

Parish Magazine

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ST MARGARET MARY'S RANDWICK NORTH

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART RANDWICK

Reflection

DIANE GORDON

The poor best reflect the tension between the values of Christ and the values of the world. Being successful is without doubt one of our society's primary values. Yet Christ's greatest 'success' was being a failure in the world's eyes, dying on the cross. We have so much to be grateful for; simply opening our arms and hearts and acknowledging the flood of gifts the Lord wishes to shower upon us - life, love, dignity.

The poor can teach us that it does not matter in God's eyes how much we own or how much we have done but rather, who we are, how deeply we have loved, how generously we have given. Commercials lure us to live this life as though 'you have but one life to live', therefore spend all you can now.

In listening to the gospels we can discover the richness of God's love and the value of our own lives. That wisdom ennobles us as well as enables us. It enables us to be free in spirit no matter how burdened in body. There is no need for us to wait for our 'pie in the sky' to make this world bearable. It is bearable because the poor carpenter from Nazareth chose to be our brother. In our poverty we can lay claim to a special identity and intimacy reserved to God's privileged ones. The first shall be last. The dispossessed will be repossessed.

Although as Christians we must dedicate ourselves to battle poverty and injustice, at the same time we must be humble enough to concede that it is often the impoverished who enrich us and gift us with more than we can offer in return. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God'.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel prayed for God's justice, meaning that they prayed that God would stand by them and do the right thing, being compassionate and merciful toward them. The people, in turn, recognised that God expected them to deal with one another in the same way, namely by respecting people's rights, by fulfilling their obligations to one another, by showing compassion and mercy to others in all situations, and by caring for those who are in need of any kind.

With this understanding of justice, we realise that God's call to be just means a summons to practice justice in every aspect of our daily lives. Social justice then refers to society's responsibility as a whole to respect people's rights, fulfil its obligations and show compassion and mercy to all, and to care for those who are in need. ❖

Front Cover Photo

The Cloister, looking north with statue of St Joseph in garden.

Photographs of the Opening and Blessing of the new Parish Offices and Cloister are on page 9 and the Back Page.

Cover photo Juan Rojas

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

Editors: Tony McNamara
Debra Lawrence

My Story*

MARIE DEMPSEY

My family's links with the Catholic Church in Australia remarkably extend over 200 years. There are gaps in the records and the fading of memories but a forebear, James Dempsey, an Irish convict who arrived in Australia in 1802 established a small Prayer Chapel of Perpetual Adoration (now continued in St Patrick's Church Hill) in his house in Kent Street at a time when there were no resident Catholic priests in Sydney.

One hundred and one years later on 23 September 1903, my father William, and my mother May O'Reilly, were married at St Patrick's Church, Araluen. He was described as a storekeeper, she was a music teacher and in the quaint language of the time was described as a spinster.

Me? I was born on 18 June 1915 in Bangalow where my father had a butcher's shop. I was baptised as Ola Marie, named Ola after a friend of my mother's but I have always been known as Marie. I joined the Army in 1941 and I was described as 'height 5ft 3ins, eyes grey, complexion fair, hair brown'. A little has changed since then, especially the hair!

After primary schooling in Bangalow I would travel by train to the secondary school at Lismore conducted by the Presentation Nuns. After leaving school I became a trainee nurse at Lismore's St Vincent's Private Hospital in 1933 and this was the start of a life time of nursing. I moved to Sydney in 1938 and began nursing as an obstetric

trainee at Crown Street Women's Hospital. I joined the Army in 1941 and became a member of the Australian Army Nursing Service in 1942 as a Lieutenant and was discharged on 24 October 1946. I then nursed at various hospitals including the Royal Hospital for Women from 1949 to 1957 and then for 6 years at the Prince of Wales Hospital. I retired in 1980.

My brother John was the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and played an important part in the settlement of Indo-Chinese in the region and was an active member of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese. From 1963 to 1966 he worked in Geneva and during that time I travelled overseas and spent some time with him. I still remember my visits to Rome, Ireland and Jerusalem.

I also had two sisters, Audrey and Dorothy. Another Dempsey forebear, James, was the Clerk of Works for the building of St Mary's Cathedral. I have maintained a connection with the Cathedral by being a member for many years of the Friends of the Cathedral.

...a lifetime of nursing...

I moved to Sydney after the war, first living in Avoca Street then in Cowper Street. A constant in my life has been my association



with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church. Over the years I was a member of various societies, often as a very active member. I was a long-time Associate of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and for a while I worked in the Piety Stall. Being active in the Altar Society gave me great pleasure – I was a Sacristan – and with some other parishioners organised the Forty Hours Devotion, probably because of the link to the Perpetual Adoration devotion of that forebear of mine.

The Catholic Women's League (Combined Eastern Suburbs Group) was another favourite of mine and I continued to attend meetings when I moved in 2003 to Sister Anne Court. I was also active in a range of other organisations. I am now in the Gertrude Abbott Complex.

I am the last of the Dempsey clan!

* This My Story was compiled with Marie shortly before her death on 26 September 2014.



Some of the beautiful floral displays which adorned the Church, new Office Building and Ventnor on the occasion of the blessing and opening of the new offices and cloister on 26 Oct 2014.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) have the privilege of assisting priests at Mass with the distribution of Holy Communion and the Precious Blood. This custom goes back to the earliest days of the Church, but came to an end in the 9th century when the handling of the consecrated bread and wine by the laity was strictly forbidden. The teaching of the Church at the time was that only the consecrated hands of a priest could touch not only the bread and wine, but the sacred vessels as well.

Fortunately, among the many changes stemming from The Vatican Council II was the understanding of the Mass as a special meal. It was in this context that in 1973 lay ministers were authorized to distribute Holy Communion. Our parish, in the spirit of Vatican II, embraced its changes.

Currently, we have 55 active EMHCs for the weekend Masses, an active group at the weekday 12 noon Masses and volunteers who take Holy Communion to parishioners who are unable to attend Mass as well as visiting the hospitals and aged care facilities.

**Our parish....
embraced its
changes**

On August 15, The Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, eight new Eucharistic Ministers were commissioned by Father Peter.

The Sunday Mass EMHCs go on a roster of their preferred Mass times, usually done every 12 weeks. This can be a challenge to organize as there are always the constraints of people being on holidays, only available on specific Sundays and so on.

Maureen McKenna, Coordinator, Sunday Mass EMHCs

Sometimes these constraints are such that some EMHCs may find themselves doing 'overtime'. That is, their names appear more frequently on the roster!

As well as the 55 active ministers there are approximately 12 who are reserves. Because they are unable to go on a roster due to work/family commitments, they offer their services should additional ministers be required at the Masses they are attending.

Although organizing the roster can be a challenge the participants always display great generosity of spirit as they embrace their allocated Sundays. This generosity is further evident when the call is made for volunteers for the Holy Week/Easter and Christmas liturgies.

My gratitude goes to all EMHCs who make my job manageable and enjoyable. ❖

Places in Randwick - Captain Cook Monument

The imposing statue of Captain Cook that stands at the junction of Avoca Street Belmore Road and High Street was erected on 27 October 1874, on the anniversary of his birth 146 years earlier.

The next day, The Sydney Morning Herald wrote 'The statue from ground to crown of the figure is fully 18 feet high. The figure being over 8 feet high, the difference being taken up by the pedestal. Captain Cook is represented in the dress of a post captain, with his left hand resting on the globe, which is partly covered with the Union Jack, while there is a telescope in the right hand. At the feet of the figure there is an anchor.

The captain is bareheaded, and the figure seems, judging from portraits and busts, to be a very faithful one. The eyes are turned in the direction of, and if they were those of a living man they would command, that very spot on the southern shores of Botany where Captain Cook landed'.

The whole of the work is in Pymont Freestone and was carved by sculptor Walter McGill for a fee of £7000 paid for by Captain Thomas Watson in whose residence, Cook's Lodge, the statue was erected. It had once been the Star and Garter Inn, the site for the Lotaville Girls School and Hannan's Butcher. Today, it is *The Cookhouse* restaurant.



Captain Cook arrived in Botany Bay in 1770 and was killed in Hawaii in 1779. ❖

References: Randwick City Council, Sydney Morning Herald, 28 Oct 1874

Photo: Oct 2014

If Nuns Ruled the World

JO PIAZZA

Jo Piazza is an award-winning journalist, author and editor who has written for the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and the New York Daily News. She is the author of 'If Nuns Ruled the World' and she has written this article for our magazine.

I never expected a story to change me. Journalists believe that reporting will change the world, not them. And yet, no story has touched me as deeply as writing the book, 'If Nuns Ruled the World'. No story has changed me nearly so much. No story ever made me want to be a better human being.

I began reporting and researching this book four years ago as I was finishing a Master's degree in Religious Studies from New York University. I was fascinated by American nuns and the Vatican's investigation of them. What did the Vatican want to find out? What kind of scandal lay beneath the nuns' habits? I sought out scandal and what I found was service. What I found was bravery. What I found were women who follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ every single day. I found friends, mentors and role models. I found super heroes.

Friends and colleagues who know me well wouldn't have pegged me five years ago as the kind of person who would be hanging around with a gang of Catholic nuns. Throughout my twenties I worked in various capacities as a tabloid news reporter, a celebrity journalist and a political reporter on the campaign trail. I was cynical and wizened. I smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. I talked tough and wrote tough. I was incredibly successful. I wasn't terribly happy.

Nuns are some of the happiest individuals I have ever met. They're not happy in that they smile and joke all the time (although they love a good

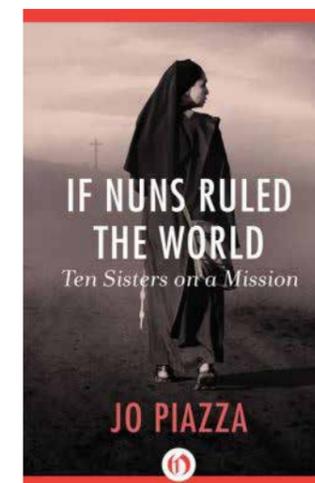
pun). They're content. They're present. They live each day to the fullest and they give themselves completely to others. Throughout my time with Catholics nuns and sisters I began to aspire to be more and more like them each day.

Every time I am interviewed about this book, the interviewer asks me which nun affected me the most. It's the obvious question, the one I would ask me if I were in their place. And yet, I don't have an answer. Each of the stories in the book is so different. Each of the women made me a better person in a completely unique way and I think about them every day.

I think about Sister Simon Campbell who spear headed the Nuns on the Bus tour to fight for the rights of poor Americans. I think about Sister Joan Dawber who runs a safe house in Queens for victims of human trafficking, former sex and labor slaves. I think about Sister Tesa Fitzgerald who raises the children of mothers who are incarcerated. When the women get out of prison, Sister Tesa is the one who gives them food, clothing and shelter.

These women inspired me to look for things outside of myself and to try to do a little bit of good in the world, to be less selfish. They set the bar high for me. They inspired me to begin volunteering. I went to Utah to volunteer with the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, a no kill sanctuary for homeless animals. I signed up to work in a soup kitchen. I raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

I was invited to speak to the employees of Facebook about



this book. So many of the women in the crowd were fascinated by the bold leadership of the nuns in my book. They asked me what the sisters could teach women determined to get ahead in business. I thought for a minute and I told them the following:

In New York City, so much of our success is determined by money and power and rank. The nuns I profiled in my book don't care about any of those things. They see a problem, they formulate a solution. They don't let any obstacles get in their way. They don't think about climbing a ladder to success. They simply do what is right and by doing what is right they are true leaders.

I am often asked to finish the title of the book.

*If Nuns Ruled the World...
I have three endings.*

*If Nuns Ruled the World,
Anything Could Be
Accomplished*

*If Nuns Ruled the World,
It Would Be a More Fair and
Just Place*

*If Nuns Ruled the World,
We Would Be Happier Human
Beings*

Those Were the Days

MARY MARAZ

My 6th Grade memories, probably given a rosy glow by time, nostalgia, and an uncertain memory, were a jumble of mostly reasonably agreeable experiences, dominated though by the fear of high school in the coming year!

Dire warnings abounded about the need for much improved behaviour (on my part) voiced by the nuns, particularly by the very efficient nun teaching maths. I must admit here that I rarely understood the various puzzling concepts which distinguish maths, which of course I felt showed a complete lack of comprehension on their part! I'm sure today this disability is treated more sympathetically.

Students were constantly warned about the dreadful possibility of having to 'repeat' the year if the dreaded end of year report didn't measure up. Apparently, my poor performance in Maths was a pointer to a traumatic year ahead unless much improvement was miraculously to appear. The magic solution - best to keep praying and also pay attention!

Stop that ridiculous giggling

There were of course rules and regulations which today may confuse young ones: hats and gloves were always to be worn when not actually in class; Sister was always to be greeted 'Good morning Sister and God bless you'; girls then had to kneel to see if their uniform length was sufficiently modest by touching the floor and ('stop that ridiculous

giggling') you will soon be seen as young ladies!

Attendance was strictly checked and nothing short of serious hospitalisation was seen as a serious reason for non-attendance; good clear writing was seen as a paramount virtue and poor reports on this were seen as a sign of an uncertain future in one's future employment; any indication shown of writing lefthandedly was viewed very unfavourably and had to cease.

Definitely no running in corridors - very unladylike - and talking in class before Sister arrived was viewed very seriously. The fact that Sister's rosary beads (attached to her belt) rattled as she approached was a big help in warning. Ink wells were slotted in each desk and could only be refilled by girls showing the requisite 'good behaviour'; the blackboards had to be wiped down from the previous class and sufficient chalk left ready for Sister's next class. I think this was also in the 'reward for good behaviour' category.

In the playground skipping ropes and hopscotch were a constant and perhaps a faint memory of hula hoops came later. I know that I felt my social success in the playground was hampered by having to look after my youngest brother and which I now see as having been very uncharitable of me. But as he clung to my skirt and cried I think I just felt mortified.

The Confirmation year was possibly celebrated in the previous year and much importance placed on the choice of a saint's name. One also had to write and present a little monologue on the background and significance of the name of the chosen saint.

I recall having chosen 'Bernadette' and remarkably can still recall that she had a fierce temper but had a vision of the Mother of God.

Just imagine - no TV

In comparison with the interesting trips taken today by school children I can only recall going to the Museum. However, the bonus of getting there by train was part of the fun. Just imagine - no TV, no internet, no computer, no mobile phone. And a train trip was 'fun'. I have clear memories of listening to radio plays which were listened to avidly and sometimes written about in class as a project. Grandchildren of my acquaintance tend to view this as great deprivation and a cause for pity.

Because this was not long before the commencement of World War II, we prayed that we would be saved though I don't think any of us really understood much and thought that the special net being put in Sydney Harbour was for catching fish as we didn't know then about submarines.

Perhaps this little vignette will provoke interest or maybe scorn from to-day's young students - I'd rather like to know. ❖



And Now.....

LAURA AND NOAH

Laura and Noah, 6th class students and captains at St Margaret Mary's Primary School at North Randwick set about asking some of their classmates what they felt made their school unique and set it apart from other schools in the Randwick area. These are the insights and thoughts about their little school and what makes it special for them.

We have a smaller community which makes us closer and more tightly knit. All of the students know each other and look out for each other. There is a true sense of concern and well-being for others. We know each-others names and we are ready to help those in need when necessary. This sense of friendship is grounded not only in the values held by the school but also in programs such as the 'Buddies Program' implemented to ensure the children in the younger grades have an older friend who can help them on the playground. We also have opportunities to read to our buddies and to help them in particular aspects of their school work.

...our particular gifts and talents...

In living out our school values of stewardship, inclusion, peace, justice and love we are committed to outreach programs such as the Mini Vinnies, where students get together to fundraise and donate to the less fortunate in our society. We also enjoy visiting the Little

Sisters of the Poor where we get to chat to the residents and perform songs and poems.

St Margaret Mary's is a multicultural school where all people are accepted and where differences and cultures are celebrated.

We are also given many opportunities to celebrate and nurture our particular gifts and talents many of which include sporting opportunities, swimming, athletics and dance.

...achieve our best...

Opportunities exist for students to learn a musical instrument and are encouraged to join in the school's band. Children who show particular abilities in creative arts are encouraged to participate in the Bishop's Annual Christmas Artwork competition while those who are academically minded can take part in competitions in English, creative writing, Mathematics and Science and Technology.



The school encourages us to always strive to achieve our best in everything that we do. We all receive a great education and enjoy our learning. We are passionate about learning new skills, facts and life lessons. There is also plenty of opportunity for us to develop leadership capabilities.

We believe that St Margaret Mary's school is unique because we celebrate the Eucharist as a community regularly, with class masses and whole school Mass each term. We also invite all members of our community to our Eucharistic celebrations including our families and the members of the wider parish.

St Margaret Mary's Primary School is a very special place where we are a family; not just a school! ❖

Established in 1956 with about 45 students the school now has 193 pupils, nine full time and four part time teachers.



St Margaret Mary's
Catholic Primary Randwick North



An Interview with Br Tru Nguyen msc

Tru Nguyen is a Missionary of the Sacred Heart (MSC) preparing for ordination to the diaconate later this year and to priesthood in 2015. In August he joined the Randwick OLSH parish and he tells us about himself in this interview.

Vietnam – where it all began

I was born in 1979, in Rach Gia, a village in the south of Vietnam. My parents were rice paddy farmers and I have one sister. When my father died in 1981, we moved to the city and lived in our grandparents house and my mother worked in a small family shop. We wanted to seek refuge outside of Vietnam. I can remember some events but I cannot clearly remember where or when I was at the time.

When did you leave Vietnam?

In 1988, to Cambodia and stayed there for about a year. In 1989 we managed to get on a boat and cross the ocean in our search for freedom. It took about two weeks and we landed in Malaysia on 14th March 1989 and were moved to the camp on Pulau Bidong Island. Life in the camp was tough. Food and water were distributed only a few days a week and we had to manage it for the whole week.

When we were granted refugee status we were moved to the camp in Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur. The condition in this camp was not much different from the camp on the island. Looking back at this time the thing I learned most was how to live with others and how to value the food and drink that I had been given each day.

When did you arrive in Australia?

We received our migrant visa and arrived in Adelaide on ANZAC Day, 25th April 1991. Reflecting on these experiences I didn't realise the affect it had on my life journey. I had to do some work to process the trauma experienced in my refugee journey. Now I have learnt to live with these experiences and how to be grateful that

I am still living now and to be here with you - to share our faith journey together and to share the experience of God's.

What were the first years like?

They were a challenge for me. I spoke very little English - such as 'hello', 'how are you?' When anyone answered and asked me more questions I panicked and said 'me no English'. As English was my second language, making new friends was not trouble-free. So I started to become introverted, and withdrew from many activities. The activity that I did find joyful was playing sport and going to see my friends on the weekend at a Vietnamese school and a Vietnamese youth group. There I could speak in my first language and there I found that I belonged.

I had one year of studying English as a Second language, then enrolled in year 8 in Northfield Public High School and then transferred to St Ignatius College, finishing year 12 in 1997.

In 1998 I enrolled in a Biomedical Engineering degree at Flinders University. In 1999 I switched to Adelaide University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science (Computer Science and Mathematics) in 2001. It was strange preparation for my job packing and repacking batteries for power tools and devices!

Then you moved to Sydney in 2003

Yes, to pursue a career in IT. However, I found myself working part-time as a junior office worker and also at the Spastic Centre – now the Cerebral Palsy Alliance - caring for people with cerebral palsy, the first inclination of my interest in being with people.



Working with people with disabilities encouraged me to do studies in the humanities. So I enrolled in a Social Work degree at the Australian Catholic University, graduating in 2007. But I had actually begun to think of being a missionary from 2003. I guess I was restless about my life so I read about the lives of the saints and began to pray more and really question what I wanted to do.

What was the big moment?

I had been talking from time to time with my friend Fr Tan – parishioners might remember him when he was at OLSH – and he rang me in 2007 suggesting I might do a Retreat at the MSC's Douglas Park.

On 12th December 2007, I decided to do the retreat. I brought a bottle of red to Douglas Park to celebrate my birthday. Little did I know that it was a discernment retreat at a religious monastery. Fr Chris McPhee, who also had been at Randwick, was my spiritual director and guided me to listen with my heart. I did that and found that what I wanted most is to be loved by God. So in that retreat I wrote a letter to the Vocation Director, Fr Peter Hearn at that time. Now he is my mentor here.

So, what happened?

The MSC accepted me. In 2008 a new chapter of my life began when I became an MSC postulant living at Willoughby. 2009 was also significant as I had the opportunity to begin theological studies at Yarra

Opening and Blessing of Parish Offices and Cloister

Today is truly a celebration for our community here at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, it is the Sunday that we as a parish choose to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and significantly this year we officially bless and open the Cloister Walkway and Offices.

The idea of creating more offices and meeting spaces for the MSC house has been on the agenda of more meetings than I can remember.

*Liz Clark
Chair, Parish Pastoral Council
26 Oct 2014*



photo: Simon Tecson



photo: Simon Tecson



Theological Union (YTU) in Melbourne. It was a part-time course and I was able to spend time working with a couple of organisations caring for homeless people and those at risk. In November 2009, I began the novitiate program at Douglas Park with Sandy – a former OLSH parishioner - and on December 18th 2010 Sandy and I were professed (made our vows of obedience, chastity and poverty) as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

I continued studies at YTU and completed my Bachelor of Theology in 2012. Then I completed my Master of Theological Studies in the middle of 2014. This was a really good course designed for students in the process of formation for priesthood. During these times I had the experience of work with asylum seekers, hospital chaplaincy, and chaplaincy in a prison. These pastoral ministries certainly confirmed for me how important pastoral care is for

those who are at risk in society. These experiences also confirmed my vocation so on 7th December 2013 I made my Final Profession in Blackburn, the MSC parish in Victoria.

And now it is time for pastoral experience

I could not be more fortunate in being appointed to this parish. And my mentor is Fr Peter who had accepted me as an MSC candidate. I have only been here a little while but the experience is really exciting. So many activities going on, so many people to meet, and so much to learn about pastoral care.

You've been seen in the choir. Is that another skill you have?

Definitely not, but the OLSH choirs add so much to our religious experiences. Singing is a religious experience that can be felt by both the young and the old. I think we are all aware that a

religious attachment does not have a strong appeal to the younger generation so music is one way of re-introducing them to spiritual aspects of their lives.

Other experiences at OLSH?

Fr Peter has asked me to work with the various other groups in the parish to have as broad an experience as possible. For example, I am involved with the Young Adults Group, I'm learning more about Christian Meditation with Fr Doug and I am visiting some local Nursing Homes, the hospital, and Prayer Groups.

What's next?

I'm looking to be made a Deacon later this year at Randwick. Then hoping to be ordained as a priest in 2015 and it will be in Adelaide as that is where my family live. Then who knows what after that... God knows and all will be revealed. *I look forward to meeting you all and hope that here is where my heart finds a new home.* ❖

Of Tribes and Tribalism

CARMEL MAGUIRE

There are pluses and minuses involved in being out of sync with the tribe. I have a mild case of dislocation on account of my lack of interest in football; my disregard of rugby codes and Australian Rules is total, though I must confess to being occasionally intrigued by the skill and acting ability of top soccer players. Again I don't want to be part of 'team Australia'.

I am glad that by ethnicity, education, nature and nurture, I am disposed to abhor the rah-rah efforts of politicians to enlist me while vehemently excluding others. On the other hand, I will rejoice mightily when this country achieves rulers brave enough to stop persecuting asylum seekers and return us to 'team humanity'.

...avoid giving scandal.

So herein proceed the musings of a misfit. The Church in the second half of the Nineteenth Century and the first half of the Twentieth Century has been described by Hans Kung as 'a closed Catholic group-environment with its own worldview'. This was certainly true of the comfortable Catholic ghetto in which I spent my Brisbane youth. In retrospect, those days seem like simpler times but were they?

We had to be so careful to keep a respectful though distinct distance from our neighbours. We were to avoid giving scandal. For example by eating meat on Friday even when meat was provided for a meal in a Protestant household to

which we had been invited. I blush to think of my rude stupidity, not at ten years old but more than twice that age, when I hid the ham slices under the inadequate cover of lettuce leaves on my plate, rather than eat meat.

Missing Sunday Mass was of course an even greater sin. One of our suburban dramas comes to mind with my father's facetious baptism of the Manse cat under a garden tap. The kids laughed. My mother was mortified, but the peace and tolerance of Mareeba Road survived. I suspect the sturdy Presbyterian pastor and his spouse expected no better from neighbouring papists.

If many of our neighbours thought we were weird, it was probably not so much because of our dietary and Sunday compulsions but rather our easy assumption of superiority to them as we were members after all of the one true church. I cannot recall that any of those 'Non Catholics' spoke of us as 'Non Protestants'. Maybe what goes round has come back to us in the awareness that some Muslims refer to us Christians as infidels, which we find so offensive.

I must say I would rather be a 'Non Muslim' than an 'infidel'. More worrying is the notion, widespread in Southeast Asia, that Catholics are not Christians. I lost this argument with friends and acquaintances in Thailand in the mid 1960s. I was similarly unsuccessful in convincing a taxi driver in Laos last December that the Catholic church I was seeking was indeed a Christian church.

IN REAL LIFE

At least in Australia today, tribal boundaries between Christian denominations are much thinner. Whether this is because of increased ecumenism or increased indifference to religion generally may repay some further thought, but there is room for much broader expansion of tolerance of non Christian beliefs.

...do not know a burqa from a hijab...

Some evidence may be drawn from the current debate on the burqa, much of it contributed by people who do not know a burqa from a hijab while the rest of us put up with their poor choices of suitable attire. Perhaps we could concentrate on things worthy to be cherished in all tribes. There are, for example, the classics of our literature and art.

As we seek to assuage the ills of the human condition in our time, there is no catechism of cut and dried answers ready to apply. But there is help to be derived from the classics of religious writers, going back to the Evangelists and St Paul. Help is also at hand in the documents of Vatican II, given new prominence in the writings of Pope Francis.

The 18-24 year olds of the tribe may well be convinced that the advice of 'Gaudium et spes' is related to 'IRL', which I am reliably informed is Youthspeak for 'In real life'. If we and the Episcopal Synod on the Family want to reach them, we'd all better have our feet firmly planted 'IRL'. ❖

The Missionaries of Charity Sisters in Bourke

SISTER JOVIER msc

The Missionaries of Charity were founded by Blessed Mother Teresa in Calcutta in India in 1950. They came to Bourke in 1969. This is their story.

Someone asked me the other day if the Sisters presence was still needed in Bourke. I recounted to them the words Blessed Mother Teresa spoke in answer to a similar question put to her when she first came to Australia. She replied, 'To feed the hungry, Christ; to clothe the naked, Christ; to visit the sick, Christ and to give a home to the homeless Christ... for Jesus said whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you did it to me'.

I don't compare the poor of Australia with the poor of India, she said, but I compare the poor of Australia with the rich of Australia, and so I find that there are poor here who need our love and service. All our works are purely for the love of God and for souls. Blessed Teresa saw Christ in every person, in particular at that time, the under-privileged Aborigines in Australia.

Blessed Teresa accompanied by five Sisters opened the first house in Australia in Bourke on September 16th 1969. Bishop Douglas Warren and Allan Morrall were instrumental in inviting Blessed Teresa and her Sisters to Bourke. We have been here 45 years and when we look back over the years, certainly things have changed. We no longer teach people about personal hygiene and parenting skills.

Services we used to provide such as after school programmes, family assistance and social outreach are now provided by government agencies. Shelter for the homeless and elderly is now provided by both private and government agencies. However the people we came to help still need our help.



Blessed Mother Teresa

Jesus said to Blessed Teresa 'Come, come be my light...' *Our presence is only a little light. We in our own simple little ways carry the light of Christ to the dark homes of the poor, knowing that the poor come in many guises. We give our whole-hearted and free service to the poorest of the poor, whoever they may be. We believe that, as Blessed Teresa said, 'We have been created for greater things, to love and to be loved.'*

.. We continue to visit families...

We try to maintain a group of four Sisters at any one time. Our Sisters are all from multicultural backgrounds and have served in many countries before coming to Bourke. Our work is now focused on working with the children and families of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our rural community.

Our main work here is with the children. We have a Day Crèche that operates two days a week and is free and open to all families in Bourke. We operate a soup van on Thursday and Sunday serving sandwiches and pies for children who are roaming the streets at night, giving us the opportunity to talk and pray with them. Once a week we hold Good Shepherd Catechism Classes for pre-school children where we try to sow in the hearts of the little children knowledge of God's love. Our Sisters teach catechism in the state schools at Enngonia (a remote village north of Bourke) and in Bourke. We help prepare the children of the Parish for the reception of the Sacraments.

Visitation is a major apostolate. We continue to visit families using these opportunities to talk and to pray with them. Often we find that families are dealing with problems caused by substance abuse and suffer from mental and emotional trauma as a result of this abuse. We visit patients in the local hospital and nursing homes. We are active in our Parish and help our local priest Fr. John Shallvey msc with Parish Pastoral work.

We are unsupported by any government or private agency depending totally on divine providence and the generosity of people. ❖

And So It Began - Cana Enterprises

JANELLE JORDAN

The wedding feast at Cana was where Christ transformed water into wine. In doing so He created joy out of almost nothing at all.

It was with this spirit, the will to create joy where there is little that Cana Communities started almost 40 years ago. They provided meals and beds for homeless men in a house in Chippendale and from that beginning they have grown. Today Cana Communities provide accommodation for over 80 people a week. They have provided thousands of meals through open houses and the Cana Café, and they have celebrated hundreds of birthdays and each year celebrate Christmas with around 400 people in Redfern Park.

Over the last three years, in partnership with TAFE Western Sydney Institute they also provide outreach courses, support and mentoring for over 800 people at their farm in Orchard Hills.

In providing all of this the volunteers at Cana Communities noticed a gap. Their guests could be housed, they could learn new skills, they could grow and develop. However often they could not find gainful employment. Many of the guests at Cana have complex issues. Some have spent time in institutions or in rehabilitation, living on the streets or are refugees from their homelands. They often lack the job readiness that many of us take for granted. So Cana Enterprises was started to support this need.

Based at the Orchard Hills farm, Cana Enterprises is a non-profit social enterprise with the goal of teaching people how to handle the rough and tumble of daily working life. They do this by using a broad and individual approach. Employees receive paid work hours, they study a certificate course through TAFE and are



asked to volunteer some of their time back to the community.

During work time with Cana Enterprises employees learn appropriate work behaviours on the job. Things that many of us take for granted - like start and finish times; applying oneself until the work is done; how to engage with colleagues, clients and your boss. They have the opportunity to learn these things by getting them wrong and then being supported, coached and mentored on ways to do things differently without costing them their job.

Cana Enterprises is in its second year of operation and its staff are learning what works and what doesn't in the same way their employees are; making mistakes, learning, and moving forward. However having provided over 2000 employment hours in its first year and with a number of employees making the transition to more traditional employment or full time study, they're off to a good start.

Cana Enterprises has adopted a business approach, taking advantage of the resources from their relationship with Cana Communities. They have access to the farm, and so grow seedlings in a greenhouse which are then planted out to grow using organic farming methods. At present almost their entire output is consumed on the farm but they are near to being able to offer seasonal organic produce at the farm gate and supply stores and markets.

With its own coffee roaster, beans are roasted in small batches, blended, and packaged. Through community contacts they have access to locally grown, organic olive oil which is then bottled on the farm. They have also developed a range of jams, relishes and pickles which have proved a hit with the community. At present they buy in some fruit but look to the time when their entire range can match their organically grown Spicy Tomato Chutney.

As well as the food products there is also recycled timber furniture. Old hardwood fence palings are de-nailed, dressed and then used to create beautiful and hardy outdoor furniture. There isn't a project too big or too small to take on so long as there are employment hours and an opportunity for learning and growth.

The challenge they have set for themselves is to sell products they are proud of. 'Don't buy from us because we're a charity', they say 'buy from us because the product is great. Let us take care of the charity'. Producing quality products when the enterprise itself is so young, the production process is still being developed and the employees are in the process of learning how to work, sounds like a difficult task yet Cana Enterprises is achieving just that. Everyday.

And in the process creating joy out of almost nothing at all. ❖

For more information on Cana Enterprises, or to volunteer, contact Janelle at canafarmorganics@gmail.com or on 0409 250 333

Thoughts On Leaving China

Fr GREG MCENNALLY msc

I consider myself to have been truly blessed to have spent ten years living in China, covering a span of twelve years, from March 2002 to August 2014. This period has seen the development of a country on a scale unprecedented in human history.

The country has become very wealthy and so have many people, with hundreds of millions lifted out of poverty. Some 500 million people have been moving, transforming China from a largely agrarian society to a mostly urban one. Some cities are massive, with populations around 20 million.

One outstanding feature of these changes has been infrastructure building. We build a house here and there; they build 30 storey apartment blocks. We argue for 20 years about building a second airport; they have it completed in three years. We have been talking for years about extending Sydney's rail system, but nothing gets done; China builds a new line every year. Express-ways march across the countryside, straddling valleys and boring through mountains, where a few short years ago narrow roads twisted laboriously across the countryside.

...but what of the people?

So much for development, but what of the people? I have been privileged to meet some of the most beautiful people you would meet anywhere. The students I taught in Tongren, Guizhou Province, are the best I have taught in any country. And these are poor. Wealth does not always bring out the best in human nature, especially when one combines



this with other aspects of Chinese culture, such as the value of 'face', the Great Wall Syndrome and the One Child Policy.

I have been teaching English, mostly to university students but to others also. I have taught at every level from kindergarten, through to professionals who have their PhDs. But you do not just teach a subject: you teach people. The success of one's teaching is not to be judged on how fluently a student may be speaking English, but on what kind of person he/she becomes. You never know what students are really learning or how they are being influenced. This I leave to God.

Priestly ministry cannot be exercised publicly, as this current regime is atheistic. The official head of the Catholic Church is some bureaucrat in Beijing, who is not even a Catholic. The Communist Party wants to oversee the training of priests, the appointment of bishops etc. In this atmosphere it was only possible for me to celebrate Mass privately, either in my apartment or in someone's home.

Yet the Church is alive and well. The Christian population is now twelve times greater than it was when the communists took over. Persecution does that. Perhaps one

of the problems we have faced in the West is that people's faith has not been challenged. Life has been too easy.

Even though I know it was time to leave China, it is a little like dying. My body is now in Australia, but my mind and heart are still in China. That will change, no doubt - in time. I am now at Kensington monastery. Soon I will be taking up an appointment as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor. I am also still writing about China, so this helps me to let go gradually. My first book has just been published and just maybe I will write another. The book is called 'A Traveller in China', available via Ingram or Amazon.

Yet the Church is alive and well

What I do like about coming back is the clearer air. One can actually see stars and blue sky. I also appreciate not having the government breathing down my neck. Let us appreciate what we have here in this country, including the freedom to exercise our faith. ❖

The Last Call Eucharist

We are all familiar with the Mass but what about the Last Call Eucharist? Well, it is familiar to around 150 people, some parishioners, some who come from afar, who regularly attend this Mass each Sunday at 10.30pm which was first celebrated on Sunday 30 April 2000 by Fr Chris McPhee whose idea it was.

‘We’re all busy and at the end of each day we wonder where life has gone’ he said. ‘I realised we needed to stop, to find time to contemplate, to hear the call of the psalm Be Still And Know That I Am God’.

‘The format is deliberately simple and it is hard to express the effect it has had on me’, says Claudette Ashburner who has attended nearly every one of the Last Call Eucharists. ‘The Gregorian Chant and the Adoration before the Mass set the scene for prayerful contemplation. And there is something of a sense of solemnity and mystery with the use of incense too’.

Annette Marskell OAM, another parishioner who has attended on Sunday evenings since the beginning of the Last Call Eucharist, has spoken about how the Mass appeals to such a diverse attendance. ‘People come from far and wide’ she said ‘and it gives them time for self-reflection and not worrying about the ups and downs of life for this one hour a week. There is no sense of their being strangers among the regular



photo: Juan Rojas

parishioners. University students are impressed by this Mass and their regular attendance is a tribute to their faith’. She pays tribute to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. ‘They are a very special group of priests who are in touch with the needs of the modern Catholic’.

There have been some changes over time. Initially there was some emphasis on creating a sense of mystique by having lighted candles on each side of the pews in the centre aisle but candle wax often overflowed onto the carpet.

With the new carpet installed when the major renovations were made to the interior of the church in 2008, it was not prudent to continue to do so and the emphasis has now shifted to the sanctuary where the candles are now positioned.

There has been slight shift too in the lighting where the only light

now is focused on the lectern and the pulpit to emphasize the message of the homily.

In the beginning there was no standing, with people kneeling at the appropriate time if they wished, and no singing, all this ‘to create a sense of stillness’ was how Fr McPhee described the style of Mass. However with the emphasis now at OLSH of singing by the congregations, the priest invites those present at the end of the Last Call Eucharist to take a candle and move to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and join in singing the Salve Regina.

Attending the Last Call Eucharist for the first time brings out feelings among some that are not felt at the regular Mass. Nada, who is not from Randwick describes it like this: ‘I feel this incredible closeness to God, it is just me and Him and nobody else there. My spirits are lifted to face the challenges that life brings’. ❖



... a sense of solemnity ...



Hope & Faith

Wissama Salama, in Australia since 2005, shares some thoughts of his homeland and the sustaining value of his faith.

I was born in 1981 in Aleppo, Syria I came to Australia in July 2005 as an engineer fresh out of university to continue my engineering studies. After completing two master degrees at the University of Technology Sydney – Master of Engineering Management and Master of Engineering Studies - I started working and I applied for permanent residency through the skilled migration visa program. I became an Australian citizen in October 2009.

...I didn't know anyone...

I had a great life in Syria. It was a beautiful country with lots of history, a safe place to live with free education and health care. My engineering degree was undertaken in a public university - Aleppo University – for free, and its high standing was accepted as a qualification that enabled me to do those advanced university studies here. I am a chartered professional engineer (CPEng) with Engineers Australia and a registered professional engineer in Queensland (RPEQ).

Arabic is my native language, and I did all my studies in Arabic. French was my second language at school and university. I did undertake a few English courses before I came to Australia and passed the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS). When I came in 2005, I still wasn't fluent in English. I had no friends or relatives, and I didn't know anyone in Australia.

I was born and grew up in a traditional Catholic family practicing my Catholic faith. When I first arrived to Australia, the only friend I had from back home was Jesus Christ. Church was the place that made me feel comfortable and strong every time I went to Mass.

Everything was going well until March 2011 when conflicts started happening in Syria. In 2013 I went to Lebanon to visit my family. This visit broke my heart and brought me to tears.

Imagine a person you really love (mum, dad, brother, sister, son, cousin, neighbour, friend, etc) who has lost his/her job, has been forced to leave his/her house, moved to another country for an unknown period with no plan for the future. Imagine how upset you would be if this happened to one person you love, but imagine if this happened to everyone you love and you care about.

...pray and hope for peace..

Every Syrian I saw in Lebanon was unhappy, stressed, depressed, had lost a lot, was out of work, unsettled, insecure, and scared for the future and overcome with a feeling of loss. Since March 2013 I started to support my family, but sometimes I feel emotionally empty and I can't support anymore. The only things that keep me going are hope and faith.

WISSAM SALAMA



In November 2013 I started praying the Rosary, I don't know what it is but after I pray it I feel nourished, positive, stronger and full of energy. I pray the Rosary every day and thank God for everything. Things are tough and it is hard not to have a home when everyone else has one. It is hard on me but what about others? What about people who worked hard all their life, built their retirement plans in Syria and now have been forced to leave their country with nothing but hope. I thank God because things could be worse.

I can't stop the war, but I can support people and pray and hope for peace and as Mother Teresa said: peace begins with a smile. Regardless of whether we believe or not, and who we believe in, I would like to close my article with a question:

- If we are physically sick, we go to the specialist and take medication
- If we are mentally sick, we go to the psychologist and take medication
- If you feel rejected, unwanted, lonely, and your heart is broken,

What do you do? And who do you go to? ❖

ST MARGARET MARY'S

Clovelly Rd (cnr Avoca St)
Randwick North NSW 2031

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

193 Avoca St
Randwick NSW 2031

Phone:

9399 6775

Web:

www.sacredheart.org.au

Email:

parishoffice@sacredheart.org.au

PARISH STAFF

Fr Peter Hearn msc PARISH PRIEST

Fr Prasad Rao msc

Fr Douglas Smith msc

GENERAL STAFF

Anita Micallef

Trish Myers

BRIGIDINE HOUSE HOSTEL CHAPLAIN

Fr Patrick Sharpe msc

INDONESIAN CHAPLAIN

Fr Aloysius Tamnge msc

Parish Magazine email

randwickmagazine@gmail.com

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The Back Page WITH FR PETER

The images on this Back Page and within this issue confirm the truth of the saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words".

The Church and Shrine were magnificently decorated with flowers and candles by the ever-generous sacristans and workers. Musicians and singers made each Mass special, with the Choir and orchestra at the Midday Mass and Blessing, outstanding.

Well over 1,000 parishioners, and not a few passers-by, had the opportunity to see what had been going on for the past seven months or so. There was also a sense of disbelief about: on the Thursday before there was not a blade of grass or garden to be seen – and skepticism was very high (but not for the 'true believers').

Thanks to our architects, Stephen Arlom, Robert MacNamara and Tamara Podgorsek of SARM Architects North Sydney, we have, as so many have stated, a beautiful addition to our heritage-listed buildings – the Church and Ventnor. While the offices are modern, the cloister harmonises so well with the Church.

Morabito Constructions, who are responsible for the building, have been excellent to work with. Luigi Ginardi, the site supervisor, has guided the work through the (inevitable) unforeseen disruptions of weather, the expected distractions of root systems, the totally unexpected and unwelcome 'find' of asbestos beneath a 1960s concrete path, the odd gas leak, and other changes to plans as the building grew. Through all of this he has been most obliging, patient and good-humoured. His attention to detail, especially to that of the brick work, is evident for all to see.

It was so good to have some of the tradesmen – electricians and brick layers – together with representatives of the architects and builders at the Mass and Blessing.

Of course, this would not have been possible without the generosity of parishioners from OLSH and SMM over many years, and to those who have generously supported the recent Fund Raising Appeal which will be near \$500,000 – allowing us to build debt free.

A special word of thanks is due to the Building and Fund Raising Committees for giving their time and talents so enthusiastically for this project. Thanks to the Office Staff who have weathered the change-overs with humour and patience, and to the MSC Community whose living space has been clogged with material from all over the place, the negotiating of corridors and living rooms requiring some agility. †



Debbie Lawrence



Debbie Lawrence



photo: Juan Rojas



photo: Juan Rojas