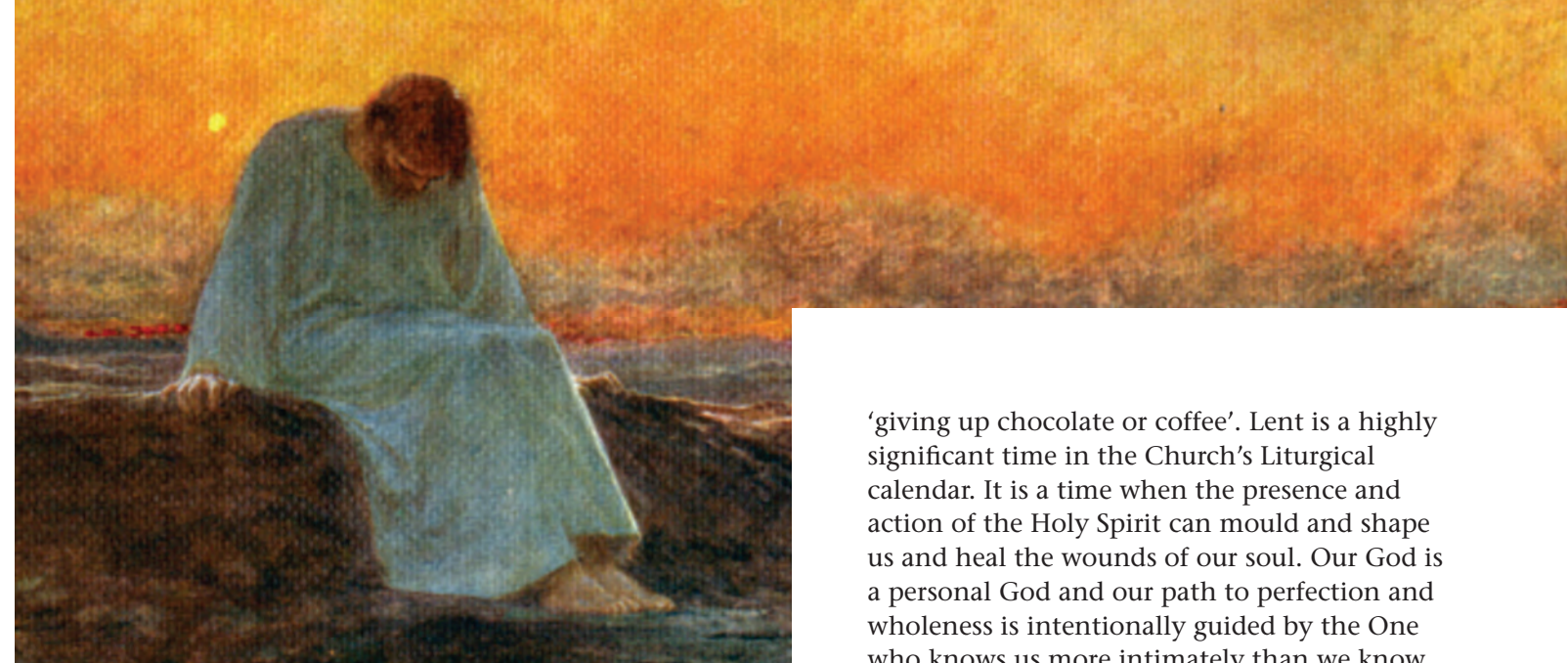


And so, at the end of 2018, Sr Joan retired from the position of Parish Coordinator of Unanderra after many wonderful years of service. At the coordinators meeting in Wollongong in December, we did our best to thank and honour Sr Joan. Bishop Brian, a friend of Sr Joan’s, gave a vote of thanks and then led the small community of coordinators in praying over Sr Joan – a prayer of blessing and thanks for a woman who has given everything for the God she loves.

We presented Sr Joan with a diamond shaped crystal engraved with her name, in a small presentation case inscribed with the words of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt 6:20-21). No treasure on earth could ever repay Sr Joan for what she has given nor would it suffice – the love of God is the only thing that truly satisfies. Thank you Sr Joan. Thank you for all you have given and for the witness you are.



*Bishop Brian & CCD Coordinators from the Illawarra-Shoalhaven with Sr Joan*



## Lenten Reflection

# Going into the Desert

*Written by Trish McCarthy*

I wonder if you've ever taken a First Aid course? In such courses you learn of the variety of injuries and wounds one might experience to the physical body. You would notice people are indeed quite fragile when they encounter force from the external environment. You might also notice a person's susceptibility to infection and disease. The hope contained in participating in a First Aid course is that we become better equipped to respond in situations where injury occurs. We grow in knowledge and skills to better understand what response is suitable for particular wounds. And as a 'First Aider' we rest on the fact that it is better to do something rather than nothing.

But have you ever considered the wounds your soul might receive – or inflict on another as we bump and crash our way through daily life? Not unlike the bumps, scratches and lacerations of our physical body, left unattended wounds often don't heal as well as they could, leaving a scar or impairment of freedom. This is true too of our souls' wounds.

Even though we may think something is better than nothing, Lent is much more than

'giving up chocolate or coffee'. Lent is a highly significant time in the Church's Liturgical calendar. It is a time when the presence and action of the Holy Spirit can mould and shape us and heal the wounds of our soul. Our God is a personal God and our path to perfection and wholeness is intentionally guided by the One who knows us more intimately than we know ourselves. This is cause for profound joy and a wholehearted response.

When Scripture and our loving mother, the Church, teaches that Jesus was 'driven by the Spirit into the desert...' (CCC 538) we notice that this was not just a 'nice idea', as if Jesus wanted to spend some quiet time in creation. There was conviction and intention; to go to the depths of human suffering and temptation and continue the process of victory over sin and death culminating in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. Have you ever journeyed with Jesus to that place in the desert and asked Him of his experience? 'The Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert' (CCC 540). How have you listened to his story? Intentional time with Jesus may reveal to you something in your journey you've never seen before...

It is in this place of quiet reflection we hear the voice of God whisper... speaking into our deepest desires. When we ask, God gives inspiration to the specific area of our hearts' wilderness – the wounds of our soul- and brings them to life. Healing and freedom are the fruits of this intimate encounter. How different our experience of Lent might be if we allow Jesus to tend to the wounds of our soul as the First Aider, inspiring us to make changes according to our deepest desires hidden beneath our wounds and at Easter, bringing us into new life – a new creation, for the world, intended by God from our birth.

*Jesus, as Lent draws near, please speak to my heart and inspire in me the particular response of love I can make to you. I desire to be set free from the things that hold me back. Grant me the grace to respond to your invitation, to go deeper into the wilderness with you, and to live in the freedom you have promised. Amen.*



# Calendar 2019

## Coordinator Meetings (10:00-11:30am)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	Jul 5 Nov 22
Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Jul 8 Nov 25

## Level III (9:30am-1:30pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	Aug 16, 23, 30 Sept 6, 13, 20
Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Aug 12, 19, 26 Sept 2, 9, 16

## Craft Day/Morning Tea (10:30-12:00pm)

Micah House	Oct 23
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## Catechist Retreat (10:00am-2:00pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven St Mary S. Sea, Gerringong	Oct 18
Macarthur-Highlands Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville	Oct 21

## Annual Catechist Mass (10:30am)

St Francis Xavier Cathedral	Nov 16
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\*Dates are correct at time of printing

### BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

CONTACT CINDY OLIVER ON 4640 8550  
OR [cindy.oliver@dow.org.au](mailto:cindy.oliver@dow.org.au)



GO DEEPER  
IN FAITH

## Catechist Training Level III



Level III training is a chance for all Catechists to take their knowledge of the Catholic Faith deeper. Over six weeks, Level III focuses entirely on Theology and Church teaching, with the aim of providing space to explore and reflect on the profound truths of our Catholic Faith.

### TOPICS INCLUDE

- Creation: Work of the Trinity
- Communion: Eucharist - Source & Summit
- Reconciliation: Forgiveness of Sins, Healing
- Christ: Heart of Catechesis
- Morality: Life in the Spirit
- Church: Mission of the Holy Spirit

**See Calendar above for course details.  
Bookings essential.**