

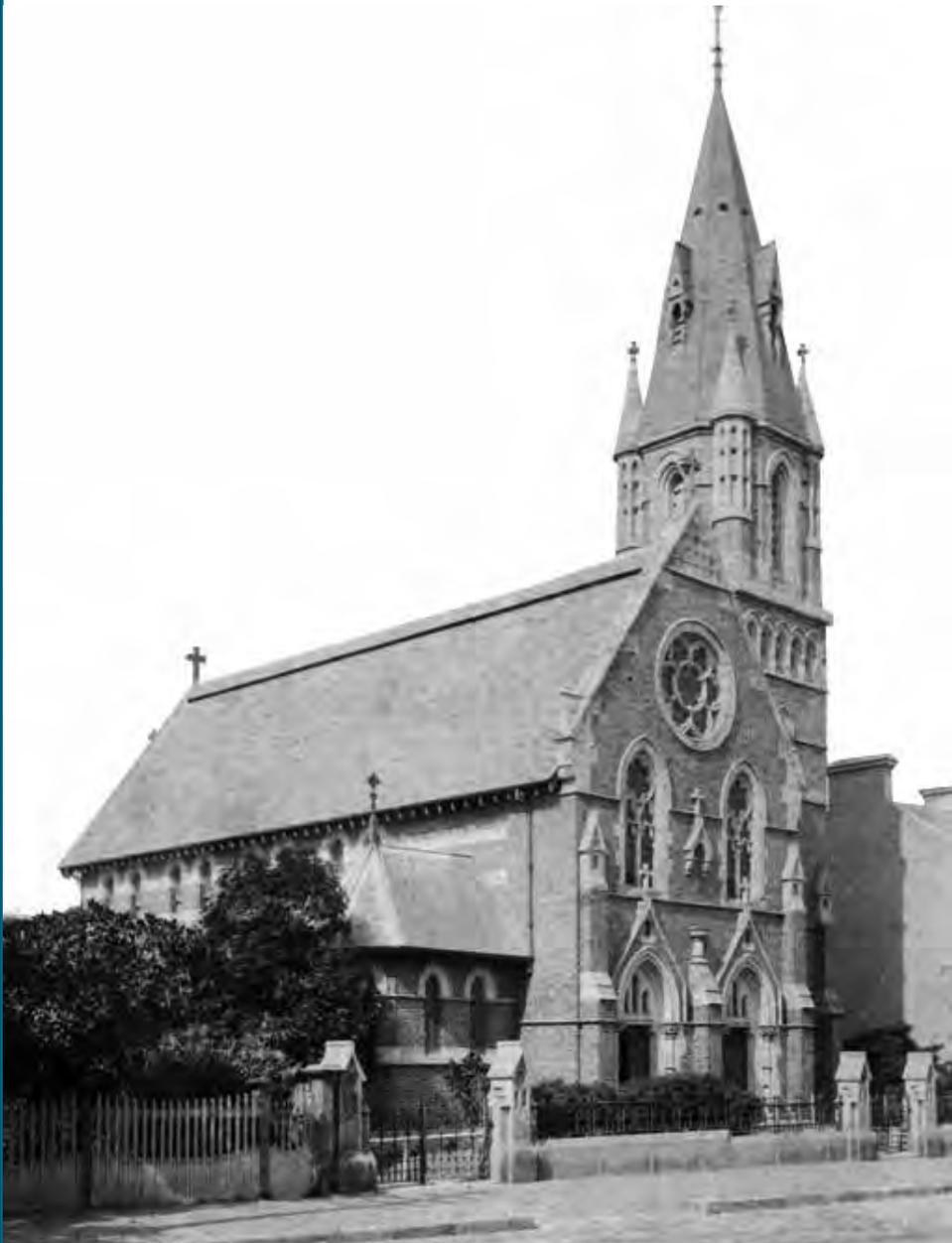
Parish Magazine

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ST MARGARET MARY'S RANDWICK NORTH

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART RANDWICK

Reflection

DIANE GORDON

In a number of ancient civilizations, hospitality was viewed as a pillar on which all morality rested; it encompassed 'the good'. For the people of ancient Israel, understanding themselves as strangers and sojourners, with responsibility to care for vulnerable strangers in their midst, was part of what it meant to be a people of God.

Jesus, who was dependent on the hospitality of others during much of his earthly ministry, also served as the gracious host in his words and in his actions. Those who turned to him found welcome and rest and the promise of reception into the Kingdom. Jesus urged his human hosts to open their banquets and dinner tables to more than family and friends who could return the favour, but to give generous welcome to the poor and sick who had little to offer in return. Jesus promised that welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry person, and visiting the sick were acts of personal kindness to the Son of man himself.

Hospitality is something we practice in our hearts and reflect in our homes. The spiritual discipline of hospitality is not one that is mentioned as often as others, but I think it is a critical one. Out of spiritual discipline, we practice hospitality to others and offer an opportunity for transformation for ourselves and for those we invite into our lives.

We also create places within ourselves where we can welcome God. Welcoming God into our lives may be an obvious effort that we make when we enter into an intentional relationship with God, but it is not always that straightforward or simple. We might tell ourselves that we want God to be present, but when we actually experience that presence, we find ourselves convicted, frightened, overwhelmed, or confused.

Creating that place is something that we must learn and practice. With practice and discipline, we get better at it. We begin to live together. As we get to know God better, we learn what kind of place will make God feel at home and welcome. We learn such things as God's desire that this dwelling place within us be furnished with love, truth, beauty, joy, faith, and hope. Hospitality to God, which is part of the interior spiritual journey, is paralleled in our outward expression. We can develop hospitable hearts towards others.

As Henri Nouwen reminds us in *Listening as Spiritual Hospitality*:

To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept.

Listening is much more than allowing another to talk while waiting for a chance to respond. Listening is paying full attention to others and welcoming them into our very beings. The beauty of listening is that, those who are listened to start feeling accepted, start taking their words more seriously and discovering their own true selves. Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you. ❖

Front Cover Photo:

Original Church built c. 1888.
The Transept and present Sanctuary were added in 1919.

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

ROLF BERTI

I was born in Luzern in 1926 and grew up in Zurich, Switzerland's largest city. As a fairly fragile youngster I spent some time in the Swiss mountains for recuperation. I don't know to this day what was wrong with me. Whatever, this made me very health conscious, and health has been an important guideline throughout my life.

My parental grandfather was an Italian builder from the Trentino province but his family came originally from the Toscana region. He married a pretty mountain farmer's daughter from Lungern, the very heart of Switzerland. They had nine children whilst he was building tunnels and bridges of the Bruenig Train route.

Taking a line through my grandmother's ancestry my brother and I and many cousins are the 16th generation of the Swiss Patron Saint, Bruder Klaus. (There haven't been any more Saints in the Berti family since, certainly not me). In 1941, when Hitler was deciding whether to go through Switzerland or the *pays bas* (also known as the Low Countries) – Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg - to attack France, a well witnessed apparition of Bruder Klaus in the form of a huge cloud formation appeared above the northwestern frontier between Germany and Switzerland.

My mother grew up in an orphanage and I am blaming this, from what we now know of such institutions, that she later suffered from depression. Then it was not considered a serious mental illness. After six years of primary and one year of secondary schooling I spent the next year in the French speaking part of Switzerland in a catholic institute learning to speak French. I have never forgotten arriving with my small suitcase and being given a little black book with all the prayers printed in French and

strict instructions to speak nothing but French. A little difficult but it certainly worked.

After a three year apprenticeship I received a commercial diploma followed by a compulsory 17 week recruits school, very much more a military urgency in 1946 than now, and in November 1946 I began what would become my lifelong employment in the Wool Trade. In 1947 my employer - a Swiss Wool Import Export company in Zurich - sent me to Verviers, a wool centre in the French speaking southern corner of Belgium. Mr Barbe the Chief Sorter was given some money to teach me, but knowing what I subsequently learnt in Australia it was completely useless. Still you live and gain experience.

I complained to a fellow boarder in the Pensione (a small privately

...all the prayers written in French...

run boarding house) that the ladies in the mill's sorting room were teasing me and as a young 20 year old I didn't have any comeback. He told me - he was in the diplomatic corps - to retort with 'vous avez de tres belles jambes' you have very beautiful legs. It worked and, like I said, you gain experience. During my three months stay I took advantage to visit my aunty in London. Sadly during this period one of the directors of my employer, Cpy Wollimex, crashed during a flight from Buenos Aires to Santiago and the company lost its main driving force. Soon after returning to Switzerland I was asked to go to Australia for further experience in Wool.

I joined Dreyfus, a close business connection of Wollimex, and one of the biggest wool buying companies - not only in Australia but in most wool producing countries including New Zealand,



South Africa and South America. The intention was for me to stay for two years but my bosses liked my Swiss work ethic and I was offered a permanent job after only six months. Initially I declined but very soon after I became romantically involved with an Australian girl, got married, started a family and now 60 years later I am 'still calling Australia home'. Wollimex in the meantime had met difficult business conditions and were quite happy to let me go.

Wool buying suited my personal make-up very much - I am competitive and love travelling. I visited Japan on many occasions - for a long time it was by far the largest consumer of Australian wool, as well as India, Europe and the USA.

I retired from the wool trade in 1997. I was just over 70 years old and heartily sick of the way the wool trade had been run by people who were given the authority but didn't have the know-how. Charles Massy's 'Breaking the Sheep's Back', the true story of the decline and fall of the Australian wool industry is a must-read book

Our family has lived in Coogee since 1953. The first Catholic Church I visited was St. Anthony's in Clovelly where our three daughters were educated. Later I preferred OLSH church which very much reminds me of St. Peter and Paul, my childhood church in Zurich. ❖

The Ventnor Knitting Group

Early in 2012, a group of knitters decided to meet at Ventnor on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 10 am. They formed the Ventnor Knitting Group which has over twenty members. The aim of the group is to knit ten inch squares which can be made into rugs, crocheted around the edges, and when completed be sent to different charities for the homeless and needy.

Besides making rugs the group has added benefits – meeting people from the Parish, having a chat over morning tea and catching up with each other each fortnight. Also we are grateful for five or six ladies who knit at home and send along their squares and those

who crochet around the edges of the rugs. So far we have donated over forty-five rugs to different charities including, Catholic Care, Cana, Marist Youth Care, Brown Nurses, Fr. Riley's Youth off the Street and others.

If anyone feels they would like to join the group, you would be most welcome. Even if you are not a knitter, you perhaps could sew some of the squares together, help with the morning tea or just come and enjoy the companionship. We look forward to seeing you. ❖



A Hidden Gem

Many parishioners may not be aware that there are tennis courts at the eastern end of the church grounds.

In 1921 the first secretary of the Randwick Catholic Tennis Club hunted the chooks off the backyard of the old presbytery 'to take rough measurements to ascertain, whether and if so, where a tennis court could be laid out'. The answer was 'yes' and the courts were established in 1921. The lowest court is now an all-weather court and is used by the parish school for many activities. The top two courts were surfaced in artificial grass in 1996.

Recent storms together with some blocked drains resulted in one of the surrounding grass banks collapsing and most of the soil cascading down across the courts. Fr Peter and a team of young parish-

ioners spent many hours clearing, digging and removing the muddied soil, and a tradesman rebuilt the bank support and new steps were installed.

The eastern suburbs once had many backyard tennis courts which have been converted into units and other buildings, so the parish is indeed fortunate to have retained theirs. At present there are organised groups who use the courts on Tuesdays, Wednesday afternoons and Saturday afternoons, and some late afternoons



two of the priests and some young people can be seen enjoying some exercise too. ❖

Further information about the courts can be obtained by contacting the parish office.

Centenary of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor BARBARA BOWERS MBE

It was standing room only as Sydney's very own religious Order, Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor, (sometimes known as The Brown Nurses) celebrated its Centenary with a Thanksgiving Mass at St Brigid's Church, Coogee, on Sunday 9th June concelebrated by Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Provincial Superior, Fr John Mulrooney and attended by many community representatives including family members of Our Lady's Nurses co-founders Fr Edward McGrath and Eileen O'Connor. The Mass was a wonderful reminder of lives devoted to loving and assisting the poorest of the poor throughout Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Earlier, on April 13th a Centenary Thanksgiving Mass was concelebrated by 50 members of clergy from all over Australia at St Mary's Cathedral and attended by over 850 people. However, there was a highly significant and distinct difference in the Celebration at St Brigid's Church.

Congregational Leader of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor takes up the story in her

address: 'It was within this locale, within this then small community of Coogee- it was here 'WHERE IT ALL BEGAN'. So, it is here where we 'come home' to say 'Thank You'.

Eileen O'Connor was just 19 years of age and bedridden from her severe lifelong crippling disability, when financial circumstances forced her mother to approach the MSCs at Randwick for urgent accommodation assistance. The then Provincial asked the young Fr McGrath, in charge of Coogee, to visit the O'Connors and help in alleviating Mrs O'Connor's rather desperate situation. Only Divine Providence could have foreseen

where, and for what purpose, that chance first contact of Fr McGrath and the O'Connor Family, would lead.

In fact... no one's life was ever the same again!

With Fr McGrath's help the O'Connors moved from Redfern to 4 Neptune St Coogee and it was there that the deep, spiritually based friendship and vision of service to the sick poor of Fr McGrath and Eileen O'Connor was ignited.

As he said some thirty years later: *'I knew I had come face to face with a very saintly soul, encased within a pure and precious body, wracked with pain. From that moment I realised better, that there were big things to be done in life for God and souls and that I had found my helper in that frail looking but deeply spiritual child of Christ and Mary, of whom I had often heard, but never seen'.*

Later, 35 Dudley St Coogee was purchased by Fr Gell and his sister, Frances for the work of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor which was formally established on

15th April 1913. And it is from here, named Our Lady's Home, that the work for the sick poor in Sydney and much further afield has been managed and carried out for the past 100 years. It is where the presence of Father Founder and Little Mother inspired each and every aspect of the Original Sisters working and spiritual lives. And it is where the practical and spiritual legacy of Eileen and Fr McGrath continues to inspire us Sisters here today.

The Society, now an Order, hasn't really changed much over the past 100 years. We are still small in number. Our scope of the work for the poor, disadvantaged and



marginalised is still very large and growing.

We remain daily faithful to the original vision, spirituality and encouragement of our beloved Founders. We trust implicitly in the providence of God, our Blessed Mother Mary and St Joseph. And we remain dependent upon and indebted to our generous benefactors and public supporters from all walks of life, many of whom are descendants of local residents in and around Coogee who assisted us from the very beginning.

We plan and pray for the years ahead. Never has our world been in greater need of the essence and action encapsulated in these very words of Eileen.

'To give, to do, to ease pain and suffering but above all, and before all, to love with a great love'.

We work and pray for the canonisation of our little 'Saint-in-Waiting', not for any earthly glory, but that this devout disabled young woman who died in enduring pain at 29 can be a Witness for all.

Not for Honours but for the higher aspirations of others; to see, to acknowledge, to accept and to follow the core values of the formation of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor which is 'love of God and neighbour' ... into the next Century...which promises to be far more challenging than the last'. ❖

Contact details: Our Lady's Home

What's Happening at OLSH Primary School

Mrs Natius McAdam, Principal of OLSH Primary School writes of a new school initiative:

In 2010 the school embarked on a learning framework program which would assist students to focus on learning as a priority. The framework is called 'School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning', shortened to PBL. The system works on positive reinforcement for acceptable behaviour, with an emphasis on reward because it is the right way to act, rather than for material reward. The staff spent several weeks training, followed by many months of development before implementing the framework. The PBL team of five teachers meet regularly to plan teaching strategies, review data, write articles for the newsletter and assess the program.

The students were asked to design a mascot and the winning entry was a BEE. The system is now fully operating in our everyday routines, with the results showing many positive achievements, mainly enabling teachers to spend more time on learning and less on discipline issues, together with a significant reduction in the number of students receiving a consequence for unacceptable behaviour. The introduction of Values Leaders in Year 6 has also assisted in developing the framework. The leaders instruct the classes about the value for the week, they give examples, sometimes through drama, with excellent feedback from the junior students.

The students receive a "gotcha" when teachers see them doing the right thing. They acknowledge this positive behaviour by saying, 'Thank you for being so well behaved at drop off or at assembly', or 'I saw you doing

the right thing at the canteen or other activity, well done'. The bee or gotcha stickers are then placed onto a bee hive. When 15 gotchas are achieved students receive a gold bee sticker which they place in their diaries. The goal is to work towards gaining 20 gold stickers, then work towards the highest achievement of platinum. Students who receive the designated number of stickers at the end of each term receive an award of their choice, which may be some additional time for play or a movie at lunch time. We are in the process of developing a PBL honour board for the school hall.

**Staff, students
and parents are
pleased...**



Visual evidence of the framework can be found in many places, including the hall, canteen, toilets, playground, walkways and administration area, with a variety of reminders on each.

The posters and banners are also utilised as a teaching tool. Staff, students and parents are pleased with the development to date.

The following is an extract from the students and staff diaries so that all members of the community are familiar with the expected outcomes.

'PBL is a process for teaching expected social, emotional and behavioural skills, so the focus can be on teaching and learning.

At our school we have learnt that it is important to teach, model, practise and praise appropriate behaviours in order for students to exhibit them. At our school, the expectations we have agreed on are:

**Be Safe | Be Respectful
Be Responsible | Be a Learner**

We feel these expectations exemplify our school motto of Strength and Gentleness and reflect our culture of fostering positive relationships.

◆ We **teach** all students what these behaviours look like, sound like, and feel like in all school settings.

◆ The teachers teach the explicit behaviour, model it, and then provide time for students to practise skills.

◆ We **reinforce** these behaviours when we see them exhibited and students are given PBL stickers explaining how they exemplified the behavioural expectations. A system is set up for acknowledging students who are following the school rules.

◆ We **treat** errors in behaviour the same way we treat errors in maths or reading.

For example, students who are having difficulties need additional or modified teaching. An increase in positive school climate becomes a

reality with the commitment of both the mind and hearts of the whole school community - the parents, the students, the teachers, and the parish. We want the children to realize that these behavioural expectations are important everywhere - at home and school'. ❖

**...showing many
positive
achievements...**

St Brigid's Social Justice Group

DIANE MULLIN

The Social Justice Group at St Brigid's Coogee began in 2005 to raise money for small groups working outside mainstream charities and to educate ourselves and our communities on what good is being done in our world.

Our first and most spectacular function was a trivia night to raise money to bring 'government accepted refugees' from Sierra Leone following its civil war. (Our government then fulfilled its UN obligations by medical testing and security checking 6000 refugees, but only paying for 2000, leaving the rest to have their acceptance lapse in 12 months if they could not raise the fares).

We were helping the Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary who arranged migration and support. David Addington came to speak at every Mass, bringing refugees who had already been helped to talk to us about the situation in the camps. This way, we educated both the parish community and the friends and family who came to the night. We had over 400 at that trivia night and raised \$16,000 – not a bad effort for a bunch of amateurs.

We have had some wonderful guest speakers like one of the 32 remaining white farmers in Zimbabwe and a member of the group who support pilgrims on the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage. Some of us attended the open day at Auburn Mosque and a Sudanese festival at St Joachim's, Lidcombe.

Membership: open to all. We invite the parish to all meetings and functions. Our members are busy people who usually belong to other groups. Not everyone can attend all meetings. However,

we communicate via group emails, a telephone tree and an occasional half price lunch at the Doncaster. All give what time we can and have found that monthly meetings, one large function and several smaller ones per year are the most we can manage. Food always seems to be a way we can repay support. A Bangladesh curry night, an African party, an Irish Breakfast and a supper from the Camino

were all fun. Film nights too are successful. Entry is always by donation so we don't exclude our own disadvantaged parishioners. A bucket collection or a raffle works for smaller needs. ❖

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

The charities and people we support seem to land on us. There are so many 'good causes' out there, but we tried to help anyone who approached one of us. Some have been:

- The Blue Dragon Foundation - helping street kids in Vietnam
- St Canice's Soup Kitchen at Kings Cross
- A local man needing to help his brother escape from a refugee camp in Kenya
- Indigenous Bangladeshis where the bamboo flowering caused a rat plague
- A hospital patient who needed air and taxi fare to return to her mother in the country for Christmas
- A Jewish women's craft group in Zimbabwe teaching women to make goods for market to help them care for their Aids orphan grandchildren
- Cana Communities – selling raffle tickets on their appeal days every two years
- A single Mum in PNG needing a scholarship to learn vocational skills from the Salesian Sisters
- ACRAT - furnishing a room in a safe house for victims of trafficking
- Catholic Mission - hosting a day at Coogee annually as a reward for young Sudanese who attend their homework club at Blacktown Library (where they bus in students from privileged schools to tutor – a double benefit)

If you would like to be on our mailing list please email:
diannemullin@bigpond.com
 with the Subject line: St Brigid's Social Justice Group

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Families: The Michaels

Ah ya Rabbi, Rihit a la gheir chachtoura!' ('Oh my God, I've got on the wrong boat!'), exclaimed grandfather, John Lahood, when he departed Lebanon in the early 1900s. Like many thousands of new Australians who thought they were bound for America but ended up in Australia, John inadvertently began a family heritage rich in imagination and generosity.

Upon their arrival in Sydney, the new Australians were encouraged to take up hawkers licences by the Australian Government at the time. This fact explains why many Lebanese were dispersed far and wide across so many regional areas of Australia.

Eric's grandmother, Mary became a hawker and literally walked with her brother (whose grandson is Bishop Gerard Hanna of Wagga Wagga) from Sydney to Toowoomba whilst selling a vast array of haberdashery. What freedom and determination! John and Mary eventually settled and raised their family in Toowoomba.

Their daughter Barbara married Bill, the son of Anthony and Helene Michael. Bill and Barbara had two sons, Eric and Mervyn, who were educated at Christian Brothers, Toowoomba. In 1949, Bill died and in 1950 Barbara, Eric and Barbara's sister, Mary relocated to Sydney, where Mervyn was already living, as they all wanted to be together as a family.

The family's entry into Sydney was memorable, to say the least. They departed Toowoomba by car and approached Sydney via York Street. Aunt Mary noticed

everyone waving vigorously as they drove down York Street and she commented on how welcoming and friendly people were in Sydney. Little did they know, it was a one way street and they were going in the wrong direction!

The family were then met by Uncle Tony, Barbara's brother, who had a fruit shop in Belmore Road Randwick. They lived with Tony for a short while before purchasing properties in Carrington Road, Randwick.

Eric met Honey (Joseph) in 1952 and they were married by Father Perkins in 1954 at St. Brigid's Church in Coogee. Honey, originally from Toowoomba, moved to Sydney with her mother and 11 siblings to 48 Dudley Street, Coogee. Eric and Honey purchased properties in Bundock Street, Randwick and have lived there for almost 60 years.

Eric and Honey have nine children, Anne-Marie, Bill, Barbara, Lulu, John, Peter, Liz, Emma and Daniel. Their spouses are a mix of many cultural backgrounds, including Irish, Dutch, Lebanese, Swedish/ Phillipino, Australian/Scottish and Australian. This multi-cultural blend enriches the Michael family immensely.

There is a long association with Brigidine College. Honey, two granddaughters Hannah and Jacquie, were educated there and granddaughter Hannah Spaninks is



presently a student there. The four boys attended Marcellin College, Randwick. Honey's brothers Leo and Dan established the first school uniform shop at Brigidine College and Honey contributed by sewing the school uniforms at the family's clothing factory in Redfern. Anne-Marie, Barbara, Lulu, Liz and Emma were married at OLSH and some of the children have been christened at OLSH. Eric and Honey are now grandparents and great grandparents. In 2014 they will celebrate 60 years of marriage.

Eric worked at General Motors Holden for many years as an automotive mechanic before purchasing a Golden Fleece Service Station in Mascot and operated the business for 50 years before passing it on to his two sons, Bill and John who continue to operate it.

The Service Station was once featured in a Toyota commercial as it is one of the last old style independents offering personalised service. John was even cast as one of the actors! On September, 11 2001 when the Twin Towers of The World Trade Centre in New York were destroyed by terrorists, the Service Station was almost destroyed by a speeding truck demolishing everything in its path! No-one was hurt but we will always remember this date for more than one reason in our family. Lulu was filmed for the

**...Life was never
dull at the
Service Station...**

series 'Candid Camera' while working there. Life was never dull at the Service Station!

Eric and Honey have always encouraged their children to approach life with a sense of humour. Eric remembers when Cardinal Freeman came to the Service Station and his daughter, Anne-Marie remarked loudly, 'Oh my God!' and Cardinal Freeman replied 'Just Jim'.

Meanwhile Honey was also contributing towards the provision of the family. She worked at the family's clothing factory in Redfern and then as her family grew, she continued working from home with four children under five. Later on, she pursued a successful, home based catering business specialising in patisserie – she was definitely ahead of her time!

Today, Daniel together with Liz and Emma continue to run the catering business using many of Honey's unique recipes. Even the MSC priests are among their clients! The family also produce a product called the 'Sweet Potato Chip' which is distributed to many businesses in Sydney.

Eric and Honey have a genuine empathy with all children. Their son Peter and daughter Barbara also share this passion for children. They both work in the education system and both care passionately about the welfare and education of children.

Honey's drive and passion for life are amazing and to this day she encourages every one of her nine children, their spouses and grandchildren to be true to themselves throughout their own journey in life.

Eric and Honey have been very active in the OLSH parish during

their lifetime. Eric was a reader and an acolyte for 32 years and a member of the Finance Committee. For many years, Honey hand washed and ironed sacramental altar linen. Currently, Eric is involved with the monthly counting roster along with Daniel, Emma and Liz.



The family have held many Healing Weekends, and Lenten Programmes at their home. They have participated in Parish Renewal Programmes and Cursillo. Honey would always provide the home cooked meal on these occasions. The children were involved in Antioch, with their son Peter meeting his wife Clare at one of the group's events. Eric worked tirelessly for the Brown Nurses Day of Days Committee raising much needed funds to help the poor. The whole Michael family would also support him during this time.

When the Randwick Aged Accommodation Committee was established by Dr. Peter Fallon, Mrs. Brenda Longworth and Anne-Marie Michael, the whole Michael Family, together with a very generous larger committee, held many fashion parades and events for this charity in order to raise awareness of an aging population that needed to be looked after with dignity. Whilst

the aged facility was never built at Randwick, the committee raised incredible awareness which saw aged facilities built in other parts of the eastern suburbs.

Eric and Honey have anonymously supported many charitable organisations within the parish and beyond, setting a magnificent example to their children who also support many charities nationally and internationally. Eric and Honey have always believed in helping those less fortunate than themselves. This can sometimes be expressed by just being a good listener and offering emotional support to people in distress.

The MSCs have also shown great kindness and support to the family. When Father Tony O'Brien offered to celebrate a special mass to give Communion and Confirmation to Liz and Ian's son Hayden, who has cerebral palsy, it was a beautiful gesture. The mass was a special and joyous celebration for the family, friends and relatives.

...they will celebrate 60 years of marriage...

It can be said that Eric's smiling face and cheery demeanour will always be fondly remembered by the priests and parishioners. Eric and Honey believe that their family, extended family, friends and their faith are paramount for a fulfilled life. The Michael family has been enriched by their close association with the OLSH Church throughout the years. Eric and Honey's home has been host to many MSC priests, even when they have taken up new roles in many far flung parishes in Australia. The special bond they have made with the Michael's continues today, with many sharing at table whenever they are visiting OLSH Randwick. ❖

Religious Orders at OLSH: The Marists

What does the future hold?

On 8th December 2012 the two Marist Brothers Provinces of Australia amalgamated to form one. Ironic really, given that for our first eighty years in Australia, until 1947, we were one Province that split into two because then there were just too many Brothers to administer as one unit. Now, with just 240 Brothers, and an average age that hovers around 70 we are in rapid institutional decline. In 1957 we opened a newly constructed training house that accommodated 80 young men. I was a resident in that training college when we closed it just 25 years later because the dozen or so of us could be easily accommodated elsewhere. The building, of double-brick and silky-oak joinery, was built to last forever because at the time it was believed that the glory days when we went from one institutional triumph to another would never end.

At the Mass inaugurating our new Australian Province the president, Archbishop Mark Coleridge said: 'The decision to form one province out of the two can look like an inevitable response to an irreversible decline. It can look like the kind of planning that is really palliative care. Yet if it is only that . . . then it is a betrayal of St Marcellin Champagnat and his vision of divine grace'. And where is that grace showing itself at this time in our history?

When the nascent group of Marists were finding their way in southern France in the second decade of the 1800s it was Marcellin Champagnat, our Founder, who insisted 'we must have Brothers'. Amongst this group of relatively young priests everyone was in agreement that the new Marist movement was to consist of Sisters, Laypeople and

Priests, but not everyone shared Marcellin's dream that it should also include Brothers. Today, across our own country, as Marists (Brothers & Laypeople) dialogue about structures that will support our mission into the future, the same mantra that haunted the first Marists remains strong today: 'we must have Brothers'.

But now the realisation of the vision is different. For Marcellin, having Brothers meant that he could be more certain that he had a suitable group of educators to teach in his schools. These days in Australia things are looking much brighter. The competency and commitment of well-equipped Lay staff means that excellent Marist schools are not dependent solely on a group of Brothers. Far

**....we must
have
Brothers...**

from it. But what has emerged through our experience is the value of the different yet complementary views that both Brothers and Laypeople bring to our mission. We don't need as many Brothers, but according to Lay Marists in particular, we need some Brothers.

Our Marist education document, *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*, having described the specific gifts of both the Lay Marist and the Brother, concludes:

'As sharers in Marist mission, we are invited to commit ourselves freely and generously to the same charism as consecrated religious or as single or married people, whatever our situation or culture. We identify with the charism in ways that are different but complementary. Together we witness to a unity of story, spirituality, mutual trust and common endeavour.... The women among us, especially, bring a fresh perspective to Marcellin's charism and reveal

Br DAVID HALL FMS –
Headmaster, Marcellin College



new facets of its charism for all of us today'.

So is there any solid basis on which we can have some hope for the future? I think so. Over the past two decades close on 4000 Lay staff in Marist schools have engaged in the voluntary three day residential retreat that explores Marist spirituality and pedagogy. We are also in the throgs of establishing a canonical structure that will, among other things, give Lay Marists full participation in the oversight and direction of Marist mission and ministry.

The Lay Marist dimension is on a sure footing but what of the Brothers? Last year a gathering of all Brothers aged 55 years and under concluded that we believed that there was still a future for vowed Marist Brothers. We have increased our resourcing in the area of vocation promotion – it has modest goals, cognisant of the fact that while we need Brothers we only need a few, compared with previous eras.

As we plan for a future with some confidence, albeit challenging and without certainty, we are reminded that nothing is ever certain when one accepts the call to help bring about the reign of God in the world. More than anything, Brothers and Lay Marists need to be reflective people; people attentive to the whisperings of the Spirit. The whisperings that are heard within the depths of our heart and in communion with one another. Pray for us. ❖

Wednesday in Rome

MADONNA NOONAN

Wednesday used to be a day like any other in Rome. Getting off at the Ottaviano Metro station, I would join the usual crowd of Roman workers and school children, ready to commence my 20 minute walk to the Embassy. It is a beautiful walk that still gives me great pleasure, even after eighteen years of living here. My walk takes me along the colonnades of St Peter's Square, up the broad Via della Conciliazione, and I cross the Tiber River at the Castel Sant'Angelo (the former mausoleum of the Emperor Hadrian) each morning over Bernini's Ponte Sant'Angelo bridge. A peaceful way to commence my work-day...

That was up until that momentous Wednesday, 13 March 2013, when Jorge Mario Bergoglio was announced as the Pope of 'firsts;' first Jesuit, first from the Southern Hemisphere, first from the Americas and the first to take the name of Francis.

Now when I arrive at Ottaviano station on a Wednesday morning, it always takes me a (somewhat alarmed) split second to wonder what on earth is happening, before I remember and realise that these massive waves of people from a myriad of nations, babbling in all languages, thronging through the halls and joyfully striding off down Via Ottaviano waving their banners, are on their way to see this new, beloved Pope at the weekly General Papal Audience. I take a different route to the river on Wednesdays now, not quite as picturesque, but much less chaotic.

I originally moved to Rome eighteen years ago for a managerial position in the airlines

and now, happily settled with my Roman husband and two sons, 15 and 12, I have had the pleasure and privilege of working for the Australian Embassies to both the Republic of Italy and, for the last four years, to the Holy See. Over these same last four years, I have seen the amazing Roman 'gioia di vivere' eroded by economic crisis and particularly high unemployment. At the time of Pope emeritus Benedict XVI's resignation, it was a particularly bleak period in Rome, with no government, no Pope and the looming prospect of no president; even the ever-resilient Romans were disconcerted and apprehensive.

So the election of a man who is so obviously down to earth, 'così alla mano', as leader of the Roman Catholic Church brought a much needed injection of hope and optimism, not to mention tourism capital, to the Eternal City.

As a local, it is interesting to meet various Vatican insiders and learn that what one reads in the media about Pope Francis and his desire to continue living amongst his 'brothers' at Casa Santa Marta, to stroll out across that Italy/Vatican frontier and meet with the people in the neighbourhood coffee bar, to attend the local Roma-Lazio soccer derby, is all true. He may have Vatican Security's hair on



Fr Adrian Noonan, Pt Pirie diocese (her brother), Madonna, Tim Fischer

end with worry, but they adore him nonetheless.

But my enjoyment at working for the Australian Embassy to the Holy See predates these momentous events. It was a pleasure and an honour to have helped expand the Embassy under the first resident Ambassador, Tim Fischer, AC, together with a small but terrific team of staff. His Excellency John McCarthy, QC, is equally committed to his role and it is a pleasure for all of us to work with Mrs McCarthy and him in their efforts.

The canonisation of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, including the opportunity to work with Postulator Sr Maria Casey, RSJ, was a true highlight. We had the delightful challenge of organising a conference, an exhibition opening, a reception and an

Australian Indigenous performance, all inside the Vatican Museums, on the preceding Friday evening and I will never forget the evocative resonance of didgeridoos echoing through the stunning

setting of the Vatican Gardens and the dome of St Peter's Basilica. Further events over the weekend, including the official opening of the new Holy See Embassy

...injection of hope and optimism

...evocative resonance of didgeridoos..

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A Day in the Life of a Hospital Patient A RESTORED-TO-HEALTH PARISHIONER

What is your name?
What is the name of the Prime Minister?
How old are you? It is the voice of a woman in blue Ambulance Service dungarees as she and her partner slide me onto a stretcher and wheel me into the Ambulance. Are we going to hospital I ask inanely? Yes, she says, and we are on the Road to Recovery. I think I begin to laugh as she clamps an oxygen mask on me.

I next remember looking at a wall clock. It is 1.42am and for the next 24 hours I am a hospital patient – in bed 08, ER. My television viewing tells me that ER means Medical Emergency.

Do you remember falling? It's obviously a doctor now. Yes, I say. Have you fallen before? Twice I say. Later doctor B asks me, do you remember falling? I think so I reply. When doctor C comes calling to my bed later still and asks me the same question I tell him I can't remember anything. Am I just being difficult or really sick? I don't know.

That reply was enough for the doctors to swing into action. I'm gently pummelled, X-rayed, watched continuously on a

monitor besides my bed and even asked to put out my tongue. So last century! Later I sneak a look at my notes and there is a record of 'a dry tongue'.

My bed is across the corridor from the main work station, a bit like Central Railway station really. There is not a moment when nothing is happening. The funniest thing – to me anyway – is when they enter, they wash their hands, when they leave they wash their hands. Each time only three paper towels, never one, or two, or four, are used.

I'm clearly getting better as a breakfast tray appears at 7 o'clock. Apricot jam never tasted so good. And a new round of consultations begin. Different doctors ask me different questions, a pharmacist talks to me about some prescription tablets. I'm a bit worried when an occupational therapist asks me if my house has steps and do I have a handrail in the bathroom. I'm immediately feeling better!

Visitors are apparently permitted and somehow my daughter has discovered I am in hospital. I tell her the doctors speak so quietly



and all the doctors are young. She tells me I am going deaf and my eyes need testing. My recovery takes a jolt.

Morning is a time for moving. There are new patients, beds and patients are being moved around but I am still in bed 08, ER. Around noon I am told I may be discharged soon. A little later there has been a change. We need to observe you a bit more. What it means I don't know, don't ask.

One o'clock is good news time. On the move to bed 03 EMU. Doesn't seem much until I'm told you'll be going home soon and you'll get lunch in that ward. True to their word I get lunch and I'm home by 2 o'clock. What was wrong? No idea, one of life's little mysteries. The hospital? It gets a big tick, a gold star really, for care and concern. ❖

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chancery, meant I did not see my family for three days, but they were very patient and the entire, outstanding experience was worth every moment of exhaustion and effort.

But perhaps the greatest pleasure is derived from my endeavours to contribute to the attainment of the Embassy's objectives, particularly in (but not limited to) the areas of human rights, including advocacy on abuse prevention and detection, anti-people trafficking, development assistance,

international humanitarian relief, arms control and environmental issues. I continue to experience a sense of pride and fulfilment in helping to work toward advancing Australia's interests in such worthwhile aims.

Rome's Centro Storico, the city centre where the Embassy is located, is of course one of the world's oldest inhabited city spaces, which presents its own challenges in terms of logistics and coordination. But it also provides a magnificent backdrop

for events such as the MacKillop canonisation. The Embassy's view of St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, in particular, provided an excellent venue for our Papal Conclave Watches just two months ago. It was thrilling to see hundreds of people literally sprinting across the bridges, through the rain, all longing to be present in St Peter's Square for the big announcement following the first glimpses of white smoke. It certainly all helps make life a little less ordinary for 'us' Romans. ❖

Travels of a Pilgrim

Sr MARGARET DANIELS *csb*

The opportunity last year to participate in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was, for me, a dream come true. To walk where Jesus had, to visit and pray at sites and places of significance in His life, and to savour some of the history, culture and religious practices and traditions of this Land, were experiences I had long hoped for.

On arrival in Jerusalem our pilgrimage group was greeted with the words, Welcome Home, by the staff of Notre Dame of Jerusalem, the beautiful Guest House where we stayed. Here we enjoyed an abundance of gracious hospitality such that, at the time of our departure, we could all say that it had been, for us, 'a real home away from home'.

Visits to the Old City with its high walls, the steep steps to the Temple, the portico where Jesus overturned the money changers' tables, the views of the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives, the Domes of the Holy Sepulchre, the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque, all gave us tiny glimpses into the lives of generations of different peoples and cultures whose ways of living had shaped Jerusalem into the treasured city it is today.

A trip to Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan took us away from city crowds to places of great beauty and serenity. We could readily visualise Jesus and His Apostles in boats on the Lake with crowds pressing in on the shores in the hope of Him performing healings and/or miracles for themselves and their loved ones. I felt a sense of reluctance to move on to

Yardenit where full immersion Baptisms in the River Jordan took place. However, on arrival, I found this also to be a place of great natural beauty with magnificent gum trees lining the river.

While I had been looking forward to visiting Bethlehem and seeing Jesus' Birthplace, nevertheless, the journey there evoked in me dismay and sadness. After getting through the armed checkpoint at the intimidating wall which divides Israel from Palestine, we travelled through narrow, poorly defined streets in areas of obvious deprivation to Bethlehem's Manger Square and the Church of the Nativity. The latter is built over a cave that, according to tradition, was where Jesus was born. I loved the simplicity and earthiness of this place and felt privileged to have been able to spend time reflecting and praying there.

Visiting Bethlehem University, at which De La Salle Brother, Peter Bray, from New Zealand, is the Vice-Chancellor,

was an occasion of both joy and sadness. Of its 3,000 students, 700 are Christians, 2,300 Muslims and 2,100 women. The financial situation of many of these students is such that the University has to rely on donations for 70% of its annual operational costs. It is an ongoing challenge to administer and maintain. Nevertheless, its leaders and staff are passionate about keeping it not only functioning but also developing and expanding to provide excellent educational opportunities for young Palestinians who will be future leaders. Unfortunately,



however, many of its graduates are driven by Palestine's high unemployment to seek overseas employment in their professions.

While I was in the Holy Land, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, had just returned from his visit to the United Nations during which Palestine was confirmed as a Member State. The joy this evoked in Palestine, however, was mingled with the sadness of Israel's announcement that it would be both withholding Palestinian Tax Revenue and building three thousand settlement units between East Jerusalem and Ramallah, therein further diminishing the possibility that the two nation proposal put forward in 1947 would ever become a reality.

My Holy Land pilgrimage very much enriched my reading, understanding and praying of the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels. It also heightened my awareness of the pain and struggle of the minority group of Christians - 200,000 in comparison with 11 million Jews and Arabs - as well as the Palestinians. May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whose image adorned many of the sites I visited, embrace the people in this part of the world and extend to them her loving care and protection as they face the challenges that lie ahead. ❖

'I loved the simplicity'

The Wonder of Words

CARMEL MAGUIRE

At the beginning of May, according to the *Washington Post*, Pope Francis told 800 nuns 'Don't be old maids'. In reporting his address to members of the International Union of Superiors General, most other news media found the somewhat less pejorative term, 'spinsters', for whatever word the Holy Father had used for childless unmarried women. To a proud spinster of this Parish, however, his context is quite sufficiently unflattering. Pope Francis made reference to the vow of chastity taken by women religious and charged that this chastity must be 'fertile' because "*the consecrated are mothers: they must be mothers and not spinsters*".

Naturally the subtleties in his address were much less newsworthy.

Any advice to nuns and to women generally, especially if there is a hint of criticism, is always worth a run. At the present time there is also awareness in the media that many of the world's citizens of both sexes have not found easy to accept the Vatican's criticism of women religious in the United States.

In a long and nun-filled life, I have yet to come across one consecrated woman who has shown the slightest sign of believing herself a spinster. In the wider sisterhood I am also unaware of any of my unmarried women friends and acquaintance who regard themselves as 'spinsters'. Perhaps we spinsters should proclaim our spinsterhood more loudly and proudly. We may even seek to annex for the term some of the glamour which seems unfailingly to attach to our male counterparts, the 'bachelors'.

Whatever term Pope Francis used in the language of his address, there is no doubt the languages of Europe as those of South America have been moulded by experience in those regions, and in turn continue to mould the expression of the inhabitants' experience. Loaded with all the burdens of history and geography, words are never neutral. Which is what makes them so powerful and so wonderful to think about. So to 'spinster'. According to the Oxford Dictionaries website, 'spinster' has moved from its late medieval meaning of 'woman who spins' to acquire several connotations, in addition to

that of 'unmarried woman'. Not all the later meanings are necessarily welcome since, to quote the Oxford experts, "In modern everyday English spinster cannot be used to

simply mean 'unmarried woman'; it is now always a derogatory term, referring or alluding to a stereotype of an older woman who is unmarried, childless, prissy, and repressed".

I realize that modern everyday English was not in the minds of the transliterators of the new liturgy from the Latin, but in our everyday usage perhaps we should try to add some more connotations rather than discard somewhat sullied terms like 'spinster'. My mind goes to spinster aunts of previous generations, many of whom, like my Auntie Josie, cooked, cleaned and cared for widowed brothers and mothered their children. Less pre-occupied with child-bearing and raising,

in middle class families, maiden aunts have quite often bestowed on the next generation a love of music and the theatre, by taking them off to concerts and plays. In much less privileged environments, I think also of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, the Argentine mothers whose children 'disappeared' during the Dirty War of the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. Their silent demonstrations continued even after some of them also 'disappeared'. Can anyone be sure that there were not among them spinster aunts, masquerading as mothers, fired with equal zeal in seeking justice for the children? After all, as a class, spinsters have been notoriously reluctant to be left out of any demonstration, at least for the last hundred years. For example, many of the suffragettes in England in the first decades of the Twentieth Century were spinsters, undeterred by police horses and prison sentences.

We are in the aftermath of an insult hurled at an admired indigenous football player, exacerbated by a football manager who possibly deserves to be 'boned', to use one of his own terms. More seriously we are also witnessing the attempted return to public political life of a woman given to expressions out of sync with the reality of multicultural Australian society, let alone of Gospel values. If there is a

moral to this tale, let it be a call to arms to all of us to take words seriously. Be wary of 'politically correct' as a term of abuse and in evaluating ideas, look behind the terms in which they are expressed. Let's take words seriously and find food for thought in expressions like the Pope's 'spinsters'. ❖

'don't be old maids'

'words are never neutral'

A Cautionary Tale

Fr Greg McEnnally sends a regular newsletter to his friends in Australia. Recently he wrote about one of his students and the day she gave ‘her news’ to her classmates. This is the story

Tuesday was the birthday of one of the students.

No big deal you say: most people have birthdays. This girl’s story, however, is very sad. At the age of three, she was abandoned by her own mother. At the age of eight, she was again abandoned, this time by her father. She was then brought up by her grandmother, but at the age of sixteen, her grandmother also abandoned her.

How would you feel? What concept of self-worth would you have? One of our teachers is putting on

a party for her tonight, and has bought her a cake. Nobody has ever bought her a cake before.

Another of our students told me a story connected with her birthday. She went to a party, where she got more than a little drunk. Nevertheless, she decided to drive herself home. As luck would have it, she got pulled over by the police to be breathalysed.

She did not want to be caught, as this means loss of licence, so she sped off. This did not go down too well

with the police, who sped off in pursuit. They caught her at traffic lights, when she got hemmed in by other cars. She sat there, and I can imagine her terror as the police officer asked her to wind down her window. She shook her head. They shone a bright light on her with possibly a camera as well. Again they asked her to wind down her window; again a shake of the head. This girl is very pretty,

small in stature, with big eyes and pointy chin – somewhat elfin. I can imagine her big staring eyes.

Then she started pleading. ‘Please let me go: today is my birthday!’ The officer asked to see her driving licence, which she refused to hand over, saying that the police would keep it. The officer said he would hand it back. ‘Do you promise?’ ‘Yes, I promise.’ She wound her window down just a

fraction, enough to extend her little finger. In China, linking little fingers is like making a promise formal. The officer extended his little finger and the deal was done.

She wound down her window and handed over her driving licence, while another officer breathalysed her, realising that she was way over the legal limit, which I think is 0.05, as it is in Australia. He was about to arrest her, when the first officer intervened.

‘No, I made her a promise’. He obviously realised from reading her driving licence that it was indeed her birthday, and in fact he let her go with a warning, calling ‘Happy Birthday’ after her. Whew.

Isn’t it good to find people with a real heart?

It was not necessary in this case to throw the book at this 23 year old young woman. She did something wrong – in fact two things: 1) driving while under the influence and 2) trying to escape. But the whole experience was so terrifying for her that she has learnt her lesson. I am quite sure she will not drink and drive again. I wonder how much the officer was influenced by her obvious good

...Isn’t it good to find people with a real heart...

....Nobody has ever bought her a cake before...

About Popes

✚ The shortest reigning Pope was Urban VII - 13 days in 590

✚ St Peter was the longest reigning Pope – 34 years from 30 to 67. Next was Pius IX who reigned for 31 years from 1846 to 1878

✚ Pope Francis I is the 266th Pope

✚ It is a myth that there was a Pope Joan

✚ In one year – 1276, there were four Popes. Gregory X, Innocent V, Adrian V and John XXI

✚ The Pope may appoint a cardinal in pectore (a secret cardinal) to protect him or his congregation from reprisals if the identity were known. Pope John Paul II elevated, four such Cardinals. The identities of three of these were subsequently revealed. ❖



COAT OF ARMS: POPE FRANCIS I

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The Back Page WITH FR PETER

In the last edition of the Parish Magazine I was speculating on the soon to be elected Pope – hoping that he was someone with deep, hands-on pastoral experience and especially with the Church of the poor. The media have been abuzz with the comings and goings of our new Pope Francis. All of sudden there is a different 'feel' about the Church. Others are quick to point out that so far, much of this has been a matter of style, rather than substance – from simpler garb (no red shoes, no ermine lined capes...), living at St Martha's rather than the Papal Palace, celebrating Mass each day with his workers and other staff, a preference for simplified liturgies, breaking centuries old liturgical tradition in washing the feet of a Muslim woman and other young inmates of a gaol no less... However, we should remember the saying regarding style and substance: the medium is the message, and perhaps even more apposite, actions speak louder than words. As symbolic actions these have been powerful in themselves.

The London Tablet, a well-respected lay-run Catholic magazine, in its latest edition speaks of Pope Francis as the 'natural successor to John XXIII'. Both were 76 when elected. John XXIII's electors wanted a 'short term compromise candidate'. He died four and half years later, having called Vatican Council II within three months of his election. John XXIII was anxious to find an end to the disunity within the Christian Churches and communities. He also extended that by adding 'something for the Jews.' After his death, the Council Fathers also included an opening for interreligious dialogue, especially with Muslims.

Pope Francis has been thoroughly formed in the spirit of Vatican II. In one of his early addresses to diplomats, he stated how he 'appreciated the presence of so many civil and religious leaders from the Islamic world' at his installation. And he declared his intention 'to intensify dialogue among the various religions' and that he was 'thinking particularly of dialogue with Islam.' The presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople was 'unprecedented' at the inauguration of Pope Francis. However, let us not forget that Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI were also thoroughly engaged in dialogue at all levels.

Rabbi Skorka from Buenos Aires who co-authored a book with Pope Francis stated 'I think he is going to change everything that he believes needs to be changed,' and added: 'He is not a person to take on this role in a passive way. He is not a person who stays quiet when he knows that there is work to be done.'

He has complained more than once about clerical careerism, and told an assembly of leaders of major religious women: 'A theoretical poverty is no use to us.' His comment about shepherds with the 'smell of the sheep on them' has been widely reported providing much food for thought and action. I will be particularly interested to hear his reflections on the world of economics with so many young people, especially, worldwide, including Australia (greater than 50% of youth in Elizabeth, SA), excluded from the work force. In a recent speech to the ambassadors of Luxembourg and Antigua, two well-known tax havens, he scolded them on the dictatorship of an economy which 'is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.' He is equally blunt with aspects of the capitalist economy, as was John Paul II, denouncing the 'culture of waste' and he has made it clear that environmental sustainability will be a priority for the Church.

At base, he reminds us, in a way that modern popes have not, that we are involved in a spiritual battle as well – very Ignatian in its articulation – with our true enemy, the devil.

Where will he take the Church with his comment, so heart-felt, that he longs for a 'Church of the poor for the poor'? What challenges will this bring to each of us as in his weekly homilies he urges us to leave our comfort zones and reach out to the poorest on the margins? How can we envision that as a parish and put it more and more into practice?

Pope Francis has only completed some 4 months in office, a 'listening phase' as many point out. I think we are in for a very interesting pontificate. ✚