



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS  
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH

MARCH 2020

Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.  
John 4:14



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## PRAYER FOR LENT

One day my life on earth will end;  
the limits on my years are set,  
though I know not the day or hour.  
Shall I be ready to go to meet you?  
Let this holy season be a time of grace  
for me and all this world.  
“Teach us to number our days aright,  
That we may gain wisdom of heart.”

O Jesus, you place on my forehead  
the sign of your saving Cross:  
“Turn from sin  
And be faithful to the gospel.”

How can I turn from sin  
unless I turn to you?  
You speak, you raise your hand,  
You touch my mind and call my name,  
“Turn to the Lord your God again.”

These days of your favour  
leave a blessing as you pass  
on me and your people.  
Turn to us, Lord God,  
and we shall turn to you.

*Adapted from Catholic Prayers & Devotions, Edited by Rev Victor Hoagland, CP. Regina Press, New York: 2000.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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**Catholic Enquiry Centre**  
1300 432 484  
[catholicenquiry.com](http://catholicenquiry.com)  
[facebook.com/CatholicEnquiryCentre](https://facebook.com/CatholicEnquiryCentre)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY RENEWAL



## THROUGH ASKING “WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SAYING?” WE HAVE NATURALLY NEEDED TO PUT ASIDE THAT WHICH IS OBSTRUCTING US FROM HEARING THE SPIRIT.

Lent is a season where we are asked to de-clutter, to leave behind that which is not essential and to re-focus on Christ. Many give up small luxuries, for example chocolate. Some young adults will challenge themselves to give up social media for Lent, so as to focus on human relationships. Families may commit to spending more time together or make donations to those less fortunate. These are all important and worthy sacrifices, as long as they challenge us. Lent is not about an easy sacrifice. It must challenge our personal behaviours and our spirituality, therefore allowing a renewed focus on Christ.

This Lenten fast must also be applied to our community life. Many communities, either work or faith communities, gather for Lenten reflections each week. Taking this time for communal prayer and personal sharing is essential for the development of relationships, which are the foundation of a successful community. In these reflections we must also consider ourselves as part of the community and the implications for our community.

We must ask ourselves what are the Scriptures asking of our community? What are those things as a community we must de-clutter, to put to the side, to see if they are in fact as essential as we think? With limited, and in some cases diminishing, resources, what must change for us to become more focused on and be more like Christ?



**MALCOLM HART**  
Director  
National Centre for Evangelisation  
Catholic Enquiry Centre

## FORMATION

### MASS READINGS IN LENT AND THE RCIA



There is often a small sigh of relief for those involved in the RCIA liturgies when we reach Year A in our cycle of readings. For those of you who might not have noticed that, regardless of whether we are in Year A, B or C, during Lent when we conduct what is called the “Scrutinies” we are to use the readings from Year A.

Some liturgy teams struggle with this, because often they are making their liturgy plans well in advance and then they discover that there are people preparing to be brought into the Church, and they have to cater for this in their planning. The priest may also have to consider more carefully his homily for that day.

If you want to get a better understanding of this, you can refer to the Rite (#128-133) and/or take a look at this article in the Christian Initiation Australia’s Network News, Summer 2019 issue, (<http://bit.ly/2SGInZS>).

The three readings the elect, and indeed all of us, are asked to reflect on are:

- *The Woman at the Well* (John 4:1-42), because Christ is our living water;
- *The Man Born Blind* (John 9:1-41), because Christ is the light of the world;
- *The Raising of Lazarus* (11:1-41), as a reminder of the resurrection and life.

These three readings from the Gospel of John have been chosen for a particular purpose. RCIA #126 says that Lent “is intended to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Saviour”. These readings can help in that reflection.

If you have some time over Lent, then I recommend immersing yourself in these three readings. Imagine yourself as the woman, the blind man or those watching on as Lazarus comes back to life. Do you see Christ as the living water or the light of the world? Does the miracle of Lazarus’ rising from the dead help you to believe, and profess more deeply who Jesus really is?

## AGENT OF EVANGELISATION JACQUI GIULIANO



When I started in my position at the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, I remember saying to people that it felt like I was holding a bunch of balloons and each of the strings was a different part of my life experience that seemed to have been brought together for this role.

As a “cradle Catholic”, the realisation that some people didn’t know they were loved by a personal God seemed foreign to me and somehow registered a deep sadness within. Over time, this has translated into a deep desire to share this “knowing” of being loved and is, I hope, reflected in every facet of my life; my desire is to share this, to embody it. Certainly I’ve been tested through the usual challenges and hurdles life throws at us, but I believe this helps me to be an authentic witness and a relatable traveller on the road.

My answer for as long as I could remember to the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” was always the same: a teacher. Why? Because I wanted to share with those children that God loves them.

I was lucky enough to become a teacher, a wife, a mum to six beautiful children (now seven with our first son-in-law) and found myself invited into parish ministry as a pastoral associate. The term “vocation” is sometimes only used for those in ordained ministry, but I truly believe that each of the roles I live has come from a place of call for me.

Much of my growth has come through saying “yes”. When the opportunity arose to apply for my “dream job”, it was the encouragement of another pastoral associate that led me to do so. It is truly a blessing to be part of a network of fellow travellers who are the hands, feet and heart of our God, and extraordinary to experience being an instrument of the Spirit in my own parish community and through my work.

*Jacqui Giuliano is the Formation Specialist in the Mission team of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.*



## CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE ENQUIRIES



As many of you would be aware, the Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC) is a work of the National Centre for Evangelisation, which is an agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC). In our 60 years of operation, we have had to keep our eyes open to the signs of the times in order to respond effectively to the broad range of enquiries we receive.

With the recent restructure of the ACBC, I have found myself summarising what that broad range of enquiries looks like to people who want to know more about the CEC. It was suggested to me that readers of The Bridge might like to read about some of these enquiries. So, here are some examples.

- The most popular question is where or how do I get a copy of my Baptism certificate? As proof of Baptism is required for marriage, and increasingly required for parents requesting their child to be baptised or for enrolling their children in Catholic schools, this is one we answer almost every week.
- How can I get some information about the Catholic faith? Most of these enquiries come to us through our Google ads campaign. That is, people find out about us when they are on the internet and can request a free book about the faith. We also invite these people to subscribe to a monthly email from us which contains a short spiritual reflection (see Faith Journey - <https://www.catholicenquiry.com/faith-journey>).
- What is the CEC's view on what is being presented in the secular press? This is what we might call "hot-button" issues. In the last 12 months this has included religious freedom, institutional responses to child sexual abuse, seal of confession and euthanasia.
- Information about the sacraments, especially from parents who have not been able to meet their local parish's expectations about preparation and celebration.
- Event information. For example, what is the itinerary for the St Therese of Lisieux relics?
- What are the rules for choosing Godparents?
- Can I get an annulment? How much will it cost? What do you think my chances are?
- Can I speak with a bishop or whoever is in charge of the Catholic Church in Australia? People are often quite

surprised and frustrated that a bishop is not available to take their call. We do our best to point them in the right direction depending on their particular concern.

- Professional standards matters. The CEC does not get involved in these matters and refers the enquirer to the most appropriate organisation to deal with their concern.
- What are the Holy Days of Obligation in Australia?
- I haven't been to Confession for a long time. Could we offer some advice about how to go about it?
- What are the rules about receiving communion? In the hand or on the tongue?
- People from overseas wanting information about how the Catholic Church assists refugees and migrants.
- People from other denominations wanting to understand why Catholics believe what they believe. For example, why is Mary important and why do we believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist?
- When is it okay not to attend Mass? This is of particular concern to the frail and sick in our community who want to fulfil their Mass obligation but are no longer able to.
- People with mental health issues. These are very tough to deal with as it is hard to ascertain how mentally unwell they are. They can be abusive, sad, confused, under the influence of alcohol or drugs and are often just wanting someone to speak with.
- Resources for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), adult faith formation and sacramental preparation.
- Will we pray for the enquirer? Sometimes it is a prayer request, but on the rare occasion we get someone who would like to be prayed for over the phone.

Many of the above questions are addressed on our CEC website. However, it is near impossible to predict the myriad of questions we might be asked. So, thank you to our donors for their ongoing support. You make it possible to have someone here to answer these enquiries, no matter how unusual they are!



**SHARON BREWER**  
National Centre for Evangelisation  
Catholic Enquiry Centre  
[mission@nce.catholic.org.au](mailto:mission@nce.catholic.org.au)

## SHARING MY FAITH THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING YOUR OWN STORY



When it comes to proposing our faith to others, one of the go-to Scripture quotes goes something along the lines of always being ready to give an account for that hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15). It's a great quote, but personally I find it daunting.

Firstly, I sometimes feel that I'm not theologically competent enough to talk about my Catholic faith,

especially with people who are very well versed in Scripture and who seem to have had a lot of practice talking about their faith (or their atheism or agnosticism).

Secondly, I don't feel confident that my conviction about God, Jesus and the Catholic faith will convince the other person.

Thirdly, I don't have an extraordinary single experience about how God, Jesus and the Catholic faith became important in my life. My "testimony" is fairly ordinary.

But over time, I have come to learn the following.

- That as a baptised Catholic I am called to share my faith, by whatever means God has given me.
- That in my vocational call of being a wife and mother, I have been given the opportunity to nurture faith in others.
- That while men and women have different roles available to them, I should not see that as a barrier to sharing my faith in the myriad of settings where I live out my life.
- That I must take the time to work out what my story of faith is. Where has Jesus, and being a member of the Catholic faith impacted my life in such a way, that both have become so important to me? People aren't interested in a text book response. They want my story, in my own words, and no matter how imperfect they are.

If you haven't worked out what you are going to do for Lent, then maybe this is it. Take the time to write down your story. Practice it. Be ready to share the hope that knowing Jesus can bring.

## RESOURCES + EVENTS

### RESOURCES

Still Listening to the Spirit  
Woman and Man Twenty Years Later

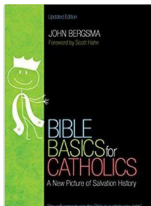
DISCUSSION GUIDE



### STILL LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT: WOMAN AND MAN TWENTY YEARS LATER – DISCUSSION GUIDE

This discussion guide accompanies the anthology *Still Listening to the Spirit: Woman and Man Twenty Years Later*, which was published last year. It provides starting points for engagement with each of the essays. It can be used for personal reflection, or in a parish, school or community group context. Several discussion starters are provided for each essay. You might choose to focus on one or two of the essays or to work through the whole anthology reflecting on each of them. Likewise, you may choose to focus on one or two of the questions in relation to any given essay, or to work your way through all of them.

The free download can be obtained from: <http://bit.ly/2PIP0rC>



### BIBLE BASICS FOR CATHOLICS

John Bergsma is a convert to the Catholic faith. Bible Basics for Catholics, which has sold more than 60,000 copies, highlights Bergsma's teaching skills as well as his biblical scholarship. He writes with a keen pastoral sensitivity and adds a little humour along the way.

Bergsma is a prolific writer and his books are easy to obtain over the internet and in many Catholic bookstores. Other titles include:

- *New Testament Basics for Catholics*
- *Psalms Basics for Catholics*
- *Stunned by Scripture: How the Bible Made Me Catholic*
- *Yes, There is a God. And Other Answers to Life's Big Questions*
- *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls – Revealing the Jewish Roots of Christianity*



### RCIA CONVERSATIONS – VIDEO OR PODCAST

The Christian Initiation Australia Network has started to develop a series of video/podcasts. At the end of 2019 they spent a day filming Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal from TeamRCIA from the USA. In this video they speak with Sharon Brewer about their Australian experience, their thoughts on our Plenary Council 2020 process, comparing evangelisation and the RCIA process in the US and in Australia, and the joys (and pitfalls) of a married couple working together in ministry. Enjoy!

Link to Video or Podcast: <http://bit.ly/37SGtbV>

### CONFERENCES



### CHRISTUS VIVIT - CHRIST LIVES AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY CONVENTION 2020

Archdiocese of Hobart, St Mary's College  
9-11 July 2020  
Bookings Open March 2020.

The 2020 Youth Ministry Convention invites all those from parishes, schools and communities to come together and reflect upon Pope Francis post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit – Christ Lives*; the invitation for the entire people of God to accompany young people. The Convention is the largest and most diverse gathering of those who accompany young people in schools, parishes.

Visit [www.acymc.org.au](http://www.acymc.org.au) for more details.



### CATHOLIC MEN'S GATHERING - BROTHERS WHAT MUST WE DO? ACTS 2:37

Saturday, 25 July, 2020 9am-7pm  
(including Vigil Mass)  
ACU Strathfield

Registrations open in March.

[www.catholicmensgathering.com.au](http://www.catholicmensgathering.com.au)



### ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT CONFERENCE

9-11 July, 2020  
St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong  
International Speaker: Leisa Anslinger, USA.  
For more details and registration: [nappaevents.org](http://nappaevents.org)  
Contact: Lisa Bright on 0448 652 720

This will be the premier conference for all involved in pastoral ministry in parishes, dioceses, groups and movements in Australia. With over 45 workshops covering a broad range of topics that will enhance parish life, this conference is one that should not be missed.

Registrations open 28 February. Note, this conference is being held during NSW school holidays. Please book travel and accommodation ASAP to obtain the best prices.



### SISTERHOOD NATIONAL CATHOLIC WOMENS CONFERENCE

20-22 March 2020  
The Tops Conference Centre  
51 Bendena Garden Road  
Stanwell Tops NSW 2508  
Enquiries: [info@sisterhood.org.au](mailto:info@sisterhood.org.au)  
Book here: <https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=556337&>  
Contact: Von Hosking 0401 815 853

Sisterhood is a national Catholic women's movement that seeks to support women from all walks and stages of life. The Sisterhood Conference aims to empower women to return to their own parish, community, family and workplace to make a difference.

The weekend will be full of dynamic talks, quality sisterhood time and most importantly an encounter with our amazing God who loves us beyond measure and pours out His grace in abundance.