

# Parish Magazine

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ST MARGARET MARY'S RANDWICK NORTH

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART RANDWICK

## Reflection

DIANE GORDON

**I**n our every day life we are all influenced by many forms of media and communication. Often these are focused on the negative things in life and there is no doubt that we all need some inspirational positive messages to provide us with some balance. In short, we all need to feel good about life rather than the opposite.

As we live in a world full of constant change, packed with never ending business and personal challenges, we often have little time available to refresh our spirits and boost ourselves emotionally.

The environment with which we are surrounded tends to be highly charged with lots of negatives and these can drain our capacity to really enjoy life to the fullest.

When we take time to consider the wide variety of negative inputs we receive in our every day business and personal life, it is no wonder that we often focus on 'what's wrong' rather than 'what's right' in or with our world.

Few things are more important in our lives than words. Words are the primary means of communication; how they are said or not said at all, communicate a deep meaning for us.

Words have the power to reveal but words can also be used to conceal. Most of us have been deceived by lies and disappointed by false promises. But eventually we learn the truth. Given enough time, words are an amazingly accurate test of what we are on the inside. Jesus said, 'A good person produces goodness from the good in their heart'. Words also have the power to help, to heal, to encourage. But the wounds that words inflicted on us may remain for years.

Some words we use often are so simple that even a child can say 'Thank you.' It's not hard to say. All of us, every day, are recipients of numerous courtesies. We often take these for granted. Words of appreciation in our own home are probably the most important words we can hear with the exception of 'I love you.' Jesus was continually helping someone by the things that He said. 'Do not be afraid,' 'You are valuable'. He said this to all kinds of ordinary people. Our Lord was a masterful user of words. He knew their power. God has given us the power of speech. May we use it wisely and use it well to honour Him and to help one another.

*Editors welcome feedback on the magazine and its contents.  
Email to: [olshmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:olshmagazine@gmail.com) or leave in an envelope  
marked 'magazine' in the Parish Office.*

## From the Manager's Desk

JACQUELINE WALLINGTON

**A**s previously mentioned, painting works in the Nave of the Church that were put on hold due to WYD08 will recommence during July. This will see a slight disruption to our midday Masses while preparation works and outstanding repairs are carried out for this work.

The Transept area will then be home to a tower of scaffolding for a three week period commencing on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August. Again, there will be a slight disruption to Masses but not nearly as bad as we have previously experienced.

The curse on our beautiful font has struck again, on this occasion the auto cut off mechanism did not! The result being a mini flood just prior to Saturday's midday Mass. AAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRR! Fr Peter is disinclined to spend any further money on this but may consider its relocation.

With an effort to saving funds, while ensuring that necessary repairs and maintenance are carried out within the Presbytery, we have recently undergone some much needed painting and repair works to all external window sills and fascia boards that should last for at least the next 10 years.

In keeping with our Parishes 'Go Green' motto, our wonderful Priests have embraced a composting system for our garden waste and the fruit and vegetable matter. This will then be returned to our gardens as fertiliser.

OLSH are doing their bit to increase our hygiene practices with the outbreak of swine flu. This has resulted in new pump soap dispensers being installed in the toilets as soap bars are unhygienic and pump packs seemed to 'walk' away. Curiously another item that seemed to constantly 'go missing' was our toilet rolls. This has seen the installation of secured dispensers which has already resulted in money being saved!

Exciting news, Fr Peter is speaking with an architect who will supply concepts to the side of the presbytery to create additional conference rooms, additional offices and disabled toilets.

With a view to make better use of previously unused areas, a new security music room has been created below the presbytery. With a lick of paint this will now allow better storage and easier access to the church for those bulky musical items.

We are also looking at options to create additional car parking spaces by cutting into the grassed area in the far corner of the car park next to the St Vincent De Paul bins. This area serves no beneficial purpose and could create up to three additional spaces.

### DID YOU KNOW.....

Income from weddings this year - \$8,600

Credit Card transactions covering all financial activities for the financial year \$90,641

No. of Confirmation candidates - 83

New Parishioners to the parish - 10

No. of registered Planned Givers – OLSH – 548

No. of registered Planned Givers – SMM – 35

Additional donations made this year include NSW Fire Department, The Leukaemia Foundation, The Biggest Morning Tea, NSW Police Blue Light Program.

## RCIA Supporter one day, Coordinator the next!

CARESA SANTOS

**W**here do I start? In November 2004, Annie Lau approached me to join the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Team (RCIA) as a supporter, and I replied with a blank expression on my face - 'the what...?' Anyway, five years down the track I'm now the Coordinator. Who could have known, especially not me.

Soon enough, I learnt that RCIA is the process by which adult persons are brought into membership of the Catholic Church; that is they become a 'Catholic' like you and me. I originally declined the offer when Carole Gan (then the Coordinator) contacted me, but a soft loving gentle voice within me seemed too powerful to resist and so I became a 'supporter', helping to set up the room and prepare refreshments prior to the meeting. That wasn't too hard I thought.

A team member would give a talk on a topic and then we would invite questions from the enquirers. I didn't have much knowledge of my faith or the Church's teachings, so I didn't want to open my mouth at all at these sessions. Eventually I was asked to give a talk, and though I was very nervous I enjoyed the experience; and with time and practice I'm not so nervous now.

Then in 2006, Carole told me she might be heading up north to the Diocese of Rockhampton and that I would be taking over as the leader/coordinator. Panic and fear came over me. I prayed that she wouldn't get the job. Carole reassured me she would support me from Rockie. Gulp!

Along the way, I learnt the process of what being a 'coordinator' entailed and I am still learning even now. Contacting and meeting the enquirer one to one before they join the group is essential. For most people taking the step to even contact me would be a bit



daunting, so by meeting them first shows the enquirer that we are a welcoming and hospitable parish community.

Eventually I realised the immensity of my position and the responsibility of accompanying these adults on their faith journey towards becoming a Catholic. Each year, my understanding of the Easter Vigil becomes more profound as we prepare these Candidates for their initiation into the Catholic Church.

Since 2005, we've had 26 Catechumens (unbaptised) who were fully initiated into the church through Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; and nine Candidates (baptised Christians) received into the church through Confirmation and Eucharist. Along with them, two babies and two small children were also baptised with their parents. This Easter was the largest with eight Catechumens and three Candidates.

I look back and reflect that it's the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit that brings these enquirers to OLSH. Their conversion and spiritual growth is wonderful to see, and God never ceases to amaze me with these transformations. The friendships developed are wonderful and it's fantastic that some are now more involved within the parish by

becoming Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes or joining the choir.

For me, it's a renewal of my faith and my commitment to serving God through my parish community. There are times when I get a bit stressed especially prior to the Easter Vigil as this is the most important and momentous occasion for the Catechumens and Candidates and I want to ensure all goes well for them. I'm blessed with such a wonderful team and priests who support and encourage me with my ministry.

On behalf of the team members, Sr Ruth, Annie and Paul Lau, Claudette, Tom, Maria and new additions, husband and wife Paschal and Natalie, new supporters Lorraine and Monike, we would like to invite you to join us and meet these wonderful people, who are trying to work out how God fits into their lives and I can promise you'll want to keep on coming.

Currently we meet together twice a week – Sunday and Thursday afternoons. We discuss topics relating to faith and church teachings, invite questions, share our faith experiences, pray and laugh also. You can be a catechist, prayer partner, a sponsor or simply a supporter. Give me a call (0404 291 746) and God will do everything else.

# The Shrine of Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart BARBARA BOWRING



From the beginning of our parish in 1885 there has been a Shrine to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The first Shrine was in the form of a statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (brought from France by Fr Coupee), placed on a pedestal and adorned with lights and flowers. It was erected in May 1886 in the old church-school, the site of the current parish centre.

Two years later when the first part of the present church was opened, a Shrine to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was placed at the end of the northern

aisle and a beautiful marble altar, the gift of Mrs. H. Oxenham was surmounted by a marble statue, the gift of Sarah Clancy. Both these gifts may still be seen in the present Shrine.

When the extensions to the church were built between 1919 and 1921, a larger space was reserved for Our Lady's special shrine on the left side of the main altar, and on the right side an altar for the Sacred Heart.

It had always been a dream of Fr Peter Treand (1890 - 1926) that a more beautiful shrine would be built and Fr Matthew Smith (1926 - 1939) resolved to build it as a memorial to him.

Fr Smith also wanted the new shrine to be completed in time to celebrate the parish's golden jubilee in 1935. The firm of Agabiti and Mullane drew up the

plans for the new shrine and Mr H.A.Taylor of Concord was the builder. His daughter Joan, well known to many parishioners, lived in Randwick for many years until recently.

Unfortunately Fr Smith developed heart trouble and the work was postponed. When work resumed it was found that the plan was too expensive and a new plan was adopted. The planned domed roof and the complete marble cladding had to be changed, plaster was used for the upper areas of the shrine and a new sacristy was built to join the shrine by an inter-connecting passage behind the main altar.



The Shrine was officially opened on 17th October 1937 by Archbishop Kelly. A memorial tablet to Fr Treand and Fr Smith was unveiled on 7th December 1941. Many people contributed to the beauty of the Shrine, the golden windows, the marble pillars, the Central lamp, the statues of St Anne with Mary and of St Elizabeth with John the Baptist, and the last change, the blue window as a memorial to Fr James Bourke (c1925—1980).

Behind the altar is a case containing the *Golden Book of Remembrance*, a book with the names of all who contributed to the Shrine. So our beautiful National Shrine is the result of many hands and hearts and a Shrine in some slight way worthy of Our Lady and a tribute to those involved in bringing it about.



## About

### THE BOOK OF TOBIT

The Book of Tobit, sometimes referred to as the Book of Tobias, combines specifically Jewish piety and morality with oriental folklore and is one of the historical books of the Old Testament. Because of the book's praise for the purity of marriage, it is often read during Catholic weddings and cited for its teaching on the intercession of angels, and reverence for the dead. It is generally believed that the book was written in the second century BC.



## Training the new Eucharistic Ministers

L. M.

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 a training session for new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) was held in the dining room at OLSH Presbytery. This was attended by some 18 generous volunteers who had humbly stepped forward, following an appeal for new EMHCs, to offer their services to their fellow parishioners.

Fr Peter Hearn opened the session with prayer and an explanation of what being an EMHC means not only during Mass times but also on outreach duties. He spoke of the great amount of loneliness that proliferates in our community and the need to try to address this problem, something that EMHCs are well placed to do. Then a truly heart warming 'getting to know you' session followed which entailed individual trainees introducing themselves and talking a little about their own personal lives and their hopes and expectations regarding becoming a Eucharistic Minister.

Some were also seeking a fuller involvement with the ministry by joining in with the 'Home Visiting Scheme' coordinated by Marie Stapleton. Others were showing interest in becoming volunteer visitors with the Catholic Chaplaincy Team at Prince of Wales Hospitals Campus.

This was followed by a session, led by Lyn McDonagh, covering more technical aspects of the EMHCs role in the Mass and detailing the expectations the ministry has of its ministers.

Carmen Ortiz was busy organizing the taking of photos of each participant, with some assistance from the recruits, making Carmen's job a little easier. These photos are on display in the Sacristy to help the priests and other Eucharistic Ministers to be able to recognize the new

Ministers and possibly offer any assistance if needed.

All this time Heather Liddell's little daughter sat quietly beside her mother, drawing and amusing herself until it was time for her to go to dancing lessons. Is she that angelic at home Heather?

The recruits then followed Carmen over to the church where everyone practiced going through the routines expected during Mass. This was done in small groups instructed by Carmen with a little assistance from Lyn.

In the meantime Fr Peter had been busy setting out the makings of morning tea in the kitchen at the Presbytery. It was a most welcome sight to some rather thirsty people to find all the cups etc. ready for use. The entire contents of the biscuit barrel managed to disappear during the merriment that followed. No one showed any interest in 'repairing to the dining room' with their cups, preferring to remain standing and crowded into the kitchen. The racket that ensued brought Fr Tony Bolt into the kitchen to find out what was going on.

It gave everyone an opportunity to meet and chat with Fr Bolt before he had to go off to other duties. This refreshment time proved to be quite valuable as with everyone more relaxed they were easily able to bring questions to mind that were pertinent to their forthcoming ministry.



*Toshika Hitchings, new EMHC at St Margaret Mary's*

The first commissioning of the participants was held at the midday Mass on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June at OLSH. Toshika Hitchings was commissioned for the first time at the 9.30 am Mass at SMM on the same day.

A heartfelt thank you and congratulations to all our new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

### About

#### THE HOLY OILS

There are three sacramental oils

##### The Oil of Catechumens:

Used to strengthen those who are preparing for Baptism

##### The Oil of the Sick:

Used for the healing of the mind, body, and soul

##### The Holy Chrism:

Used at baptism, confirmation, ordination, and the dedication of a church building



## Woman of the Sacred Heart

FROM 'LADY' TO 'WOMAN'

Br JAMES MAHER msc

I did not grow up with any great devotion to Mary, despite my mother's efforts to get us children to pray the rosary together. We would all kneel down against the chairs in our lounge/dining room. Inevitably, one of us would get the giggles or stir up some sort of amusing disturbance. I remember finding the 'Hail Holy Queen' particularly scary ... all about the 'poor banished children of Eve', the 'valley of tears' and being 'made worthy of the promises of Christ'. I cannot be sure what was going on in the minds of my sisters and brothers, but the theology or spirituality (I would not have used those words then.) surrounding Mary did not attract me at all. I found it all quite dark.

I was in my 30s, now an MSC brother studying theology, when I decided I needed to find a way of understanding Mary that made some sense to me, particularly in the light of all I had been learning in my studies of scripture and theology. I began by talking to friends and confreres whom I knew had a special love of Mary. I asked them to describe what it was about Mary that attracted them, or inspired them, or helped them in their faith. Many of them

◆ The Mary in this song is a gifted and discerning woman who makes choices everyday to cooperate with the desires of God's heart. She is not simply a passive and obedient 'daughter'. She bears the responsibilities and burdens of life, including child rearing. Mary is receptive, but she is not an 'empty reed'. Her courage, her 'guts', are the stuff of real life and the stuff of real spirituality.

◆ 'Woman of the Sacred Heart' paints for us a picture of the Mary found in the scriptures, the Mary who sings praise to God for remembering the poor, the *anawim*.

spoke of a grounded, down-to-earth woman, whose life was pretty tough, but who carried herself through with grace and strength. They spoke of the Mary of the scriptures, the Mary of the *magnificat* – giving thanks to God for raising up the poor. It was these responses which began the journey of exploration which led to the song: 'Woman of the Sacred Heart'.

Since it was published in 1998, I have been quite staggered by the response to this song. People have frequently expressed to me how moved they are by it, both lyrically and melodically. Often they will say that the song has articulated something genuinely new for them in terms of a spirituality of Mary.

Fundamentally, the song focuses our attention on Mary's **humanity** as the reality within which God's work is done. Mary is not a 'lady' floating on the

clouds of heaven, but a woman walking the warm earth. It is her flesh and blood which makes Jesus 'real', and it is **in her daily experiences** that she brings the Divine plan to life. She is woman and mother.

Let me summarise some of the reasons people give for this:

◆ The song puts Mary alongside us, in our faith journey, and invites us to be open to experiencing what she did. It asks her to pray for us on our faith journey.

◆ It keeps Jesus (the Sacred Heart) at the centre whilst allowing Mary to be Mary.

◆ It expresses a spirituality and the theology that allow Mary to be **who she really was** (i.e. a first century young Jewish woman, trying to live out her faith and respond to her religious experience in her own concrete historical circumstance) and **who she really is** (a special member of the Communion of Saints, who prays for us as we now walk our journey of faith.)

### *Woman of the Sacred Heart*

*In you our flesh, he had to come.  
You grounded him upon our earth.  
Your feet that walked, your womb that held,  
your pain that brought this love to birth.  
The Sacred Heart of him you held  
can grieve and grow within the space,  
of patient love and listening;  
a mother's choice, a mystic's grace.*

*In your delight, in your despair,  
the smallest choices of each day;  
the cost to you, your hope-filled yes,  
your courage lived shows us the Way.  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart,  
eternal sign of God's surprise,  
in you we know the poor as blessed,  
this world transformed before our eyes.*

*O Woman of the Sacred Heart,  
you heard the words of Gabriel.  
Pray we may hear the call of God  
and come to meet Emmanuel.  
His truth is witnessed in your face,  
that he became and was and is  
the Sacred Heart, the resting place;  
our hearts forever held in his.*

© 1998, James Maher msc

Since Vatican II, the Mary of the scriptures has been making a comeback. I think 'Woman of the Sacred Heart' is really an expression of this new spirituality of Mary that has arisen since Vatican II. The woman of the earth has stepped out from behind the lady on the clouds. Welcome back, Mary of Nazareth!

## An interview with Fr Joshua Gopini msc

**F**r Joshua Gopini was ordained an MSC priest in India in 2004 and joined the parish in April this year. In this interview he tells us more about himself and his experiences.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

I am 31 years of age and the youngest in my family. Two of my sisters are married, and one is at home with my mother in Bangalore. My other sister lives in London and my brother is an entrepreneur. My father died of a heart attack when I was one year old.

### YOUR SCHOOLING?

Both my primary and secondary schooling to year 10 was at convent schools. In 1994 I enrolled in the MSC Seminary in Bangalore to study for the priesthood and was ordained in 2004. That seminary is a Carmelite of Immaculate Mary one with candidates from the various orders. Some 700 students are currently studying there to become priests.

### AFTER 2004?

I was asked to do some teaching at the seminary, was bursar of the local MSC order for a while and spent a year and a half as an assistant priest in the diocese of Mysore and did some further studies.

### WHAT STUDIES?

I felt that being able to communicate was essential to being a good priest so apart from studies in philosophy and theology I did my Master's course in Journalism. Fortunately I was able to study by correspondence. I am hoping to develop my interest in Christian journalism.

### HOW WAS IT YOU CAME TO RANDWICK?

The MSC order was invited to establish an order in India in 1988 – there are now twenty-five MSC priests in India and it was natural for the Australian Province to invite an Indian priest to Australia, almost like an exchange scheme. I had read a little about Australia, its sparseness compared to India with its crowded cities and of course Aussie cricketers so I was delighted to be asked to come.

### IS IT TOO EARLY TO MAKE COMPARISONS ABOUT THE TWO COUNTRIES?

I have a few first impressions. India is a multi lingual nation whereas in Australia English is a common language which makes it easier to have a united community. On the other hand, India seems to be a more united religious community while Australians seem to have more of a sense of believing without a strong need of feeling to belong. Lifestyle here seems cleaner and more relaxed. Both countries are 'sports mad'!

### IMPRESSIONS OF RANDWICK?

Everyone has been most welcoming and I really feel at home. Parishioners have introduced themselves to me and my biggest worry is being able to remember all the names. Our presbytery community is a prayerful one and our Thursday get togethers to discuss our Sunday homilies has been very helpful to me. My brother priests have been very supportive in other ways too, introducing me to the coffee shops of Randwick and the golf course and showing me the sights of Sydney.



### YOU ARE HERE FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF THREE YEARS. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

I think my main focus will be on a youth ministry, building on the core of existing school and adolescent groups. I'm hoping that some of the planned activities will encourage young people to see the value of having a strong faith and regarding the church as much theirs as the older generation of parishioners. Tapping into their interests will be a way of strengthening that contact. I can play the guitar but will need to do a bit more practice to match the musical skills of some of the young I have met. Prayer of course will be needed.

### JOSHUA OR JOSHVA?

I'm told that in Australia some children have their chosen name incorrectly entered on their birth certificates for all sorts of reasons, perhaps excitement or just bad spelling ability. Joshua was my intended name but was misspelt as Joshva but I'm known as Joshua!

## Musical Musings at OLSH

TONY AMIDHARMO

Our parish is a musically gifted one. With so many talented and dedicated musicians and singers serving our weekend Masses, Randwick has to be one of the most musical parishes in the eastern suburbs. And what variety! With music groups ranging from choirs to bands, small ensembles to cantors, Randwick offers a wealth of varying, dynamic styles of worship that caters for all parishioners.

The importance of music in Mass cannot be underestimated. Fr John Rate once said to me that the recipe for a worshipful Mass is threefold: good homily, good liturgy, and good music. Music is central to the liturgy. It animates the liturgy; it brings about tension and resolution, crescendos and climaxes in the sacred drama that is the Mass. For instance, think of the joyful energy in the Gloria and Alleluia, or the piety and serenity in the Lamb of God as we prepare to receive communion.

### Music is central to the liturgy

Music helps us to focus and meditate on the liturgical actions being enacted in Mass. When we sing praises, the music is justly upbeat and bright; when we reflect and pray, the music is fittingly contemplative and serene. Music is meant to engage the congregation as active participants in this sacred drama.

When music is present in Mass, the congregation is called to respond to it. This response can be either communal or contemplative. Certain music in Mass is played in order to unify the congregation through singing, to create and sustain our parish community. It's a bit like an AFL game – let me explain. Before every game,



Sydney Swans have their theme song played at full volume on the stadium speakers. The fans then start to belt out the tune, not the least bit caring whether they are out of tune or out of time! They remind themselves that, despite the weather, despite their different backgrounds, despite how tough their week has been, they are there to support their team as a community of fans.

The gathering/entrance hymn in Mass is not that much different. By singing a known hymn at the start of the Mass, we remind ourselves that we are here as a Christian community, worshipping together and united in one voice. What better feeling is there than to belt out songs with hundreds of other people around us singing the same thing? If only we were to belt out our hymns at Mass like the Sydney Swans fans do – imagine the unifying effect it will have!

### To sing is to pray twice

The ordinarium, or the 'parts of the Mass', as it's commonly known, is another example of communal songs. It is essentially a collection of liturgical prayers, consisting of Kyrie (Lord, have mercy), Gloria, Alleluia, Sanctus (Holy Holy), Anamnesis (Memorial

acclamation), the Great Amen, and the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God). The ordinarium is always recited at every Mass, and given its importance to the liturgy, it should always be sung by all members of the congregation, again, as a unifying theme for the community.

Not all songs are meant to be sung communally. There are instances in Mass when we want to reflect and listen, such as the psalm. Psalms have been sung in worship since the time in which they were written by the Jewish people. Jesus himself sang psalms with his disciples, notably at the last supper (see Mark 14:26). The psalm is essentially a poetic prayer. Its literary constructs and imagery plumb the depths of the Jewish people's understanding of God's mystery, which is still relevant to us Christians today. It's no wonder that many composers set psalms to beautiful music. The psalm response should be sung by the community (communal), with the verses sung by cantors or the choir (contemplative), which allows the community to meditate on the prayer as it's being sung.

St Augustine, one of the great doctors of the church, once said 'to sing is to pray twice'. This concept is at the very heart of music ministry: our music is an outward expression of our spirituality. As music ministers, each singer and musician is called to share our love

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of God and others to all parishioners through music. Liturgical music, therefore, is not a performance. Rather, it is a prayerful service to God and to the community. It should not be intrusive, or 'out of place'. Rather, it should blend in and enhance the liturgy.

Making music brings together people from diverse backgrounds and age groups: it forms Christian community. Love of God and love of music are what create and sustain this community. This year, thanks to Fr Peter Hearn's initiative, we formed the Randwick combined choir (we are still without a name – suggestions are welcome!), which consists of musicians and singers from the greater Randwick parish. I had the privilege of conducting this marvellous group at the Easter

Masses earlier this year. I humbly say that the Easter celebration this year is the best one that I've ever attended in my ten years at Randwick.

### Music is a gift we all treasure

Apart from the Masses themselves, the most memorable moments for me were the rehearsals and the great time I had getting to know choristers and musicians whom I had not been acquainted with before. There is a great feeling of community where age and cultural background do not matter – believe me, we were a real mixture! – only

our love of our faith and music do. As part of this group, this sense of community is really rewarding and promising. I certainly hope that this group continues to serve the parish on major feast days and celebrations.

Music is a gift that we all treasure. OLSH is truly blessed with so many musicians and singers who volunteer their time and energy into making the Mass a more prayerful and engaging celebration of faith. I do hope that this article gives you a better appreciation of music in liturgy and how you can be a part of it. If you feel the calling to serve the parish through music, the door to the music ministry is always open. Don't be afraid to approach the music group at your Mass and express your interest.

## The Cullen Centre

Sr MARGARET DANIELS *csb*

**I**n the presence of a thousand people - invited guests, parents, students, past students and friends - Brigidine College's Cullen Centre, adjacent to the Ritz Theatre and comprising a Hall and three classrooms was recently officially opened and blessed by Bishop Terry Brady.

The Hall which seats a thousand people is state-of-the-art in both design and equipment. Nintendo Wiis (sports gaming consoles) and a versatile stage make it an ideal space for both College Assemblies and students liturgical, sporting, dancing, music and drama activities and events. It also provides an excellent venue for other large gatherings such as the recent Farewell Function held there by the Eastern Region for the former Executive Director of Schools for the Sydney Archdiocese, Brother Kelvin Canavan *fms*.

Named after a former teacher and Principal of the College (1941-1953) Brigidine Sister Scholastica Cullen, who, in the view of the present Principal, Ms Kate Edmondson, modelled in an exemplary way all that Brigidine strives for, the Centre truly upholds the Brigidine heritage and tradition. An attractive feature is the tribute to Sister Cullen in the entrance to the Hall.

Guests on the occasion of the Official Opening and Blessing included Father Peter Hearn *msc PP*; Dr Dan White - Executive Director of Schools; Sister Maree Marsh *csb* - Brigidine Congregational Leader; Sister Dorothy Costigan *csb* - Brigidine Province Leader and a former student, teacher and counsellor at the College; and Sister Patricia Keating (Mother Thomas), the



most Senior member of the Brigidine Community who was a teacher at the College from 1936 to 1961 and has since been a tireless promoter of the College's Past Students Association. As a resident now of nearby Brigidine House Sister Patricia maintains a vital interest in the College and its past students.

*Fortiter et Suaviter  
Strength and Gentleness*

## My journey with St Paul

CHRIS McIVER

Perhaps the most moving experience for me as a parishioner of OLSH was to have narrated the Gospel at this year's Mass of the Lord's Supper. My understanding is that the reading of the Gospel is the more deserving role of our priests and to be involved as a narrator was overwhelming. I am equally privileged to have recited the readings before the Gospel which is a role I have frequently undertaken during my thirty-year involvement in our parish. To present a reading effectively, I try to understand the message, identify passages that may need emphasising and then practise in my mind how the meaning should be conveyed. In my preparation, I realise that I am also making an interpretation and feel humbled to do this in front of my fellow parishioners.

The salient messages in the Letters from St Paul have been easier to grasp as they often effuse a common theme of 'faith, love, patience and gentleness' which are the tenets of our Catholicism. For this reason I have a fascination with St Paul and always look forward to presenting passages from his Letters. This being the Pauline Year in celebration of the second millennium of his birth, I have found myself on a journey wanting to know more about this impressive apostle. My journey began during a recent visit to my mother's former country, Malta.

a common theme of 'faith, love, patience and gentleness'

Malta is a small island country situated near Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. The island is credited with a long recorded history of foreign occupation and military campaigns. Catholicism remains the dominant religion and has evolved over 2,000 years seeded

by a visit to the island in the autumn of AD 59 by the apostle Paul. His sojourn is vividly described in the *Acts of the Apostles* by St Luke, Chapters 27-28. For me, the passages are a very exciting read.

an opportunity to participate in our parish's Bible study programme

As I have come to appreciate, St Paul had a very strong character and was deeply committed to the dissemination of the teachings of Jesus. After three major missions throughout regions we refer today as Asia Minor and Greece, Paul is charged with sedition by the Jews whom he constantly offended with his own conversion from Jewish culture and criticism of the Torah. Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (Palestine) to avoid 'being killed' and as a Roman citizen appealed successfully to the Governor Porcius Festus to appear before Caesar in Rome. In the company of Luke, the journey involved navigating across the Mediterranean around Cyprus to Myra (Turkey), to Fair Havens (Crete), and then when striving to reach Rome encountered a heavy storm lasting fourteen days.

During this time Paul showed strength and leadership to all aboard including soldiers, crew and fellow prisoners before finally the vessel grounded on the coast of 'Melita (Malta). This was the beginning of yet another fascinating chapter of Paul's apostleship and is dramatically described by St Luke.

All 'two hundred and six souls' survived the shipwreck and were treated with 'unusual kindness' by the Maltese inhabitants. As Paul collected a 'bundle of sticks' to fuel a fire lit to provide warmth for the fellow survivors, he was bitten by a poisonous 'viper' but came to 'no harm'. The Maltese were astonished by his survival and 'began to say he

was a god'. Paul equally impressed Publius, the 'chief man' (a Roman Governor) of the island who had provided hospitality for the survivors for three days. Luke also records that Paul cured Publius's ailing father and other 'sick people on the island'. After a three month stay he left for Rome 'honoured with many marks of respect'.

Devout Maltese strongly believe that St Paul is responsible for conversion of the island to Christianity and had empowered Publius as its first bishop. There is however, contention by historians arguing that Paul did not land on Malta but on another island of similar geography and climate. The Maltese are protective of their heritage and have many monuments marking the significant places of Paul's sojourn the association of which they claim to be have been strengthened by archaeological and literary evidence. It is not surprising that Paul is the patron saint of this small country and is so revered.

St Paul had a very strong character

My visit to Malta coincided with festivities celebrating St Paul. As you can imagine, it was quite an event especially this being the liturgical year dedicated to their patron saint. The festivities culminated on the 10th of February when the island commemorates the infamous shipwreck. Valletta, the capital city was adorned with St Paul statues and images, and streets decorated with traditional red and white coloured banners. The Church dedicated to St Paul was elaborately decorated with an exhibition of relics of the sojourn.

The evening mass with a full orchestra culminated with cannons firing, street festivities and fireworks! I visited everything I could

*continued next page*

from previous page

that related to St Paul including a cave excavated in the rocks (known as 'St Paul's grotto') near the parish church of his dedication in Rabat. It is believed that this was where St Paul had preached and healed the sick (pictured). Buoyed by my experiences I was keen to learn more about this amazing person and welcomed an opportunity to participate in our parish's Bible study program on St Paul's famed *Letter to the Romans*. I participated in a small group comprised of young adults and a nun from the congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor. I am grateful that the group had been accepting of me and gracious in their tolerance of my naive contribution. We were a very diverse group and it is interesting how on most occasions our interpretation of the sometimes difficult passages were similar.

In contrast to the *Acts of the Apostles*, I have found *St Paul's*

*Letter to the Romans* very challenging to understand. It has been a very bumpy ride and I often question how his contemporaries would have understood the complex language and explanations. My favourite passage in *Romans* without a doubt is



Chapter 12 where St Paul writes of spiritual worship, humility and charity to everyone (including 'enemies'). A great *modi operandi* ('modes of operation') that we should all embrace.

Biblical text is often challenging to understand and I have found it

helpful to discuss passages to crystallise some meaning. Further, I have had to research commentary texts to help me understand and was grateful for Fr John Rate's lectures explaining the theology and highlighting the principal messages for us to grasp. The scholarly style was reminiscent of his engaging sermons which we were accustomed to when he was our parish priest. The Bible study program is the inspiration of Fr Tony O'Brien who has now seen it develop from very humble beginnings to a large event deeply entrenched into the culture of OLSH. This achievement is also attributed to the generosity of our fellow parishioners who help to organise and facilitate. I am sure that St Paul would be very impressed!

My journey with St Paul continues.

P.S. The Feast of St Paul is also celebrated on my birthday!

**Want to read more about St Paul?**

Log onto the website <http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aid=14772> and click down to the article **Opinion - No goodbyes to St Paul**

## Still Searching for relics

**I**n all churches a small square chamber is placed in the altar which contains authentic relics of canonised martyrs or saints. The relics are not necessarily of the one for whom the parish is named and often parishes do not have a record of which relics are in their altars.

Our last edition asked readers if they knew details of the relics in the altars at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St Margaret Mary's. Details of the relics at SMM have now been discovered.

The relics there are of St Catherine Laboure (a Sister of the Daughters of Charity who claimed to have relayed the request from the Blessed Virgin Mary to create the Miraculous Medal), St Therese of the Infant Jesus (known as The Little Flower and the patron saint of Russia, and co-patron with St Francis Xavier of all Catholic Missions) and St Pius (the first pope since Pope Pius V (1566–72) to be canonized).

But details of the relics in the OLSH altar are still unknown. Can you help?

## My Story

(Sr) RUTH PATON

Probably when we meet someone for the first time there are two standard questions that we may expect to be asked: 'Where do you come from? What do you do?' Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) has been my parish community for many years now. Previously I was a member of the Randwick OLSH Sisters community.

However, I grew up in a small farming village several miles out of Cootamundra, where I was born. Today when I am asked 'Where do you come from?' I am likely to reply Randwick as I know many of you and have found friendship and affirmation from among those who have become my close associates. We have worked together on a number of projects, some successful, others short lived, the most enduring being the years spent with the Hospital Pastoral Team during Fr Greg McEnally's time; the initiation of the Parish Magazine; the Meeting Place; involvement in the Liturgy and the RCIA. Well! I guess that is a comment on 'What do you do?' concerning recent years.

### four happy years were spent on Thursday Island

Formerly I spent many years working in the Darwin Diocese. My first assignment was to Alice Springs where we accommodated children from far away places for their schooling. I remember one little boy turning up for his first meal looking wistfully at his serviette and asking 'do I 'afta eat ert?' We looked forward to the week-end excursions, the most memorable being the day when we climbed to the top of the ridge via the Gap and walked along the range to Mount Gillan, the highest point in the McDonald Ranges. We made it home at sunset still in high spirits.

While I was in Alice Springs the Mission at Arltunga, which was surrounded by a rocky landscape a few miles out of town, moved to Santa Teresa close to the edge of the Simpson Desert, a very different landscape. I didn't work at Santa Teresa but spent

holidays there. At one time on the way out to the mission we came across a mob of emus. When they saw the truck they began running alongside and did well at keeping up for several miles. In those days we dressed in white from head to toe. On arrival at the mission the only visible white was our teeth! Our habits had taken on the hue of the desert.

In 1955 I was assigned to Thursday Island where I lived as a member of a community of four. Four happy years were spent on Thursday Island, even though at times it felt like a melting pot. One of my responsibilities was to ring the Angelus Bell. It was the most beautiful sounding bell I have ever heard. It was struck in Germany and salvaged from a ship that sank in the Torres Strait some years earlier.

One way we prepared for the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was by walking through the bush to collect tropical orchids which grew there in abundance. The return of the Sisters to the Island took place soon after World War II. The convent was in a state of disrepair. I collected some deal-board boxes and turned them into cupboards. I remember thinking at the time I may have made a good carpenter under different circumstances.

Following my time on Thursday Island I returned to the Territory and spent the next several years working at Port Keats, now known as Wadi, and the leprosarium at East Arm a few miles out of Darwin. Days at East Arm were spent tending to the needs of the people, who were confined to the limits of the settlement. None of the people were permitted to move beyond the limits so that all their needs were met by the staff including shopping for clothing and other personal needs that were not available there.

I had a change of occupation when for the next few years I worked with children in the Government School System. Together with a team of Catholic teachers from the schools we ran Christian Living Camps. We had a good relationship with the Territory Department of Education and were given permission to use their Education Village facility. This was a transformed miners settlement 80ks south of



Darwin, a remnant of the uranium mining days. It was situated in bushland and equipped with cottages, playing fields, a recreation hall, a swimming pool and a chapel. The aim was to give the children an experience of 'everyday' Christian living. Not many rules. Just one: respect for everyone and the environment.

Prayers came at meal time as that was the only time everyone was together in one place. One of the priests came down from Darwin on the Sundays for Mass. Washing up was a problem until the supervisors decided that everyone should do their own. We had the experience of telling stories around a campfire. The kids loved to climb trees. Looking back I thank God that there were no serious accidents. Many times there could have been when directions were not followed.

After leaving the Territory I worked in all the major cities, including Hobart. This involved a very different lifestyle than what had gone before. Later I was given the opportunity to study theology, firstly at St Paul's Seminary, Kensington and later at Yarra Theological Union, Box Hill, Victoria. That was a most rewarding time for me and gave me the opportunity to share my love for the Scriptures and the ability to appreciate the developments in theology.

Time and its consequences have now caught up with me. Today my lack of energy curtails my enthusiasm, but I continue to do a few small things. I thank God for the experiences of life and the people who have touched me in so many ways as well as this opportunity to share with you a few snippets of my story: 'Around Australia in Fifty-Five Years'.

## Schools Reports

### OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL

CATHY HODGINS  
ACTING PRINCIPAL

**T**his year we have made a commitment to programs that focus on Pastoral Care: Restorative Justice, Bounce Back, Community Outreach.

The Restorative Justice Program is a whole school commitment to quality relationships. It establishes a philosophy and a set of practices that reflect a commitment to inclusiveness and collaborative problem solving. The Restorative Justice program is run by Marist Youth Care and encourages students to reflect on their actions and how their actions affect others. Each class has used strategies such as Circle Time and Goal Setting promoting justice and fair play.

The Bounce Back Program complements the Restorative Justice program.

Staff Professional Development was held with three of our neighbouring primary schools: St. Anthony's Clovelly, St. Brigid's Coogee and St. Margaret Mary's North Randwick. The key presenter Toni Noble spoke about resilience: teaching strategies to help young people develop a stronger sense of well being, being confident, successful and cope when they experience difficulties. These programs reinforce our commitment to student welfare, pastoral care and whole school management.

A successful addition to lunchtime activities has been the TOPS Room: Time Off the Playground Room. During second half lunch students have the opportunity to attend the TOPS room to speak to a teacher, play board games, draw, time out, relax and socialise with students from other grades.

With our wonderful parent community we are working on a project establishing links with a remote indigenous community. The aim of this project is to educate students about the indigenous culture and promote an understanding of remote rural indigenous communities. This project is about building long-term relationships between our urban based catholic school and the remote indigenous communities. Our focus has been on communities in Alice Springs, Wilcannia and Bourke. We are currently organising fundraising to support this project and look forward to involving the parish community.

Our motto of "Strength and Gentleness" is a driving factor in the teaching and culture of our school and key to our understanding and promotion of pastoral care.

*Strength in the Matter  
and  
Gentleness in the Manner.*

### ST MARGARET MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

ROBYN BRIDLE  
ACTING PRINCIPAL

**S**t Margaret Mary's Primary School is embarking on a significant building project and refurbishment program. The refurbishment of classrooms in the current buildings has already begun and has included the remodelling of the area that was used for assemblies and Before and After School Care into a classroom; new carpets; new desks and chairs; remodelled wet areas and new pinboards/front runner that is attached to walls to allow for the display of children's work. Further work will be carried out on the top floor of the school building, where the area will be re-designed to allow for more open planned learning spaces.

The construction phase of the project is due to begin in the coming weeks. This will involve the levelling out the hill area and the building of a new classroom, library, multi-purpose room, administration block and staff facilities.

## Still Searching for the Kindergarten class of 1945

**T**he last edition sought names of those in a 1945 photo of a kindergarten class at Brigantine College. No-one has yet identified 'the little darlings'.

Can you help?



Kindergarten class of 1945 at Randwick.

## Sisters Of Charity Outreach- Eastern Area Visit Program

RAJIKA GILHOTRA

**T**he Eastern Area Visit Program is one of several programs run by the Sisters of Charity Outreach. The program offers visits and support to people who are socially isolated due to age, disability or medical conditions and operates within the Eastern Areas of Sydney, from Watsons Bay to La Perouse. Client referrals are received from hospitals, community agencies and families; individuals can refer themselves if they feel isolated. Once a client is accepted into the program, a field-worker visits the person at their home fortnightly. The visit can be in-home or the client can go for an outing in the visitor's car. In-home visits provide the client opportunities for warm, non-judgmental chats, sharing an interest with the visitor or playing a favourite game. Many of our clients are unable to leave home unassisted; outings with their visitor to parks, beaches and coffee shops provide a refreshing change of environment.

A very important outcome of our services is that it provides respite to carers, leaving them free to pursue other tasks. We do not provide shopping, cleaning or personal care services as we feel there are other agencies that do admirable work in those areas.

Currently, there are 75 clients in the program and visits are under-

taken by four staff and twelve volunteers. As we are largely volunteer based, we are constantly looking for new volunteers to help us extend our service. We support volunteers with a training program and ongoing interaction. We endeavour to keep them involved and motivated, encouraging participation in the Organisation's activities and celebrations.

### We support volunteers with a training program

The program also supports clients through referrals and advocacy. We link with Age Care Assessment Teams to organize Aged Care Assessments for those clients who require Community Care packages. We also provide information to our clients about other services in their neighbourhood that might be of interest to them.

An activity of the program is the Social Club which aims to provide opportunities for group socialization and interaction. On June 17 the clients, staff and volunteers used Ventnor as a venue for a Social Club event. Upon arrival,

we settled comfortably into the Function Room and heard Joan McNamara's account of Ventnor's history. The magnificent architecture of the building and the history of George Kiss, Mayor of Randwick, and his family fascinated all of us.

After the introduction to our lovely venue, we played a quiz on historical and important Australian facts - which year did Holden start manufacturing cars in Australia, when did Vegemite first appear on our breakfast table etc. All this activity left us hungry, so lunch, cake and drinks were served. Birthdays were celebrated and one lucky client won a prize.

Our clients are the focus of our Program. We honour their individuality and the rich life they have led by providing socialization, non-judgmental listening and striving to support them through their current needs. The result is usually a warm relationship between the visitor and client, a dependable support and respite for concerned family members.

To find out more about the service or volunteering opportunities, please call 8382 2883 between 9.30am-2.30pm Monday to Friday.

## About

### THE BIBLE

The oldest known Bible is the hand written Codex Sinaiticus, dating from the 3rd or 4th century

The first printed Bible was the Gutenberg Bible.

In Catholic Bibles, there are 46 books in the Old Testament (7 less in some other versions) and 27 books in the New Testament (2 less in some other versions).

The Bible is available in more than 400 languages in over 50 versions.

## Our Parish Priest: third of a series

FATHER JAMES POWER *msc*

**F**ather James Power was parish priest of our parish from 1939 to 1948 succeeding Fr Matthew Smith who had been parish priest from 1926 to 1939. Born in 1886 at Dalby, Queensland, he was educated at the Christian Brothers in Nudgee before joining the MSC Order and being ordained in 1913.

As a young priest he did not enjoy good health but nonetheless lived to age 91, dying in 1977. His first appointment as a priest was to Douglas Park where the apostolic school had recently been opened. At one time Fr Power was a member of the Admissions Board for students to that school.

After Douglas Park he was appointed as assistant priest at OLSH. He was a great friend of Fr Treand, our first parish priest, and wrote a fifty page monograph of his life. Together with Fr Smith, he consolidated the deep Sacred Heart Spirituality which is an important feature of our parish.

During the years of World War II Fr Power arranged for the beautiful windows over the sanctuary to be boarded up to ensure their safety. A subsequent myth has it, mistakenly, that the windows were transferred to Douglas Park.

Fr Power oversaw the completion of the Church and Shrine and arranged for the installation of much of the sandstone in the sanctuary. The windows on both sides of the transept were planned by him as a memorial to the servicemen and women who died in World War II as well as a token of thanks to God for those who survived that war.

He was a man of elegant appearance and great gentleness of manner. 'A great lovable priest' wrote a parishioner, 'he could wax quite eloquent when it came to balls, bazaars and carnivals'. He was active in the Randwick Catholic Tennis Club, being President from 1924 to 1927 and Patron of it while parish priest.



Fr Power was unwaveringly loyal to parishioners and in return received their loyalty. After leaving OLSH he was superior of a number of MSC communities and a foundation member of the Canberra Monastery. He retired to Kensington in the 1960s.

*(References MSC publications)*

## Memories of Randwick. The first fifty years

**I**t is just fifty years since the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart arrived in Randwick, to devote their lives to the spreading of Christ's Kingdom on earth in accordance with the beautiful Motto of their Society: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved.' All too quickly the years have passed, and now it is the happy privilege of the parishioners to rejoice with them on the completion of a Golden Jubilee replete with good works in the cause of religion, education and charity.

*The object of this little work is to give the people of the present some insight into the labours of the past, that they may see how rapidly the tiny mustard seed has expanded into a wide-spreading tree and how abundant has been the golden harvest, for the small group of Catholics of fifty years ago now number some thousands.*

*It may be said that the history of Randwick began about the year 1840 when the first settlers were quick to recognise the beauty of the picturesque site, with its extended views of the Pacific Ocean and the rugged rock-bound coast broken by peaceful bays and shining beaches.*

*At a time when land grants were given to various religious denominations in New South Wales, an area of land situated at the corner of Frenchman's Road and Chapel Street was apportioned to Catholics. That, however, was found unsuitable, and was sold under the authority of an Act of Parliament.*

*In 1881 the land now occupied in Avoca Street by the Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was purchased from Mr. Aston Watkins.*

These are the first five paragraphs of Mary Agnes Finn's book, *Memories of Randwick* detailing the early years of our parish from 1885. **Want to read more?** Log onto the website [www.sacredheart.org.au/nationalshrineOLSH](http://www.sacredheart.org.au/nationalshrineOLSH) and click 'History' on the left panel.

## Reflections from Tongren – China

Fr GREG McENNALLY

Is it not extraordinary that we have no say whatsoever with regard to our birth: neither who our parents are, nor where we are born, nor when. I consider myself to have been particularly blessed on all three counts. My parents have been extraordinarily good people and the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney is a wonderful place to live. I will not here enumerate the many advantages, except to say that I grew up with English as my first language. As to the when, suffice to say that at this point of history, native English speakers who are also teachers are in high demand.

So I teach English in China. Might I pause here to say a word of thanks to the Brigidine Sisters and the Marist Brothers who taught me the rudiments of the language, to the point where I have never had a problem with grammar. Indeed, as a boy, hopping on the tram at The Spot for the short trip to Peter's Corner, where my father, incidentally, had his fruit and vegetable shop, I used to love going over my grammar.

### So I teach English

Can teaching English be considered to be a missionary activity? You can argue about this, but we do try to be a Christian presence. While Greg McCann does have long term plans to establish a more permanent presence, at the moment we go from year to year. Currently, I am planning to bring two students down to Australia for dental treatment. The parents of one of them wanted to know why I would do this. The answer is very simple: because I am a Christian – and I can afford it.

Tongren is one of the smallest cities in China, with fewer than

100,000 inhabitants, so your education is not necessarily lacking if you have not heard of it. It is set in a rural area, where the people are beautiful. You read a lot these days about 'China', but here we have simple people who know little or nothing of world events. For the most part, the students are more concerned with passing CET 4 or 6, and with graduating, so that they can get a job. They just want to be happy in a very competitive world, and



believe me, here it is very competitive. This does not make them angels of light; they have their faults, as do we all. One of them is cheating. Each semester I catch students cheating and give them a zero grade. They do not see it as morally wrong as we might. It is just so important to pass, that it does not matter how you do it. And they are so good at it. You can take as many precautions as you like, but they still seem to be able to find ways to cheat.

What we are doing, therefore, is trying to work on a person to person basis, leaving governments to sort out the bigger issues. That is not our field. Our aim is to love these people as individuals, to fulfil local needs, in short, to be a Christian presence: that is our mandate.

It is exciting being here, as you never know what is going to happen next. It is a land of mystery, due in part to a lack of information

or even to misinformation, and in part to the complexity of society. Several weeks prior to the end of semester, not even the English Department office knew when the semester was due to end.

Let me tell you a story.

Recently we had the annual dragon boat festival, and I had never seen a dragon boat race, even though there have been six such in my time here. I was keen to see one. I found out that the event was scheduled for the morning of 28th May. With a number of students we set out for the venue: nothing doing. Further up stream some boats were practising, but no race. It is not on till 4.00pm, we were told. OK, so I returned at 4.00pm. It was all over. Brilliant. Not to worry, as there is another international race scheduled for the following month. On the due date and time I turned up.

Sorry, it has been postponed till the following day. I still have not seen a boat race. Maybe in my seventh year I will get lucky.

What appears on the surface is for show: the reality is somewhere underneath. State ownership of all radios, newspapers and TV

### It is a land of mystery

stations ensures a biased reporting of any event, always depicting China in roseate hues. In any dispute with any other country, China is never wrong. Strict censorship is the other leg of the double. So please be careful if you ring me. As from July 1st, any computers sold in China must have inbuilt firewalls, ostensibly to prevent children accessing pornographic material, but blocking out whatever the government decides is 'undesirable' material.

## Book Review: *The Shack* by William Paul Young

M.M.

**T**he *Shack* – a first novel by William Paul Young, has been received, since its publication in 2007, with widely differing responses. Some have enthusiastically endorsed it as *changing the way you think about God forever*. Another surprising comment from an American theologian makes a favourable comparison between *The Shack* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Some other comments are: *faith enhancing, spell-binding, a masterpiece, riveting, a solace and inspiration*.

Not all the criticism is so pleasing. One critic says: *If you haven't read The Shack– don't*. Another reviewer says: *it misrepresents God and is heretical*. Other critics have called it *scripturally incorrect*.

Young originally wrote his book as a kind of memoir for his family, especially his adult children. It was later offered for publication and continually knocked back by established publishers until friends in the publishing field collaborated with him to publish through Wind-blown Media in California. It has now gone through many printings and there are over a million copies in print.

The author was born in Canada to missionary parents who took him as an infant to New Guinea where, as well as being abused by members of a primitive tribe, his disturbed father constantly and harshly abused him verbally. By the age of six he was sent to boarding school. He carried much baggage to the period of his life where he wrote *The Shack*.

Basically the story, a fictional tale, involves a man Mack (Mackenzie), who on a vacation with his family, finds that his young daughter Missy has been abducted and killed by a serial pedophile killer. He is drowning in what he calls his 'Great Sadness' until he is called by God to visit Him at the shack where the crime took place. The shack has become the metaphor for this dark ugly place which we see is in Mack also. The unorthodox characterisation of the Trinity which follows when he meets God is where we find Mack being transformed. He had previously thought of God as distant and judgmental, though he felt he had always kept 'a sense of God'.

In the story, during three days of conversation, Mack encounters God. There's not much action, mostly dialogue, over many topics, including forgiveness. Mack's understanding is radically changed. Piece by piece, his idea of faith is taken apart and reassembled by this communication on a deep spiritual level. His baggage is swept away as he takes on board this extraordinary knowledge of God's amazing transforming love. He interprets this love and compassion as being within oneself as one's life is turned over to God. At the same time Mack has a bit of a go at those who take the Bible too literally.

Mack's journey is virtually compressed into belief, forgiveness and acceptance as he is embraced by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He feels he has been led to comprehend the age-old mystery of suffering and evil in the world by seeing that God



is fully reconciled to all humanity so that all may be fully aware of God's love. Receiving 'grace' he sees as happening when coming to the end of one's own self-sufficiency, and being open to God being there for you in one's greatest sorrows and not leaving us unless we dismiss Him.

Despite the wide division of opinion about *The Shack*, it seems, at least to this reviewer, that anyone will find interest, comfort, even diversion in this book. For the most convinced believer there is a loving connection to a faith-filled journey; for the enthusiastic seeker of Truth and Spirituality there is an excited awareness that here is truly an answer to the enigma of God. For the unhappy ones who feel institutional religion has failed them, there is another path to recognize, and perhaps in which to find solace.

At the end, perhaps it's only just a story, but one with a poignancy that can leave you in tears.

## About

### THE BUTTERFLY

The butterfly has often been depicted in Christian art as a symbol of the resurrection. In its earlier stages of development the butterfly is an earthbound caterpillar that crawls along the ground. Then it enters its cocoon as into a tomb. After a death-like sleep it emerges in a new and beautiful form. No longer bound to earth, it freely soars where it wills



## A Story about Inspired Animals

LYN McDONAGH

**D**ogs and even monkeys have been successfully trained to act as companion animals for humans. Some animals seem to be naturally inspired towards this behaviour, sometimes inexplicably so. Such as dogs that can sense when their owner is about to have a seizure, dogs that can sense the presence of cancer in a person and the special affinity that dolphins have with ill or disabled children.

As a 6 year old I contracted the mumps, which in those times was considered to be an almost normal childhood complaint that didn't require any medical intervention. One night, when I was about 6 years old, I had awoken to find my beloved teddy on my bed, unusual as I didn't normally sleep with a toy, and pushed him under the blankets as I felt I needed a cuddle.

The next morning I awoke with swollen and very sore glands and to my amazement – a strange large ginger tabby cat under the blankets – teddy was still sitting on a chair. I considered that I knew every dog and cat in the neighbourhood and had never seen this particular animal before. On my stirring the cat stayed purring for a short time, stretched and yawned, then casually jumped back out the bedroom window. Apparently this had also been the entry point for it to enter the room.

At that time my mother had to work to support my brother and myself which meant that I had to stay at home on my own during the day throughout the term of quarantine from other children. This could have been a very lonely time except for the strange ginger cat.

Each day when my mother left for work the cat would reappear via the bedroom window, stay with me for the day and then disappear again when it was time for my brother to come home from school. When I was able to rejoin society the cat disappeared for the last time. I had never seen this particular cat before my illness and didn't ever see it again. What inspired the animal to act like this and where did it come from? It certainly helped a lonely unwell little girl.

On another occasion I had been sent to live with my maternal grandmother while my mother was receiving extensive medical treatment. This wonderful lady was of the 'old school'. A very religious Seventh Day Adventist who also had very strict ideas about how little girls should behave. I was in 6th class in primary school at the time and spent a whole school term with her in the mid north coast town of Kempsey. Nanna considered that young ladies were not to be allowed to play with the other

neighbourhood children, instead, after school hours were spent with homework, chores, gardening, practicing on the old pump organ, singing hymns and reading the bible. Indeed I wasn't even allowed to chat to another child between the school bus stop and her place.

Just before sunset each day I would sit on a settee beside a window that opened onto Nanna's garden reading the bible. One evening a large green tree frog hopped onto the windowsill and looked at me. I tentatively patted the frog with one finger and it stayed, didn't seem to be afraid of me at all. For the next two months the frog reappeared every evening about the same time and kept me company whilst I was doing my bible readings.

What prompted these actions? Nanna hadn't seen the frog on her windowsill before and it didn't come back once I went back home to rejoin my little family. However I was more than happy to have its company and didn't feel quite so lonely.

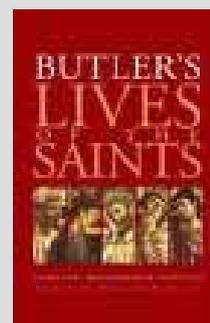
I have no explanation for these incidents, except that I feel they were inspired animals who came at exactly the right time to help out a very lonely little girl. It would be interesting to hear other people's stories involving inspired animals.

## About

### ALBIN BUTLER

For many Catholics Albin Butler's *Lives of the Saints* has been their first introduction and the final word on the saints. Born in England in 1710 Butler was ordained a priest in 1735. He taught and eventually was named president of St Omer Seminary in France. For nearly 30 years Butler worked on a multi-volume book on the lives of the saints. By the time he finished it contained the lives of more than 1600 saints.

First published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century his book has never gone out of print.



## ST MARGARET MARY'S

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## OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

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## The Back Page WITH Fr PETER

Recently we received a break down of the Government Census of 2006 for SMM and OLSH Parish areas. Some statistics are compared to the 2001 Census. It is worth remembering that these stats are already three years 'old' and, as we know, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, particularly in the finance and employment domains.

*The Snapshot* looks like this. Happy Reading.

### ST MARGARET MARY'S

**Total pop: 6,474**

**R/C 2,045 or 31.6% (decline of 80)**

Median Age R/Cs 38.

Catholic families: 684

Living alone: 316

Born overseas; 604 – Top 5 places of those born o/seas: UK, Ireland, NZ, Other Europe, Central & Sth America.

Top 5 places of recent arrivals: Nth America, India, NZ, Ireland, UK.

144 need assistance with core activities

Changed address since 01 census: 915 or 44.7%

7.4% provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability.

62.2% in Catholic Primary Schools

75.9% in Catholic Secondary Schools

R/C Families: 684

R/C One Parent families: 79 (11.5%)

R/C + R/C married: 192

R/C + other Xtian registered married: 133

R/C + non Xtian registered married: 64

R/C De facto couples: 51

R/C + other Xtian De Facto Couples: 42

R/C + non-Xtian De Facto couples: 61

Median Annual Family Income: \$88,758

Median Monthly House loan repay: \$2,266

People claiming no rel: 1,241

Rel not stated: 762

### OUR LADY of the SACRED HEART

**Total pop: 18,997**

**R/C 5,162 or 27.2 % (decline of 300)**

Median Age R/Cs: 34

Catholic Families: 1,702

Living alone: 702

Born overseas: 1,844 – Top 5 places of those born o/seas: Ireland, UK, Philippines, Italy, Other Europe.

Top 5 places of recent arrivals: Sth Korea, India, Ireland, Other Middle East and Nth Africa, Sri Lanka.

173 need assistance with core activities

Changed address since 01 census: 2,442 or 47.3%

8.2% provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability.

55.5% in Catholic Primary Schools

69% in Catholic Secondary Schools

R/C Families: 1,702

R/C One parent families: 185 (10.9%)

R/C + R/C registered married: 479

R/C + other Xtian registered married: 308

R/C + non Xtian registered married: 218

R/C De facto couples: 112

R/C + other Xtian De Facto Couples: 120

R/C + non-Xtian De Facto couples: 152

Median Annual Family Income: \$93,405

Median Monthly House loan repay: \$2,127

People claiming no religion: 4,230

Rel not stated: 2,695

These figures do not tell us anything about Catholic practice. What they do tell us is that there are a huge number of people who identify one way or another as Catholics. The numbers in registered marriages does not tell us that they are Church marriages. The numbers in 'irregular' marriages or relationships is quite high. A prior divorce can be a factor in Catholics not being able to enter a Church marriage. Single parent families – not clear whether headed by a male or a female. The numbers 'needing assistance with core activities' may be skewed by the prevalence of Nursing Homes, especially in the SMM area. However, the percentages 'providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability' is of interest. Mixed religion marriages could be a fertile ground for our RCIA program. The steady numbers of recently arrived poses challenges for our capacity to welcome new-comers.