



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH
FEBRUARY 2020

Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.
Gen 3:19 Ash Wednesday - 26 February 2020



PROUDLY
SUPPORTED BY



THANKS DONORS!

We are very grateful to our donors who have allowed us to respond to many enquirers, as well as provide free books to those who would like to know more about the faith. Here is a short summary for 2019:

Phone call enquiries: 436

Email enquiries: 317

Distribution of Call & Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith:
1341 books



In less than two years, we have introduced almost 1500 recipients of our free resources to subscribe to our monthly resource, Faith Journey.

Take a look at it! <https://www.catholicenquiry.com/faith-journey>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover Photo: Joan Brumby, Stations of the Cross, St Mary Star of the Sea, Milton, NSW. New Year's Eve Bushfires.

Ashleigh Donnelly, Centacare image.

"Lake View", Yattle Yattle, NSW S.Brewer.

Debbie Gates, DOW, Bishop Mascord and Fr Michael Dyer with members of the community.

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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THE NCE IS AN AGENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
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PRAYER FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY BUSHFIRE AND DROUGHT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE



Eternal God,
In wisdom and love
you created our earth
to sustain us and give us life.

We turn to you now
in faith, hope and love,
asking you to look with favour
on our fire-ravaged and drought-stricken land,
on our starving and displaced animals,
on our failing crops and burning
farms, towns and forests.

Strengthen, sustain and give new heart
to our farmers
and to all who are affected by drought;
be with those who support them.
Strengthen and comfort the victims of the fires,
those who have lost family, friends, property and stock.
Protect our volunteer firefighters and all members of essential services.

In your loving providence,
send abundant rain to quench the fires
and to restore our parched earth.

Father of all compassion,
hear our prayer
through Jesus Christ your Son,
in whom the promise of new life
has dawned, and
through the power
of the Holy Spirit,
the Lord the giver of life:
Renew your faithful people;
Renew the face of the earth.

Our Lady of the Southern Cross,
Mary, help of Christians –
Pray for us.
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop –
Pray for us.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

RENEWAL FOR THE EVANGELISATION OF TODAY'S WORLD



In his Christmas address to the Roman Curia (21 Dec 19), Pope Francis shares that reform must 'respect history in order to build a future that has solid roots and can thus prove fruitful'. As the Australian Bishops' renewed National Centre for Evangelisation (NCE) emerges from changes made in 2019, the history on which this office must build is diverse and deep.

As part of a holistic financial and missionary review of national agencies, the Australian Bishops have consolidated the Office for the Participation of Women, Office for Lay Pastoral Ministry and the Office for Youth under a renewed National Centre of Evangelisation (Formation, Youth and Lay Participation). This has streamlined resources significantly and ensured diocesan resources are prioritised for local ministry efforts.

Through this process, there have been staff across all agencies who have either decided to seek alternative employment or who have been made redundant. This has been a difficult but necessary circumstance of the process.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Shane Dwyer (Director), Marcus Amann (Senior Mission Projects Officer) and Michael King (Mission Projects Officer) from the National Centre for Evangelisation; Andrea Dean (Director) from the Office for the Participation of Women (OPW) and Office for Lay Pastoral Ministry and Ruth Durick (Projects Officer) from the OPW; and Rachelle Smith (Projects Manager) from the Office for Youth, for their contributions from which the renewed Centre will build.

In his Christmas speech, Pope Francis goes on to highlight that the aim of reform is so 'Church customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world' (Evangelii Gaudium, 27). Sometimes this purpose of reform can be lost among the challenges of human process or implementation. In our concerns that ministries have been cut or disregarded, we can lose sight of opportunities for growth and collaboration; or the important need for laity to take up, lead and develop new initiatives in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

The renewed National Centre for Evangelisation brings what has been on the fringe to the centre. It draws young people, women and laity to the centre of the Church's evangelisation in today's world and acknowledges their existing and critical contributions. We must continue to work proactively to empower their responsibility for the Church's mission.

The renewed Centre will continue to empower local evangelisation efforts and offer opportunities for renewal and support through national initiatives. Existing initiatives from previous offices that will continue include the women's Leadership for Mission program, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, Catholic Enquiry Centre and Proclaim evangelisation conference. Some projects will be consolidated for a more comprehensive response, while space has also been made to consider Plenary Council themes.

After 10 years as the Director of the ACBC's Office for Youth, I now humbly take on the role of NCE Director to build synodality among these ministries, people and projects for the evangelisation of today's world. Over the past 25 years I have been committed to the evangelisation of and ministry with young people, their parents and the renewal of parishes. I have worked in both rural and urban dioceses, movements, leadership programs, as well as national and international evangelisation events. In 2018, I was appointed as a Consultor to the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

I am passionate about the empowerment of laity and about synodality -- the interconnectedness of Church life and ministries for the accompaniment of all the people of God. Pope Francis so beautifully highlights in Christus Vivit that ministry,

'should involve a "journeying together" that values "the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church's members, through a process of co-responsibility... Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. No one should be excluded or exclude themselves"' (CV 206)

Church leadership cannot always resource and be solely responsible for the future. We all have a responsibility to become agents of evangelisation.



MALCOLM HART

Director
National Centre for Evangelisation
Catholic Enquiry Centre

AGENT OF EVANGELISATION

ASHLEIGH DONNELLY



Growing up Catholic, Sunday Mass and Grace before Meals were part of our family life. When I was 15-years-old I had surgery and subsequent time off school; this was a period of isolation and introspection for me. During this time I started journaling, and I grew to know God as my refuge and friend. I became fascinated with the Gospels and a Jesus who challenged the status quo. As a teenager, something about that intrigued me! I would volunteer for any social justice activity on offer. The encounters I had during these activities led me deeper into the heart of the Church.

Over time it became clear that God was calling me to Social Work and today I work at Centacare. We run a factory in Sydney that employs adults with an intellectual disability, and I coordinate an immersion program for high school students. Every afternoon I ask the students, "Where did you see God today?" Often the students will say, "But I don't know what God looks like." And then something clicks. God, they realise, was present in the beautiful people they spent their day with.

Two years ago I fell in love with a young man from my Diocese and last month we got married. There are many new and exciting things in our lives at the moment, including a new parish. In our short time there we have received some beautiful welcomes from other married couples. My hope is that we can imitate Christ's love and welcoming embrace in the same way we have received it.

Recently I was appointed to the Vatican's new International Youth Advisory Body. Our Australian Church is young and diverse, and there is something fresh that we bring to the international table. Our national youth events such as ACYF are unique, but there is also much we can learn from countries where the Church has several hundred years of history. Please pray for me as I prepare for our first meeting in April!

REFLECTION

WHERE WAS GOD?



**GOD WAS WORKING,
AS GOD DOES, IN
MYSTERIOUS WAYS.**

On New Year's Eve, my mum and I played phone tag between her home near Ulladulla, NSW and myself in Canberra. She was very concerned about the bushfires and my younger brother, Anthony. She said that he could see the fire on Egan's Farm Lane from his place at Conjola Park. My gut told me that this was bad. Very bad.

Only a few hours later, she rang again with the news: "Anthony is okay, but the 'farm' is gone." The 'farm' was my brother's home and mechanic business situated on a few rambling hectares with views to Lake Conjola in the east, Pigeon House Mountain to the west. It was the home that I grew up in.

In the days that followed, we picked through the rubble in the hope of finding some small mementos of what had been the Jansens' home for almost 50 years. But the sheer intensity of the fire meant very little survived. Glass, cars and bikes that my brother had been working on, water tanks and fences melted into each other – sometimes it was hard to even identify what we were looking at.

This is but one story of the more than 1000 families who have lost their homes so far this summer. And even these accounts pale into insignificance when compared with the tragic loss of life that accompanied the bushfires.

Time and time again over those early days I asked myself, "how will people find God in all of this?" Time and time again I found myself begging God to send the rain and to stop the carnage. But no rain came, and hectare after hectare of bush, homes, livelihoods, infrastructure and animals were savaged by this fire beast.

But then I started to see it. God was working, as God does, in mysterious ways. The 'field hospital' which Pope Francis speaks of was being established in towns and villages across our country. Vinnies, our schools and our parishes galvanised to provide support. During November, parishes had prayed for those affected by the drought. Now we were praying for those affected by fire. People who said that it had been years since they prayed called out to God in desperation, and maybe some of them had the sure hope that God would provide.

As my mum and I were buying lunch provisions to take out to the 'clean-up' team, we met a friend who told us about how she and her young grandson prayed and prayed that the boy's mum would be safe. The story of her being pulled from a burning house by a brave friend can only now be seen as a miracle.

Seeing countless media clips of people surveying the charred remains of their homes, but who expressed their gratefulness that they and their loved ones were alive, pricked heavily at my conscience. My faith tells me not to become attached to material goods. I wish I didn't, but I do.

People of all religions, and none, have been extraordinarily generous. In the weeks, months and years to come what role will Catholics play in the healing process? Will we be the face of Christ to those who will continue to suffer? Will it be an opportunity to mend the wounds in such a way that people will ask what drives us to keep reaching out?

If people are drawn to God through this event, will our parishes welcome them with open arms? Will we be ready to tend their wounds, and, if and when the time is right, to tell them how much Christ loves them? Will we respond to the words in Scripture to, 'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15)?

God has provided us with an immense opportunity to be like Christ in our hurting communities. As the 24-hour media cycle starts to go quiet on this story, will we as Catholics be prepared to be there for the long haul?



SHARON BREWER
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HOW DO I SHARE MY FAITH WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING GRIEF FROM NATURAL DISASTERS



In recent months Australia has been inundated with natural disasters, notably drought, fire and storms. For those of us trying to do our best at being intentional about sharing our faith, we can be lost for words as we try to reach out to those who are suffering. I'm also conscious that many of our donor supporters and agents of evangelisation have experienced first-hand the devastation of these recent events.

Here are a few thoughts on how we can be open to the movement of God in our lives at this time, and how we might bring God's love to those who are suffering.

- The 'field hospital' which Pope Francis speaks of is a real place. We see it on the local TV and we are probably seeing it in our communities. Let us work generously with Australians of faith, and no faith, in giving practical assistance.
- The Catholic Church is regularly criticised by secular society, and sadly by many people who use to call themselves Catholic. We need to remember that charities such as St Vincent de Paul and our agencies, whose primary task is to care for those suffering, are also the face of the Catholic Church. Let us be proud of, and continue to support these organisations.
- Learn how to tackle questions such as, 'Is God punishing us?' and, 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'. If this is something you find challenging, and most people do, then get in contact with us and we will provide you with some links to good reading on the topic. Or, ask your parish priest if he might speak about it at Mass or in the parish bulletin.
- If you, or someone you know, is showing signs of anxiety or depression, then urge them to seek proper medical attention.
- Be aware that in times of suffering, people who once had a connection with the church might return. Ensure your parish is ready to welcome them home.
- Similarly, there may be people who come searching for new meaning to their lives. You, and your parish, need to be ready to welcome them. What strategies do you have in place? Alpha? RCIA? A good website that is welcoming, informative and speaks to Christ's message of love?

LENTEN RESOURCES



DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG LENTEN PROGRAM: GRACE

Last year DoW sold 20,000 copies of their Lenten Program. The offering this year also looks like it will sell quickly. Grace is a 76-page full colour book (240x170mm) and Triple CD Resource containing short daily reflections (from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday).

Information about the resource and online purchasing can be found at: <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/lenten-program/>

Should you require further information, please phone (02) 4222 2461.



ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE LENTEN PROGRAM: BE OPENED: A JOURNEY TO NEW LIFE

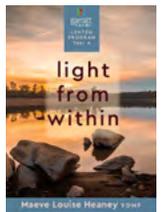
For 2020 the Evangelisation Brisbane's Lenten resources have taken on a new expanded look. Stunning artwork from Sr Mary Stephen CRSS provides an inspirational backdrop to each session. The Gospel Reflections have been written by Dr Michele Connolly RSJ (Catholic Institute of Sydney) and Dr Ian Elmer (Australian Catholic University). 4000 copies have already sold, so be quick.

Further information at www.lentprogram.com

Contact Evangelisation Brisbane:

Ph: 07 3324 3440, email: eb@bne.catholic.net.au.

Resources are also available from bookshops around Australia.

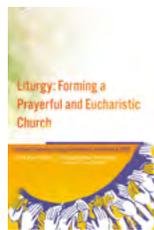


LIGHT FROM WITHIN: GARRATT LENTEN PROGRAM YEAR A

In this year's Lenten Program, Light from Within, Maeve Louise Heaney invites us on a journey to explore the light from within in recognition that the foundations of our growth in faith depend on the quality of our inner life of faith.

To view sample and purchase: <https://www.garrattpublishing.com.au/product/9781925009637/>

CONFERENCES & EVENTS



NATIONAL BIENNIAL LITURGY CONFERENCE

12 – 14 March, 2020

Novotel Sydney, Parramatta

International Keynote Speaker: Fr Paul Turner

Early bird pricing extended!

If you are involved in parish liturgy, then this is the Conference you should be signing up for.

bit.ly/nlc2020event



ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT CONFERENCE

9-11 July, 2020

St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong

International Speaker: Leisa Anslinger, USA.

This will be the premier conference for all involved in pastoral ministry in parishes, dioceses, groups and movements in Australia.

Claim the date: Registrations open 28 February.

Contact: Lisa Bright on 0448 652 720



CATHOLIC MEN'S GATHERING - BROTHERS

WHAT MUST WE DO? ACTS 2:37

Saturday, 25 July, 2020 9am-7pm

(including Vigil Mass)

ACU Strathfield

Claim the Date: Registration opens soon.

www.catholicmensgathering.com.au



PILGRIMAGE OF ST THERESE OF LISIEUX AND HER PARENTS STS LOUIS AND ZELIE MARTIN - AUSTRALIA 2020

For the first time in 18 years, the relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux, one of the most popular saints of modern times, are visiting Australia on a four-month pilgrimage with her parents, Saints Louis and Zélie Martin.

To access the full itinerary click here: <http://bit.ly/StThereseliterary>

OTHER RESOURCES



ONLINE WITH THE SAINTS

From the author of Tweeting with God, Fr Michel Remery, comes this new resource, being sold as both a book and as a free app for both iPhone and Android. This would make a terrific gift for any young person who you would like to encourage in their faith life.

https://freedompublishingbooks.com.au/product/info.php?products_id=21656



goodgrief

GOOD GRIEF

A part of MacKillop Family Services, Good Grief supports a range of evidence-based loss and grief education programs that help children, young people and adults to understand their experience and attend well to their grief following major loss experiences.

Our Natural Disaster program Stormbirds provides an opportunity for children and young people who have experienced a natural disaster to share their experiences of change and loss in safe and creative ways, understand and attend to their feelings, and learn skills for adapting and recovering.

Please contact Good Grief for more details about accessing Stormbirds for your school or community. Donations to support the work of this program are gratefully received visit www.goodgrief.org.au



stormbirds



Catholic Enquiry Centre

CEC WEBSITE UPGRADE

The CEC website has been substantially upgraded. There is still more work to do! However, you will find more than 30 new articles on important tenets of our faith. Please take a look and send us your feedback.

www.catholicenquiry.com