



THE BRIDGE

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



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## PRAYER FOR EVANGELISATION

CHRIST HAS NO BODY BUT YOURS ...

Christ has no online presence but yours  
No blog, no Facebook but yours  
Yours are the tweets  
by which love touches the online world  
Yours are the posts through which the Gospel is shared  
Yours are the updates through which hope is revealed  
Christ has no online presence but yours  
No blog, no Facebook but yours

Adapted from St Teresa of Avila's prayer 'Christ has no body but yours'  
by Meredith Gould, in 'Word Made Flesh and Shared Among Us', p. 14.

## ABOUT THE COVER

St. Isidore of Seville, Spain, from the Aberdeen Bestiary, England c.1200. In 1997, Pope John Paul II chose Saint Isidore of Seville (560-636) as patron saint of the internet to help guide us in its use. As well as reforming and building up the Church this great scholar compiled a 20 volume encyclopedia of all secular and religious knowledge, written in Latin, which was used as a standard reference work for much of the middle ages. It was a tool for obtaining knowledge much like the internet is used now.

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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COVER IMAGE: St Isidore of Seville

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## EVANGELISING IN A DIGITAL AGE

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST WEBSITE



As Head of Faith Formation at Marist College, Canberra, Nathan Ahearne saw the need for a central place for people passing on the faith, to share resources as well as exchange ideas across a wide range of areas. His solution is his user-friendly "prototype" website. The homepage proclaims: "This is a space for parents, educators, pastoral care providers and Faith Formators to share

resources, ideas and the challenges of evangelisation and catechesis with young people."

Nowadays he has less time to put into maintaining the resources on the website. His focus is more reflective writing for social media. This started by accident on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he wrote daily about a variety of things such as the physical surroundings and his own spiritual responses. He then emailed it to some of the other pilgrims in his group. Other pilgrims asked to be included in the emails. He says he realised he had a gift he had no idea was there. He'd done academic writing, but this was different.

Today his writing comes out of his experience of raising his own children, being out in nature, and being at school; he observes God in the everyday. He also keeps in touch with research and Church teaching, especially through podcasts as he is running. Despite little feedback from his readers, he has found that when his writing ventures into the digital space, it becomes more than just something for him but is formative for others.

Using his Graphic Design training Nathan has created, with his colleague, Carmel, 'Marist Minutes': short reflections that take a minute to read and are found on his website, and received via email and social media. He finds this a spirit-led ministry, and it's humbling when people respond.

Nathan received the award for 'Mission' in the 2018 Catholic Education Recognition Awards for the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn. The citation describes him as having a "passion for helping young people discover Christ and in providing opportunities where they might grow in their relationship with God." It also describes him as an "innovator."

'Passion', 'discover', 'opportunities', and 'innovator' speak to what it means to evangelise.

Visit: <https://eoiconnect.wixsite.com/start>

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### CAN WE DO SOCIAL JUSTICE WITHOUT AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST?



As Social Justice Sunday draws closer (September 29), I have been pondering the interconnection between the faith we hold and the call we experience to live that faith in the world. Which comes first? Perhaps it doesn't matter. What matters is the awareness that they are deeply connected.

Catholic spirituality, when well-rounded and healthy, is not solely concerned with the purely spiritual. This can seem counterintuitive, as you might think that 'spirituality' is only to do with spiritual things. However, central to the Catholic understanding is the conviction that the spiritual and the physical are deeply connected. This is because of who we believe Jesus Christ to be, and is a consequence of taking his teaching seriously.

We experience God in Jesus, for Jesus is God. This, then, tells us that now and for all time, the spiritual (God) finds its home in the physical (the world). We cannot live an authentic Catholic spirituality while somehow artificially separating our faith from our real day-to-day lives. This is central to the Catholic conviction that, while belief in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the source of salvation, if that faith is not expressed in what we do (i.e., our 'works'), then that faith is not real.

The connection with Social Justice should be obvious. The first principle that governs our relationship with the society in which we live, is that of the fundamental dignity of all human beings. While we might at times question how those we encounter may choose to live their lives, that does not undermine our awareness that they have an innate dignity that deserves our respect and, as required, our compassionate care.

There are many examples of where Jesus called those who believe in him to care for others. It can be distilled down to his teaching "love God and love neighbour" (Mark 12:30 – 31). You cannot have one without the other. But there is more to love than emotion and feelings.

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When Jesus speaks of loving our neighbour he tells the story of the Good Samaritan – a man who did not share the faith of the people Jesus was talking to, but who revealed in his actions a degree of love that showed the kind of person with which God is pleased (see Luke 10:25 – 37). God is to be found in those in need (Matthew 25:31 – 46), and serving them serves God.

We are so used to this idea that we can fail to recognise how unusual this was. The predominant belief had been that, if an individual or group experienced suffering or need, it was an indication that God had abandoned them. God was said to be with those who prospered, lived long lives, had many children, and made something of themselves in the world. It finds its modern equivalent in the so-called "prosperity gospel" of some more recently established Christian faith communities.

That this was not Jesus' perspective must be taken on board. He turns the idea that health, success, etc. are a sign of God's blessing on its head, and teaches instead that God is to be found in those who suffer. What's more, those who serve them are the sign of God's presence and are his hands as he reaches out to care for them. How real our faith actually is, is defined not by the strength of our conviction, but by the service we show to others. All you need is faith the size of a mustard seed (Luke 17:6).

A Christian faith that does not engage with the world, does not concern itself with the struggles and needs of others, and does not challenge the neglect of the economically disadvantaged, the suffering, the immigrant, the refugee, the mentally ill and so on is not the Christian faith. Furthermore, a way of being that presumes the superiority of one gender over the other, one race over another, one social and economic class over another, is inherently disordered. There are those laying claim to that faith who, by their actions and attitudes, have little right to do so. Social Justice Sunday is a challenge to us all.



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## MISSION PROJECTS

### THE DESIRE FOR FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTERS

Many years ago I worked as a parish Sacramental Coordinator. Almost every day I would have contact with parents of children who were receiving the sacraments. Occasionally these parents were experiencing some difficulty which prevented them from attending to all the pre-requisite meetings and/or documentation. Sometimes I would have the slightly unpleasant task of ringing parents to say that if certain things weren't attended to, their child might have to wait until the following year to receive the sacrament.

I would then invite them to come into the parish office for a chat over a cuppa. Sometimes this offer was declined. However, on many occasions the parent did come in and after some initial awkwardness we got to the core of what was going on in their lives. In so many cases the family was under stress: divorce, apprehended violence orders being put in place, a death, illness, financial stress and trying to juggle work and home life. The list goes on. Sometimes, after a few tears, we would then try to work out the best way to help their child prepare for the sacrament.



When I reflect on those many conversations I am convinced by the power of face-to-face communication. It is, as they say, whole-body listening. In our digital world, and especially here at the CEC, concerns, frustrations, worries etc are conveyed to us via email or outbursts on social media. How to deal with this

way of communication can be frustrating and challenging. That's why we need to take seriously the points raised in the Social Justice Statement for 2019-2020 regarding human encounter in a digital world. We have to be open to finding new ways of sharing Christ's love and mercy in this digital age, without losing the skills, and desire for, face-to-face encounters.



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## INSPIRATION

### DECLAN'S WELL



Renate Cassis, left, Jacky Krsnik, Melanie Dooner, and Fr Chris Ryan MGL produce Declan's Well.

Like most parishes St Declan's Parish in Penshurst, Sydney, prints a weekly bulletin. In addition it has just begun publishing a 14 page e-magazine entitled 'Declan's Well' "to share the great stories of faith and action taking place in our parish community" as Fr Chris Ryan, the Parish Priest, puts it.

Parishes are often named after saints to inspire them in building communities of disciples. Fr Chris has used St Declan's life from medieval Ireland to explain to the parish how this project can foster encounter. In the first issue, June 2019, Fr Chris recounts how people used to gather at a well that Declan used for prayer. Wells have always been places for community just as we find in the Gospels: "We want the e-magazine to be the digital-age version of the village well."

Fr Chris then develops three reasons for the publication. Just as people used to share stories at a well so "we want to celebrate the stories of people's encounters with Jesus". He continues: "as the original Declan's Well was probably an ancient baptismal site, we also want to mirror the ways in which people are taking up their baptismal calling to share the Gospel of Jesus through their words and actions." "Finally," says Fr Chris, "like St Declan's place of solitude amongst the cliffs of Ardmore, we also hope that Declan's Well provides a virtual "place" for your own reflection and prayer."

Conscious of people's gifts, Fr Chris invited a small team of people with backgrounds in writing, editing, and graphic design to produce the magazine. Although they had not worked together before, they decided to focus on completing the first edition in order to build momentum for this long-term venture, leaving the development of detailed production processes to later. "People's energies are not drained as much when they're giving from their gifts; they're energised," explains project coordinator Melanie Dooner. "I receive so much out of it spiritually, it gives me life."

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To position 'Declan's Well' as central to the parish's communication strategy, Fr Chris and the team introduced it at parish Masses and persuaded parishioners to subscribe via email. In this way the initial database of subscribers was established before the website link appeared.

"Fr Chris always says the front door of our parish will increasingly become our website," says Melanie. "This will give them a sense of our parish life before they join us." So it is fitting that 'Declan's Well' lives there on its homepage where it can be subscribed to, read, and downloaded. To the user, access seems easy, but working out how to make the digital version available was one of the biggest hurdles the team faced. It was solved by asking friends and parishioners familiar with this challenge.

The team values 'Declan's Well' as an evangelisation tool for it aims to attract people to the parish by proclaiming, "This is who we are so come and join us!" As such, it forms part of a new model of parish building where Catholic Alpha courses follow up and act as a pump for building relationships which can lead people to the RCIA. This has been the pathway for Ray whose reception into the Church is on the cover of the first issue. The parish has been energised by this approach which encourages a personal decision for discipleship. By mirroring this, 'Declan's Well' is enjoying very positive feedback.

Since the team sees this project as ministry it is already establishing effective production processes to enable more people with similar gifts to join them and carry it on into the future. Advertising is planned to enable printing in significant numbers for people who come to the Church and for those without email and a computer.

To contact for more information: [well.stdeclans@gmail.com](mailto:well.stdeclans@gmail.com)

Next issue is September. Subscribe, read or download from <https://www.stdeclanspenshurst.org>

See the inspiration for 'Declan's Well': 'Benedictus' e-magazine from Divine Renovation's St Benedict Parish, Halifax, Canada: <http://www.saintbenedict.ca/read>

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## HOW DO I SHARE MY FAITH?

### WITH MY WORK COLLEAGUES



The laity, by their very vocation, to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God, they live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations ... There, they are called by God that by exercising their proper function and, led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way, they may make Christ known to others."

*Lumen Gentium, 1964, # 31*

- Work colleagues are more likely to be interested in hearing about your faith if:
  - you have developed a good working relationship with them
  - you can be trusted
  - you reflect the values of the faith you are trying to profess
- If you are allowed to, have religious symbols on your desk, maybe a cross or a calendar with religious art.
- When asked what you did on the weekend, don't forget to mention going to Mass, or other church activities you might have undertaken.
- There are often many people who are searching for 'something' in their life but don't know how to articulate it. There are now generations of people who have not been exposed to religion at all. Could you be the person who introduces Jesus to them?
- Don't be put off by anti-religious/anti-Catholic colleagues. You have just as much right to be pro-religion/pro-Catholic – just try to do this in a kinder and more intelligent manner.
- Be ready for hot-topic conversations (e.g. euthanasia, abortion, scandal of sexual abuse). Can you give a different thought on such matters? Something that is different from the rhetoric used in the media?
- If you believe certain work practices do not respect the dignity of all staff members, can you speak up on their behalf?
- Are you able to put up flyers advertising Mass times for Easter and Christmas?

## EVENTS AND KEY DOCUMENTS



### SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement for 2019-2020 'Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world' affirms the positive possibilities for encounter and solidarity offered by new digital media.

Visit: <https://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications>



### WORD MADE FLESH AND SHARED AMONG US

A compilation of 30 short reflections for the 47th World Communications Day from 2013. "This unique project is a real testimony to the way in which Social Networks can be used for the greater glory of God." Bishop Peter Ingham

Visit: <https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/download-free-ebook-and-parish-resource-word-made-flesh-and-shared-among-us-here/>



### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY MACKILLOP

22 October - 2 November 2019

10 day pilgrimage: East Melbourne, Penola, Adelaide, North Sydney. Prepared by the Sisters of Saint Joseph pilgrims enter more deeply into Mary and Julian's stories and spirituality.

Contact the Pilgrimage Co-ordinator 02 8912 4818  
Email: [national.pilgrimage@mmp.org.au](mailto:national.pilgrimage@mmp.org.au)



### WHY BE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

17-19 October, 2019, Perth

An invitation to everyone who is interested in deepening their relationship with Jesus Christ  
Speakers: Tim Staples, Karlo Broussard, Dr Stacy Trasancos, Cy Kellett.

<https://www.evangelisationaustralia.com/events>



### EXTRAORDINARY MISSION MONTH OCTOBER 2019 - WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR DIOCESE

In response to Pope Francis' invitation, the Extraordinary Missionary Month is to be an opportunity for reflection, prayer and support for the missionary efforts of individuals, communities and the whole Church. Visit <https://www.catholicmission.org.au/emm/emm-events>

## APPS & WEBSITES FOR LITURGY AND PRAYER



### LITURGY HELP

Comprehensive resources for liturgy planning: official Mass texts, scripture and commentaries, homilies and reflections, music suggestions, Prayers of the Faithful, liturgical art, parish bulletin masters with reflections. See: <https://www.liturgyhelp.com>



### THE SUMMIT ONLINE

A website with free resources from the Archdiocese of Melbourne. 'The Summit Online' builds on more than forty years of service to liturgy across Australia (and internationally) by providing commentaries on the seasons, ministries and pastoral celebration of the church's liturgy, as well as liturgical notes for homilists, music suggestions and videos, and weekly reflections on the Sunday gospels.

See <http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Summit>



### LITURGIA

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Online liturgy preparation resources and library for PCs, Macs, Tablets and Phones.

Prepare Sunday and weekday Masses, school Masses, baptisms, funerals and weddings. Features include homily notes, commentary on the readings for newsletters, and a library of hymn lyrics.

See <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/liturgia/>



### UNIVERSALIS APP

Follow the readings of the day at Mass, with information about the saint of the day. Pray the complete Liturgy of the Hours. Also has Lectio Divina, Angelus, Rosary. Switch to airplane mode and turn off sound for use in Church.

Visit: <https://universalis.com/n-apps.htm>



### TRUTH & LIFE APP

Dramatised Audio Bible, Daily Mass Readings, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Supports family sharing for up to six.

See <https://www.truthandlifeapp.com>

## APPS FOR ENCOUNTER IN THE DIGITAL AGE



### YOUCAT Books and Apps

At World Youth Day 2011 a small catechism for youth 'YOUCAT' was launched by Pope Benedict XVI. It has now grown to a series of 10 books, 4 Study Guides, and 2 apps.

Visit <https://www.youcat.org>



### YOUCAT Daily App

Free. Read the Gospel of the day from Mass, the YOUCAT (Catechism) and DOCAT (Social Teaching) with an 'Inspiration' which makes more sense of the readings. 'Share' the readings with friends. In 'Your Journey' record each day when you complete your reading and so build a "5-minute habit" which builds into 'Badges' for motivation.

See <https://www.youcat.org/products/youcat>



### DOCAT APP

With this free app you can know the Church's social teaching through study guides. It encourages commitment to 'Join Pope Francis' Dream' to "read the DOCAT, study it in groups and go out to change your surroundings".

See <https://www.youcat.org/products/docat>



### WORD ON FIRE APP

Bishop Barron's 'Word on Fire', a ministry promoting the new evangelisation using new media. No account is needed to watch Bishop Barron's public talks & lectures, and many videos, but you have to pay to see all of them.

See <https://special.wordonfire.org/digitalapps>



### BIBLE LENS APP

Share Scripture quotes with friends. When you take a picture with Bible Lens, it identifies objects, expressions. It then searches the Bible for a verse to match, and overlays it with graphics.

See <https://www.youversion.com/bible-lens/>