

CatechistNET

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE • DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

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Awards 2020

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the Director

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Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

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and Support Personnel

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Message from the Director



Something Old, and Something New

What a whirlwind year we have all faced due to the disruption and restrictions bought on in response to the COVID-19 pandemic! Thank you for your ongoing faithfulness and passion for this wonderful ministry. I hope and pray that the content of this edition of CatechistNET brings you hope, perseverance and inspiration as we continue to navigate our way through this 'interesting' time.

COVID-19 has presented us with not only many challenges, but also opportunities to consider new ways of praying and to grow in our personal relationship with the Lord. We must remain deeply connected with God and to always remember what is at the heart of our role as missionary disciples.

Something new

During this time, it would have been easy to miss the publication of a document by the Vatican, which is pivotal for the work of Catechists, underlining boldly our call to be missional, and to be so in new ways that recognise the signs of the times.

In our work as Catechists, it is important that we are not only focussed on both what we are proclaiming and teaching, but also on the way we teach, taking every care to do so in a way that ensures our effectiveness. As Catechists, we are gifted with numerous tools to assist us in this regard, with Scripture and the Catechism giving us clarity in what we teach. When it comes to 'how' we should proclaim the good news, the Church has given us the Directory for Catechesis. On 25 June this year, the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization released a new Directory for Catechesis, emphasising its continuity with the 1971 and 1997 editions, but also presenting some new elements, that are relevant for our time.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, in his introduction at the press conference releasing the new document, described the need for a new understanding of the relationship between the role of catechesis and evangelization and how "In this relationship, the primacy belongs to evangelization not to catechesis."

The directory stresses the close link between evangelization and catechesis and the need to keep the Kerygma always front and centre. In other words, we need to always start and return to the basic good news, that is almost too good to be true – that is, the saving life, death and resurrection of Jesus, with the invitation to live a life in relationship with Jesus as a member of the Church.

Drawing heavily on Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, "Evangelii Gaudium," this document brings to the forefront the elements of a kerygmatic catechesis that does not make the mistake of assuming the basic gospel has been proclaimed or heard. Catechists are therefore encouraged to give qualitative priority to an evangelizing catechesis in which the kerygma is the first, repeated and main announcement of catechesis to all ages in one form or another, in all its stages and moments.

One noteworthy highlight in this directory is the need to focus on the formation of catechists, in heart and mind, who are the living face of the Church's witness. Without a doubt, providing Catechists with a grounding in the priorities of this document in our formation courses and publications, is going to be a priority for CCD Wollongong. The new Directory for Catechesis provides great encouragement, a reassessment of priorities and a road map for renewed and creative proclamation of the Gospel in an era of new evangelisation.

Something Old - Ongoing Struggles

Recently Bishop Mascord released on Social Media a statement that affirmed the work of Catechists in our Diocese and the important place of SRE in Government Schools. He did so in response to the ongoing calls for the removal of SRE that we have become so used to over the last decade. It is worth re-sharing with you here.

"Each and every week, 11,000 Special Religious Education (SRE) Teachers, representing 29 faith groups, teach around 380,000 children and young people in government schools about the faith of their families. In our very own diocese, around 500 Catholic Catechists, our SRE teachers, work with nearly 9,000 children in 142 schools. Recent studies have shown that this has a very positive impact on the school community and the health and wellbeing of each child. Yet, despite this, some groups are calling for the removal of SRE from schools. In a multi-cultural, multi-faith society, we must care for the WHOLE child - family, culture, ethnicity, life experience, faith affiliation and spirituality. This provides real choice for families, who entrust the government with their education of their children in state schools. I encourage you to read the following statement from the Catholic Conference of Religious Educators in State Schools (CCRESS)."

– Most Rev Brian Mascord
Bishop of Wollongong

I, too, would encourage you to read the CCRESS statement (<http://dow.sh/sre2020>) and continue to pray for the success and protection of this wonderful ministry of teaching SRE in Government schools.

I pray you have a happy and holy Advent and Christmas. Thank you for all your efforts in support of the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

Blessings,

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

CATHOLIC SRE
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

500
CATHOLIC
CATECHISTS

work with

9,000
CHILDREN

in

142
SCHOOLS

Annual Catechist Mass & Awards 2020

Written by Peter Gilmore

Our Annual Catechist Mass & Awards was held on Saturday 14th November at St John Vianney Co-Cathedral. As I looked out over the precisely ordered Catechists and guests, with safe-distancing spaces between them, I was reminded of a tradition that is thousands of years old. During a Jewish Passover Seder, the meal to remember when the angel of the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites during their captivity in Egypt, it is customary to leave a seat empty, awaiting the return of the prophet Elijah. A glass of wine is even poured and left for him, should he arrive during the meal!

There were lots of empty spaces on Saturday. Yes, for the sake of safety, it was good to leave them free but at the same time, we were painfully aware that there were many Catechists and friends of our ministry that would have been there, had it been possible. Your absence didn't go unnoticed and, in a way, was mourned. We are a community and we all have a seat at the table. On the day we can all be together again, it will be a joyous celebration!

A special thank you must go to our celebrant, Bishop Brian Mascord, and concelebrating clergy from around the diocese – Fr Leo Duck, Fr Joseph Nguyen OFM, Fr Christopher Sarkis and Fr Patrick Vaughan – who led us so beautifully through the Liturgy. During his homily, Bishop Brian challenged us to our Christian calling to be witnesses when he recalled his time as a Catechist Coordinator. As a trained primary teacher but only part way through his training to be a priest, Bishop Brian realised, “I was a teacher but I wasn't a Catechist”. A Catechist is something much more than a teacher – they are a witness, a sharer of the faith. It's easy to give all the information and teach all the lessons but being ready to share your faith is something much deeper. As we sat and listened to Bishop Brian's stories and wisdom, it was clear to everyone present that even if he may not have felt like a Catechist in his younger years, he is a Catechist for us in the Diocese of Wollongong. It is a great source of comfort for us,

especially when we feel in over our heads in the ministry, that our Bishop has the vulnerability to share that even he sometimes doesn't feel worthy of the message we share. We all feel like that sometimes.

There were many people who contributed to making the Catechist Mass & Awards such a special occasion this year. Sr Kerry Gardiner RSJ from Unanderra and Linda O'Rourke from Albion Park (also a 20-year awardee) proclaimed the Word to us with clarity and sincerity. The Prayers of the Faithful were led beautifully by Sue Clarke, parish coordinator from Helensburgh (also a 15-year awardee) and Gai Delavere, parish coordinator from Kiama. During these prayers, Frances Fairs, parish coordinator from Nowra, presented Bishop Brian with our CCD Book of Remembrance where the names of Catechists who have passed away are recorded – It is a particularly moving part of the Mass as Bishop prays for each Catechist by name. Tony Lima, parish coordinator for Port Kembla, blessed the liturgy with his humble service as Acolyte. So many people serving to recognise the importance of what we do as Catechists!

A very big thank you must go to Daniel Hopper from the Diocesan Communications team who photographed our Mass for us. As always, he has managed to capture the beauty of the Liturgy and the joy of Catechists as they received their awards.

This day only came together because of the hard work and dedication of the CCD Wollongong team – Lisa Metcalfe, Cindy Oliver and Helen Bennett, under the leadership of Jude Hennessy, Director of the Office of Renewal & Evangelisation.

Finally, thank you to all the Catechists of the diocese who work so hard in the ministry and give us a reason to celebrate each and every year and congratulations to our awardees! As Jesus said, “Well done, good and faithful servant(s)!..Come and share your masters happiness!” (Matt 25:23) ■



2020 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.

Note: This year, due to COVID-19, we were unable to have group photos

BISHOP'S CITATION 10 YEARS SERVICE

Albion Park - Josephine Pulido
Kiama - Frances Egan
Nowra - Dorothy Cornish, Jeanette Easton
Picton-Tahmoor - Joseph Moore
Varroville - Denise Sanhueza, Maria Gleeson, Sr Nory Ordiz

BISHOP'S CITATION 15 YEARS SERVICE

Helensburgh - Sue Clark
Kiama - Lyn Cox, Helen Plowman
Milton-Ulladulla - Patricia Williams
Nowra - Dorothy Cornish
Oran Park - Therese Easter, Linda Maguire
Thirroul - Lisa Metcalfe
Varroville - George Shiner, Josephine Theunissen,
West Wollongong - Joyce Wilkins
Milton-Ulladulla - Patricia Williams

PAPAL BLESSING 20 YEARS SERVICE

Albion Park - Linda O'Rourke
Bulli - Kate Dorling
Milton-Ulladulla - Patricia Williams
Shellharbour - Emanuel Grech

MARY MACKILLOP MEDAL 25 YEARS SERVICE

Albion Park - Marisa Canero, Paula Potts
Corrimal - Denise Stephen, Charlotte Symes
Milton-Ulladulla - Patricia Williams
Nowra - Roseanne Mullany,
Picton-Tahmoor - Michael Griffiths
Rosemeadow - Margaret Botterill, Vicky Stuart



life memberships 30 YEARS+ SERVICE

Albion Park - Yvonne Smith, **Campbelltown** - Gwenneth Harris, Marija Smolcic,
Milton-Ulladulla - Margaret Noble, Patricia Williams, **Nowra** - Rosanne Mullany,
Oran Park - Joseph Cilia, **Varroville** - Josephine Theunissen

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GOD IS WITH US



Another name for Jesus is _____
This name means, “ _____ is with _____ ”

GOOD TO REMEMBER _____

What does God say to us?

Be _____ and _____!

Do not be _____ or _____,

for the Lord your _____

is with _____ wherever you go!

(Joshua 1:9)

WORD BANK

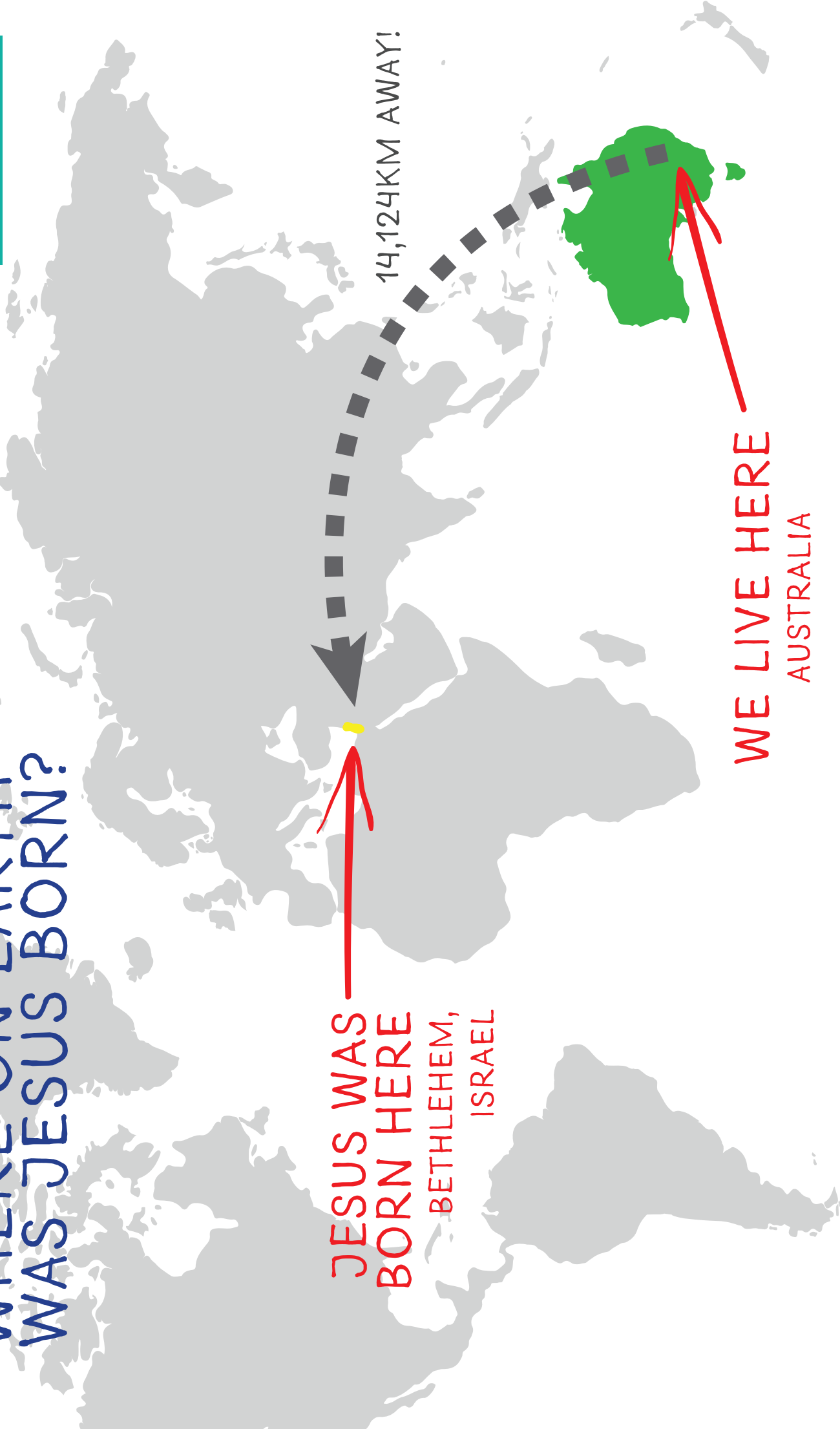
you confused brave scared strong God

WHERE ON EARTH WAS JESUS BORN?

JESUS WAS
BORN HERE
BETHLEHEM,
ISRAEL

WE LIVE HERE
AUSTRALIA


14,124KM AWAY!





2020 CATECHIST SERVICE AWARDEES





No one learns to hope *alone*

Written by Peter Gilmore

At the height of the uncertainty of the pandemic this year, Pope Francis painted a word picture that perfectly describes how many of us have been feeling.

In the Spanish magazine *Vida Nueva*, the Pope likens us to the women waiting at the tomb after Jesus' death and burial, asking "who will roll away the stone?"

For us, the stone covering the tomb might be a lot of things this year. It might have been sickness, uncertainty, fear, loneliness, anxiety, frustration or anger. And what does a stone covering a tomb do? It reminds us what was and what we have lost. It reminds us that we are disconnected from not just those we love but also from the future. Yes, it stops us from seeing in but it also stops us from looking out into the world beyond. In a certain sense, the stone that covers the tomb is a blockage to hope.

Recently, at the Catechist Retreat, Jude Hennessy recalled a true story of a crew trapped in a sunken submarine, frantically using morse-code to tap out a message

to their rescuers. The message they sent was only four words: "Is there any hope?" Isn't that the question we all ask at various points in our lives? I've certainly asked it a few times this year!

Pope Francis assures us, "we are not alone, the Lord goes before us on our journey, and removes the stones that paralyze us... This is the hope that no one can take from us."

This hope isn't born in isolation though. It isn't the product of pure determination and positive thinking. Hope is a grace given to us by God that is nurtured in community. As Pope Francis said in his General Address, 8 February 2017, "No one learns to hope alone". It is the encouragement and reassurance of our brothers and sisters in the Lord that stokes the fire of hope. A kind word, a meal at just the right time, an offering of prayer... It is things such as these that remind us that it is not a fool's hope to believe that, even if not today or tomorrow, the stone will be rolled away! Hope is alive and it will not put us to shame! (Romans 5:5)

As the year comes to a close and we begin to resume the mighty task of providing SRE lessons to Catholic children in our state schools, it seems appropriate to make hope *our* focus. After all, as Pope Francis said, no one learns to hope alone.

For this reason, we have decided to centre our call for volunteers to our ministry around this very idea. Now, more than ever, children need to hear a message of hope. They need to hear the words of St John Chrysostom's Easter sermon:

*O death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?..
Christ is Risen, and the tomb is
emptied of its dead..
To Him be Glory and Power forever
and ever. Amen!*

We need messengers for Jesus who will remind us that Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Do you know someone who might make a good Catechist? Have you thought to invite them into this important ministry? Consider sharing our website, ccdwoollongong.com ■



Catechist Profile

Frances Fairs

Catechist Coordinator
Nowra Parish

How long have you been a Catechist?

I started as a Catechist in 2008 when my girls were teeny. A friend from the parish would come and babysit, while I taught Scripture at Bomaderry Public School.

What inspired you to become a Catechist?

I was a teacher before going on maternity leave and moving to Nowra. When I heard that there was a need for Scripture teachers, I knew it was something that I could do. I had a strong desire to serve God and our Parish and so I volunteered to help. Sometimes I took my baby to class with me, but I was always grateful for Michelle Sims who looked after one or both of my girls.

What do you enjoy about teaching SRE?

I enjoy teaching the children but mostly I enjoy seeing how much they come to love Jesus as I do. If they have an experience of God in our lesson, then it is a good day!

What do you find most challenging?

The biggest challenge for me is the huge disparity of literacy within a group. I've had whole groups where I've had to adapt the curriculum as they were not able to comprehend the workbook. Currently, in one of my classes, I have several children that are Stage 3 but their understanding and literacy is still at the Stage 1 level. This makes me sad and at the same time motivates me to do what I can to involve and engage these children.

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

I affirm and encourage the children with my warm words. I genuinely care for them and they respond very well to my encouragement and kindness.

Describe a lesson that went particularly well.

I tried a meditation once. It was a big risk, but I asked for friends to pray for the students during that time. I played the song 'Oceans' by Hillsong. I asked the students to close their eyes and to imagine being with God during that time. That lesson was more than a lesson as children were able to experience God in a way that stayed with them for the rest of the year.

What warms your heart when you are a in the classroom?

Children praying with their whole hearts. Children not afraid to speak of their love for God.

What is your future direction as a Catechist?

My future is to grow and improve as a person and as a Catechist.

Your best tip for other Catechists.

Go along to the events and courses if you can. Hearing about what others are doing helps to make great lessons.

Thank you so much Frances for sharing about you and your journey in the ministry! ■

Want to share your story in the ministry?

We'd love to hear from you.
Please contact
cindy.oliver@dow.org.au



Catechist Retreat 2020

Written by Lisa Metcalfe

For those who could not join in the wonderful experience of the Catechist Online Retreat with facilitators Fr Mark De Battista, Administrator of Parish of Port Kembla, and Sr Therese Mills, Missionaries of God’s Love Sister, this is a short reflection on the material presented.

Fr Mark paved the way for understanding through Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church by exploring the Virtue of Hope as “the dignity of the human person that is evident in our desire for the Kingdom of heaven to reign in our earthly lives and for our eternal happiness” of CCC1818. Hope relies on us understanding Christ’s promise of forgiveness and freedom to work with the grace from the Holy Spirit to inspire a joyful way of life putting aside selfishness and living a life with the charity to respond in love to all that we encounter.



I think I am hope filled. I have faith, but I also know that it can be fragile and brittle at times. Using a secular analogy, I am a “glass half full” person and can always see the positive in tricky situations. My eldest son, Tim who has had numerous challenges in his life opened my eyes and my heart when he said, “I feel lucky just to have a glass.”

Tim’s dad is not a Catholic but has steadfastly supported the faith formation of our four children, accompanying us to Mass and surviving the sibling wars during the homilies. So, I asked him - a person without faith, What does hope look like? “It’s a wishing for a good outcome when the future is uncertain, sometimes despite the evidence that the outcome is likely to be poor. You know, you hope for small things, like safety as you travel.” This got me to propose a harder question to him. Do you hope that the chemotherapy for Tim is making him well or at least not leading to a worse outcome? His reply “Yes – I have faith in the doctors.”

From this discussion I see that if we can have hope in the small things and place our faith in the skills and experience of doctors, then perhaps we can grow in hope for larger things. Hoping beyond

a good health outcome or that a loved one returns home safely – we move toward the greatest hope, that we become heirs to eternal life. See CCC 1818 “The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every person; it takes up the hopes that inspire the person’s activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven.”



How can we achieve this? Thankfully, Sister Therese provided four simple practices that can lead us to Hope in Action.

- Know that you are loved by God. Yes really, you are loved by God. Rest in that for a moment.
- Prayer- including participation in the sacraments and the calling on the Holy Spirit to deepen our relationship with God. See Pope Benedict, Spe Salvi.

Continued over the page

- Develop an “Attitude of Gratitude” – Each day find things to be grateful for. Say “thank you” to others.
- Acknowledge and accept suffering – Accept that we suffer and unite with Jesus in suffering and turn it into a hymn of praise.

Sister Therese closed with a story of hope. A recipient of the patient and constant presence of Catechist teaching in a public school, Dr Michelle Jones, won two Catholic Press Association of US and Canada Book Awards for her book, *The Gospel Mysticism of Ruth Burrows: Going to God with Empty Hands*. Michelle was Catechised in Year 4 by a person just like you and her life journey moved toward God.

My hope is sustained by my fragile, brittle, faith in our loving and generous God and the actions of Jesus Christ. What does hope look like in your life? Can you bring it to life through hope in action?



References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church online https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

Jones, M. *The Gospel Mysticism of Ruth Burrows: Going to God with Empty Hands*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2018.

Pope Benedict: *ENCYCLICAL LETTER SPE SALVI*: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html

Thank you so much to Lisa for sharing your story and your experience and insights from the online Catechist Retreat for 2020.

A big thank you to Fr Mark DeBattista and Sr Therese Mills MGL, for spending the retreat with us and for leading us through the day so wisely and gently. ■

More support for Catechists

support@ccdwoollongong.com



Rather than wondering who to contact when you need help from the CCD Wollongong team, we're really pleased to announce that there will be a single point of contact for all CCD support going forward*.

support@ccdwoollongong.com

A lot of things have changed in the world but one thing that remains constant is that when we are looking for assistance, the last thing we want is hoops to jump through or riddles to solve. As volunteers, knowing that when you reach out for help, you will be listened to and have someone respond in a timely fashion is important.

In the CCD Wollongong team, whilst we are all in the business of supporting Parish Coordinators and Catechists, we each have areas responsibility and expertise. Amongst the many things they contribute to the ministry of Catechists, for example, Cindy Oliver is responsible for managing the Catechist Resource Centre at Campbelltown and Lisa Metcalfe

liaises with the Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding for the authorisation of Catechists. You may or may not have known that!

To help make sure we support you the best we possibly can, we have adopted a support service that will enable us to function as a team when responding to your requests for assistance. It will enable us to see all current unresolved support requests, assign requests to the most appropriate team member, and make sure you aren't left waiting any longer than absolutely necessary.

We're really excited to see how this improves your experience of interacting with the CCD Wollongong team.

** Reminder–If you have a professional standards or safeguarding/Child Protection matter to raise, we would ask that you email Peter Gilmore at peter.gilmore@dow.org.au ■*



Calendar 2021

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

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	Jan 29, Jun 25 Nov 19
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Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Jan 28, Jun 28 Nov 21
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Level I (9:30am-1:30pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	Feb 5, 12, 19, 26 Mar 5
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Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Feb 8, 15, 22 Mar 1, 8
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Level II (9:30am-1:30pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	May 7, 14, 21 28, Jun 4, 11
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Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	May 3, 10, 17 24, 31, Jun 7
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Level III (9:30am-1:30pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Xavier Centre	Jul 23, 30 Aug 6, 13, 20, 27
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Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Jul 19, 26 Aug 2, 9, 16, 23
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Craft Day/Morning Tea (10:30-12:00pm)

Macarthur-Highlands Micah House	Mar 15 Oct 25
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Catechist Retreat (10:00am-2:00pm)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven	Sep 13
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Macarthur-Highlands	Sep 17
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Annual Catechist Mass (10:30am)

St Francis Xavier Cathedral	Nov 13
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*Dates are correct at time of printing

Please note: This calendar was correct at the time of printing. Please ensure that you contact Cindy Oliver when booking to confirm any changes to dates and availability of courses and events due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some events have been rescheduled or changed to online only in response to the current situation we are in. Thank you for your understanding.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

CONTACT CINDY OLIVER ON 4640 8550
OR support@ccdwoolongong.com

“No one learns to hope *alone*”

POPE FRANCIS



Become a Catechist and *share* hope

In our diocese, more than 500 Catechists reach 9,000 Catholic students each week in government schools. All training and lesson materials are provided. Online training options available.

Find out more at:

www.ccdwoolongong.com