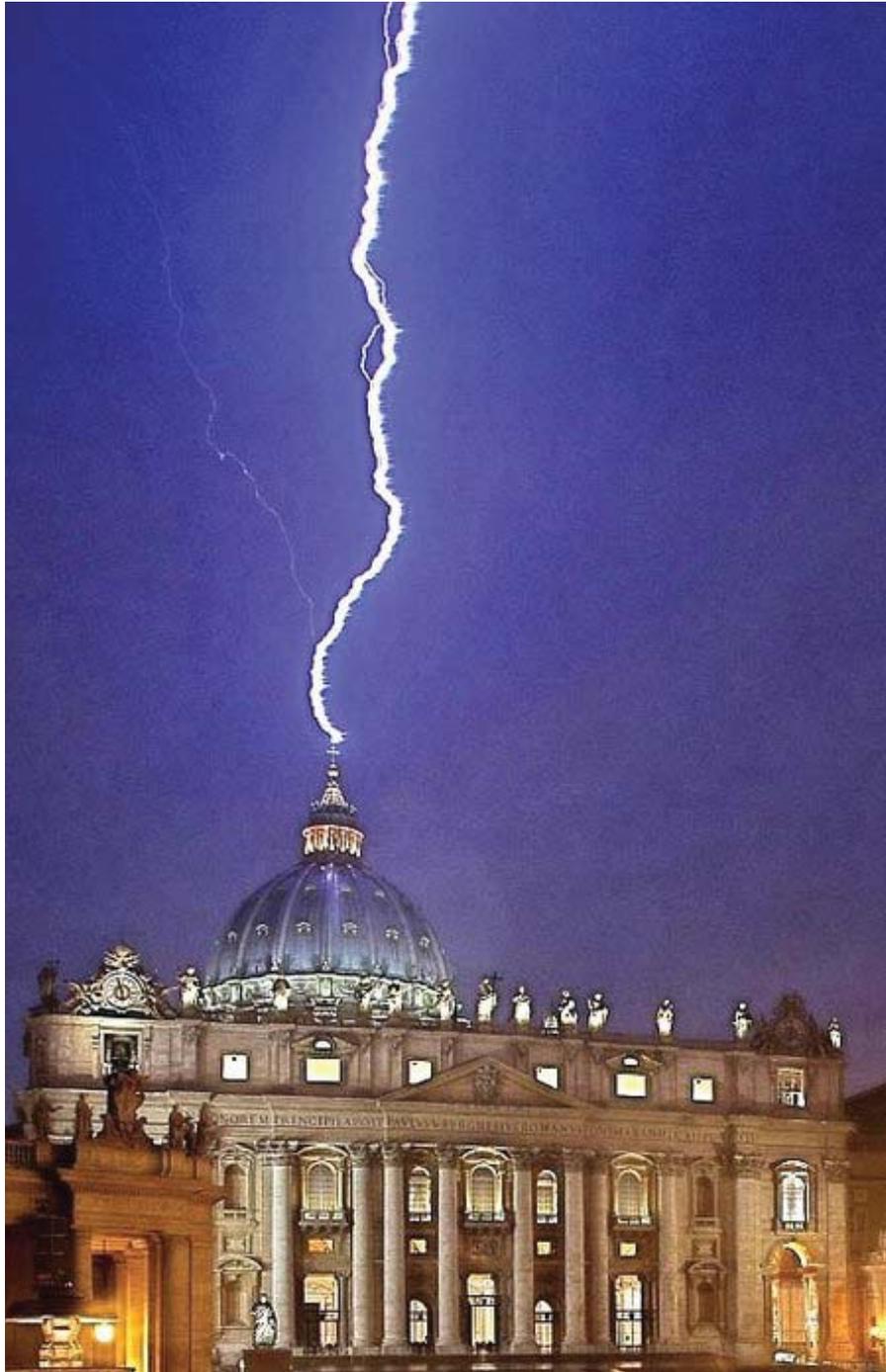


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ST MARGARET MARY'S RANDWICK NORTH

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART RANDWICK

Reflection

DIANE GORDON

The life of Jesus was about loving one's neighbours and forgiving seventy times seven. However, when we enter the 'real world' of politics and the balancing of egos that the political process necessarily involves, the best we can hope for is a kind of 'rough justice'. During his ministry Jesus made healing contact with the 'unclean' and social outcasts (for example, lepers). In his healing Jesus brought back into the community the socially marginalized. In having a meal with 'tax collectors and sinners, Jesus challenged the religious and social boundaries of his society'. He was seen as a 'friend of the tax-collectors and sinners'. The act of Jesus having a meal with them was a form of social protest, symbolically proclaiming that the Reign of God included the disenfranchised (Matthew 9:11-13).

Jesus challenged those of his society, who ostracized those who could not observe all its detailed regulations. He linked together 'justice, mercy and faith' over and against meticulous observance of ritual law (Matthew 23:23).

It is central to the Christian faith that God desires a world in which justice is done. Global forces that are deeply unfair determine the destiny of the world's poorest people and cause damage to the planet's environment. War and suffering have followed. This has led to a planet on which, every eight seconds, a child in the developing world dies. Striving for justice and working for peace, particularly for the world's poorest people, are at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The good news he came to announce was that suffering and oppression could be brought to an end.

The challenge Christians face is to have a personal way of life that does not add to the world's problems. This means adopting a simple lifestyle in which the world's resources are not wasted, buying goods that have been fairly traded, and changing habits that damage the environment. In the richer parts of the world many people support and give money to organisations that are seeking to improve the conditions of the world's poorest people, to end conflicts, and to preserve the planet.

The word peace is used in the Bible in a very broad sense. It takes in the wellbeing and health of people, as well as the absence of violence. Christians pray for the end of conflict between nations and religions. But they are also called to promote harmony in their communities, families and anywhere that they can make a practical difference.

Many followers of Jesus say that seeking justice and working for peace gives their lives a great sense of fulfilment. They know that their ways are becoming more like God's ways. And they know that they are making the experience of being alive better for all the people God has lovingly placed on the earth.

I wonder what we are doing to make our homes and world a better place. ❖

Front Cover Photo:

A message from above? ... lightning strikes St Peter's dome at the Vatican hours after Pope Benedict XVI resigned. Photo: AFP

Names of authors who have contributed stories are shown at top of the articles. Other stories are the work of the editorial team.

My Story

UNA SMITH

1932 was a significant year, the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, but for my family the big event was my birth! My parents both came from Melbourne – my mother was a hairdresser and my father a jockey - but when he obtained a job riding track work at Canterbury racecourse they moved to Sydney. My sister Jacqueline and I were born in Sydney and lived near the course. Later our family moved to Maroubra, and we lived in a flat in Marine Parade above a shop opposite Mahon Pool and while we were there it became the scene of one of Sydney’s unsolved murders – a Miss Mary Fahy.

Jacq and I began our schooling at St Peter Claver’s in Maroubra Bay. In high school Jacq was having piano lessons under the ‘Chef’ method, but was unable to continue after she injured her hand and as the lessons had been paid for I took her place. It was the start of a real liking for music and I was asked to play the piano as the pupils marched into school, something I also did when my own children attended OLSH Primary School.

I was not really interested in school and would have left at age 14 at the end of 2nd year (Year 8) but for a request from one of the nuns, Mother Albeus csb, to help her with the young pupils in First Class. Along with music that request sparked the beginning of a lifelong interest in teaching.

Leaving school at 16 my introduction to the world of work was beset with problems. I learnt shorthand and typing and at my first job I was asked for an ‘eraser’. I had no idea that an eraser was a rubber and was promptly sacked. Misfortune followed me in my second job as a demonstrator of mops and buckets

at the well-known department store, Mark Foys. I accidentally tipped the bucket over, the water spilled over the shoes of my boss and again I was promptly sacked.

I was more successful with social activities. I joined the Randwick Catholic Youth Organisation attending the dances and concerts, competing in netball matches, and playing the piano at parties. At the CYO I met my future husband Ted Smith. We were married in 1953 and on our wedding day moved to Brisbane where Ted had a job – honeymoon and work all in one. Later Ted and two partners opened their own advertising agency, but were forced to close the business in the early 1960s. This also meant we had to move back to Sydney. We then had four children and I was pregnant with a fifth.

We had no money to pay for the removal of our furniture from Brisbane to Sydney, but one day I heard on the radio of a competition for recipes to make a meal from a tin of Camp Pie. This had to be delivered to the radio station which I duly did, and was declared the winner with a prize of \$200. This paid for our furniture removal!

Initially we shared a flat in Coogee Bay Road with Ted’s parents, a wonderful couple. Five young children and four adults in a two bedroom flat meant that accommodation was cramped but we were grateful for it until we were able to get on our feet again. We moved to a house in Prince Street, Randwick and then bought a house in Rae Street and from that time five of our children then of school age attended Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School and we became active parishioners of the parish. The ‘new’ presbytery had been built in 1963 and the ‘old’ presbytery became a Parish



Social Centre, and a meeting place for all parishioners. Ted was the President of the Centre and he and Fr Tony O’Brien were enthusiastic organisers of the Centre as well as many other people. On one occasion we had a concert with Bobby Limb’s band.

I was invited to play the piano for the school, marching the children into class in the morning and playing for concerts. Sr Alexis (now Sr Bernice) used to teach singing as well as a class and formed a choir ‘The Pacelli Singers’ which became very accomplished under her tutelage. My daughters were in this choir and feel that what they learned in those early days at OLSH was a grounding for a love of music and singing that spanned many years – something they are still passing on and cherishing to this day.

In the late 1960s a friend and I heard about an organisation for women – Toastmistress, closely related to Toastmasters which at the time was only open to men. A group of friends set to and we started our own club in Coogee and over the years many women joined and gained experience and confidence in standing on their feet and speaking in front of an audience. They also learnt to speak up for themselves and apply for jobs as women were beginning to join the permanent workforce.

continued on page 4

I accidentally tipped the bucket over..

There's an Awful Lot of Coffee in Randwick

A Coffee
Addicted Parishioner

In one of his recent newsletters Fr Greg McEnnally wrote about his coffee experiences in China. 'It has now become something of a tradition to go to such a shop after Mass on Sunday mornings. There we sit and chat for an hour or so, enjoying each other's company even more than the coffee. We take it in turns to shout, though – since we do not organise a roster – this is always a matter of some debate. 'It is my turn to pay this week.' 'No, I think it is mine, as I have not paid for some time.' 'You are both wrong: it is mine, and you paid two weeks ago.' We manage to sort it out without coming to blows: well, so far.' Sounds familiar?

That got me thinking about my coffee experiences, back many years ago when my mother introduced me to Coffee and Chicory. In our household it was seen as exotic and expensive, and occasionally offered to visitors. A cup of Bushells Tea with milk and

two sugars was not just the drink of choice, it was the cheap choice.

Once my rich aunt from Perth took us to Repin's Coffee Lounge in the city to taste real coffee made with beans you could see behind the counter. Later when I began work I was introduced to Instant Coffee. A spoonful, stirred rapidly, add hot water and voila, my introduction to the morning coffee break.

I have a Japanese friend who loves coffee and once told me that there are more coffee shops in Japan than in America and I wondered whether coffee had become another of those Western lifestyles adopted by the Asian community. Surprise, surprise, coffee has a long history dating from the first discovery of coffee trees in Ethiopia in the tenth century. And, more surprise, coffee has had a strong religious connection.

Tradition has it that the drink proved hugely popular throughout the Arab world despite the

objections of orthodox Muslims who condemned it as a stimulant. From the Islamic world, coffee spread to Europe where it met fierce resistance from the clergy who considered it the drink of 'Islamic infidels'. Pope Clement VIII did much to change popular opinion about coffee, however, when he tried it and found it 'delicious'. There's nothing like a religious imprimatur to justify an addiction! A bit like Greg's friend in China who prayed that she would be able to buy her own coffee shop – and she did.

So, when we gather for coffee after Mass to meet with friends and relax just as Greg does in China we can set aside any thoughts of caffeine addiction knowing it has some religious overtones. And at last count, we can do it nearly every Sunday of the year because not only is there an awful lot of coffee in Brazil (remember that song with Frank Sinatra) there is also an awful lot of coffee shops in Randwick. ❖

My Story: Una Smith *continued from page 3*

A renewed and more serious interest in teaching began for me in the 1970s. Sr Bernice was asked to establish a Special Needs Unit at Christian Brothers Bondi, and she asked me to play the piano for ballroom dancing classes which all boys attended. I studied and acquired my teaching qualification by correspondence, studying at night on the dining table after our now seven children had gone to bed, I then assisted Sr Bernice with the teaching of the boys in 5th and 6th classes. In 1981 I joined the staff of Marcellin College, teaching there until 1987. I absolutely loved it. Apart from regular teaching I was involved in rehearsals for the annual musical shows.

Along the way, in 1972, began the most rewarding of all my activities – the establishment

of what became known as the Marcellin Singers. As part of the Parents and Friends Association of Marcellin College it was decided to hold a Mass for mothers, born of the idea of having 'Mums who prayed together to stay and work together'. Six hundred mothers and grandmothers came to the first Mass and so began our musical journey which continued until last year with some of the original members still part of the choir. Over the years we sang not just at OLSH Church but other churches, various festivals and once we were on Channel Nine.

1987 was another significant year for me – Ted and I caught the hospitality bug and purchased 'Alexis' the wedding Reception Centre in Kingsford. Sadly while we were there Ted passed away in 1990 and I consequently ran the

business on my own selling it in 1995. The estate agent asked me what I intended to do after selling the Alexis and offered me a job in real estate, so I did the course and decided to take on another 'people skills' role.

So there was teaching, weddings, real estate and then another chapter in my career and indeed along life's journey, working in a funeral parlour where at times I conducted funeral services.

While the Marcellin Singers are no more, a new group the Champagnat Singers has been formed and I and many former Marcellin Singers are now part of that group and I have been spurred on to resume my piano playing. Perhaps it is the start of a new career for me! ❖

The Joy of Teaching

Paul Daley and Garry McDonald are teachers at Marcellin College. Paul, a teacher for 20 years and Garry for 25 years are still imbued with the joy of teaching. This is their story.



Paul Daley

My teaching career began as a simple gut feeling. My secondary schooling was at Marcellin and I was taught by some fantastic people - Marist brothers and lay teachers who made a lasting impression on me. I'm glad they did because I followed my instinct and 20 years later I still love teaching. The school and the classroom are vibrant and lively locations fed and sustained by the confidence and energy of youth. At the heart of my workplace are a mix of personalities and characters that are interwoven with Marist tenets and broader Catholic values. It is a work place where tradition and structure are tempered by relationship and humanity. Despite being a place of serious learning, they are also areas of optimism and humour that still allow me to 'embrace the child within' and enjoy a good laugh.

One of the best things about being a teacher is the satisfaction that comes with seeing my students achieve in all the varied aspects of their school life. Sometimes it is the unexpected successes that are most notable. Like when the introverted 'battler' perfects a musical performance at a school assembly; observing the genuine and spontaneous applause of his peers, who recognised the importance of the moment, something that was unexpected but indeed very special. I am a regular eye witness to such

memorable human events because I am a teacher.

A long time ago the great philosopher Aristotle concluded that *to educate the mind without educating the heart is no education at all*. For me, his words resonate strongly. They remind me of the many intangible aspects of my job. I accompany boys on a six year journey into adulthood. Along the way I play my part to help them achieve their goals but also share my own life experiences to help them in the times that they fail.

Living in the same area that I teach means that I regularly meet up with former students. It's always great to hear an update on their lives since they left school. It is even more gratifying to know that in some way my fellow teachers and I have helped these young men become the people they are today. ❖



Garry McDonald

The term 'joy' generally defined as the emotion of great delight or happiness derived from a source of keen pleasure or delight is certainly an apt description of the sense of fulfilment that I gain from my profession as a teacher and my general engagement with today's youth.

An examination of the joys of teaching will invariably highlight

the fact that there are both joys and at times disappointments. Luckily, my experience has been that the joys far outweigh the negatives or disappointments. It is my strong belief that one cannot continue to teach if there is little joy in the practice. Essentially, I teach because I am called to teach by some innate force within me. I teach because I believe that the youth of Australia matter. Ultimately I teach because I believe I am good at it and believe I have something to offer my students and my colleagues.

I cannot see myself doing anything else. Some occupations may be higher paid and may have a higher profile but that is not for me. Money and glory are not substitutes for passion and enjoyment. Teaching involves connecting with others, being in a relationship with students as they search for answers and as they develop into adults. The youth of today while not always receiving the most positive press have much to offer and for me to be a part of the shaping of these young minds certainly is an enormous task but one well worth being involved in. This engagement with youth on a daily basis has given me much personal joy and kept me young at heart.

Now, as a teacher and mentor, I find one of the joys of teaching, one of the major reasons I teach, is to experience that moment of recognition my students experience when they 'get it'. Some explain this as 'when the light goes on'. There is a visual expression of joy on the face of the student when some difficult concept is finally understood, a technical problem overcome, a difficult skill mastered. This shared moment of 'discovery' is what teaching and learning is all about.

At the end of the day, there is nothing quite like a stream of students leaving the classroom thanking you for the lesson. ❖

Religious Orders at OLSH

Religious Orders have long contributed to the work of the parish including education, health and pastoral activities. In the first of a series we highlight two of the members of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who have been a beacon, not only to their own members but as a reminder to us all of their dedication to the ideals of their Order. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart date their presence in the parish to 1898 when they had charge of the parish school until 1901.

Sr M GERARDA (SHEILA MARY KENNEDY)

Sr M Gerarda was born on 5 November 1919 in Shepparton Victoria, the eldest of six children of John and Catherine Kennedy. Her schooling was at schools conducted by the Mercy and Brigidine Sisters and her desire to go to the missions was fostered by reading of the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. She began university studies but left to enter the Novitiate in Bowral, making her first profession in 1940 and her Perpetual Profession in 1943. She trained as a mothercraft nurse and was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal when she topped the State at the completion of her General Certificate of Nursing. After three years in the missions in the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati) she was appointed in 1953 as Matron of the newly opened OLSH Hospital at Randwick and later as the Tutor Sister also.

Sr M Gerarda was appointed Provincial Superior for Australia in 1966, just after the end of the Second Vatican Council which called for some changes in the living of apostolic religious life. Changes were introduced gradually and although there was some resistance to change in some areas she faced the challenges with gentleness and love.

Three years later in 1969 she was appointed as Assistant General to Sr M Benigna the General Superior and in 1975 was elected as the Superior General, an office she held for 12 years. The main challenge of her first term was the revision of the Constitutions. She involved the whole Congregation

in this work and the present Constitutions were approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious in 1983. Sr M Gerarda's personal influence on the Congregation was very marked. Under her direction the Archives were brought up to date and books were written containing accounts of the early days of the Congregation including the letters of Mother Mary Louise.

Returning to Sydney in 1989, she spent a year or so at Kensington and then was appointed Community Leader at Randwick from 1990 to 1996, spending some time translating from French documents for the General Archives. When sister's health deteriorated she went to St. Joseph's Aged Facility Kensington and died there on 4 March 2007.

Sr MARY BERNARD HAUGHEY

Johanna Haughey was born on 2 December 1889 in Perth, Western Australia, her parents being Daniel Haughey and Mary Ryan. She entered the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and took Sr Mary Bernard as her religious name, and pronounced her first vows on 6 January 1912.

After her profession she taught for some time at the secondary school at Kensington, being one of the first Sisters to teach there. She was responsible for getting the College registered by the Education Department as a secondary school.

In December 1920 Sr M Bernard, then 31 years old, arrived in the Gilbert Islands. In 1923, together



with Sr M Victor (French) she was named for the northern island of Marakei. After a few months the latter was replaced by Sr M Gregory who had just arrived from Australia.

The two young Australian Sisters opened the first school for girls on the island and soon they had about 120 children. There was very little in the way of equipment, but these two Sisters did what they could with what they had. They carried on until they had a very good school.

She went to Bowraville when she returned from Kiribati and was there for 19 years before going to Yarra Bay where she taught for some time with Sr M Martina. Many of the pupils at Yarra Bay were aborigines and migrants and in many cases the parents could not speak English. When they visited the school, the parents would tell their tale in their own language and the young children would repeat it to Sister in English. When retired she went to Botany.

When Sr M Bernard went to Kensington she had an aviary that she looked after with great care. On being admitted to St Joseph's Nursing Home and Hostel the cage was kept outside the building where she could keep an eye on it. When it was decided the aviary could not remain, she was quite heartbroken. She really enjoyed talking to her birds.

Towards the end Sister was confined to a wheel chair. She died peacefully at the age of 96 at St Joseph's Nursing Home on 17 May 1985. ❖

Seven Things About India

India, with a population of 1.21 billion people remains an unknown country to many of us. Here Fr Prasad lists seven things to know about his country.

1. NATIONALISM

India is a land of diverse physical features, cultures, religions and communities. There is great diversity in our traditions, manners, tastes and customs. Each and every region of the country portrays different customs and traditions. But though we speak different languages yet we are all Indians. 'Unity in Diversity' has been the distinctive feature of the Indian culture. This sense of nationalism in India is because we all believe we are part of the same nation, and that unity binds us together. This sense of collective belonging comes partly through the experience of united struggles. To live peacefully has been our motto. The real strength of Indian culture lies in maintaining an amazing diversity of views and people who never seem to agree on anything. Yet, concepts of one basic culture and one nation have continued. When Indians go abroad, they call themselves Indians and they are known as Indians.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE

The culture of India is one of the oldest and unique with an amazing cultural diversity. Its history is full of the rise and fall of many kingdoms and its monuments, built by different kings, throw light on its past history. These monuments exhibit its glory and are part of our cultural heritage. Almost all states of India boast of some important historical monuments. Thousands of tourists visit India to have a glimpse of these places. Taj Mahal and Red Fort (Lal Qila), are probably the best known but the Sun Temple, the Agra Fort, and Buland Darwaza (the Lofty Gateway) are historically famous and have a religious significance. These monuments tell of our past and will shine forever.

3. SOCIAL STABILITY

India has ensured fundamental

rights for all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, religion, colour, sex or nationality yet 40% of the world's poor still live in India, and 28% of the country's population continues to live below the poverty line. More than one third live on less than a dollar a day, and 80% live on less than two dollars a day. The rate of disparity between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', is increasing rapidly. What's concerning is that there doesn't seem to be any concerted government effort to rectify the situation. These glaring social and economic problems must be addressed directly and earnestly.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

We, the Indians, although born into various groups - families, clans, sub castes, castes, and religious communities - live with a constant sense of being part of each other. Everything a person does properly involves interaction with other people. There is an assumption that social ties can help a person. Seldom do people carry out tasks on their own. When a boy climbs a tree to pluck mangoes, another stands below with a basket to receive them. When a farmer stacks sheaves of grain onto his bullock cart, he stands atop the cart, catching the sheaves tossed up to him by his son. At the age of marriage, a young person expects that parents will take care of finding the appropriate bride or groom and arranging all the formalities. When facing death, a person is confident that offspring and other relatives will carry out the appropriate funeral rites, including a commemorative feast when, through gifts of clothing and food, continuing social ties are reaffirmed by all in attendance.

5. SOCIAL EVILS

I am proud of India. Proud of its rich culture and heritage. Proud of being one of the oldest civilizations. Proud of being born in a country which has so many



languages, religions, communities. But at the same time, India is now beset with a number of social evils. The Caste system, Child Marriages, the Dowry System, the Untouchability concept, are some of the evils which kill Indian society. Nonetheless efforts are being made to make India a better place.

6. DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

India is the world's largest democracy and is a young country having achieved independence from Britain in 1947. It is a matter of great pride that no matter how chaotic this country, we are free to remove our leaders (or re-elect them) every five years. The Parliament is in the capital, New Delhi. For me, the free tortoise wins over the dictatorial hare anytime and always. Connected to this is the fact that the other legs of a democracy - the judiciary, the media and the executive are relatively free and healthy.

7. DIFFERENT PROFILE

India is often characterized as an emerging economic super power. There is an altogether different profile of India, a country with the largest number of poor and destitute in the world. India also accounts for the largest number of illiterates; and the largest number of unemployed. It has the largest number of anaemic women and children, and huge infant/child and maternal mortality. These are not normal characteristics of a modern nation aspiring to be a world economic power. A decent society cannot be built on the ruins of hunger, malnutrition, ill health and illiteracy. Children who are the bridge between our inherited past and the aspirations for the future are neglected beyond limit. ❖

If you would like to know more, please let me know.

A Day in The Life of Ron Foley

Ron Foley is a cameraman and a director of photography with the ABC for a recent Four Corners program. This is his story.

It's a sunny Friday afternoon and we are heading to Sydney's outer edge for the last filming day for a Four Corners story about Claymore. This suburb was conceived in the 1970s as a model housing commission suburb where the multistory attached dwellings had backyards all facing each other to add to a sense of community, populated with lower socio economic residents, 96 per cent of whom needed to rent public housing.

We have been coming out here for the last 8 weeks talking to and filming some of the children who have grown up here, many third and fourth generation, to paint a picture of what it is like to grow up poor in Australia.

On any other filming day we would have a schedule, perhaps some interviews lined up at appointed times, an event or a situation to record to help tell the story. There would be a crew of three to four on those days. Today the car contains Sarah the reporter and myself, too many people can overwhelm the kids we are talking to, making it difficult to elicit responses.

We adopt a simple style with low profile on this shoot, attempting to slide quietly into the world of these children. There is no pretty lighting, no formal interview, the camera sits constantly on my shoulder and the reporter waits for what she hopes is the perfect moment to elicit a thoughtful response.

Stories about politics and business and the usual Four Corners subject matter mostly involve experts and commentators, politicians and other stakeholders. We sit them in a chair, kit them, mic them, then go through the time honoured process of the formal interview.

This is usually then put together in a traditional narrative style with answers often self contained and in context.

Besser block and steel shutters are the architectural style of Claymore's 'shopping centre'. It looks more like the sort of building you might see in an African township rather than suburban Sydney. School children are making their way home, some picked up by their young mothers and fathers. In this suburb of 3300 people, 1500 are children, which is among the highest proportion in the country. Of the population over 15 years of age less than a third participate in the labour force and of those only 60% have employment.

We have arranged to meet Jacob and his brother Connor who live with their Aunt, whom they consider and refer to as Mum. They are engaging and lively boys, particularly Jacob, who is clearly smart and can be a deep thinker. Both are diagnosed as having ADHD and are medicated for that condition. It appears that most of the children in Claymore have similar diagnoses and it has struck us that the incidence seem higher than anywhere else we've encountered.

Connor and Jacob have kept their appointment. This seems due to the routine and discipline that their Aunt/Mum has tried to place in their lives to help with controlling their condition. It is a struggle as she looks after three children of her own, one who is only one year old. Before being put into the custody of their Aunt/Mum the two boys had a personal history of abuse and neglect.

On previous occasions we have attempted to interview Jacob about his life but the various mood



swings caused by his medication have previously rendered him either restless and disengaged or almost catatonic. It is not feasible to sit those kids down in a chair and throw a barrage of prepared questions to them and expect a response, so instead we remain ready in whatever situation the kids deem it a good time to chat. This afternoon it seems Jacob is chatty and cooperative and wants to walk to the football oval.

Within minutes of leaving the house I notice Jacob and Connor start searching through the clover. I beckon to Sarah and roll the camera. After a few minutes they have found a number of four leaf clovers which they claim to find often. The conversation turns to luck, do they consider themselves lucky, if they were very lucky and became wealthy how could they use that luck? Their replies sounded almost poetic. I felt like this was one of the most beautiful and honest moments I have ever witnessed through my viewfinder.

We return to work excited but unsure about what we have filmed. Often moments like these that have so much emotion and meaning don't translate to the screen as they are often tied to the time and place they occurred in. I believe this did translate and we had the closing piece for our film, which I hope left the viewer feeling positive towards these kids despite their troubled situations.

This was a very untypical day in the life of a television camera person. Sometimes we live for the magic of creating a kind of artifice to carry a story along and engage the viewer, but this was one of those rare, raw completely real days that will live in my mind forever. ❖

Moving Out and Moving On

MARY MARAZ

Moving from your own home to a retirement village can be one of life's great experiences. Here Mary Maraz tells her personal story.

Oh, you're moving are you? They ask. 'Well yes, just sold the house and going into a retirement village'. A familiar conversation opener with various reactions.

One is why would you do that? You've got such a nice house. 'Oh well it's big and has a big garden and there's only me rattling around, and I really can't put up with unreliable tradesmen any more'. Several responses to this come to mind. One in particular is a very firmly enunciated: You wouldn't have me forced out of my home, and sent off somewhere strange.

Obvious response to this 'of course I'm not forced to go and the retirement place is quite nice'. Said with a certain defensiveness, as partly the feeling can be that I really shouldn't be going, what am I doing?

Of course one cannot talk about Moving House without dwelling with a certain reserve on the subject of The Estate Agent. This is a Person Who Knows Everything especially when it comes to a mysterious subject called decluttering. Freely translated, this means getting rid of most items previously treasured. Only then apparently will that much sought after person – the Interested Buyer – be at all interested. The next move with this firmly in mind is to take most paintings off the walls (particularly family ones.) Bring in lots of new trivia, cushions, fresh flowers, and ideally, fragrant coffee and cake making thus perfuming and making tolerable the newly desirable interior.

It is now necessary to spend a great deal of money on The Photos which will be viewed, one is to understand, by many admiring people on a daily basis in newspapers both local and national.

This is a very exciting subject for The Estate Agent who of course is working extremely hard and with unfailing courtesy for his %. The somewhat jaded nerves of family members are constantly exacerbated by the constant Inspections, none of which must be overseen by the owner until the day of the magic experience of The Auction.

Moving on - for those family members still being reasonably civil to each other it is necessary to ask for help – any help – with The Packing. And it is immensely privileged to be able to call on one's precious friends, hoping that an overseas holiday was not on their agenda at this very specific time.

However one is not yet free to rejoice among the confused sea of cartons, packing tape and much tissue paper, as, apart from paying what appears to be extraordinary sums of money for poorly understood and no doubt esoteric purposes, one must convince various charities that the items one must dispose of are on their just what we want list. This of course is mostly not the case, so – out it all goes to the footpath after gaining the gracious consent of a Council member who turns out to possess Powers. For instance, a direction to leave the nature strip in a pristine condition presents certain problems with rubbish going out being a constant activity and of some interest to neighbours.

So, OK, you've moved, and 'How are you settling in?' becomes the kindly greeting. You don't really know what you feel because you are privately convinced that it's all A Big Mistake. After 56 years in a house so familiar you don't need lights on to wander around, you're tucked away all safely in a perfectly pleasant two bedroom unit in a perfectly pleasant suburb with perfectly pleasant people.



As they say what's not to like? For starters, how about getting to be familiar with new bus time tables? Bearing in mind that the ageing memory bank involving anything with figures seems to have totally resisted such information. This ageing brain is in some sort of meltdown being required to take on board new and largely unwelcome details relating to How to Work this Oven and why did I leave behind my perfectly dependable microwave.

It's interesting to hear the various stories of some of the new neighbours who wished they'd moved in years ago, to well, it's very pleasant but you're really not your own boss any more. There's a definite feeling that it's all a good idea to make the move before decrepitude makes the decision. This is not a particularly cheery thought, and various platitudes come to mind. It's not all about you. Change is a welcome challenge. Finally, one does accept, albeit somewhat ungraciously, that it's just another part of The Journey. One still has friends who don't mind listening to a whinge occasionally, and one needs to maintain the sense of humour which is surely God-given.

Of course, like all of one's life, moving house has an element of melancholy, thinking as one does of those who aren't here anymore to share your new experience. But amazingly, perhaps because a challenge is always a bracing affair you start to accept the difference and find a few pluses. One can be aware that the prize for constant negativity has been taken already. ❖

On The Road to Conversion

ADELA EZCURRA

I am from Argentina, where Catholicism is, or at least used to be, the culturally dominant religion and I have been living in Australia for about seven months. The story of my conversion to becoming a Catholic and the story of how I came to Australia are basically one and the same.

I grew up in a family where there were answers for everything and God was never part of them, so for many years I had no inkling that there might be something beyond us or a yearning for it. When I was 14, my father died and for lack of a reason for hope, I became angry with life and the world; I also changed from a public school to a Catholic one.

Although my paternal family is Catholic, this was my first encounter with people who I felt had something that was good that I did not have. It took a few more years, going to university and a change of course from philosophy to translation and from a public one to a Catholic one, for another much more confronting encounter.

Originally a Jesuit institution, the Universidad del Salvador has compulsory courses in philosophy, theology and ethics across the various faculties. The quality of teaching –teaching itself as well as the content – varies depending on the lecturer. I happened to have one who had a deep love of God and His Church and he made a point of witnessing to them as a theology lecturer.

It is hard to remember what came first, whether a philosophical argument or just a side comment of the incorruptible bodies of saints and later on of Eucharistic miracles. The latter ones are not why I believe but I was prompted by them to start reading and learning more about how amazing

and mysterious the Catholic Church is. This confirmed an idea I had when I was in year seven, that if any religion was true, it had to be the Catholic one. I take this as a grace from the Holy Spirit, as I had no reason to believe it, except that most of my classmates were receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.

I then realised I needed to be baptised, but it took two years of making up excuses of all sorts and telling a few and close friends about my desire. Then a friend forwarded an email where the pastoral team for my faculty was offering catechesis for Sacraments of Initiation. It was so easy that I couldn't say no to such an opportunity. Also, by this time I had been in a relationship for just over five years; we wanted to marry once we were both done with our undergraduate courses and we were only a few months away from that. So there I went.

By then, I had successfully passed my theology course; it was learning to live the faith that I needed. So after two and a half months of catechesis, and struggling with my heart and in my actions with what I was learning, I was received into the Catholic Church. I was baptised and confirmed and I received Holy Communion on November 10, 2009.

'Now what? How do I live this new life I'm supposed to be living' was all I could think of, and I was going to spend four months in England, as an exchange student. In Manchester I met the Marian Community of Reconciliation, a Society of Apostolic Life whose members are consecrated laywomen, known as the Fraternas, who had a house just a 15-minute walk from where my accommodation was.



Getting to know them meant discovering there were people, real, normal people, who lived out their faith, who were able to build relationships based on Christ, and who actively listened to God and followed His Plan. It meant understanding that only by responding to His Plan could I really be happy in this life, and that I had to discover what that Plan was for me.

Every aspect of their life appealed to me and when one of them asked me if I had considered a vocation to consecrated life, it immediately became clear that I had to take very seriously what I had been experiencing. I could no longer continue with my own plans; the time to start listening to God, to learn to listen to Him, to trust Him, had begun.

Soon, I returned to Argentina, broke off my engagement and started the journey that brought me to Australia, close to the Fraternas again. Through them and other people I have met, God has shown me that although we are all called to cultivate relationships based on Christ, it might not necessarily be through life in a consecrated community.

It has been hard at times, there have been some sacrifices, but it has been a big Yes to God, one that has brought more joy and peace than I could ever imagine was possible. ❖

On The Road to Conversion

MICHAEL PETERSON

Some of us are much more receptive to the subliminal callings of The Lord and begin our journeys of spiritual progression at an early age. Others, are somewhat less receptive and do not respond unless more assertive promptings are received and correctly interpreted. For most of my life I was definitely a resident of the latter category, giving only passing thoughts to God, the Universe and the meaning of my life. Likewise, my views of religion stemmed from popular misconceptions and petty rumours.

I was a wanderer in the spiritual wastelands, seeking contentment and fulfilment through material gain, and it was there I would have remained had the Lord not decided a different tactic for me was required, something less subtle and able to penetrate a thick skull and a calloused heart.

My wake-up call arrived a few years ago. I was delivering documents to a secondary school in Hornsby. The School was closed, but during my efforts to locate some staff I accidentally found myself in the School Chapel. This chapel was nondescript, adorned by a simple cross above a lonely lectern and a few rows of plain pews.

No sooner had I entered the Chapel when I was struck by a brilliant flash, not one of light, but emotion, a flash of such intense love, closeness and unity that I was brought to one knee and a flow of tears. I was stunned and confused, and it took several minutes to regain any composure. In those few minutes there was only one certainty - the person who walked out of that chapel was entirely different spiritually to the one who stumbled in.

This encounter was a defining moment in my life and the starting point of an amazing journey. While I harboured no doubt about

the source of my encounter, the new direction in which I should set forth was another matter. Reading the Bible seemed a good starting point and, when I finished some six months later, the need for Baptism became apparent.

I was drawn to the prospect of entering into a kind of formal agreement with God, but where to turn? I knew nothing of the differences between the various Christian Churches, but a little research soon showed that being baptised was a relatively easy process except in the Catholic Church. A commitment of nearly an entire year in an RCIA Program was required. I was sold. A milestone of such personal significance had to mean more than the simple 30 minute ceremony offered elsewhere.

My decision was sealed a few days later when by chance I turned on the televised final Mass of Sydney's WYD. This was my first exposure to any form of the Catholic Mass and I was mesmerised. I had absolutely no idea of what was happening, but the beauty, grace and tradition of the Mass stole my heart and would later play a major factor in my decision to become an Acolyte after I had been received into the Catholic Church.

The next day I made the most important phone call of my life. The following Sunday I was greeted by the (then) leader of the Parish RCIA Program, the delightful and effervescent Caresa Santos, and nervously joined my first meeting. Initially I felt way out of place in this alien environment of group prayer and thanksgiving, but my awkwardness was soon eased by the openness, warmth and sincerity of Caresa and her team. They seemed to share an underlying contentment that was soothing and, over the course of the Program, I began to understand the source of this inner peace and how to share in it.



The teaching system of the program appealed to me and much that had previously lingered at the periphery of my thoughts was now brought forth and so many things began to make perfect sense to me. The highlight of my time remains the sponsor I was most fortunate to be granted. Sister Margaret Daniels was perfect for me although I was somewhat alarmed the Lord should feel the need to place my watch-care in the hands of one of His own. Was He concerned that, like Jonah, I should think to flee? Sister Margaret shall forever remain my compass and, within her, I see all that I aspire to be.

I have come so very far, thanks to Our Lord and His Church, and the sure knowledge that we are never alone is, I believe, a gift of eternal value. It has helped me in my working life by giving me the confidence to take building websites from a part-time concern to a full-time business, specialising in building sites for the Catholic Community worldwide. The third job I received was for this year's International Cardinals and Bishops Conference in Rome, *Sacra Liturgia* 2013.

None of us can know what turns lie on the path ahead, but nothing scares me more than the thought of not having being guided to the path I have now been graced to take. ❖

Orthodoxy Anyone?

CARMEL MAGUIRE

At one of the entrances to the local hospital complex on a recent morning, an older woman had emerged from a car and was moving off with the assistance of a walking frame. As she did so, a younger woman called to her, 'Are you sure you are all right'? Pausing on her frame, the first woman replied 'I'm not really sure of anything these days'. And so could say many of us. Certainties are elusive, in all the various climates that we inhabit, whether in the physical, social or religious world.

Recently a newly installed Bishop in England set out his wishes for his flock. Most of all he wished them to be 'orthodox'. At first thought at least, it does seem an extremely modest if not stultifying aspiration for a bishop or any pastor or parent to have. Ever since I have been mulling over the idea of orthodoxy, not in any profound way I assure you, but I am fascinated by the whole notion of who and what is orthodox. By whose orthodoxy is the orthodoxy of others to be judged, and how fixed and immutable should anyone's orthodoxy be about anything anyhow?

The decision of Pope Benedict XVI to retire from office at the end of February reminds us that six hundred years of a practice does not insure its eternal orthodoxy. One commentator in the media described the Pope's resignation as 'the most courageous and definitive action of his career'. Hyperbole perhaps but at least, the decision is startling in relation to the widespread perception of Benedict as a bastion of orthodoxy. An editorial in *The Tablet* points out that the resignation 'revealed an important but almost forgotten

truth – that a pope could resign'. Indeed, far from dispelling questions about orthodoxy, the resignation can throw them to the top of the agenda.

Theologians have long discussed the distinction between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Mighty Google led me first to simple definitions. Orthodoxy means 'right beliefs' orthopraxis means 'right living'. My mind threatened to enter then into the faith and works conundrum but I was rescued in the

serendipitous milieu into which Google delivers us, when I happened on an address given by Pope Benedict when still Cardinal Ratzinger at a Eucharistic Congress in Italy

in 2002. A scholar, he presented both sides of the dilemma. On the one hand, 'The will without knowledge is blind and so action, orthopraxis, without knowledge is blind and leads to the abyss'. On the other hand, 'doctrine alone, which does not become life and action, becomes idle chatter and so is equally empty'. The then Cardinal went on immediately to point out that 'Knowledge and action are closely united, as are faith and life'.

I find the idea of knowledge-based orthodoxy very appealing. Knowledge is an individual phenomenon and not a passive beast. Data might be its raw material, but in processing the inputs of our senses, our impressions are formed based on life experience and all the effects of our nature and nurture come into play. Our belief systems are not stock size, not interchangeable one to another. If buying clothes online to fit our bodies can be fraught with

problems, so much more difficult are attempts to slot ill-fitting ideas into our individual knowledge bases. So I argue for acceptance of the inevitable, that is that our orthodoxies will not be identical, they will move and change over our lives. And it is no heresy to point out that the Church's organizational orthodoxies have moved over the times. The fact that they have not necessarily moved with the times has called for the intervention of great helmsmen, such as the peasant Pope John XXIII who called the Second Vatican Council into being.

In the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Vatican II, it is great that the Australian Dominican Province has had a large hand in publication of Cardinal Yves Congar's *My Journal of the Council*. Viewed with considerable suspicion by the Roman curia's conservatives, Congar lived out an orthodoxy akin to that of John Henry Newman whom he admired. Happily for the Council and for us, this suspected firebrand

from the beginning saw the reunion of Christians as the ultimate aim of the Council and never let either frustration

or physical exhaustion dilute his vision for the people of God and his respect for the *sensus fidelium*. Reading his *Journal* deals us into the urgency and excitement of the Council's work and a feeling for the all-star cast whose personalities and sometimes idiosyncrasies emerge from his writing.

May the upcoming conclave bring forth a Pope whose orthodoxy may be equal to the challenges presented by the needs of the people of God, among whom are numbered all the people of the earth, for all of whom Jesus lived and died. ❖

... I'm not really sure of anything these days ...

... certainties are elusive ...

Botany Cemetery - Its Catholic Connections

For many people there are the two great markers in life – birth and death. And cemeteries often provide that public history, though brief, of our lives – dates of birth and death and sometimes family connections.

Providing those markers for more than 65,000 people since 1888 is Botany Cemetery, surrounded on one side by industrial sites and on the other by market gardens at Bumborah Point.

Three years later, in 1901, land adjacent to the cemetery was set aside to take some of the identified remains from the Devonshire Street Cemetery to allow for the development of Central Railway. The graves moved to this site, then known as Bunnerong Cemetery were placed in separate denominational sections of the cemetery. In 1968 the Botany Cemetery Trust assumed full control of both cemeteries and in 1976 part of the Bunnerong Cemetery was set aside as a Pioneer Park with the re-erection of some of the surviving memorials from the Devonshire Street Cemetery. A crematorium was opened in 1938. The whole complex is now known as the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park.



There has long been a Catholic presence at the cemetery - its first Board of Trustees included a Roman Catholic representative. In 1894 John Birch was the first Catholic buried in the Catholic portion of the cemetery an area slightly less than that set aside for the Church of England.

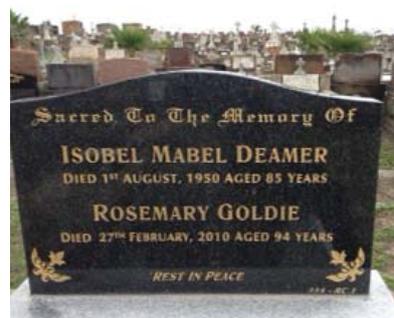
By 1952 more than half of the 1754 burials were of Catholics and additional burial plots were assigned from other denominations but additional land for the cemetery was not made available until 1955. In the meantime some land subsidence due to rain resulted in some Catholics being interred into the General Section of the cemetery.

In 1944 despite an earlier decision not to allow the sale of large numbers of graves to any particular denomination the Trust allowed the Brigidine Convent to reserve 32 graves for its nuns. Interred in one of those graves is Mother Albeus Younge who came to Australia after WWI following her novitiate in County Carlow. She spent much of her life teaching in Brigidine schools at Randwick and Maroubra Bay. A nun for 78 years she died in 1999, at age 103 years. In the same section, among the 119 graves of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is buried Sr Mary Philip (Patricia Hamilton). Professed in 1952 she spent some time at the OLSH Hospital in Randwick but just before finalising her nursing training she took sick, dying in 1959, just seven years after being professed.

Nearby in the same Catholic section, in a simple grave, is buried Thomas Kenny, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry when a Private in World War I.

Better known but for lesser deeds are the graves of two underworld characters –Kate Leigh, ‘Queen of the Underworld’ and Tilly Devine, both associated with the razor gangs of the 1920s. They were fierce rivals when alive and separated in death with Tilly Devine being buried in the Chapel Gardens section of the cemetery.

Two significant Catholics have their graves in the cemetery –



Archbishop James Carroll and Rosemary Goldie. Archbishop Carroll was a leading figure in the battle for State Aid during the 1960s and 1970s. He died in 1995.

Rosemary Goldie who died at the Little Sisters of the Poor in 2010, aged 93 years, is remembered as a great champion of the laity. One of the highlights of Rosemary Goldie’s fifty years as a Rome-based Church bureaucrat came in 1964, when she was one of the first women appointed an auditor at the Second Vatican Council. After the Council she served for several years as Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council of the Laity. No woman has ever occupied a higher position in the Roman Curia. She is buried with her mother, Dulcie Deamer, a novelist and poet and known as the Queen of Bohemia for her association with Norman Lindsay.

Many sporting personalities have been laid to rest in the Catholic sections - jockeys, trainers and the most famous of race callers, Ken Howard who died in 1976. A star of stage and the theatre, Gloria Dawn was buried nearby in 1978. Among her starring roles was in the revue, *A Cup of Tea, A Bex And a Good Lie Down*.

And there are thousands more of the well-known and the lesser known, the rich and the poor, some with lives exciting, some less so, but all who now are at rest. For believers the cemetery is but a passing place on the way to something much better. ❖

Fr Louis Couppé msc – connecting Randwick with PNG

Sr MARY
RUTH BAYARD

2012 marked the centenary since the foundation of the first PNG congregation of women religious, Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) and the connection with Randwick was Fr Louis Couppé msc.

Louis Couppé was born at Romorant in the diocese of Blois, France. Entering the Seminary, he was ordained in May 1874 at the age of 24, and worked for six years in his diocese before joining the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He volunteered for the Missions and arrived in Sydney in January 1885, ready to join his confreres already in Thursday Island and New Guinea. Archbishop Moran, saw the wisdom of having a Procure (Overseas Mission Office) in Sydney and asked him to remain as Procurator for the Missions in the Parish of Botany and then, in November at Randwick which was divided from the Franciscan Parish of Waverly and given to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. So it was that Fathers Couppé, Tierney and Hartzer, accompanied by two seminarians, Brothers Kutter and Toublanc took lodgings at Napper Terrace next to the school-church in Avoca Street. On November 15 that year Fr Tierney celebrated the first Mass in the school-church. They settled down in their new quarters and with some enthusiasm began to look after the two parishes.

Fr Couppé left for Papua in August 1886 to assist Fr Verius arriving in New Britain in 1888. He succeeded Bishop Navarre in 1890, as the first Vicar Apostolic of New Britain, New Ireland, Manus and the Solomon Islands taking as his motto, 'I will give them one heart'. Bishop Couppé spent the next thirty-five years as head of this Mission. He retired in 1922 and lived his remaining years at Douglas Park, NSW where he died on 20th July 1926. He was buried there but his remains were reinterred in Vunapope in January 1927.

In the year 1912, just thirty years after the arrival of the first

missionary priests and only twenty years after the coming of the first French and Dutch OLSH Sisters in 1891, Bishop Couppé decided after much prayer and advice, to found a Community of local Sisters - *Daughters of Mary Immaculate* - named after Mary Immaculate and drawn from the young girls who for some years had been under the care of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the various boarding schools or orphanages. The work of the missionaries had been blessed by God and many families had sought to be instructed and baptised as Catholics.

It was to Mother Gerarda (Dutch) the Superior whom Bishop Couppé turned to co-operate with him in the formation of this new foundation. That direction and formation was carried on for the next 66 years by more OLSH Sisters; French, Dutch and Australian.

In October 1976 I was privileged to hand over to Sr Bernadette Lik FMI the direction of the Novitiate and in 1979 Sr Paula Mavoko, the first PNG FMI sister was elected as Superior General.

At the celebrations on 27 October 2012 to commemorate the centenary of their foundation all FMI Sisters were at Vunapope for the celebrations along with hundreds of people from the many dioceses with Bishops and priests. Sr Kathleen Gaffy, a former Superior General of the Sisters and I were honoured to return to PNG and share their joy and gratitude.

A significant part of the Congregation's history is the time of tribulations, trials and torture the Sisters experienced during the Japanese occupation of Rabaul in the Second World War, when all the missionaries were interned and the Sisters were deprived of their support and Mass and the Sacraments. Ousted from their Convent, they lived in huts in the bush, remained faithful to their way of religious life. Working in food gardens they brought baskets



of food daily to the top of Ramale valley for the missionaries interned there, thus contributing in an incredible way to their survival.

Now 100 years later we can see how the inspiration of Bishop Couppé has been realised and blessed by God. There are 126 Professed Sisters in 28 communities spread not only in the Archdiocese of Rabaul, but also in eight other Dioceses in that country.

The Sisters are involved in a variety of apostolates. At Vunapope, where their Motherhouse is, the Sisters have a large Altar Bread Bakery supplying hosts to several Dioceses, they also look after the central laundry there. Throughout the country they work in Primary Education, Nursing, Catechetics, Pastoral work in Parishes with Women's groups, Youth groups, Family Life groups, Papa's groups.

Some are REC co-ordinators and others give Sunday instructions to prisoners.

We give thanks to God for the blessing of the past years and are confident of those same blessings in the future as the Sisters continue to serve the Church in PNG and their people under the protection of Mary Immaculate.

Little did the young Fr Louis Couppé imagine how God would use him to help bring to reality the request made to Fr Jules Chevalier by Pope Leo XIII to bring to PNG, through his MSC sons and OLSH daughters, the first news of God's love revealed in Jesus. ❖

Caring For Sick Children

Dr MICHAEL BRYDON

Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick continues to evolve as one of Australia's premier services looking after some of the regions sickest children and adolescents. In 2013 the hospital will see the opening of an additional wing to accommodate new inpatient facilities for surgical patients and the ever increasing number of patients with severe mental health disorders. Outpatients attending the hospital will benefit from new purpose built, state of the art, rehabilitation, child protection and respiratory consultation facilities, and there also will be additional facilities for families travelling great distances to visit the many specialists.

The current hospital, when first built in the early 1970s, was the first children's hospital in Australia to build parent facilities on each ward so that mum or dad could stay with their children. This revolutionised the way parents began to take an active role in supplying some of the monitoring and complex clinical care themselves, once they were skilled up with new knowledge, experience and confidence

Over these last 3 - 4 decades this trend is now just part of everyday life with the staff, family and patients all working together with a key goal being to get the young charges home as soon as it is safe and appropriate.

Nowadays the hospital is really a service with no walls. Many staff

are on the road delivering care in general practitioners rooms, the home or other outpatient services. We even use telehealth, an internet connection with the families using email and electronic visual contact, to reduce the travel of rurally placed families. This helps our patients stay at home with their families and attend their local schools as much as possible. Maintaining contact with their mates and living as normal a life as possible despite their many illnesses.



This type of service, a so called ambulatory model of care, takes a fundamental shift in our thinking, planning and resource distribution. We spend many hours educating our staff, the families and local clinical teams on how to deliver such care close to home. We have therefore built different types of facilities to cater for shorter patient visits, with many now admitted just for the day.



Only the very sickest children stay overnight and many of these children have very high dependency, almost intensive, care needs. This brings numerous challenges to the doctors, nurses and allied health staff caring for them every hour of every day. The hospital certainly never sleeps!

Sometimes of course the emotional side of all this care can be very draining on the families and the staff. This pressure can be enormous and yet I have found over the years the camaraderie it brings amongst the whole team, both staff and families, is one of the most rewarding parts of why many of us choose to be in children's health.

Helping the mums and dads cope with what can be their worst nightmare is undoubtedly a professional challenge but those bonds, created in those darkest days, certainly fill the soul and heart with hope that you may have at least eased their suffering. We often say we try to leave work at work but in reality you never forget those most very human experiences. It's a privilege to be an active member of the children's hospital here in Sydney. ❖

OLSH Garden Group

We thank all who have donated plants or time for the Parish gardens. Fr Peter has been particularly occupied by the gardens since his return from Summer holidays. February has been a wonderful growing season. Many parishioners have commented on all the work and are very appreciative of the new vista. Please help yourself to the mint along the Ventnor pathway. Maybe some more herbs could be added! All are welcome to the garden working bee which is held on the second Saturday of each month, from 9am, morning tea is provided. The Ventnor Fig Tree needs some more bromeliad varieties. Do you have any to divide and share?



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The Back Page WITH FR PETER

I am writing this on the last day of the pontificate of Benedict XVI. We are certainly living in interesting, even unprecedented times. It is over 600 years since a Pope abdicated, and even then he was 'pushed' in an effort to clear up a situation where there were two claiming to be the legitimate pope after a schism in the Church.

As members of the Church Universal we need to add our prayers for the Conclave to elect the new pope. 'Conclave' literally means 'with key' and refers to times in the past when certain power blocs endeavoured to impose their candidate on the papacy and interfered in the conduct of the assembly and its voting. On reading various media commentaries, Catholic and secular, one wonders if a body such as the Church could ever be free of blocs and interest groups? Nonetheless, the Holy Spirit is alive and active in the Church and is discernible in the broad sweep of history, preserving our very human community from disintegrating from forces antithetical to Christ from within and from without. Given the history of the Church, nothing should be too daunting for us. I pray that the new pope will be someone with a broad pastoral experience, especially of the Church of the poor from amongst whom most of the Church's membership is derived.

Once again we seem to be racing towards Holy Week. Lenten Groups, choirs and the RCIA are all active. The RCIA this year has 18 members and I am, as always, impressed by their dedication to the Sunday afternoon sessions, from 4.30 -7.00pm. It's good to remember that most of those who come to the RCIA come because someone invited them to think about becoming a Catholic. The 6.00pm Sunday Mass is privileged to accompany these adults through the various steps of the RCIA Journey to Easter - like receiving the Our Father, the Creed, writing their names in the Book of the Elect indicating their desire to continue to the sacraments of initiation at Easter, the (infelicitously named) scrutinies and culminating in the Holy Week Triduum.

The Antioch Youth Group, now in its fourth year, is certainly growing in confidence gained by experience. The Open Night Invitation to parents and youth to come and observe a meeting is timely. Peer to peer encounters have a particular power for good, especially in the area of faith and spirituality while the experience of leadership roles within the group are very formative. One can learn about Catholicism, about faith, be very involved in good works and outreach as so many schools are, but we can remain relatively untouched by religious experience. Many seem to fail to truly encounter the person of Jesus in a personal relationship which is life-giving, friendly, real and formative of their lives, and, which hopefully follows through in the liturgical and practical life of the Church. It is particularly at the level of religious experience, appropriate to youth, that I feel Antioch has a lot to offer.

St James stresses in his Letter, 'faith without good works is dead...' The development of the Mission outreach to the Central Pacific Nations of Kiribati and Nauru, among the poorest, materially speaking, in the world, yet culturally so rich, gives us an excellent focus for mission at OLSH-SMM. Two containers are being procured and lists of things drawn up. Already goods have been arriving at the Monastery where the MSC Mission Office is housed. It would be wonderful if we could send some of our Young Adults or other Parishioners, again, to Kiribati as we have done in the past; even better if we were able to develop some form of personnel exchange between the two missions - the Randwick Mission, which is essentially what we are - a missionary Church, and the Kiribati Mission. Immersion experiences as they are now popularly known have a great capacity to sensitise one to the world of the 'other'. Congratulations and thanks to the volunteers driving this initiative. I'm sure the entire parish will get behind it as it develops.

By the next issue of Parish Magazine we will have a new pope. In the meantime, and for all time, we live our own mission in life to the full - 'to be on earth the Heart of God'. †