



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH

MAY 2019

Hail Mary, full of grace!
The Lord is with you
Lk 1:28



PRAYER FOR EVANGELISATION

Holy Mother, Mother of God, and our Mother,
to you, who untie with motherly heart the knots of our
life, we pray to you to receive in your hands
(the name of person you are praying for),
and to free him/her of the knots and confusion
with which our enemy attacks.

From Pope Francis' Prayer to Our Lady Undoer of Knots

PRINTED COPIES OF 'THE BRIDGE'

A reminder to parishes that this will be the last printed issue of
'The Bridge' that is posted to you.

However, we are very happy to send printed copies to parishes that
use them and we would encourage you to get in touch with us for
multiple copies to share with your community.

All parishes will still be emailed a digital copy and it would be
excellent if the download link could be shared with parishioners.

For other recipients of printed copies, if you'd like to use less paper
then email us today and we will email your next issue.

Contact 02 6201 9833 or info@nce.catholic.org.au



**National Centre
for Evangelisation**
(02) 6201 9833
info@nce.catholic.org.au
nce.catholic.org.au
[facebook.com/groups/
AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork](https://facebook.com/groups/AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork)



Catholic Enquiry Centre
Reaching out in faith

Catholic Enquiry Centre
1300 432 484
catholicenquiry.com
facebook.com/CatholicEnquiryCentre

THE NCE IS AN AGENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE IS A WORK OF THE NCE



COVER IMAGE: Painting of 'Our Lady Undoer of Knots'
by Suzzanah Fisk, created for the Parish of Our Lady of the
Rosary, St Mary's, Sydney. Suzzanah said to the Catholic
Weekly: "There are a lot of knots in my life and I think
having the companionship of someone who will sit with you
in your mess and help you sift through it really resonated
with me."

See the full story: www.catholicweekly.com.au/young-catholics-artistic-tribute-to-mary

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AGENTS OF EVANGELISATION NETWORK (AEN) EVANGELISATION IS NOT A DIRTY WORD!

At a recent retreat I was leading in Menai, NSW I asked the group
if I could take a photo of them to share on our new closed Facebook
(FB) Page for the National Centre for Evangelisation. That led a few
people to share their thoughts about the word 'evangelisation'. It
wasn't a term that sat well with quite a few of them. Some thought
it was very American, others associated it with other denominations,
not Catholicism. This was not the first time I'd heard these sorts of
comments. We have even had people write to our office to complain
about the use of this particular word.

Interestingly the Pope uses it regularly. And, my young adult children
don't seem to be phased by it at all. I'm not sure what the solution is.
Words are important, and the last thing I want to do is upset people by
using a word that conjures up something unpleasant or distasteful.

So, what should we do? Well, more often than not I use the words
'sharing or proposing the Catholic faith' rather than 'evangelising'. If I
ask people would they like to be able to share their faith with family
members, work colleagues, grandchildren or friends, they respond
favourably. They ask for resources and advice on how to do this. Some
tell us that they don't feel confident to share their faith, and others are
embarrassed because of the scandals that have rocked our church.

If one of the above descriptions sound like you, and you are a FB user,
then come and join our closed FB group. This is a safe place for you
to ask questions about the faith, find out how to respond to tricky
questions, and to share your ideas of how you have proposed our
Catholic faith to others. Jesus asked us to share our faith (Matt 28:16-2)
– let us help you to follow his command.

To join the AEN:

www.nce.catholic.org.au/networks/agents-of-evangelisation-network

To join the closed FB group:

[www.facebook.com/groups/AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork](https://facebook.com/groups/AgentsofEvangelisationNetwork)

(A closed group means that only people who are genuinely interested
in our aims can join.)



Menai St Vincent
de Paul Conference
– Faith Sharers!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

AS BAPTISED AS THE POPE



IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY THE CALL BECOMES VERY DIRECT AND VERY SIMPLE: THROW YOURSELF ON THE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD, LEARN TO PRAY AGAIN, AND ALLOW THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH TO LEAD YOU FORWARD.

I don't know about you, but it has occurred to me on more than one occasion that this is not a particularly easy time to be Catholic. In PR terms, from a number of perspectives, it is not looking great. The recent census tells us numbers are down and even among those who continue to practise our faith, there can be an air of confusion and disappointment. Perhaps even anger. It can be hard to speak about sharing our faith in this context.

So many Catholics I have worked with in recent years tell me that they no longer know what to say about their faith to their friends, their children, or their grandchildren. Earlier this year my office was contacted by an elderly man who was reflecting on this situation. As he comes to the end of his life he wonders what he can do as a last-ditch attempt to pass on the faith that has nourished him his whole life. His loved ones don't appear to be interested. He feels that his Church hasn't always helped him to do this. In fact, we may even have got in the way.

It would be easy to feel overwhelmed. But even my rudimentary study of the history of the Church tells me that we've been in tough situations before. The Church is in regular need of renewal and reform, and this should not surprise us. Any organisation that lets you and me through the door is never going to be perfect. For this is one of the glories of the Church: that all are welcome – saints and sinners alike. And this is the burden of the Church: that all are welcome – sinners and saints alike.

And as we look back over the history of the Church this is what we see: when things get difficult, the great saints come to the fore. God does not abandon his people, even as we might be tempted to abandon God. In times of difficulty the call becomes very direct and very simple: throw yourself on the grace and mercy of God, learn to pray again, and allow the search for truth to lead you forward.

For this I know to be true: there is nothing standing between you and the love of God. There is nothing happening in the world, in the Church, or in your own life that is preventing you and me from living the faith we have received. You are as baptised as the pope, and you are called to live your baptism as if nothing else matters.

But we are human beings and it can be hard to do this without support. For this reason I make you an invitation. Learn to think of yourself as an agent of evangelisation. By this I don't mean anything onerous. I simply mean that we must embrace the call to enter deeply into our faith and, where appropriate and as the opportunity arises, to take the step of sharing that faith with others.

Proclaiming our faith without a deep relationship with Jesus Christ comes across as inauthentic and may even undermine the mission of the body of Christ. And having a relationship with Jesus Christ but not proclaiming it with our lives reveals our faith as being shallow and perhaps self-serving.

But we need support. For this reason each of you is being invited to join the Agents of Evangelisation network. See www.nce.catholic.org.au/networks/agents-of-evangelisation-network for how to join.

Wishing you every blessing as you seek to live your baptismal vocation this month.

THERE IS NOTHING HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, IN THE CHURCH, OR IN YOUR OWN LIFE THAT IS PREVENTING YOU AND ME FROM LIVING THE FAITH WE HAVE RECEIVED.



SHANE DWYER
Director
National Centre for Evangelisation
Catholic Enquiry Centre
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MISSION PROJECTS

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE



In a previous issue I mentioned a few statistics about the number of enquiries we receive here at the Centre. The problem with using statistics is that it can dehumanise and negate the fact that every caller or person who emails us is a person who requires our careful attention and respect. Our small team really focuses on this belief. US Bishop Robert Barron said that he nearly always begins his podcasts and talks with the word 'Friends', as a reminder to himself that every listener is a child of God and deserves to be treated with dignity.

I must admit that over the past few months when I answer the Enquiry phone I will hold my breath waiting for an outburst about how bad the Catholic Church is. Sometimes the person will let go with a tirade of bad language and accusations. I do my best to respond as kindly and as honestly as I can. Sometimes I don't have answers to their questions. Sometimes I have to admit that I personally can't take away the pain they have experienced. Sometimes I simply can't quell their anger. But sometimes, after some deep listening and proposing a few ideas about how they might seek redress or mend broken relationships, the conversation becomes gentler and kinder. Sometimes the caller even thanks me for just listening to them. Some are genuinely surprised to find someone that will listen to them!

Some of the above experiences echoed in my mind when I participated in a few Plenary 2020 Listening and Dialogue sessions. The more I kept my mouth shut, and the more I listened in a respectful manner, the more I came to understand the other person.

Author, Bryant McGill wrote, 'One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say'. I couldn't agree more.



SHARON BREWER
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INSPIRATION

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE AT THEIR POINT OF NEED



HER FIDELITY TO THE SUPPORT OF CATECHISTS RESTS ON HOW OFTEN SHE IS INSPIRED BY THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CHILDREN, AND TO THEIR PARENTS, IN THEIR SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS.

Monday 4 February, 2019, marked the 10 Year Anniversary of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, also known as Black Saturday, one of Victoria's worst disasters in which 179 people lost their lives. Among hundreds of others at three Commemorations in her local area was Barbara Durand, a mother of eight and grandmother of 12. Dressed in a polo top and lanyard she was present with other Emergencies Ministry Chaplains offering mental health and psychological support to those affected by tragedy. Barbara's ministry for that day included speaking with people and checking how things were going ten years on. Her journey to this point in her life had started decades before in Tasmania where she grew up.

There she had said 'yes' to her parish priest's invitation to become a catechist and pass on the faith through sacramental programs to children who were neither engaged in a parish nor attending a Catholic school. Another 'yes', this time to marriage, would lead her to raise her family in country Victoria and work in accounting. She gave her 'yes' again when approached by another catechist to take up that role again. Soon she also assented to representing her area, the Central Region of the Diocese of Sale, on the diocesan catechist committee. From there, in 2004, she accepted the nomination to become the Diocesan Catechist Coordinator. Her fidelity to the support of catechists rests on how often she is inspired by their commitment to the children, and to their parents, in their sacramental programs.

However, most of the families involved in the sacramental programs, especially Confirmation, do not continue their engagement with the parish. For 13 years as sacramental coordinator Barbara says she has seen "children and parents turn up to the program but they don't tend to stay around in the parish afterwards"; she has thought about this for a long time. She is involved with bringing adults into the Church through the RCIA, and whilst she would also like to see more people come to Mass, she appreciates the young families that do come as

she doesn't see this in many parishes. She also tries to link school and parish so those at the school see themselves as part of the parish community.

Three years ago Barbara joined with some others in the parish who saw the need for a Bereavement Team and approached the parish priest, who was very supportive. A team of eight was formed and then trained by counsellors. Six weeks after a funeral they visit in pairs, the next of kin, for instance a spouse, to talk and see how things are going, and give a wooden holding cross and a Serenity Prayer bookmark. They offer a follow-up visit which people sometimes accept. They don't pray with them unless the person is open to it, as their focus is on the immediate needs of the bereaved. An annual remembrance Mass is also organised in November and, to cater for working people, it is held on a weeknight with supper afterwards.

Her outreach to people who are grieving has been extended into serving the wider community outside the Church. As a member of the Victorian Council of Churches her Diocese of Sale facilitated her entry to the ministry of supporting disaster affected people through the Council's Emergencies Ministry. Recent bushfires have seen her on duty wearing her 'Personal Support' white vest and talking with people at bushfire relief centres near where she lives.

Barbara sees all her commitments to people as sharing her Christian faith by connecting with people at their point of need and, once there, giving encouragement and hope. Even if she doesn't specifically talk about God she knows her actions are a witness of God's love within the community. Repeatedly through her life she has been willing to take another step and respond to invitations with her 'yes'.

HOW DO I SHARE MY FAITH? IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES



PEACEMAKERS,
WHEN THEY WORK
FOR PEACE, SOW
THE SEEDS WHICH
WILL BEAR FRUIT
IN HOLINESS

JAMES 3:18

- No-one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. People need to first experience our love and caring before they will listen to what we have to say about our faith or accept an invitation to Church.
- As the saying goes, "Preach the Gospel and if necessary use words." Barbara Durand is testament to this way of sharing her faith. If we as Catholics do the same then possibly others, including those with negative feelings about our Church, will make the connection that we are Jesus' disciples. (see John 13:35)
- Strive to "shine forth as a prophetic sign of unity and concord" (Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs I): we hold our tongue when we are tempted to say something negative about the Church in public, we speak up about the good things that happen in our Church, we consider the impact our Facebook comments might have on others. Cultivate what unites us as Catholics, rather than what divides us.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to "inspire in us words and actions to comfort those who labour and are burdened" (Eucharistic Prayer for Various IV): if you have a positive story about your faith be ready to share it. This may help others to focus on the good rather than on the bad.
- Remember that each person has a story and may have a genuine hurt that you must acknowledge. Offer to do what you can, but if you can't solve their problems, just listen. This is evangelising through faithful presence.

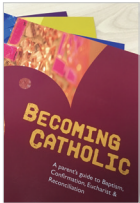
LITURGY AND FORMATION



LIFE IS CHANGED NOT ENDED

This book gives the family of someone who has died access to all the readings and prayers of the Catholic funeral rite, including the funeral texts from the new Missal. It enables the relatives to participate in preparing the liturgy.

Available from Liturgy Brisbane for \$15 plus P&H – www.shop.liturgybrisbane.net.au/products/life-is-changed-not-ended-new-edition



BECOMING CATHOLIC SERIES

Kathy Horan is the author of this set of books that will assist parents and children as they prepare to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation. The Parent's Guide would be particularly useful for mums, dads and maybe even grandparents taking a fresh look at the sacraments. It would also be a helpful resource for non-Catholic parents as they come to terms with the terminology and rituals of our Catholic Church.

For more information: www.garratt.com.au/bc



TWEETING WITH GOD

Are you looking for an excellent book that answers the many questions enquiring young minds have about God, Jesus and the Catholic faith? Then take a look at this book by Fr Michel Remery. To find out more about the book and the hundreds of topics that it covers, go to www.tweetingwithgod.com/en. This book is available from various sources on the internet and sells for between \$15 and \$22. This would make a great gift for Confirmation (where this sacrament is celebrated in late primary/early high school), or to leave around the house for visiting grandchildren!

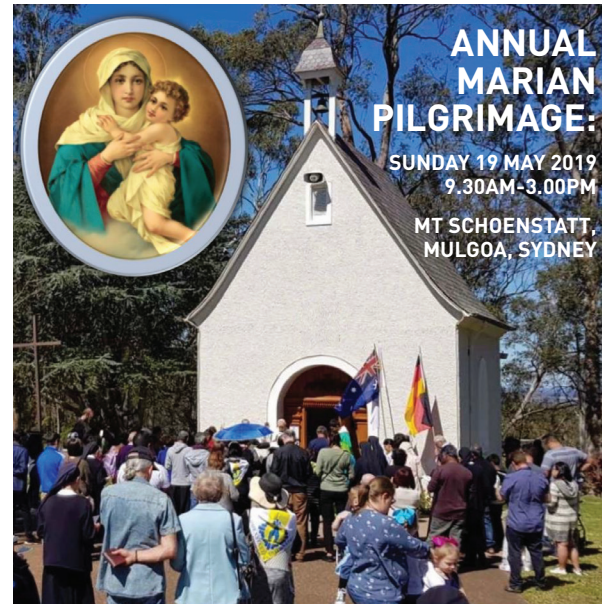


CATHNEWS

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JOIN US ON A PILGRIMAGE TO THE SCHOENSTATT SHRINE



For decades people have made a special pilgrimage in May to the Schoenstatt Shrine. Join other pilgrims for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Mass celebrated by Father Pawel Barszczewski OP, and a Eucharistic Procession finishing with Benediction.

www.facebook.com/MtSchoenstattMulgoa
www.facebook.com/SchoenstattAustralia
www.schoenstatt.org.au

RETREATS AND REFLECTION DAYS FOR WOMEN

REFLECTION DAY FOR WOMEN

Saturday 11 May, 9:30am – 3:30pm
 Mt Schoenstatt, Mulgoa, NSW

Mary our Mother and Educator.

Take a break during the month of May to reflect on the life of Mary. Day includes time for reflection, adoration and Mass.

Contact: Sr Mary-Louise Walsh
 02 4773 8338 | info@schoenstatt.org.au

BEHOLD I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

Saturday 4 May, 10:00am – 3:30pm

Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, NSW

www.carmeliteretreats.com.au/calendar/event/behold-i-am-the-handmaid-of-the-lord

Presenter: Br Emmanuel Noel, OCD

Let Mary lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus.

02 8795 3400 | retreats@carmelite.com

FIVE-DAY SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT FOR WOMEN

Monday 4 June, 7.30pm – Sunday 10 June, 9am

Sevenhill Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, Sevenhill, SA

www.sevenhillretreat.com.au/index.php/retreats/silent-directed-retreat

Presenters: Loyola Team (Stephanie Brabin/Jan Sobotta)

Five-day retreat for women offering opportunities to continue a relationship with God and experience prayer in a reflective and peaceful way.

08 8364 3834 | loyola@cis.jesuit.org.au

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP TODAY WITH THE WOMEN OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL SUNDAY

Sunday 16 June – Sunday 23 June

Sisters of St Joseph Retreat Centre, Williamstown, Victoria

www.sosj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2019-Retreats-Brochure-7v1.pdf

Presenter: Therese Quinn rsj

We will reflect on the missionary discipleship and leadership roles of Martha and her sister, Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala and consider how we are called to go forward joyfully as missionary disciples today.

03 9397 0344 | admin.sjbtsw@sosj.org.au

WOMEN OF WISDOM

Saturday 21 September

Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo, NSW

www.jamberooabbey.org.au/events/20190921

Presenters: LeeAnn Wein and Sr Mechtild Crawford osb

The inspiration of the Beguines – Mechtild of Magdeburg and Hadewijch.

02 4236 0533 | cottageretreats@bigpond.com