

CatechistNET

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Message from the Director



**Cut off from
Jesus, we can
do nothing!**

Recently, the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong welcomed Sherry Weddell to our Diocese to speak about the importance of forming intentional disciples. Over ninety people from around the Diocese gathered to hear Sherry speak about the realities faced in most of the Western World when it comes to sharing faith. Much of what was presented focussed on parish renewal for mission and a breaking open of what is required for this to take place.

Sherry explained three important journeys that are necessary in the life of anyone who moves from being a seeker, to a disciple and then hopefully - to being a missionary disciple – someone who has the heart, desire and the skills to share their love of God with others.

The first of these journeys in ‘missiondom’ – or sharing in the evangelising mission of the Church - was the personal interior journey of a living personal relationship with Jesus that led to a decision to be an intentional disciple. We all need this – even us ‘cradle Catholics’ bought up in the faith from day one. This requires the moment(s) of encounter with the Holy Spirit when a person is convinced and convicted of God’s reality, of God’s love, God’s mercy and the realisation of God’s desire for relationship with us. This awakening to the love of God, leads to a commitment to discipleship.

The second journey was that of active practice as a disciple, evidenced by receiving the Sacraments, attending Mass, and participating in the life and mission of the Christian community. These are the ‘disciplines’ of the disciple, forming us, changing us, drawing us deeper into our understanding of God, and deepening the experience of the love of and for God, experienced in the first journey. Sherry explained that so many Catholics dutifully embrace the practices of discipleship that are characteristics of the second phase, especially Mass attendance, often through a deep and noble sense of obligation. To put it simply, these fuels of a disciple need to be put into an engine that is on full throttle, a heart

that is on fire with love for Jesus because of a the life changing encounter with God's love and mercy.

The third journey is an ecclesial journey into the Church through the reception of the sacraments of initiation, and formation in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What is abundantly clear, is that all three journeys are necessary to become an effective, infectious missionary disciple who can draw others into a relationship with Jesus and the Church.

“Our Catechists are well-formed, faithful and desiring to serve God. They desire to share faith and do so with great commitment, fervour and training.”

Throughout much of the day presented by Sherry Weddell, I couldn't help but regularly hear her insights with the ear of a Catechist. Our Catechists are

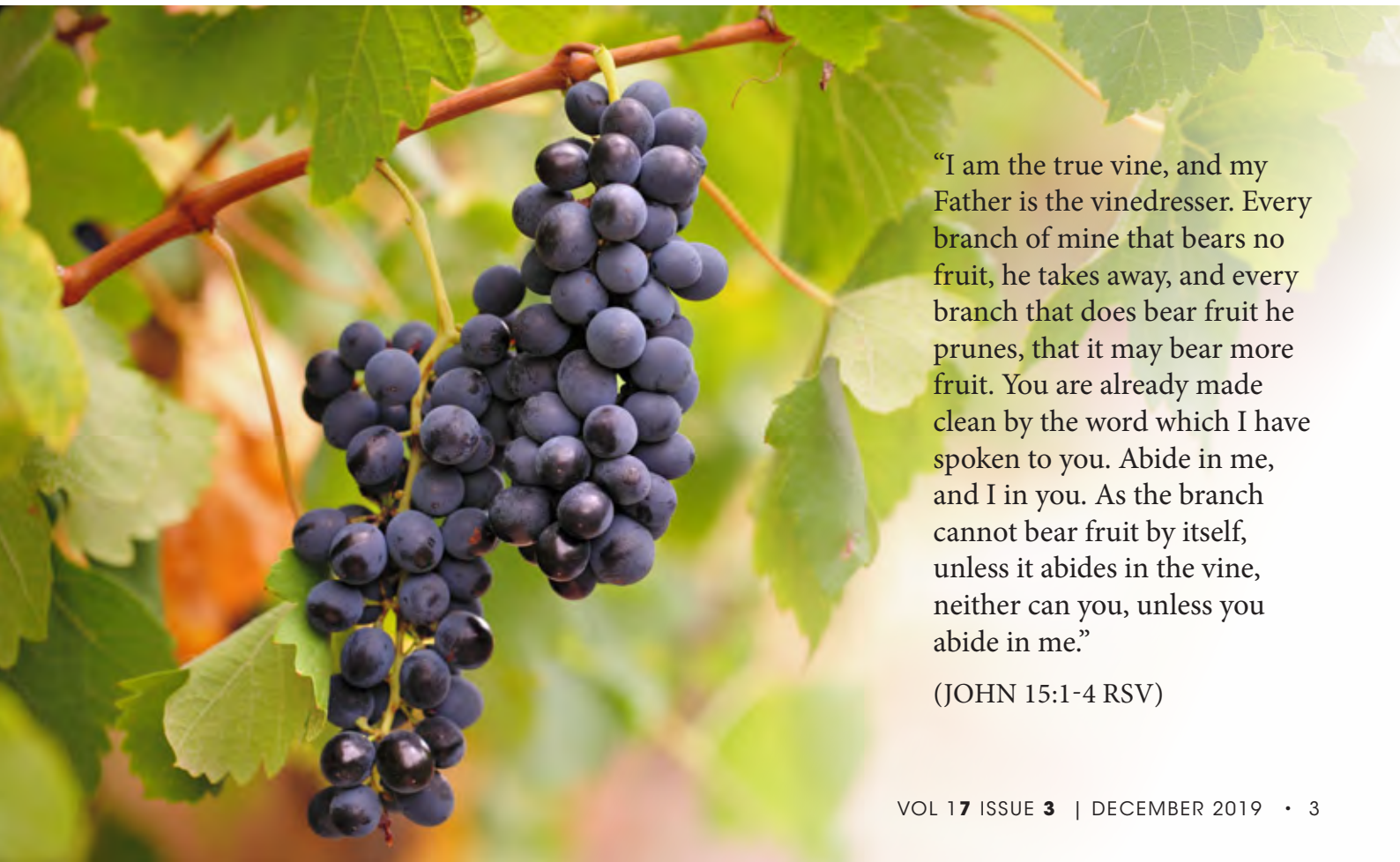
well-formed, faithful and desiring to serve God. They desire to share faith and do so with great commitment, fervour and training. What clearly is paramount in the midst of this desire is the importance of our personal relationship with Jesus. There can be no substitute to spending time with Jesus in daily prayer for a Catechist – especially if we are to authentically share the God we know and love – not just a God we've learnt about.

Linked to the knowing and loving of God, is the vital importance of reading God's Word. Sitting with the scriptures, and letting God whisper, sometimes scream out to us, of his love and mercy. Also important was the connection with Christian community, spending time in the company of other disciples – deliberately speaking about and nurturing each other in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Of course, the high point of this personal relationship is encountering Jesus through the Sacraments, Sunday Mass and regular reconciliation in particular – so as to encounter God's mercy as the sons and daughters of God.

As a Catechist, we regularly need the infilling of the Holy Spirit if we are to be authentic, effective witnesses to the Gospel message and our love for Jesus. We need the fuel and gifts that come from our openness to God's presence. Be deliberate about your time with God, by committing to personal prayer, reading scripture, and the Sacraments. We must make a daily choice to be connected to Jesus, for truly – he is the vine and we are the branches – cut off from him we can do – nothing! (John 15:1-4)

Blessings,

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



“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

(JOHN 15:1-4 RSV)

Annual Catechist Mass & Awards 2019

Written by Peter Gilmore

On Saturday, 16th November, Catechists from across the Diocese gathered together in St Francis Xavier Cathedral for the Annual Catechist Mass & Awards. Held on the Memorial of St Margaret of Scotland, Bishop Brian, along with several priests of the diocese, Fr Patrick Vaughan, Fr Chris Sarkis, Fr Leo Duck, Fr John Ho and Fr Meno Basti OMI, celebrated Mass, praying for the important ministry of Catechesis for Catholic children in state schools.

In his homily, Bishop Brian stressed that we are at the coalface of evangelisation – bringing young people to an encounter with Jesus not only through what students heard but through experiences of prayer and the witness of our vibrant faith.

Diocesan Director, Mr Jude Hennessy, recollected the journey that the ministry has been on in the last decade, overcoming many obstacles and threats. Jude reminded us that, although we now find ourselves in a position of relative security, we can not afford to be complacent. We need to pray for this ministry and its impact on the lives of young people and pray for more Catechists to do this wonderful work.

It was a beautiful occasion, the Cathedral was lifted with our singing led by the local Catholic duo, *Gus & Iggy* (Marilyn Ng and Louisa Daniels). After Mass, a steady stream of Catechists could be overheard thanking Marilyn and Louisa for such a wonderful contribution to our celebration.

During the prayers of the faithful, Kristina Knight, the Catechist Coordinator from Rosemeadow, brought forth the CCD Book of Remembrance and placed it by the large cross near the altar. Bishop Brian read out the names of Catechists who have entered into eternal life during 2019 and prayed for them and their



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY YUEN

families. It is always an incredibly moving part of our Annual Mass, because the Catechist ministry isn't made up of strangers – we are family, working and serving God together.

Special thanks must go to Cindy Oliver for her careful planning of the generous luncheon that was enjoyed by all in the Xavier Centre after the Mass. Cindy, along with Lisa Metcalfe, Lauren Hall and Kerrie Hennessy did so much to make the day as special as it was. Thank you!

The Annual Catechist Mass & Awards is truly a unique opportunity to spend time with one another, celebrating and thanking God for all he has done and promises to continue to do! We hope you can join us next year in November. ■



2019 CATECHIST AWARDS

The Annual Catechist Mass would not be complete without the Awards Ceremony. Encompassing a wide range of service - Student Catechists to Life Membership which represents 30 years or more of ongoing dedication - the Catechist Awards are our way of acknowledging the beautiful sacrifice and service of those involved in the ministry. We know that our true reward will be in heaven where God celebrates all that we have given him but until that day, this is our simple thank you for all you have done.



DIPLOMA OF CATECHETICS

Albion Park - Mary Daly, Vanesa Evans, Julianne Hoffard, **Bulli** - Robert Brien, **Campbelltown** - Suzette Casse, Ken Garland, Diana Hill, **Eagle Vale** - Monika Rutkowski, Laureta Soliven, **Helensburgh** - Jacqueline Severino, **Ingleburn** - Simone Hay, **Lumen Christi** - Eugenia De Bortoli, Therese Nilsson, **Rosemeadow** - Margaret French, Kristina Knight, Elizabeth O'Neill, **The Oaks** - Maurice Dal Santo, **Unanderra** - Gabriella De Battista, **West Wollongong** - Brian Barlow, Marie Carvalho



BISHOP'S CITATION 10 YEARS SERVICE

Bulli - Frances Connelly, **Campbelltown** - Anthony Wagner, **Milton-Ulladulla** - Catherine Land, Joan Brumby, **Nowra** - Christine Burrows, Kathleen Cook, Mary Kellett, Dianne Lowin, **Rosemeadow** - Elizabeth O'Neill, Desiree Thomson, **Unanderra** - Mary Carolan, Fiona Fernandes, Leisa Gandy, **Varroville** - Alvita De Souza, Hillary De Souza, Cordelia Pereira, **Warrawong** - Herwina Arlotta



BISHOP'S CITATION STUDENT CATECHISTS

John Therry Catholic High School, Rosemeadow
Magdalene Catholic High School, Narellan
Mount Carmel Catholic College, Varroville
St Benedict's Catholic College, Oran Park
St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong
St Joseph's Catholic High School, Albion Park



BISHOP'S CITATION 15 YEARS SERVICE

Albion Park - Teresa Farrugia, Michelle Wynn, **Nowra** - Kathleen Cook, Teresa Cuda, Mary Kellett, Alice Laps, **Rosemeadow** - Elizabeth O'Neill, Sharyn Takacs, **Unanderra** - Mary Carolan, **Warrawong** - Herwina Arlotta





Christmas Find-a-word



Jesus

Mary

Joseph

Manger

Joy

Angels

Stable

Christmas

Wisemen

Gold

Frankincense

Myrrh

Nativity

Advent

Wreath

Candles

"Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.'"

Gifts for a King



Gold



Frankincense



Myrrh





Advent Wreath





PAPAL BLESSING

20 YEARS SERVICE

Bowral-Mittagong - Nicola Cotchett, **Campbelltown** - Marie Shiner, **Dapto** - Brian Brennan, Anne Johnston, Lynette Roach, **Eagle Vale** - Sr Julia Hartnett RSJ, **Kiama** - Sandra Sawers, **Nowra** - Kathleen Cook, Mary Kellett, **Rosemeadow** - Marie Abdalla, Marie Berbari, **Shellharbour City** - Rosetta Mastroianni, Roslyn O'Dea, **Warrawong** - Herwina Arlotta, **Varroville** - Bianca Heuvel

MARY MACKILLOP MEDAL

25 YEARS SERVICE

Berkeley - Catharina Green, **Picton** - Janette Chaumont, Audrey Ferrara, Proserfina Grima, **Shellharbour City** - Nena Crawford, **Unanderra** - Sr Margaret Paton RSJ, **Warrawong** - Herwina Arlotta



Life Membership

30 YEARS+ SERVICE

Dapto - Robyn Ford, **Kiama** - Gillian Wells,
Lumen Christi - Margaret Wakeling



Behaviour Leadership with Dr Bill Rogers

Written by Trish McCarthy

Earlier this year, the combined Sydney offices for CCD invited Dr Bill Rogers to deliver a workshop for 'Behaviour Leadership, Management and Discipline'. Dr Bill is an education consultant, has spent many years teaching in the classroom and now focuses on delivering seminars, mentoring, in-services geared toward a skills-based approach to discipline and behaviour management.

One of the first insights Dr Bill shared was that, "we can't control students, but we can help them control themselves". This provided a powerful shift in thinking to help raise students' awareness of behaviour and re-direct it to the desired behaviour creating ownership and responsibility in the students themselves. In light of this, Dr Bill spoke of the importance of brief descriptive cues to raise behaviour awareness and control their own behaviour.

For example, "David, you are wandering around the classroom. We are about to start. You need to be in your seat". It highlights what the student is doing as well as reinforcing the desired or required behaviour. Questions beginning with where/what/when can help in these circumstances: where is your seat? What are you supposed to be doing? "When you are back in your seat, look at your

worksheet, then I will come and help you." Questions beginning with 'why' (why are you still talking?) are helpful in teaching but not in raising awareness of behaviour

Another helpful encouragement from Dr Bill revolved around keeping your focus, as the leader, on the primary behaviour. That is, avoid being drawn into discussion about the secondary behaviour sometimes exhibited by students – what they say ("I was going to do it"), tone of voice, or body language such as eye rolling. To help keep the focus, we can operate from the paradigm of descriptive-reminder-direction. Describe the behaviour, remind what is expected and direct to desired behaviour before walking away to give them time to do what you have asked.

There is much more to explore in this area of classroom management though not enough room here! Thankfully, Dr Bill has a website containing resources (www.billrogers.com.au) as well as videos available on Youtube: for example 'Students who just say "NO"' ([dow.sh/2NX2nTe](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dow.sh/2NX2nTe)).

I encourage you to explore the wonderful and empowering work of Dr Bill Rogers.

Find out more at www.billrogers.com.au ■

Leadership tips

The Key to Communication

Written by Peter Gilmore

Master communicator and leadership expert, Craig Groeschel tells us that “just because you say something, it doesn’t mean they heard it, believe it, or will do it”. Communication, the process of sending and receiving information, is at the heart of what we do in our SRE classes. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that the point of SRE is to dump a whole pile of facts and rules on the children – full hearts are at least as important as full heads. When we think of communication, we generally understand it to be this: I have something to say and I want you to hear it, understand it and remember it. But communication is so much more than this!

We don’t just communicate ideas. We can communicate our care through our actions. We can communicate our beliefs by what we value – the things we will or won’t tolerate in the classroom. But “the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place” (George Bernard Shaw). We tend to overestimate our ability to communicate and vastly underestimate what is required to make sure our message is not just heard, not just understood but actually takes root and has a chance to grow and flourish in our students lives. Whether you are communicating your care or communicating the ten commandments, here is one key principle and three key questions that will rocket-fuel boost your communication.

One Key Principle

It’s not about me. It’s about the person (in this case, the children) that I’m communicating with. It can be confronting to realise but most children aren’t thinking about us. They’re thinking about lunchtime, the bird outside the window, which pencils they will use, or when school finishes. We generally frame this as children being *distracted* but the reality is that most children are consumed with their own lives and concerns. So if we want them to receive what we are trying to communicate, we need to be *you-centred*, not *me-centred*. A good leader always takes responsibility and never casts blame,



so we must make the act of communication our responsibility. For example, we might say “they’re not paying attention” and so we apply a classroom management solution where, perhaps, asking the question, “how could I communicate this better?” might yield a more positive result. Am I saying too much? Too little? Am I making it relevant to the children? Age-appropriate? With this in mind:

Three Key Questions

- 1. What do you want the children to know?**
And more than just an outline of content, why do they need know it? Will it help them be kinder? Will it help them be happier? What is the purpose for the information? If you are trying to communicate your care or your faith, what exactly are you trying to say (even with actions)?
- 2. What do you want the children to feel?**
What is the outcome on an emotional level? Should they feel safe? Should they feel hopeful? Should they feel loved?
- 3. What do you want the children to do?**
Communication should lead to action so always attaching at least one action point to your communication helps the children learn (e.g. in teaching about God’s goodness, we might make the action point, “say thank you to God”).

When you’re preparing your next lesson, consider those three key questions and then prepare your lesson accordingly. Did anything change from previous lessons? Did this process help? We’d love to hear about your experience. You can share it with us at peter.gilmore@dow.org.au. ■

Catechist Retreats 2019

Gerringong (Oct 18) & Varroville (Oct 21)
with Fr Bernard Gordon vG



“May I take this opportunity to thank the team for organizing our SRE retreat yesterday. From my perspective, it was an outstanding success.

The weather was lovely, friendship among fellow Catechist was spontaneous and caring, a beautiful and inspiring venue, generous morning tea and the music during Mass was perfect and beautifully presented.

The highlights were the three sessions presented by Rev. Father Bernard Gordon vG. I know I speak for all of my friends who attended from Milton–Ulladulla when I say how inspired we were. “

– Joan Brumby, Milton–Ulladulla

*Grant me, O Lord my God,
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
conduct pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance in
waiting for you,
and a hope of finally
embracing you. Amen.*

St Thomas Aquinas



Catechist Profile

Anthony Rewak

Catechist
Port Kembla

What inspired you to be a Catechist?

Formally, it began with a “Called to Ministry” course run by Darren McDowell, Coordinator of Evangelisation and Discipleship, which opened a new door on the path that is my life. I am always conscious that God is on that path with me. I then met Port Kembla Parish Catechist Coordinator Angela Shelton. Sister Maria was retiring as a Catechist and they were praying for someone to replace her in her ministry. I was asked, and I said “Yes”.

I have always felt called to teach, but I was never called to study primary education at an academic level. I have been especially inspired by my many teachers. I loved St Patrick’s, I loved Mrs Cooper, and I loved the Franciscan Sisters. I was very inspired by who they were and what they did, and I believe that was because they really loved what they did. I loved the experiences they helped me to have in the classroom, and I think once you find a deep appreciation for those moments you want to make them happen for others.

What do you enjoy about teaching SRE?

There is real joy in just being able to be there with the students and to connect with them. It’s beautiful, and it can happen in so many different ways. There is something of course very magical about that, and really something divine too. That is what has helped me to continue, and to grow, I suppose. I was once on the other end of feeling seen and heard and being allowed to be myself in class – reading and performing - and that is something that has carried through in my teaching catechism. I actively work from the question, what opportunities can I create for everyone to feel seen and heard and included.

The answer to that question means adapting and changing and evolving your style of teaching every year. Sometimes it is the same children you taught last year, but they grow and we have to allow them that space to grow and to become more. I feel very proud when I see them grow and mature. Even some of those children others might think won’t grow, they might be classed as difficult students, but I try not to allow those judgements to inform my teaching. I want everyone to participate. I am not happy to say “ok you can sit in the corner for the rest of the year and not do anything.” I want them to have an opportunity too. I have seen “difficult” students participate, and that has been a joy.

Do you have a particular talent or gift that you make use of in the classroom setting?

I am answering this in a universal way. The gift is who I am. My gift to them is my authenticity. I go into the classroom as a teacher, and very much as myself, and I think that gives them permission to hopefully begin to be more authentic within their own selves. There is a responsible way to be yourself, and I hope to demonstrate that, and I hope that they can grow to feel seen, and allowed to explore who they are, and especially who they are in relationship to God.

That is why we are truly there. I say to myself I am not there to make them master theologians, for what has carried me through in my Christian journey is the people I have known; these are tremendous people and often they are also the most “ordinary” people; all these people who through their Catholicism have that beautiful energy to them – that beautiful presence - and there is something more to them.

There is nothing that could stop me from continuing my journey because of them and it is difficult to articulate because it is one of the most profound experiences there is, and the reason it is profound is because God is present in those people and in the interactions between those people and myself. The Holy Spirit working in and through them. He is there. You allow God to be there by being yourself.

What do you see to be the future direction of your catechism work?

I have always said my future is in God’s hands. I personally can’t put a time frame on anything but as long as I am teaching, and God willing I will continue to teach, I will continue to grow. I don’t just mean just as a catechist, but as a Christian, as Anthony. I have still got a lot of ways to grow, and ways to go, as do they, but every year brings out more in me, and helps me to discover more of myself as a teacher, as Mr Anthony. I feel equally educated by the children often. The more we can intentionally continue to move forward with Christ at the centre in our lives the more we can grow. That is what it is to continue walking with God. And if God intends for me to continue teaching Catechism, then I’ll continue to give myself in that way.

Thank you Anthony for taking the time to share with us!

60 YEARS OF SUPPORTING CATECHISTS

CCD Pilgrimage to the Holy Land



SAT 16 MAY-THU 28 MAY 2020

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journeys

A message worth
SHARING

YOU are loved by God
YOU matter
YOU belong
YOU can do great things
YOU can be a light to the world



**START
HERE**

WANT TO BECOME A CATECHIST? NEW TO THE MINISTRY?
NEED TO UPDATE YOUR TRAINING * ?

Catechist Level 1 Training

*Includes Child Protection & Classroom Management

9:30-1:30PM

Micah House, Campbelltown
Monday 3 February

Xavier Centre, Wollongong
Friday 7 February

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

Contact Cindy Oliver on 4640 8550
OR cindy.oliver@dow.org.au