



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH
APRIL 2019

I have come so that they may have life
and have it to the full.
Jn 10:10



IN GRATITUDE

Now in its 60th year, the Catholic Enquiry Centre responds to enquires about our Faith by phone, mail and email. It offers information and free materials and connects enquirers to their local church.

As a measure of our sincere gratitude to all who support our work, please be assured of our regular prayers for you and your families. We hope and pray that your giving is richly rewarded, both in this life and in the life to come.

GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU. A GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER, RUNNING OVER, WILL BE PUT INTO YOUR LAP; FOR THE MEASURE YOU GIVE WILL BE THE MEASURE YOU GET BACK. – LUKE 6:38

YOUR WILL

The Catholic Enquiry Centre benefits from the generosity of many of our donors and supporters, even after they are no longer able to contribute on a regular basis. Those who have died and left a bequest to the Catholic Enquiry Centre give a gift which keeps on giving.

After meeting all ordinary obligations in your Will, you may consider a bequest supporting the Catholic evangelisation of our nation. The Catholic Enquiry Centre can supply a form of words for such an intention to your legal advisors.

If you love your printed copy, that's great. But if you'd like to use less paper then email us today and we will email your next issue.



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YOUR SUPPORT

**To aid the Catholic Enquiry Centre in its mission
in Australia**

While our hope is that your main contribution to the work of the Centre will be a prayer, some may still like to offer a small donation.

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APRIL 2019

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



IT IS BECAUSE OF JESUS THAT CATHOLICS HAVE A SACRAMENTAL WORLDVIEW...WE SEE IN HIS VERY EXISTENCE THE WAY IN WHICH THE SPIRITUAL IS MADE REAL IN THE PHYSICAL.

Stop. Look. Listen. Historically this advice was given to children to help them learn to cross the road safely. It was about paying attention and engaging the senses.

It is implicitly sacramental. That is to say: it engages the interior life of the individual (thought and attention) through their physicality (sight and hearing). This interplay between interior life and physicality is what Catholics mean by 'a sacramental worldview': where the interior and the exterior are intimately linked, where the whole range of human experience is considered valuable and of significance, and it is understood that one is the doorway through to the other.

This can seem obvious until you look at the ways in which Catholics have misunderstood and distorted their own teaching on this over the centuries. Some would argue we continue to do so. The recurrent temptation has been to either downplay the significance of the physical dimension of life in favour of a more 'spiritual' approach to faith and practice (typically: 'only the spiritual life matters, the physical dimension of life is just a hindrance – or even evil'), or to downplay the significance of the spiritual dimension as having no relevance to our 'real' physical lives. Here we find the attitude: 'how I live my life is my business and is separate from the teachings of the faith into which I have been baptised'.

Where each of us is on the spiritual/physical continuum can change and develop throughout our life of faith. All the time the invitation is to get them in balance, and to understand that both need to be equally revered and to be allowed to inform each other.

Why are you being invited to think about these things? It's that time of the year. During this month we engage with that most mysterious manifestation of the interplay between the spiritual and the physical that human beings have ever encountered: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus

that Catholics have a sacramental worldview, because we see in his very existence the way in which the spiritual is made real in the physical.

To understand who Jesus is we begin by acknowledging that he is God ('spiritual' par excellence) and he is a human being (with all the physicality this entails). Furthermore, to understand his suffering and death we need to recognise that this is not something God made Jesus do to pay back some terrible debt on our behalf, but that it is something God allows to happen to himself, as God manifests the interplay between the spiritual (love) and the physical (laying down his life for us – see John 15:13). God takes on the effects of sin in his own physicality that we might experience the healing we need in our bodies and spirits as a result of the harm we have done. The death of Jesus is not an act of revenge inflicted by an angry God. It is an act of love undertaken by God, which could only be achieved through Jesus: God made human.

Which is why the resurrection is so important. If you've been told it didn't happen, or that it was a purely spiritual reality, then you have been sold short. This is the cornerstone of our faith: that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead – both spiritually and physically. In this we experience the profound truth that the spiritual and the physical are forever interconnected, and it is through the interplay between the spiritual and the physical that you find who you really are and you discover who God really is.

Prayer is great, but only if it leads to action and then back to prayer. It's an eternal cycle. Please pray for the work we do and feel very encouraged to make that practical by offering a financial donation. It would be greatly appreciated. More importantly, give some thought to the ways in which your faith is made real in your own life. In this issue we offer further ideas and resources to assist you with this task, so central to our baptismal vocation.

Wishing you every blessing as you seek to bring the spiritual and the physical together in your own life. Get in touch if you would like some assistance...

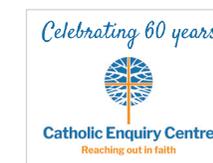


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MISSION PROJECTS

For 60 years the Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC) has been producing resources for people who have enquiries about the Catholic Faith. Through the support of our donors we are still able to distribute some of these resources for free. One of these resources is *Call and Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith*, which was released about 10 years ago. A project we are currently undertaking is to make contact with all those who received a free copy of this book in 2017 and 2018 to see how they are travelling.

Whilst the project had merit, there was a little nervousness as to how it would unfold. Firstly, would these enquirers respond, and if so, would we have the capacity to help them further? As I write this we have made contact with all our 2017 enquirers. Responses keep coming in and I'm surprised by the variety of questions and feedback that has been provided. People have been genuinely grateful for the free material. Some had no knowledge about the faith, and had found out about the CEC through Google advertising or brochures that some parishes have in their churches.



FOR 60 YEARS THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE (CEC) HAS BEEN PRODUCING RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Questions and comments included: "thanks for the book but I'm finding it hard to connect with a parish", prayer requests, "I joined the RCIA group and I'm now a Catholic", "my family were also interested in reading the book" and "how can I further nurture my faith?" We respond to these questions via email, and occasionally a long phone conversation. There are just some things that are better done via a chat than the written word.

This is the ongoing day-to-day work of the CEC. It is a real blessing to be involved in people's faith journeys. Thanks to those who make it possible.



SHARON BREWER
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INSPIRATION

A DISCIPLE OF JESUS – A SOLDIER OF CHRIST



MY LIFE HAS CAUSED ME TO DRAW DEEPLY FROM THE WELLS OF LIFE-GIVING NOURISHMENT OFFERED BY GOD TO THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW HIS SON JESUS, WHO CAME THAT WE MIGHT HAVE LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS.

Before his ordination as a deacon, and appointment as an army chaplain, Gary Stone served for 25 years as an infantry officer in the Australian Army. He was surprised when he was asked to consider becoming a chaplain before his deployment to the UN peace-keeping mission monitoring the ceasefire at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. There he was taken captive by militia and soon feared for his life. It was in the moment of seriously turning to God for assistance that he was released.

Before that incident he had always believed that God said to him on a daily basis: "I got you through yesterday and I'll get you through today." However, in the days following he reflected that God had spared his life for other purposes. He made a commitment that if he survived his mission he'd give the rest of his life to serving God in some particular, concrete way. He gradually became convinced that God had given him many experiences in the Army to be used in a new pathway that was opening up, and that he would patiently wait for God to open and close doors as he was led into some form of ministry. He was moving from being a Christian Soldier to a Soldier of Christ.

Today as a married Deacon of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Gary works for the health of the veterans' community and the people of East Timor as a self-funded retiree and volunteer in ministry. He leads a team of veteran clinicians and peer support carers to transform the lives of ill and injured veterans through encouragement, holistic health education, and life coaching.

I'VE SEEN GOD LEADING ME BY THE HAND TO HELP PEOPLE SEE GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE DIFFICULTIES AND SEE POSITIVE THINGS COME OUT OF THOSE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.

For Gary this involves going out to find what people's real needs are and then nurturing them by caring for the whole person. He addresses groups sitting on a small stool – with the words 'physical', 'mental', 'spiritual', and 'relational' written on its four legs – encouraging people to believe in each of these 'pillars of strength'. Spirituality is positioned as integral to this process, not an 'add-on' – you cannot preach the gospel when a marriage is falling apart, or when you're hungry.

"We share faith as part of a holistic package of wellbeing", says Gary. "I've seen God leading me by the hand to help people see God's presence in the difficulties and see positive things come out of those difficult situations."

To drive home the potential and importance of faith, the team takes groups of veterans to Timor for a 12 day retreat where they hear the amazing stories of the Timorese who were victorious against all odds, with faith in God as their underpinning hope. At the end of the process the aim is to give everyone the vision that they can be a carer. Gary reflects, "When you evangelise people you need to also train them to be leaders and ministers to others."

His 'Welcome to my website' (www.garystone.com.au) sums up Gary's life as an evangeliser:

"I hope that the material here will be life-giving and uplifting for you.

Over my journey of life I have had many experiences ranging from the joyous and satisfying, to the terrifying and traumatic. My life has caused me to draw deeply from the wells of life-giving nourishment offered by God to those who would follow his son Jesus, who came that we might have life in all its fullness.

I hope that you might find light and nourishment from what I offer here and I would be pleased to guide you to places where you might realise your full potential.

May peace be with you –
Your Chaplain, Gary Stone."

To read more about Gary go to www.garystone.com.au/about-gary where you will also find radio and television interviews.

HOW DO I SHARE MY FAITH?

WITH CHRISTMAS AND EASTER CATHOLICS



- Invite someone to come with you to the Easter Vigil – do you know someone who would find this really meaningful? This is the most beautiful liturgy of the year, starting with the Easter fire, then the darkness of the Church gently lit by the candles we hold, baptisms, song, and the Eucharist. So think ahead, invite someone special to you, and be with them at the liturgy and afterwards for a hearty supper.
- Use our 'Parish Easter Flyer' to advertise your Easter Liturgies – if possible, hang it up in the workplace. See 'Resources and Events' below.
- Do send Easter cards to family and friends for Easter – make it personal – offer to say a prayer for them – think of making them with your family.
- Be truly welcoming at Easter Masses as, for many people, this is a once or twice-yearly occasion for turning up at Church. You never know what impact a simple welcoming word or look can make. And don't groan if someone is sitting in your spot, as they may be quite new to the parish.
- Invite someone for Easter lunch – maybe someone you know will be alone on Easter day. For many families Easter lunch, or dinner, is a tradition. Inviting friends to your home, even people you hardly know, can be a time of evangelisation as they experience your welcome and the symbols of your faith in your house. Remember that your Christian hospitality is the heart of the matter at Easter.

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EVANGELISATION



FAITH JOURNEY is a monthly newsletter with short reflections and tips to help you on your faith journey. It is ideal for someone who might express an interest in spirituality but not be quite ready to make a commitment. Practising Catholics have indicated that they find the articles thought-provoking and worthwhile to share with friends via social media.

www.catholicenquiry.com/faith-journey



FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES 2019

There are many parishes and groups that do not have easy access to adult faith formation, especially that which helps people to fulfil their baptismal promise of sharing the Good News of Christ. We can offer a variety of topics and different formats.

- Parish/Diocesan Renewal
- Parish Pastoral Council Formation
- Parish Leadership Team Formation
- Retreat experiences for large or small groups
- Sacrament Preparation – helping parents understand the sacraments

Costs are negotiable, however we look to having our travel costs covered and a small hourly rate for delivery. Ring us to discuss further or take a look at our brochure:

www.nce.catholic.org.au/images/2018/about/NCE_Formation_Opportunities_2019_Brochure_FINAL_WEB.pdf



DOWNLOAD THIS FLYER TO ADVERTISE YOUR LENT, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER LITURGIES IN YOUR PARISH

This is a great evangelising resource for your parish. Use the template to add in all your Easter liturgy times and maybe other events happening in your parish. A number of parishes are giving it to families attending scripture classes or their Parish School of Religion. You might even be able to drop them into letter boxes or pin them to community noticeboards.

www.nce.catholic.org.au/the-resource-centre/the-resource-centre-index/evangelisation

CHRISTIAN INITIATION PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Many parishes are finding that young people in both primary and secondary school are asking the question, 'Can I become a Catholic?' Sale and Brisbane Dioceses have responded to the request by producing high quality resources for these age groups. The producers of these resources are more than happy to discuss with you how the resources can be most effectively used.

Crossroads has been developed for the two age groups 9-12 years and 13-16 years. You can read more about the program on the dedicated website, or phone Evangelise Brisbane.

Details are:
 07 3324 3440 | eb@bne.catholic.net.au
www.crossroadsRCIA.org

NEW

Activity Book

CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALE

Walk With Me

Christian Initiation for Secondary Students provides parishes and schools with theological background, detailed outlines and notes for weekly gatherings, references to the Church's rites, links to other resources and much more.

For more details contact:
 03 5622 6677
smorley@sale.catholic.org.au

UNABLE TO ATTEND HOLY WEEK AND EASTER LITURGIES?



MASS FOR YOU AT HOME

There are many people in our parishes who are unable to attend Mass because of illness, or on some occasions because of a lack of priests. Network 10 offers a weekly Mass service that many people have found helpful in nourishing their spiritual life if they can't join with the parish community. Let your local nursing homes or housebound friends know about this service.

Here is the link: www.tenplay.com.au/channel-ten/mass-for-you-at-home



THE GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY AND EASTER MASS

from the Vatican will be televised via Shalom Media this year. Viewers will need an internet connection to watch these telecasts. Please pass this information on to people you know who are housebound, and to their families (they might need to assist with internet and computer setup). You may also wish to share this with any nursing homes in your parish. Shalom Media can provide technical assistance and equipment (0401 444 495).

The link for Shalom Media is: www.shalommedia.org/live

Exact times are yet to be published.



PROCLAIM 2018 RESOURCES

Did you know that the keynotes from last year's Proclaim Conference are still available to view? These videos would be an excellent resource for Parish Pastoral Councils to watch and discuss. They offer ideas and inspiration for those wishing to enliven their parish in the areas of leadership, youth ministry and sharing faith. The speakers are leaders in understanding the society to which we reach out to.

www.shalomworldtv.org/proclaim2018