

Sandpiper e-News

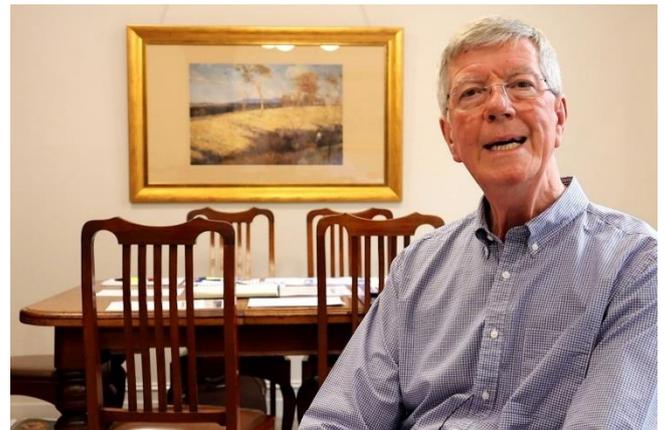
Sandhurst 2023 SCRIPTURE TALKS

The Acts of the Apostles "Making decisions with the Holy Spirit"



Join Scripture Scholars Dr Rosemary Canavan and Rev. Dr Brian Boyle on a journey through the "Acts of the Apostles" focusing on the elucidation of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the Church and the activity of the Holy Spirit in the process of discernment in the Council of Jerusalem.

These Scripture Talks will help us to reflect on the ways the Holy Spirit has been present in times of change for thousands of years, and how we continue to discern with the help of the Holy Spirit. By attending these online Scripture Talks you will gain a general understanding of Luke's "Acts of the Apostles", including knowledge of the literary genre, structure, author, intended audience and key themes. There will also be panel discussions and the opportunity to ask questions.



"Acts focuses principally on the preaching ministry of Paul and his strategies of establishing new Christian communities and staying in contact with them through his letters. Acts has a distinctive literary genre in the New Testament canon, almost like a select history of the early Christian community. Its emphasis on discernment, prayerful reflection and, indeed, synodality makes Acts a topical and enjoyable work for study and reflection."

Rev. Dr Brian Boyle



It was a moment that changed their lives for ever ... The wind of change blew. The sound of a violent rush of wind, all together in one place, all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. It was Pentecost! This moment sets off a chain reaction that unfolds through the Book of Acts; it is the birth of the Church.

It is a marvellous fantastic journey of discovery and it's a never-ending story ..."

Dr Rosemary Canavan

Accreditation

These scripture talks are eligible for maintaining accreditation for teaching in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Sandhurst. In other dioceses teachers should check with their education office.

Cost These talks are at no cost.

Via Zoom

Tuesday 9 May 7.00 - 8.30 p.m.

An Overview of the Acts of the Apostles,
presented by Rev. Dr Brian Boyle.

There will be an opportunity for comments and questions after Fr Brian's presentation.

Tuesday 16 May 7.00 - 8.30 p.m.

"Gathered in the Upper Room" [Acts 1:12-26]
presented by Dr Rosemary Canavan.

There will be a panel dialogue with Bishop Shane and time for small group conversations after Rosemary's presentation.

Tuesday 23 May 7.00 - 8.30 p.m.

"The Council of Jerusalem" [Acts 15:5-29]
presented by Dr Rosemary Canavan.

There will be time for small group conversations and a panel dialogue with Dr Chris Cotter and Fr Brian Boyle after Rosemary's presentation.

Book online

Please book all sessions directly through [Trybooking.com](https://www.trybooking.com). You must book to receive Zoom details to access livestream.

[Click here to register.](#)

If you cannot register with Trybooking, or are not familiar with Zoom, please contact our office on 5445 3600 and ask for Leslie.



SANDHURST MISSION AND PASTORAL COUNCIL (SMPC)



FIRST MEETING 28-29 APRIL

Members of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council will conduct their first meeting in Shepparton on 28 and 29 April 2023. Please pray for the Council using the Prayer for the Mission and Pastoral Council.

Mission and Pastoral Council

See end of newsletter for Prayer

RIGHT OF COMMISSIONING AT CHRISM MASS

Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council Members were commissioned by Bishop Shane Mackinlay at the Chrism Mass (Mass of the Holy Oils) at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Tuesday of Holy Week, 2023. After making their vows at the altar, Members lit a small candle from the Paschal Candle and the Bishop proclaimed:

"Christ our Saviour is the light of the world. Be a beacon of light in the life of the Church of Sandhurst.

Your task is to walk in the light of Christ and to share it with others. May the light of these candles remind you of our mission to let the light of Christ shine out for all to see.

Let us pray the prayer for the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council."

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER



Before saying a prayer to consecrate the Chrism Oil, Bishop Shane breathes over a vessel containing oil and balsam, a gesture which symbolises the Holy Spirit coming down to consecrate this oil and which recalls Jesus breathing on his disciples after the Resurrection.

And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

(John 20:22).



After renewing their priestly vows at the Chrism Mass on **Holy Tuesday**, Sandhurst Clergy, Altar Servers, and guest Clergy, gathered for a quick photograph on the steps of Sacred Heart Cathedral.



On **Holy Thursday**, Bishop Shane washes the tiniest of feet, repeating Jesus' gesture of humility when he washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. The tradition apparently goes back to the 12th Century.

PASSION EVENT MOVES US TO DEEPER FAITH

The banging of drums, the rattling of chains, a visceral human scream, the crack of lightning, the raw of thunder – there, trembling beneath the dark **Good Friday** sky was St Brendan's Church – its congregation holding candles in palpable silence.

The dramatisation of the Stations of the Cross at St Brendan's is "always a solemn and very emotional experience," said Musical Director and Coordinator, Dale Wright. "It's done so beautifully and respectfully." Dale says that

the dramatisation Team goes to great lengths to ensure the event "takes a hold of everyone" so it's produced very professionally.

"Jesus dying on the Cross for us is core to Christianity; we want people to experience the Passion and to connect more deeply with their faith," explains Dale. "The professional lighting and sound installations create an almost physical experience of lightning, thunder and the Church shaking!" Yet he believes the raw emotion experienced within participants comes from our own humanity and spirituality.

St Brendan's Church was packed; people had come from all over Victoria to witness the Good Friday story. As Dale recounts:

"When Jesus was forcefully brought into the Church there was banging of drums, the rattling of chains and the ringing of bells. Angela Connelly sang Pie Jesu as Jesus was being condemned and this really set the tone for the evening. Images of the crucifixion were projected on to the dome of the Church, creating a truly immersive experience."

When Jesus was being crucified, the congregation sang as one "Take me Home" and "Here I am Lord". Everyone was worshipping with their hearts and voices.

After Jesus left the building, the entire congregation was invited to come forward to



light a candle for their intentions. This year each person was given a Cross, made from a palm by members of the Shepparton Youth Group. It was a lovely way to finish."

The dramatisation of the Stations of the Cross is a thirty-year-old St Brendan's tradition. In 2023, after a three-year COVID-19 hiatus, it was back in full force with an all-new cast.

"We were a month out and still didn't have enough volunteers to cast key characters," said Dale. "I told Fr Joe that we were struggling to find people, I don't know how but, by the Grace of God, we managed to find a stellar cast and pulled the whole thing off in the space of a month." Dale paused for a moment, as if to question whether Fr Joe had pulled a few strings or had asked someone higher up to pull some strings for him.

Every dramatisation over the years has been different; each year focusing on a different theme, or different character from the images of the Stations of the Cross. Writer and Director, Les Billing, writes a fresh script every year. "I really want people to get into what the crucifixion means to us today," he explains.

In past years, perse themes such as rejection, abandonment, loneliness have been explored through the Stations of the Cross. This year, following on from the isolation of the global pandemic and the Shepparton floods, various

themes such as anxiety and depression, were explored within the script.

Les, who has a Master's degree in theology, enjoys employing Scripture in script. "I can apply a lot of scripture to the script, drawing from all the Gospels. There's always something appropriate and timely somewhere. This year, the script was scripture-heavy and more verbose, so using a narrator worked very well," says Les.

"Even though Les prepares a script, he doesn't expect the cast to stick to it verbatim on the night. "It doesn't matter if the dialogue isn't perfect on the night. There have been some very good impromptu interpretations of the script on the actual night – the Holy Spirit moving people," says Les.

Speaking of Kirk Nicholas, who played the role of Jesus, Les exclaimed, "Kirk was magnificent. He really got into the depth of the role; he wanted to carry the cross himself; he wanted to fall; he wanted to feel the passion ... it's a very heavy cross and it's amazing how he maintained his expression over the course of the fourteen Stations of the Cross."

Kirk's wife, Maria played Veronica, and their two children also had roles in the dramatisation. Jesus' Mother Mary was played by Zoe Hamilton; Mason Crosier played the high priest who accused Jesus; and brothers, Taerk and Oisn Joseph, played soldiers who nailed Jesus to the Cross as he screamed in agony – "They looked as fierce as eleven-year-olds can look," commented Les.

Les Billings is a teacher at Notre Dame College, Shepparton. He has been directing and writing the script for the Stations of the Cross event since 2009 and has been involved since about 2003. For Les, the Stations of the Cross event is a big part of his connection to his faith and to his parish. "It's my way of contributing to the parish life of St Brendan's," says Les. "It's a great way to involve a lot of young people in parish life and to help connect them to a deeper level of faith. I work with young people day in day out. This event is a very significant way of helping people to really understand the passion story and to connect to their faith in a profound way."

Dale Wright is a local businessperson, the organist at St Brendan's and Musical Director and

Coordinator for the Stations of the Cross event. "I actually haven't witnessed the Stations of the Cross for thirty years," laughed Dale. "I'm always concentrating with my head down in the script, directing the music!"

THE WAY OF THE CROSS – A STORY OF LOVE



Despite the threat of rain on **Good Friday** evening over 1200 people ventured out to Rosalind Park to witness the WOTC. Director, Julie Lovel believes the presentation of the last days of Jesus Christ's life achieved its aim of challenging its audience to consider anew the authority and divinity of Jesus. Thanking her cast, Julie wrote, "... you achieved everything we set out to do. Your performance was genuine. Your hearts were filled with love for the people that had come. AND the message was clear! 48 minutes of an incredible story of incomprehensible love."



Easter Saturday, St Therese's, Kennington welcomed with joy RCIA Catechumens into their community. Pictured are Karson Opnicai, Darby Walsh, and Kylie Macumber with their sponsors and Fr Andrew Fewings PP who administered the sacraments of Confirmation and Communion. (Photograph courtesy of Liesbeth Van Emmerik).



Easter Saturday at St Brendan's Shepparton:

"Our Easter Vigil Mass was a very special celebration this year; we welcomed three wonderful people into the Catholic Faith and our community of St Brendan's Parish. Ethan Jones, Kelly Smyth and Karlene Kirby beamed with joy as they received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist. All three spoke of a special feeling deep within themselves, something that was not there before."

(Words and photograph courtesy of St Brendan's).

Easter Sunday, Wodonga parishioners joined Fr Junjun Amaya for a dawn Mass at Hume Weir. In the Philippines, Sabulong (Filipino) or Sugat (Cebuano), a procession depicting the meeting of Jesus and his mother after his Resurrection, is celebrated after the Easter Vigil and before the first Easter Sunday Mass, usually starting just before dawn.



Shane chatting with a young parishioner after the 11.00 a.m. Mass on Easter Sunday. Do you think the child is wondering if they should offer Bishop Shane a bite of their Easter chocolate?

AUDREY BROWN APPOINTED EDUCATIONALIST MEMBER OF CORMSAA



St Monica's parishioner, Audrey Brown, has been appointed as Educationalist member of the Committee of Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person School Authorities Australia ([CORMSAA](#)).

Audrey says she's excited to serve with CORMSAA members in this voluntary position. "We're all striving to improve education for children and young people with a lens that distinctly reflects our faith tradition in contemporary times – shared mission is very important to me."

Audrey is looking forward to working with CORMSAA members in a broader national level context. "One of the CORMSAA members is also a member of the National Catholic Education Commission, so indirectly, there's scope to help shape the national education agenda and policy."

CORMSAA was established by the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP) in 2020 to replace and build upon the legacy of Catholic Religious Australia's education committee and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) School Authorities.

Audrey explains, "Around half of Catholic secondary school students in Victoria are in schools that are not governed by a Diocesan Education Authority. Just in Victoria there are 18 Religious Institutes and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (RI/MPJPs); they have 23 governing

boards and operate 47 schools. In Sandhurst, St Joseph's College in Echuca, FCJ College in Benalla, and Marist College and Catherine McAuley College in Bendigo, are schools within the RI/MPJP community."

CORMSAA works hard to focus on mission and to create conditions under which all young people will thrive in education, with a particular lens of the history and current connection with RIs or MPJPs.

Audrey's school education (with Loreto Sisters and MSC Fathers) and professional experience working with parish, diocesan and RI/MPJP school governors, has fitted her well for the role with CORMSAA. "Religious Institutes have a long history of involvement with Catholic education, and have always worked shoulder to shoulder with the whole of Catholic education. Education is a key ministry for most of the AMPJP's members, hence a committee was established," says Audrey.

Looking at Audrey's resume it's clear that she has a strong commitment to Catholic education and a genuine desire to impart her experience and knowledge to help students' educational outcomes and experiences of school. Audrey's long career in education is impressive. It includes teaching, educational support and governance roles in Ministerial PJP and Diocesan schools/systems as well as in tertiary institutions. Her current engagements include: Trustee of Kildare Ministries; Executive Officer and Company Secretary, CRMV Ltd; Member, Catholic Theological College Senate and Non-Executive Director, Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd.

Audrey is clearly motivated by a desire to sow what she has reaped, "I am very grateful for the many people who have positively influenced my career, especially in my formative career years in Sandhurst," said Audrey.

Audrey's position at CORMSAA will come into effect on 7 June 2023.

SR JANET NOLAN PART OF THE JOSEPHITE LEGACY IN SANDHURST



Ensuring the legacy of the Josephites' presence in Numurkah is very important to Sr Janet Nolan who's influence in Numurkah for the last fifteen years extended well beyond the Catholic Community. She is pleased fellow Josephite, Sr Marianne Zienstra has now moved to Numurkah and is looking forward to seeing the Mary MacKillop/Josephite Heritage Project come into fruition.

"Loving God is doing what he wants you to do."

Sr Janet Nolan recalls that at no time in her childhood did she have any intention of being a nun. However, there was one resonating voice, which came to the forefront later in her life.

Born and raised in Yarram, South Gippsland, she was educated by the Josephites in her primary school years, where Sr Nolan says, "I didn't know much about them and had no intention of joining them."

In her secondary school years, she was taught by the Presentation Sisters at Windsor, where she laughs, "I didn't know much about them and had no intention of joining them!"

"We were on Retreat in Year 8," says Sr Janet, "and I remember a priest saying – 'Loving God is doing what he wants you to do,'" explains Sr Janet.

"God was nagging at me all the time," explains Sr Janet. I wasn't particularly wanting to become a

sister or a nun, but I knew in time, that was what God wanted of me."

Sr Janet's first involvement with the Diocese of Sandhurst was when she moved with her family to Wangaratta in 1953. "Monsignor Hussey was the Parish Priest at the time," says Sr Janet. "It was a very busy parish, and life was busy within the parish."

Sr Janet left school at "15 or 16" to start working at the ESA Bank* where she worked for eight years. "I enjoyed working as a bank officer. In those days a bank was a big part of the community and bank officers really valued their customers."

While working at the bank, Sr Janet enjoyed the freedom and fantastic social life a country town like 1960s Wangaratta afforded. Volunteering for the National Catholic Girls Association, which later became the Young Catholic Women's Association. "At that time Wangaratta had a very active Youth Group, Fr Peter Quinn, the chaplain, was a marvellous man and Monsignor Hussey was fully supportive," explains Sr Janet.

It was at that time, that Sr Janet says she had what you could call a 'God moment'. She was at a Saturday night dance in the Wangaratta Church Hall, a wallflower looking at people on the dance floor. "There was a lovely couple I knew who just looked so in love and I thought to myself, "I wish I could feel love like that," and then I heard a voice say, "I love you". It was another dig from God for me to get on with it," she laughs.

Sr Janet entered the Sisters of St Joseph community in 1964 at the "old age" of 24 and was professed in 1967. Sr Janet can't explain why she chose the Sisters of St Joseph, but it was the only religious community she felt called to, mainly because they are "out amongst the people," she says. "I didn't know much about Josephite living, except that, I can remember Dad saying when I was a kid, "One day, Mary MacKillop will be a saint!"

After years of teaching in Catholic schools mainly in Gippsland, Sr Janet moved to Numurkah where she was a Josephite presence for fifteen years. "I wasn't well enough to work when I moved there, so I wasn't actively working. The congregation had bought a unit when they moved out of the convent, and I moved in with another Sister.

In Numurkah Sr Janet became involved not only in parish life, but the life of the town including Ladies Probus, Meals on Wheels and the Gardening Club. "Being involved in community beyond the parish was very enriching for me," says Sr Janet.

When Sr Janet left Numurkah at the end of 2022 after a "health incident", she was concerned she would be the last Josephite in the town and thinking of the legacy, suggested to fellow parishioners that something needed to be done to recognise the Sisters of Saint Joseph and their presence in Numurkah. Hence the Mary MacKillop Indigenous Garden project was born. "There have been over 100 sisters of Saint Joseph who have lived in Numurkah, so that's a pretty good innings."

"St Joseph's Primary School has a plaque which reads – "Founded in 1890 by Saint Mary MacKillop" – it's the only school in Victoria that can say that. So, keeping the Josephite legacy alive in Numurkah is very important."

"Saint Mary MacKillop has walked the streets of Numurkah. Numurkah was the first foundation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Victoria, not Melbourne. That's a very good claim to fame. Mary MacKillop brought four sisters from Sydney to start the school. She didn't stay for months and months – but she helped the sisters settle in, and often returned to see how they were getting on."

Sr Janet is very pleased that another Josephite is now living in Numurkah, and that a project to recognise Mary MacKillop and the Josephites' contribution to Numurkah will be recognised through the Indigenous Garden Project.

She has come full circle and now lives at Mary MacKillop Nursing home, in the same place she entered professed life more than fifty years ago – although this time "I'm facing a different street!" laughs Sr Janet.

Janet grew up in Yarram in Gippsland and worked in a bank before entering the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (the Josephite Order) where she taught for several years before assisting at the Mary MacKillop Home for the Aged in Hawthorn.

By Marian Houghton and Annette Cope.

"Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."

(Eleanor Roosevelt)

The Josephites have had a constant presence in Numurkah, meeting the pastoral and educational needs of St John's Parish since Saint Mary MacKillop opened the first Josephite school in Victoria here in 1890.

With warmth, humility and dedication, Sr Janet took up the role as a pastoral member of our parish in 2008 and immersed herself, in a quiet, gentle way, into our faith Community. She shared herself, her great love of Jesus, her vast experience of life and her example as a human being. She was present for anyone in Numurkah, not just the faithful of St John's parish. As Numurkah parishioner Marianne Houghton writes:

"Sr Janet took me under her roof when my husband died. She did this every Sunday by inviting me to join her for lunch at the Telegraph Hotel. Gradually I began to learn about her life's work. She would invite all kinds of people to join us. They were special times for me because she began to integrate me into this beautiful town. I met such a perse group of people, but at the same time she opened up about her background and I realised that I had met a kindred spirit. Our backgrounds were so similar, our experiences of life matched, from our parents' expectations, our boarding school life, although with different Orders of nuns we had the same rules, and our naivety of life in general.

Our friendship took off. We became constant companions. She corrected me, quietly, when she thought I had been too brash. I always laughed but took her advice on board. We did lots of things together, laughed a lot, took on each other's worries. I was blessed to have found this special human being in this little town."

Sr Janet has always shown resilience. She is adaptable, acted to make a difference in the lives of others and has been discerning in response to unprecedented change. What a great legacy she has enjoyed and has passed on. It is a rare

* * * * *

privilege to have been in her company. She, in times past, has had a lot of contact with Numurkah's young people, teaching guitar and forming a guitar group. Hopefully with the encouragement she gave them, those young people will pursue their dreams, and do so, with hope and optimism.

Sr Janet came to Numurkah in 2008 and was immediately involved in supporting the Parish Priests, especially Fr Frank Jones, and being a supportive presence in the parish including the Majellan Club and St Joseph's School. She regularly drove people to church and visited those in need.

Her influence extended well beyond the Catholic community. She was active in the Numurkah and District Garden Club and her exhibits in the Numurkah and District Agricultural Show were very successful. She loved her involvement in the Ladies Probus Club and invited newcomers to town to join. Her presence is missed by so many people in this town.

AUTISM AND FAITH

Eaglehawk parishioner, Kobi Paine, shares her experience of faith and her relationship with God. "For me, faith and God are a logical conclusion from looking at the world around me," writes Kobi.

I was having a conversation with someone the other week, and as these things usually happen, I was asked how I reconcile my faith with the logical, sometimes rigid thinking that comes from being autistic. I have to admit that I stared at them like they had lost their mind for a moment, but then I realised that for them, logic and autism don't go with their idea of faith, with God. (How they reconcile with the fact that many scientists have faith and yet work in a field driven by logic and semi-rigid thinking is beyond my own understanding.)

For me, faith and God are a logical conclusion from looking at the world around me. The way our existence is a delicate balance that required specific conditions to occur is evidence enough for me to have no doubts about God. The Bible and the Catholic Church simply provide me with a framework to connect to Him and to express my love. This framework of Sunday Mass, saints, devotions, prayers – all of it combines into a ritual

that has for the most part been consistent for hundreds of years and will continue to be so.

That consistency is what provides me with comfort on the hardest days – the days when sounds are too much, when sunlight is too bright, when fabrics make my skin itch and I feel like my brain is about to jump out of my skull. I know that I can walk into a Catholic Church, and it will be the same routine, the same ritual as it was the week before, and the week before that, and the week before that.

Although there are a few variations, Mass and the Catholic Church provide a steady rock in a sea of sensory information that my body and brain are having difficulty in processing. Admittedly, at times the chimes and occasional use of incense are too much, as is the somewhat required social interaction once you are a known quantity to the other parishioners, but by falling into the familiar, always constant frame of Mass, I find that I come out of it better than when I went in.

Is it God who has calmed my mind and soul, or the consistency? To be honest, I think it's both – He knows what I need, when I need it, always. Just because my brain functions differently from most of the population does not mean that I cannot have faith, that I cannot follow God and His Word with all the devotion and love as everyone else. Autism does not preclude God; difference does not preclude God, and it is something that we all need to remember in this world that is ever becoming more connected and exposed to Other.

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS

20% of AUSTRALIANS ARE CATHOLIC – NEW SNAPSHOT REPORT

A recent National Centre for Pastoral Research report provides a comprehensive snapshot of the 5.1 million people who identified as Catholic in the 2021 Australia Census.

The Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia is the latest in a series of reports published following each national Census, providing extensive demographic information on Australian Catholics.

"Knowing the people who make up the Catholic population helps dioceses, parishes and other Catholic ministries better understand and serve their communities," said Australian Catholic

Bishops Conference president, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB.

“We are fortunate to have such valuable information at our fingertips and we are grateful to the National Centre for Pastoral Research for its high-quality reports.”

Some key religious affiliation statistics were released last year. They included the number of Catholics, which fell from around 5.3 million in 2016 to under 5.1 million in 2021. Catholics made up 22.6 per cent of the population in 2016; they represented 20 per cent of the population in 2021.

“We have seen a broad shift away from religious identification in Australian society, so those figures were not a surprise, although they were disappointing,” Archbishop Costelloe said.

“The statistics in this report confirm what we are seeing in our parish communities – that they are becoming more and more culturally and linguistically diverse.

“But it also uncovers some information that is less obvious, like the increasing percentage of Catholics attending Catholic schools, the rising educational attainment levels of Catholics and the changing composition of Catholic households.”

Archbishop Costelloe said knowing, for example, that 21 per cent of those who identify as Catholic were born in a non-English-speaking country – and learning which countries they come from – helps to reach people in their native language.

Trudy Dantis, director of the National Centre for Pastoral Research, an agency of the Bishops Conference, said it is important to remember that the national social profile doesn't capture any information about religious practice.

“The Catholic Church in Australia gathers data from a range of sources, and other reports have observed – and future reports will observe – more about the composition of those who attend Mass,” Dr Dantis said.

“These national profiles, though, which have now covered seven Censuses, are extremely helpful in understanding the current demographics of the Catholic population and the evolution of the Catholic community over time in Australia.”

Social profiles for each Australian diocese, and for each parish community, will be published in the coming months.

The Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia can be found at www.ncpr.catholic.org.au

OCEANIA BISHOPS PUBLISH RESPONSE TO SYNOD OF BISHOPS DOCUMENT

The bishops of Oceania say their people's reflections for the global Synod of Bishops for a Synodal Church left them feeling “peace and joy”, but also called them to be prophetic and ready to “model ourselves on the love we proclaim”.

The bishops, in Fiji for the quadrennial assembly of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania in February, spent part of that gathering considering the region's response to the Synod's Working Document for the Continental Stage, titled Enlarge the Space of Your Tent.

The Oceania response was drafted by a writing and discernment group, which synthesised reports from the four bishops conferences and the local Eastern Catholic Churches.

In a context of prayer and contemplation, the bishops reviewed and refined that document, which the FCBCO's executive council recently approved and submitted to the Synod Secretariat in Rome.

[The document has now been published](#), as have some other continental responses.

Bishop Anthony Randazzo of Broken Bay, appointed president of the FCBCO at the February assembly, said while the report captured the voices of Catholics across Oceania, the bishops felt the need to offer a pastoral response.

“One of the key works of a bishop is to teach. Gathered as the shepherds of the people of Oceania, we wanted to share our prayerful and considered thoughts on what we had heard,” he said.

“As we bishops wrote, through this Synod process ‘we do not want to build a different Church, but rather to renew and revitalise the Church which we love’. That starts with each and every one of us – all the baptised – individually, but also in communion with one another.”

The document concedes that the responses gathered represented only a small proportion of the Catholic population, and the breadth and

depth of local lived experiences were not always contained in the document.

“The document captures the hopes and concerns of our people, and this might give the impression that the Church is in disarray,” the bishops’ pastoral reflection says.

“However, it is precisely in places and times of pain and suffering that Christ reveals Himself. This confidence and faith in His presence can guide us in our response.”

The Oceania report outlines the fruits of the discernment that took place in response to Enlarge the Space of Your Tent, drawing together common themes, issues and insights. It also highlights tensions and differences and identifies priorities and calls to action.

Regional bishops conferences around the world were invited to prepare responses to the Working Document for the Continental Stage, with the seven submissions helping to shape the working document (*instrumentum laboris*) for the first Synod assembly, to be held in Rome this October.

“We pray – and we believe – that Oceania’s hopeful contribution will help the work of the Synod move forward in fidelity to the Holy Spirit,” Bishop Randazzo said.

The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania comprises the episcopal conferences of Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands.

BISHOP RANDAZZO TO HEAD PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF OUR LADY OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Pope Francis has appointed Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD JCL, Bishop of Broken Bay, to the role of Apostolic Administrator of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Australia.

The Ordinariate was created by Pope Benedict in 2012 to provide a pathway for Anglicans to full communion in the Roman Catholic Church while retaining elements of their worship traditions and spiritual heritage in their union with the Catholic Church.

Although Bishop Anthony has been called to serve under the direct authority of the Pope, in communion with the bishops of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, he will continue as Bishop of Broken Bay.

“The Ordinariate, which is equivalent to a diocese, is built up of communities and individuals of the Anglican heritage gathered around the Ordinary,” Bishop Anthony said following the Vatican announcement on Friday night (AEST).

“I accept this appointment with great anticipation; however I realise I have much to learn, especially regarding the rich, beautiful, and distinctive theological, spiritual, and liturgical patrimony of the Ordinariate.”

There are three Personal Ordinariates in the world: Our Lady of Walsingham in the United Kingdom; the Chair of St Peter in the United States and Canada; and, Our Lady of the Southern Cross here in Australia.

Based in Sydney, the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross comprises communities in Oceania and Japan.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

PALM SUNDAY JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES ACTION



Bishop Shane was guest speaker at the Refugees for Rural Australian’s Rally for Refugees on Palm Sunday. Addressing the crowd, he emphasised Australia’s long history of welcoming people seeking safety and the enormous contribution migrants and refugees have made to our communities. He said that, although recent government decisions give hope for many on temporary visas there is still much more that the Australian government could do and should do.

The gathering at the Bendigo City Library Gardens was a celebration, a protest and an opportunity to stand in solidarity with refugees. Bishop Shane said it’s important to remember that events, such as the Palm Sunday Rallies held across Australia, do nudge policy direction in the right way. He said that every hand counts towards influencing a change in government policy.

Although it might not seem like it, progress has been made and there have been quite a few achievements.

Bishop spoke about the positive changes in refugee policy and their beneficial outcomes for the local community. He spoke of the stellar example of the Bendigo Karen Community, the 2022 Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) a framework for refugee families to settle in Bendigo with support from RAR. So far, two Hazara Afghani families have settled in Bendigo on this programme and two more will soon arrive.

Bishop Shane said the Australian Government's decision to provide some 19,000 refugees a pathway to permanent residency is commendable. It will give certainty to refugees who have been actively contributing to our community for many years; and will provide relief from the anxiety, separation and exacerbated trauma to which they have been subjected over that time.

Nevertheless, Bishop Shane lamented that the Australian Policy of deterrence, by design, required that people suffer in order to be effective. Although there are only small numbers of people in detention in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, their isolation, uncertainty and misery is used as an exemplary deterrent.

Bishop Shane said that detention needs to be an absolute last resort. People seeking asylum and people in detention need to be resettled in Australia; there needs to be an option to participate in the workforce, or receive income support while a visa is being processed; and we need to facilitate family reunions.

"Australian government policy is rightly concerned about what is going on in our region, but as global citizens we can't ignore the global refugee crisis – there are more than 10 million displaced people and 32 million refugees. It is a massive problem, and it looks like it's getting worse rather than better," said Bishop Shane.

In their recent election statement, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference wrote:

"Refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing persecution, violence or life-threatening poverty, and people who have been displaced by climate change, are our sisters and brothers ... they have a moral claim on our assistance, whether they fit legal definitions of a refugee or not. We need a just, humane and timely system for assessing claims for asylum."

'COME TOGETHER' – NOT JUST A CHILDREN'S BOOK



Yorta Yorta and Gunditjmara man, and St Joseph's College Echuca alumni, Isaiah Firebrace wrote 'Come Together: Things Every Aussie Kid Should Know about First Peoples', to create a resource which he felt his generation missed out on. Beautifully illustrated, Isaiah shares his passion for his culture in an accessible way, which will fascinate children and their adult carers alike.

The book is available in Target and Kmart and other booksellers.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC), the Australian Catholic Bishops, the Fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia have all made submissions to the Australian Government in support of a First Nations Voice to Parliament as articulated by the Uluru Statement from the Heart. All have stated that the National Voice should include the diverse voices from as many First Nations people as possible including religious and faith-based groups.

"Ultimately the Indigenous Voice should be able to show how it has helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with very practical measures in their lives, including the preservation of their unique cultural heritage, their economic wellbeing and their physical safety," wrote the Australian Bishops in their submission.

To learn more about the Referendum go to the [National Indigenous Australians Agency](#) website.

To learn more about referendums and the constitution go to the [Australian Electoral Commission](#) website.

INFORMATION SESSION WITH CONSTITUTIONAL LAW EXPERT

**5.45 p.m. Wednesday 26 April
Monsignor Peter Jeffrey Centre,
St Brendan's Shepparton
or LIVE on Zoom**

Constitutional law expert, **Professor Anne Twomey**, returns to her home parish to speak about the referendum. Anne is a member of the Constitutional Expert Group, which has provided the Referendum Working Group with legal support on constitutional matters that relate to the referendum, including the Referendum questions and constitution amendments.

AN INDIGENOUS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT: CONSIDERING A CONSTITUTIONAL BRIDGE

Jesuit priest and lawyer, **Fr Frank Brennan OAM**, has long advocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights. In his most recent book, he outlines the 'Yes' and 'No' cases for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, to help voters understand all of the issues before voting in the Referendum later this year. The book is available from Garratt Publishing.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION EDUCATION LEADERS GATHER



"Education is an extraordinary, transformative power," were the stirring words from Mr James Merlino, the Former Minister of Education and Deputy Premier of Victoria at the

annual Catholic Education Sandhurst Leadership dinner this week.

As the keynote speaker, Mr Merlino delivered the Monsignor Peter Jeffrey Oration focusing on both the privilege and responsibility of educational leadership.

"It is through education that we break out of the cycle of intergenerational poverty and disadvantage. It's through education that we achieve our own individual aspirations and goals, and what we dream of doing. Most of those things will be achieved through education," he said.

"It is through education that we prosper as a society. Education is a noble profession; it is a profession with moral purpose. Our job, no matter what role we have in education, is to find that spark that is within every child."

These words, from a man who chose the Victorian Education Portfolio and served as Minister of Education for nine years, were heard clearly by each person in the room. There was a sense of pride from the educators in the midst who made up the majority of the audience. Mr Merlino went on to say that education is a connector like no other, and that all of us can think of that one teacher, or more, who we will never forget. "You need to remind yourself that there are people in the community who think of you that way," he said.

The keynote address from Mr Merlino was a fitting tribute following the Commissioning Mass for new Principals and Catholic Educational leaders, as well as the Commitment Ceremony for new School Advisory Board Chairs at Christ the King Church in Shepparton.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay presided at the Commissioning Mass which was concelebrated by a number of Sandhurst Priests who joined in the celebration at St Mel's Parish. Candles and bibles were presented to each of the newly commissioned leaders as they were officially welcomed to their new roles within Catholic Education Sandhurst.

During the dinner, Bishop Shane Mackinlay also officially launched the CES Ltd Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027.

The Leadership Day continued on Wednesday, March 29 at Kialla with a presentation from the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA), Mr Stephen Gniel.

Mr Gniel presented an insightful look into the world of curriculum assessment, providing a candid presentation which acknowledged the challenges of recent years due to COVID-19, floods and bush fires, and the impact it has had on students, teachers, and broader communities. Mr Gniel also spoke at length about the ATAR, NAPLAN and other well-known assessment measurements.

One thing was very evident from the outset of Mr Gniel's presentation, and that was his passion for education and his desire to provide continual improvement in the assessment area.

"There is a lot for us to do in assessment, and the most important assessment for a teacher, and for a child is narrow and focused," he said.

"It's not at the subject level; it's really about the narrow piece they are learning; the developmental piece that tells teachers that they know the standard of the first piece of the information, and they are ready to learn the next piece that we want them to understand."

Mr Gniel was generous with his time, answering questions from the group about a range of topics. The question-and-answer transcript will be provided to schools in next week's edition of Communication Matters.

A full day of presentations detailed important updates and information for Principals and school leaders, covering a range of areas including the CES Ltd Delegations Framework Review, Deputy Principal selection and appointment procedure, and a detailed update on the EBA negotiations.

In the afternoon Chief Catholic Mission and Teaching Officer, Chris Hayes provided a presentation with team members about the Catholic Learning and Teaching Approach. Further presentations from Ryan Neville, ICT Lead and Mon Chalker, Procurement and Contracts Advisor were the final items of the day. These updates provided a chance for Principals to learn more about the services that the Catholic

Education Office provides, and to share information about directions within these specialty areas.

The annual Leadership Gathering is always a wonderful celebration for Catholic Education Sandhurst, bringing together Principals, CES Ltd Board members, Priests, School Advisory Chairs and CEO staff as we acknowledge new and existing school leaders for the important role they play in the life of the CES Ltd community.

DENIS JB HIGGINS SCHOLARSHIP



The Denis JB Higgins Research Scholarship for 2023 was presented to Marist College Bendigo for research in the area of PASA/PASMAP Numeracy Intervention Program.

The Denis JB Higgins Research Scholarship was established to acknowledge the dedicated career of Denis Higgins as Teacher, Principal, Consultant and Director. The Scholarship provides research opportunities focused on improving quality learning opportunities for students at all stages.

Chief School Development and Support Officer for CES Ltd, Mr Ashley Marsh presented the Scholarship to the Principal of Marist College Bendigo, Ms Giselle Talbot at the Leadership Gathering in Kialla on Wednesday 29 March, 2023.

Ms Talbot acknowledged the work of Marist College Bendigo educator, Ms Joanne Doolan who was instrumental in securing the Scholarship. Ms Doolan is the La Valla Learning Leader and Numeracy Scope and Sequence Facilitator for F - 8 at the College.



Bishop Shane's Calendar

Friday 28 April – Opening and Blessing of Senior Learning Centre, St Francis of the Fields Primary School, Strathfieldsaye, 12pm

Friday 28 April-Saturday 29 April – Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council, Shepparton

Sunday 30 April – Our Lady of Good Counsel Mass, St Mary's Church, Echuca, 11.00am

Wednesday 3 May – Mission, One Heart Many Voices Conference, Sydney

Thursday 4 May-Thursday 11 May – Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Sydney

Saturday 13 May – Victorian Council of Churches, AGM

Sunday 14 May – Sunday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, 11am

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CONTACT THE EDITOR
editor@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
Mbl: 0419 015 696 (Katrina)

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Call Katrina to have a chat.

PRAYER FOR THE SANDHURST MISSION AND PASTORAL COUNCIL

We turn to Mary, our Mother of Good Counsel and we seek to become a more missionary and pastoral Church: people of faith, hope and love for our world.

May we be led by the same wisdom and courage sent by the Holy Spirit to guide her along unfamiliar paths and through challenging decisions.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us!