



Sandpiper e-News

in the Diocese: the Diocesan Finance Council, the

SANDHURST MISSION AND PASTORAL COUNCIL (SMPC)



College

REPORT FOR MEETING ONE by Dr Chris Cotter

The Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council (SMPC) held its inaugural meeting on Friday 28 April (6pm-8:30 p.m.) and Saturday 29 April (8:30 a.m.-3.00 p.m.) at the Pastoral Centre in St Brendan's Parish, Shepparton. As a chair has not yet been appointed, the meeting was expertly facilitated by Mr Dean Mason from Melbourne. Following an Acknowledgement of Country, introductions and a welcome and Grace before Meals from Bishop Shane, the members spent time sharing dinner, getting to know each other, outlining their hopes for the meeting and preparing for the next day's business.

After lunch the members considered the relationship of the SMPC to some of the other key advisory bodies

of Consultors, and the Council of Priests. Bishop Shane outlined his expectation that one member of the SMPC will join the Diocesan Finance Council and asked SMPC members to consider nominating two people to attend meetings of the College of Consultors. Bishop Shane indicated that nominations for those attending the College of Consultors could be of lay members of the SMPC or of other suitable lay people in the Diocese. Significant time was also spent considering the attributes of an SMPC Chair. The Chair of the SMPC will be a crucial role and form the Council Executive along with Bishop Shane and the Executive Officer (Dr Chris Cotter). One of the homework tasks for members in the month of May will relate to

considering nominations for these advisory bodies and for the position of SMPC Chair.

The day concluded with an Examen of Conscience and prayer, with each member offering a simple reflection sharing how they were feeling at the conclusion of the day. The meeting was a very positive start for the three-year term of this Council. Members came away from the meeting feeling energised and encouraged. The meeting would not have been possible without the excellent work of our Chancery staff, Leslie Cooper (Project Support Officer, Mission and Pastoral Life) and Tim Nolan (Executive Assistant to the Bishop). Leslie provided logistical assistance for the meeting with Tim giving secretarial support, as well as working closely with Leslie on logistics.

Next Meeting:

The second meeting of the SMPC will be held in Shepparton on Friday 14 July and Saturday 15 July 2023. An important item on the agenda will be the appointment of a Council Chair by Bishop Shane.

SMPC Members

Bishop Shane Mackinlay
Father Vijay Bandanadam ALCP/OSS
Father Stephen Bolling, Mrs Alana Brennan
Mr Mick Chalkley
Mrs Jobelle Collier
Mr Paul Desmond
Mrs Gabrielle Downie
Mrs Angela Finn
Mr Stephen McKinley
Mr Michael McLinden
Mr Jean-Marie Mupenda
Mr Miggy Podosky
Father Jackson Saunders
Mrs Christine Sebire
Father Joe Taylor VG.
Officers: Dr Chris Cotter, Executive Officer
Mr Tim Nolan, Minute Secretary
Mrs Leslie Cooper, Administrative Support

Facilitator (for Meetings 1 and 2): Mr Dean Mason

SANDHURST THEOLOGY AND CPE SCHOLARSHIPS

Sandhurst is again aiming to support the mission formation of parishioners by offering scholarships for parish pastoral leaders and would-be leaders to study Theology or Clinical Pastoral Education at Catholic Theological College Melbourne in Semester II, 2023.

Scholarships are available for Sandhurst parishioners to study online post-graduate courses in theology at Catholic Theological College, Melbourne.

- 50% of the tuition fees will be reimbursed (full cost: credit \$2,882, audit \$650).
- You may study for credit towards a Master's degree/Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma or for audit.
- If you have not studied at a tertiary level before you can take advantage of the "Professional Attainment" pathway.
- Scholarships of \$1000 are also available towards the Clinical Pastoral Education Units on offer in Shepparton and Bendigo (July-December 2023). Support is also available for university award (50% of \$2,882, no audit)

Courses approved for study in Semester II, 2023:

BN 8001C Exploring the New Testament with Mark's Gospel

Rev. Paul Rouse OP (Co-ordinator);
Dr Catherine Playoust
Mondays 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. (online blended + 12 hours asynchronous learning)

CT 8100C Introducing Catholic Theology

Dr Birute Arendarcikas RSM
Wednesday 6.00 p.m. -9.00 p.m. (online or face-to-face, hybrid)

Clinical Pastoral Education,

Shepparton or Bendigo (July-December 2023)

Shepparton Course Coordinator | Dan Murphy
Email: dan.murphy1949@gmail.com Mobile: 0408 841 997

Bendigo Course Coordinator | Anne Wieczorek
Email: annewz@westnet.com.au Mobile: 0401 979 41

Applications are now open!

Applications for Semester 2 2023 closes on 10 June 2023.

CONTACT:

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Project Support Officer, Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst
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M: 03 5445 3600

Sandhurst 2023 SCRIPTURE TALKS

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



"The Council of Jerusalem" [Acts 15: 5-29]

presented by Dr Rosemary Canavan

7.00 p.m. Tuesday 23 May via Zoom

The third of Three Scripture Talks in this series 'Acts of the Apostles: Making decisions with the Holy Spirit'. Make sure to register for Zoom details.

Register at Trybooking:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1047282?eid=1047282&>

Or call the Chancery on Tel: 5445 3600



WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS 2023

Speaking with the heart. "The truth in love" (Eph 4:15)

"We should not be afraid of proclaiming the truth, but of doing so without charity, without heart."

Because "the Christian's programme" — as Benedict XVI wrote — "is 'a heart which sees'". A heart that reveals the truth of our being with its beat and that, for this reason, should be listened to. This leads those who listen to attune themselves to the same wavelength, to the point of being able to hear within their heart also the heartbeat of the other. Then the miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division.

In his message for this year's World Social Communications Day Pope Francis builds on the themes of his recent World Communications Day messages.

In 2021 he asked us to *Encounter People Where and as They Are*. In 2022 he asked us to *Listen with the Ear of the Heart*. This year, he calls for us to seek and speak the truth and to do so with a pure heart and with charity.

"The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living," writes Pope Francis, reminding us that "communication should never be reduced to something artificial, but rather a reflection of the soul," and that listening, hearing each other and speaking our truth is the "most precious and life-giving gift we can offer each other."

See attachment at end of this e-News pdf.

AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC PRESS REFLECT ON POPE'S MESSAGE

"Pope Francis' message invites us to reflect on how our words, which are capable of doing good for others, can touch the most hardened of hearts."

Cardinal John Dew, addressing the Australasian Catholic Press Association last week.

By Fiona Basile

The Pope's World Communications Day message is officially published by the Vatican on 24 January, the feast day of St Francis de Sales, a Doctor of the Church, intellectual, writer, theologian and patron saint of journalists. With this in mind, at their most recent online gathering, members of the Australasian Catholic Press Association welcomed Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Wellington, to share his reflections on the pope's message among those working in media and communications.

Cardinal Dew highlighted the Pope's continued emphasis on the need for mercy and tenderness in our communications, and in creating the opportunity for an encounter.

He recalled having read words spoken by then Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio at a retreat in Argentina, some years ago—words that have stayed with him. 'At that retreat, he [Bergoglio] said, "Everything in our life today, just as in Jesus' time, begins with an encounter. An encounter with this man, the carpenter of Nazareth, a man like all others, and yet different. The first ones—

John, Andrew and Simon—felt themselves to be looked at, into their very depths, read in their innermost being, and in them sprung forth a surprise, a wonder that instantly made them feel bound to him, made them feel different.”

‘At that time, he wanted them to experience the wonder and the awe of the presence of God, and I believe Pope Francis is actually saying the same thing in this message for World Communications. Because in that same retreat, he said, “We cannot understand the dynamic of encounter, which brings forth wonder and adherence, if it has not been triggered by mercy.”’

Cardinal Dew encouraged all to listen and speak with open hearts, and to speak the truth in love, communicating with courage and ‘with heart’. This, he said, is ‘the only way that we encounter each other and help one another to encounter something more, someone more’, and ‘to be caressed by the mercy of God’.

Just imagine if personally and professionally, we intentionally started all of our communications, whether it be an email, an interview, a report, an opinion piece, a commentary on something—whatever it might be—with the goal to help others through our communications to be caressed by the mercy of God. Our world would be a better place.

Thinking of the various ways in which the Catholic media communicate, he posed the question: ‘When we communicate, is it an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love?’ He encouraged Catholic media and communications professionals to look to their patron saint, St Francis de Sales, whose ‘meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love.’

Cardinal Dew also reflected on the ‘great challenges of today’, echoing Pope Francis’ view that we must not succumb to indifference, particularly when it comes to those who suffer in our world. ‘That’s why he tells the media, those working in communications—everyone—that that we should use our hearts to seek and to speak with charity in order to build and make a better world.’

Indeed, the message is not only for those working in media and communications, but for everyone. As the Pope observes in his message, ‘In a historical period marked by polarizations and contrasts—to which unfortunately not even the ecclesial community is immune—the commitment to communicating “with open heart and arms” does not pertain exclusively to those in the field of communications; it is everyone’s responsibility.’

According to Cardinal Dew, ‘Pope Francis’ message invites us to reflect on how our words, which are capable of doing good for others, can touch the most hardened of hearts.’

‘When Pope Francis says “communicating in a cordial manner”, it means that those who read or listen to us

are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time. These words clearly reflect the very beginning of the document *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council.

So really, Pope Francis is telling us that whatever means of communication that we are using, we are to be looking for the things that occupy people, whether they be joys or hopes or griefs or anxieties, because that’s what’s happening in people’s lives. That’s what we need to touch.

In his message, Pope Francis offers the opportunity for all of us, but particularly those working in communications, to ask, ‘What is your mission?’ ‘And clearly, if we go back to those words at the beginning of *Gaudium et Spes*,’ Cardinal Dew pointed out, ‘the mission for any of us who try to live the Gospel is to build a more just, more fraternal and more human future.’

Prayer for World Communications Day

May the Lord Jesus, the pure Word poured out from the heart of the Father, help us to make our communication clear, open and heartfelt.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, help us listen to the beating of hearts, to rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and to disarm the hostility that divides.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word of truth and love, help us speak the truth in charity, so that we may feel like protectors of one another.

Each year, the Vatican, and many dioceses around the world mark World Communications Day on the Sunday before Pentecost (this year, 21 May 2023). However, in Australia, it is celebrated on the sixth Sunday of Easter to avoid a clash with the feast of the Ascension.

ONE HEART MANY VOICES CONFERENCE TRUTH TELLING AND SPEAKING WITH THE HEART,

“We are a diverse people, there are bound to be differing opinions, but that doesn’t necessarily mean there is conflict.”

Dean Parkin, Director of From the Heart and Yes 23

“Truth telling operates through the power of parrhesia which is defined as bold honest and free speech ... it is empowering rather than crushing or alienating ...”

Dr Elissa Roper at the Catholic Mission Conference

“We need to ensure we have space for listening, and listening humbly, and both of those are guided by the Holy Spirit. We’re called to speak, and we’re called to hear – and hear everything that is being said in and through the various voices.”

Bishop Shane Mackinlay at the Catholic Mission Conference

Truth telling and speaking with the heart were running themes of Catholic Mission's recent 'One Heart Many Voices' conference.

Dean Parkin, Director of From the Heart and Yes 23 spoke of the way reconciliation needs to be underpinned by truth telling. He spoke boldly of the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their struggle for constitutional recognition, and their journey, to deliver 'The Uluru Statement from the Heart' to the Australian people in 2017.

In many ways, the continuing journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a synodal one. There are multiple communities, multiple opinions so there are going to be differing opinions, but this doesn't necessarily represent conflict," said Mr Parkin.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart, states very clearly that the form of recognition must be through a Voice to Parliament." The power of having a voice that is heard, opens the way to tangible recognition and reconciliation and will have a real impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, he said.

Dr Elissa Roper, who was the keynote speaker at the Sandhurst Assembly in February this year joined Bishop Shane Mackinlay, Bishop of Sandhurst to speak about "Truth Telling, Synodality and Mission."

"Truth telling operates through the power of parrhesia which is defined as bold honest and free speech ... it is empowering rather than crushing or alienating," she said.

"In the earliest months of his pontificate, Pope Francis turned the tables on the usual bland undertakings of the Synod of Bishops' Assembly when he told them: "After the last consistory in which the Family was discussed, a cardinal wrote to me saying --what a shame that several cardinals did not have the courage to say certain things out of respect for the Pope, perhaps believing that the Pope might believe something else, or think something else. This is not good, this is not synodality, because it is necessary to say that all that, in the Lord, one feels the need to say, without polite deference without hesitation and at the same time one must listen with humility and welcome with an open heart what your brothers say. Synodality is exercised with these two approaches."

Bishop Shane Mackinlay used an example from the Australian Plenary Council to illustrate ways of being a Synodal Church.

"A synodal Church is one that listens, listens to all the voices in order to listen to the Holy Spirit. It does this in a spirit of prayer grounded in the Liturgy and the Word of God. It's a way of being Church, the adjective works much better, or an adverb if you like, a way of being Church."

It's something we can only do together. In communion, and it's something that we need to participate in. Discernment – is a shared activity so it involves participation, and it is directed to renewing our prophetic witness to the human family.

We need to ensure we have space for listening, and listening humbly, and both of those are guided by the Holy Spirit. We're called to speak, and we're called to hear – and hear everything that is being said in and through the various voices. Dialogue is a process of discernment – seeking to recognise God's action amongst us. We reflected that very well in the Plenary Council Prayer that we prayed over and over, over the years."



Pointing to a large image on the screen behind him, depicting the Wednesday session of the Plenary Council after the deliberative vote on the motions for the Equal Dignity of Women and Men was announced, Bishop Shane continued:

"That was a moment of crisis. It was a moment of great disappointment, great heartache, great hurt, anger. Of not being sure what we do next. But we did do something next ... and as I look back on it now, more and more I realise what a pivotal point that was."

"In moving forwards, not only did we find a way forward in relation to the motions of this area, on witnessing the equal dignity of women and men. It actually changed substantively the quality of the dialogue and indeed the outcomes of the decisions that we made about the remaining four areas that we were looking at."

So, what made that difference? What allowed that dialogue to actually enter a new phase? First, I think there was a shared commitment to ensure there was a positive outcome. It was very clear across the room that everybody was determined that the failed vote could not be the last word on this topic."

So, there was a shared commitment that somehow, we needed to move forward. Then there was certainly courageous speaking, which was not just about speaking loudly or boldly. One of the things that happened in that moment, I

think, was that people and people from all sides – because there were passionately held views and experiences both in support of the text as they had been put – and against them. And everybody had been effected viscerally by those experiences, and the failed vote highlighted that enormously.

As I look back, I think part of what happened was, there had been plenty of discussion leading up to the vote, and people had spoken with great generosity and great commitment to the process. But to some extent it had been a speaking from the head, an exchange of ideas. This is what I think; this is what I thought when I read the documents; this is what I brought with me that I want to say; this is why it's really important that you hear what I'm saying."

Talking about the time spent in dialogue after the deliberative vote, Bishop Shane explained,

The dialogue ... shifted ... the content wasn't much different, but people spoke much more from the heart, in a way that was very vulnerable that put themselves on the line in whatever the experience they were coming from, both for and against areas. People spoke about the lived experience of how they were effected, by the various parts of the motions, not just what they thought about them. And that was heard, that was received. So, there was humble listening, listening that was open to conversion, and conversion means being open to moving, to ending up in a different spot from where you started, seeing something differently, seeing other people differently. By the end of that week, the way that people who were disagreeing about their approach to various things, or their views on various things, had changed.

Seeing the different a perspective and hearing them articulate the different perspective of other people who they had been in dialogue with, was really very powerful.

So, part of that is Listening from the heart rather than listening and thinking – now what am I going to say, what's wrong about this and how am I going to prove, or what am I going to say in response to this, what's my counter argument going to be. And that's tough.

If we're open to learning, that means that we're prepared to contemplate letting go of what we thought beforehand.

A humble listening is a costly listening. Hearing someone speak from the depths of how they're effected and being prepared to be shifted myself is costly.

So, in the end, if you look at the initial text and the one that we finally agreed on, the content didn't change a great deal. There were a range of adjustments ... What changed was that people felt

heard and they appreciated the significance of what other people were saying differently to the way they had beforehand.

Seeing what that actually means, and the impact that it can have has been actually very worthwhile."

SANDHURST YOUTH MINISTRY



Sandhurst's World Youth Day Pilgrims gathered in Shepparton for the first time on Sunday 30 April to begin the formal preparation for their journey to Lisbon, Portugal at the end of July this year.

A group of 34 pilgrims from Sandhurst Parishes and Catholic Schools will join the World Youth Day celebrations with young Catholics from around the world, leaving Melbourne on 29 July and returning two weeks later. They will spend the majority of the pilgrimage in Lisbon taking part in the World Youth Day Festival, including the Vigil "Sleep Out" and final Mass with Pope Francis. Pilgrims will also have the opportunity to visit Fatima for a day and spend several days in retreat in Avila, Spain before departing for home.

This gathering was the first of four pre-pilgrimage formation sessions that will allow the pilgrims to gather together and learn more about what it means to be a pilgrim. The particular focus for the entire pilgrimage is placed on Our Lady of the Visitation as a role model for pilgrims and missionary disciples everywhere. Pope Francis has chosen the theme "Mary arose and went with haste" (Lk 1:39) that connects this WYD with the previous few years' themes, all focused around young people being active in their own lives, responding to the needs that they see and being "protagonists for change" (Pope Francis) in the world.

Regular updates on the pilgrimage preparations, as well as highlights and reflections from the pilgrims' international journey, will be shared in coming Sandpipe e-News editions, as well as on the Sandhurst Youth Facebook and Instagram pages.



Young People ages 15-35 are invited to gather together to celebrate Pentecost! There will be music from Melbourne musician Gen Bryant and her band, talks and other activities, and a BBQ. We will also celebrate the Pentecost Vigil Mass as part of the evening.

Further information, including how to register, will be available on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) so make sure you follow on the Sandhurst Youth Ministry pages to find out more.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

KNIGHTS ENJOY 60 YEARS OF BARNEY'S PICNIC – RAIN, HAIL OR SHINE

By Paul Sammut and Andrew Vaccaro

For about 60 years, on the first Sunday after Easter, the Knights of the Southern Cross Victoria has held one of its most enduring and unique events, which we all know as 'Barney's Picnic'. Founded originally as a post-Lenten feast for Members to unwind after a long penitential season, it is a tradition that has continued to the modern day, and in 2023 it took on a modified form.

Early in the morning of 16 April, about twenty metropolitan Members of the Knights, including our chaplain, Fr Tony Kerin, woke very early in order to board a chartered bus at St Francis Xavier Parish in Box Hill North, which would take them on their way to Barney's, stopping to pick up Members along the way. Other metropolitan Members travelled under their own steam.

All in all, there was a fair representation from Melbourne. Those on the bus got a chance to catch up on precious sleep, talk, and enjoy each other's company. Some even got a chance to catch up on their reading.

On the way, we stopped at Longwood for a country-style breakfast made possible by past State Chairman Bro. Tom Brodie and his family. It has been said in recent Barney's Picnic articles that much like travelling to the Holy Land or the Vatican, the Brodie Longwood Breakfast is a pilgrimage all Knights should make at least once in their lifetime. Along with giving Members a chance to stretch their legs, the breakfast featured the famous Brodie 'egg-in-bread' sausage sizzle, a rather

unique breakfast experience. Once breakfast was over, it was straight on the bus to Barney's.

The days leading up to Barney's had seen much rain in the area, and the forecast for 16 April saw more rain. Due to the likelihood of rain, it was decided that this year Barney's could not be held at "the most wonderful open-air cathedral in the world," (as bus leader Bro. Brian Moore refers to the usual picnic site on the banks of the Murray River at the Gehrig Winery in Barnawartha North. Instead, it took place on the grounds of St Mary's Church and School in Rutherglen, thanks to the readiness of the members of Rutherglen Branch,

It was quite a different experience this year at the different location, but it was no less enjoyable. In fact, the consensus was that it was a lot easier to enjoy, because everything was at hand and there was no need to trek the long steep path from the bus to the venue.



Proceedings commenced with Mass celebrated by Bishop Shane Mackinlay at St Mary's Church. As it has been every year, the Mass celebrated at Barney's (that of pine Mercy Sunday) focused on the Gospel story of 'Doubting' Thomas, who Bishop Shane noted had been unfairly treated throughout history, as his 'doubt' was erased when he saw the proof of Christ's Resurrection.

At the end of the Mass, past State Chairman and Knight of Honour, Bro. John Starmans, presented his fellow Rosanna Macleod Branch Member, Bro. Pat Kennealy, with a certificate acknowledging 50 years of membership.

After the Mass we adjourned to St Mary's Primary School opposite the church for our picnic, where we all had a beautiful fraternal time. While not the beautiful scenery we have been spoilt with for six decades, the venue at St Mary's School was great nonetheless. Importantly, it was undercover, which protected all attendees during the intermittent bouts of rain.

The 70 odd Members that were in attendance for the Picnic were well fed by the dedicated Members of Northern 8 District (consisting of Rutherglen, Wodonga, Wangaratta, and Myrtleford), with the usual yet amazing roast and barbeque. Many caught up with old friends, while others made new friends. Following the lunch, State Chairman Bro. Paul Mitchell addressed the

crowd, before the usual raffle was conducted by the always funny and entertaining Bro. Tony Jones of Rutherglen. With the day over, at about 4:00 p.m. we boarded the bus for our way home.

Leading into Barney's Picnic, the concern of low attendances, particularly from Melbourne, led us to believe that the days of Barney's Picnic may be coming to an end. In recent years it has been a particular challenge to encourage newer members to experience this great Order tradition, with reluctance to give up a day with families to travel to the bush. We hope that in coming years Barney's can be reinvigorated and entice a new generation of Knights to travel the great distances to enjoy each other's company. As Bro. Paul Mitchell said to those on the day inspired by Mark Twain, 'There are rumours that this might be the last Barney's- don't believe it!'

It is appropriate at this point that we should give many thanks to the Gehrig family, particularly the late Bro. Barney Gehrig, founder of this wonderful tradition, and Bro. Bernie Gehrig for continuing the tradition. Sadly, Bro Bernie was not present this year, as he is recovering from a recent illness. Please keep him in your prayers.

We also give thanks to all the Members of Northern 8 District for putting on another great experience, to Bro. Brian Moore for organising the bus, and Peter Davine for once again driving us.

Let us hope and pray that a renewed Barney's will encourage more Knights to attend in the future.

ECHUCA PARISH CELEBRATES FEAST DAY OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

By Julie Moyle, Parishioner, St Mary's Echuca



On Sunday 30 April, Bishop Shane Mackinlay celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel with parish priest, Fr Novelito Lim and a large congregation of parishioners of St Mary's Parish Echuca.

The 11.00 a.m. Mass was the only weekend Mass in Echuca and was very well attended. The congregation was joined by some of the Year One students from St Mary's Primary School who exhibited great talent while singing at the Mass.

Our community then enjoyed a wonderful lunch prepared and served by our Social Committee. Some 120 adults and 30 children experienced a warm and inclusive atmosphere where some talented younger Parish community members entertained us.

The feast day celebration was also the culmination of our 'Cash for a Cause' fundraiser. The funds raised from this initiative will be used to create a hospitality space in our Church.

This fantastic day included cutting our Feast Day cake, which all members of our community enjoyed. The day was a celebration of the diversity of our vibrant community.

We thank Fr Novie for his energetic and enthusiastic approach to the day and look forward to many more memorable celebrations as a Parish Community.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Announcement on Retirement of Mr Paul Desmond

issued on 18 May 2023

by

Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay, Bishop of Sandhurst
and

Ms Patricia Cowling,
Chair of Catholic Education Sandhurst

Mr Paul Desmond, Chief Executive Of icer of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd, has recently indicated his intention to retire from his current role at the end of this year and to commence richly deserved retirement from full-time work. After nine years of outstanding leadership and loyal and dedicated service, Paul intends to focus his time and energy on other pursuits in service to the Church, which will allow him greater flexibility and more time with family.

Throughout his years at the helm of Catholic education in the Sandhurst Diocese, Paul has served as an inspirational leader and a person of the highest professionalism and integrity. He has gained the deep respect and appreciation of all with whom he has worked. Principals, staff, students, and families have been touched by Paul's clear vision for quality Catholic education as well as by his kindness and empathy for all. Paul's wise leadership was particularly apparent throughout the years of the COVID pandemic when there was great appreciation for his clear and effective ongoing communication, his calm decision-making amidst the uncertainty of sudden lockdowns, and his consistent positivity and encouragement. Parish Priests across the diocese have also found in Paul a staunch advocate for strong partnerships between Church and school and an appreciation of the long history and rich tradition of Catholic education across the Diocese.

Through his own faith commitment, Paul has modelled to the community what it means to be Catholic, living the values of the Gospel in both word and deed, and ensuring that our Sandhurst schools pursue excellence in fostering the development of each person in all the dimensions of human existence and in the provision of opportunities and outcomes that foster this. His focus on initiatives to support the wellbeing of Principals and senior leaders across the many educational settings is evidence of his profound appreciation for those charged with the education and care of learners in our schools and communities.

Since 2021, as Chief Executive Officer, Paul has worked tirelessly to guide the successful establishment of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd – a new company that saw a change in responsibility for the 52 diocesan schools from the canonical administration of parish priests to oversight of an incorporated board. This has meant the development of new policies and frameworks, procedures, and structures for systemic schools. In addition, Paul has overseen Catholic Education Offices throughout the Diocese, which have been charged with supporting and resourcing all Catholic schools in the Diocese, including the Colleges owned and operated by Religious Institutes, with whom Paul has ensured that CES Ltd has maintained a strong and supportive partnership. In all these endeavours, Paul has ensured that students and their families remain at the heart of our ministry of Catholic Education.

At the same time, Paul has served as Executive Director for Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education and Care Ltd, a subsidiary company of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. Paul's positive approach and visionary grasp of the possibilities for Catholic schools' provision of high-quality educational opportunities for children from birth to adulthood have enabled the development of clear strategic goals in this area, which will serve the needs of young families into the future.



Beyond the Diocese, Paul has represented Catholic Education Sandhurst effectively in a number of broader educational settings. His many contributions to the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and to bodies such as the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are appreciated and respected by the broader educational community. His commitment to

ensuring that education for all students in regional and rural Victoria is of the highest quality has had a significant impact throughout this Diocese. Paul is a wise and courageous Director who has never shirked from representing our community respectfully but firmly in the most difficult of contexts. His legacy will continue to enhance Catholic schools and Early Learning Centres across the Diocese for many years to come.

Over the coming weeks the advertising and selection process will commence for the role of Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. At the same time, arrangements will be made to celebrate Paul's outstanding contributions to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sandhurst and to gather together to wish Paul and his wife, Gay, every blessing as they commence a new stage of their lives together.

MASS BY THE WATER A CELEBRATION OF CREATION

By Kerry Stone

Staff and all 35 students of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School in Elmore were hearing the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, as they celebrated Mass on the bank of the Campaspe River in early April.



NEW BUILDING FACILITATES BUILDING UP OF STUDENTS

The Senior Learning Centre at St Francis of the Fields Primary School in Strathfieldsaye was officially blessed by Bishop Shane Mackinlay on Friday 28 April.

Addressing students, Bishop Shane emphasised that the most important thing built up in a school is not the buildings, but the students themselves, each one of them a gift from God.

"The building that we open today and that we thank God for ... is one in service of the building up of each of you," he said.

"What is built up most of all (in a school) is not the physical buildings made of wood and metal, stone and

so on ... what is most important is each one of you. That's what our schools are here for."

Bishop Shane said that the church and the wider community contribute so much of their resources and efforts to schools so that each and every student can be built up.

"The starting point for us in a Catholic School, like at St Francis of the Fields is to celebrate each one of you as a gift from God ... God has already started to build each one of us from the day of our birth. In our schools, and in our families, we try to help in that process of building each of you to be the people that God created you to be... in your capacity academically, in your physical growth, in your sporting growth, growing as people with rich and mature relationships with one another, and growing as people in relationship with God as well as followers of Jesus."

So, the building that we open today and that we thank God for, as we thank God for all of his gifts, is one in service of the building up of each of you."

The Senior Learning Centre was built to cater for the growing school population at St Francis of the Fields Primary School, which is situated in the growth area of Strathfieldsaye in outer Bendigo. It includes eight classrooms, two intervention learning areas, a learning persity space for children who require extra support, and four office spaces. It was built with funding from the Victorian State Government.



The building was blessed by Bishop Shane Mackinlay and opened by Member for Bendigo East, Jacinta Allan. Ms Allan said that new buildings are tangible evidence of the state governments commitment to learning and development of Victorian children, but that it's what happens inside those buildings that really matters.

JUBILARIANS CELEBRATED

By Jenni Kennedy

On Friday May 5, the Catholic Education Sandhurst community celebrated the outstanding contribution of seven committed staff who have given 25 years plus service to Catholic Education.

The Jubilarians gathered with family and friends at Sacred Heart Church Wodonga, including Fiona Barrett, Gina Nero, Helen Rafferty, Maria Rinaldi, Louise Symons and Joanne Sellwood. Loretta Casey, who was in absentia, was also acknowledged at the Mass for her 25 year's service.

The Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Mr Paul Desmond paid tribute to the seven Jubilarians.

"I acknowledge the richness that each Jubilarian has brought to our Catholic schools. In so doing, we recognize their remarkable contribution which we know is so often borne of long hours and overt commitment to the young people and families which comprise our school communities," he said.

"These men and women have been authentic gifts to Catholic education here in the Diocese of Sandhurst and beyond," said Paul.

Each Jubilarian was presented with a commemorative badge during the Mass to celebrate the significant milestone. Following the service, the celebrations continued over dinner where each Jubilarian was honoured with a personal tribute about their contribution to Catholic education.

The Jubilarian concept has a rich tradition in Catholic life in celebrating silver and golden anniversaries of ordinations, professions, ministry and service in the Church's missionary activities. The Diocese of Sandhurst extends this laudatory practice to teachers and ancillary staff in the schools within the Diocese who have dedicated 25 years of service to Catholic Education.



Congratulations to the Sandhurst Jubilarians for 2023.

GRADUATE TEACHERS FOCUS ON PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES

By Jenni Kennedy

Graduate Teachers learned collaboratively from expert presenters Glen Pearsall, Lucy Buncle and CES education officers at the Catholic Education Sandhurst

(CES) Graduate Residential Conference in Moama last week.

More than 30 Graduate teachers from expert presenters Glen Pearsall, Lucy Buncle and CES education officers in interactive workshops, focusing on evidence-based learning and teaching strategies to support student learning and classroom management, as well as the VIT registration process.

Chief Executive Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Paul Desmond, said teaching was one of the most noble professions in the world and he thanked the graduates for choosing teaching as a profession.

"Each day in Sandhurst almost 20,000 students walk through the doors of our schools, each of them rich in potential and they are in your hands. They deserve the best, and it's important that you have every opportunity to hone your skills as a teacher, to learn best practices and that you have the support of Catholic Education Sandhurst to achieve this," he said.

The conference also provided valuable opportunities for early career teachers to network with their fellow graduate teachers from across the diocese. At Catholic Education Sandhurst, we believe that by investing in the development and support of young teachers, we are investing in the future of education in our diocese.

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FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS

STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

As a vote on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament nears, Australia's bishops are encouraging Catholics to read and discuss the Uluru Statement from the Heart – the document from which the Voice proposal emerged.

During their plenary meeting in Sydney this week, the bishops considered how they might assist Catholics in preparing for the referendum to enshrine the Voice to Parliament in the Constitution, with a vote due in the second half of 2023.

While the bishops – based on a decision they took in May 2022 – will later this year issue their annual Social Justice Statement on the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australian society, they decided to issue a statement at this point in the referendum process.

The bishops argued the fact that First Nations Peoples have lived in Australia for many thousands of years but their custodianship of the land isn't mentioned in the Constitution is "an omission which needs to be rectified".

A Voice to Parliament isn't the only way to achieve that outcome, the bishops wrote, but it "is the way requested by those who gathered at the historic meeting at Uluru". "This could be a significant step towards a more just and equitable Australia," the statement says.

"We want to encourage all Australians to educate themselves as well as possible concerning the proposal to establish the Voice.

"This is an important moment in the history of the nation, and it can help us to move towards a deep and just reconciliation. It also offers a mechanism to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples."

The bishops call for a meaningful debate on the issue, acknowledging that "people may, in good faith, have differing concerns and perspectives".

"We are an open democracy and this is a moment to use our democratic institutions to produce a high-quality debate, shaped by a genuine concern to do justice and bring healing to First Nations Peoples," they wrote.

"We ask those drafting the changes to the Constitution to work together in a spirit of cooperation, so that the proposal presented to the Australian people will appeal to a wide range of the population."

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2021, with the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia taking the same step

last year.

The bishops encouraged Catholic parishes, schools and agencies to arrange opportunities for people to read the document and have discussions about their response to its key messages.

STATEMENT ON CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCE LTD

In response, to a [public announcement by Catholic Church Insurance \(CCI\)](#) on 5 May, the Australian Catholic Bishops and Catholic Religious Australia have issued a statement to underscore the Church's enduring commitment to engage with victims and survivors of abuse with justice and compassion.

The Catholic Church in Australia wishes to assure both the Catholic and wider community that it remains fully committed to continuing to engage with survivors of abuse to meet all our legal obligations. We will do this according to the principles of justice and compassion.

The Church is also working closely with all Catholic ministries currently affiliated with CCI to ensure continuity of general insurance cover.

The Catholic Church is deeply sorry for the abuse that has occurred in the Church. The bishops and the leaders of religious institutes are united in pursuing concrete ways to repair wrongdoings, including through the payment of compensation, and to bring some healing, where that is possible.

The bishops and the leaders of religious institutes have been working for many years to ensure abuse claims are handled fairly, whether cases are covered by insurance policies or not. This will continue to be the case.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

CARITAS URGES CONTINUED FOCUS ON WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE

Caritas Australia commends the ongoing commitment of the Australian Government to our region in the latest Federal Budget.

“There is no doubt that we have seen an increase in the aid budget since the Albanese Government came to office,” said Caritas Australia’s Advancement Director, Richard Landels.

“We commend the Albanese Government for its willingness to tackle complex humanitarian and development needs around the world.”

“We’re pleased to see a focus on climate change adaptation in this budget. This will strengthen the ability of Pacific nations to withstand the shocks of climate change. Additionally, the \$4 million increase for gender equality, disability, and social inclusion,

along with an \$8.8 million increase in Disaster Risk Reduction, is encouraging.”

“We remain hopeful that the government will see the need for further commitment to the global hunger crisis. Displacement and hunger loom large, and the international community must act now to prevent catastrophe.”

Over the past year, Australia has allocated an additional \$40 million to famine relief, but more is needed. The global hunger crisis has worsened significantly, compounded by climate change, COVID-19 and conflict. Approximately a quarter of a billion people are now facing acute hunger, 65 million more than last year.

Conditions in hunger hotspots like the Horn of Africa are deteriorating rapidly. In Somalia, 90 per cent of people do not have enough to eat. The recent outbreak of in Sudan, accompanied by mass displacement and agricultural disruptions, will likely exacerbate the plight of this drought-stricken region.

“The Federal Budget has shone a spotlight on the cost-of-living crisis here in Australia, and for good reason, but we are not alone. Already vulnerable regions are also facing their own cost-of living crisis with little to no support. They are suffering from the same impacts of the war in Ukraine and COVID-19, but then must deal with conflicts and climate change on top of this.”

“We know that if we intervene sooner rather than later, we will save more lives, and do so far more cheaply than after the crisis has escalated. We urge the Labor Government to continue to provide hunger and famine relief to prevent this catastrophe.”

SERRA FOUNDATION LOOKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT VOCATIONS

The Serra Foundation that has supported priestly and religious vocations for more than forty years is inviting Catholics to offer prayers and financial support to men and women making life long commitments to the church.

The Serra Foundation was founded in 1982, emerging from Serra clubs, which were first established in the United States to support vocations. The first Serra Meeting held in Australia was in 1968, with the first clubs formally convened in Sydney and Melbourne in 1970.

The Foundation began in 1982 with \$4000 raised from across the country. In the decades since, tens of thousands of dollars have been donated and distributed to support vocations and vocations related activities.

The Chairman of the Foundation’s board of trustees, Neville Hackett, said funds have been used to help seminarians and young pilgrims attend World Youth Day, people to undertake discernment, support and

expansion of facilities at seminaries, assisting education and training and participate in retreats, among many other activities

“Our Church is deeply indebted to the men and women who commit to lives of prayer, service and ministry” Mr. Hackett said.

The prayerful encouragement that the Serra clubs offer and the financial assistance that the Serra Foundation can provide are a way in which the faithful can express our gratitude and love for those servants of the Lord.

Membership of Serra clubs is open to all practicing Catholic laymen, lay women and permanent deacons.

“We have several clubs across Australia that meet regularly for prayer, fellowship and discussion” Mr. Hackett said.

“In addition to our focus on those already in ministry and those considering ministry, we also look for ways to recognize and respond to God’s call to holiness in our own lives”

The Serra Foundation welcomes donations from all people, whether they are members of a local Serra club or not.

Bishop Michael Kennedy of Maitland and Newcastle Diocese has served for many years as episcopal adviser to Serra and the Foundation.

The Serra Foundation’s address is:
P.O. 440, DONCASTER VIC 3108

Serra Australia Secretary’s address is:
84/10 Waterford Park Avenue, KNOXFIELD VIC 3180

Prayer for Vocations:

Oh God, who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech You, through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever virgin, Saint Joseph her spouse, Saint Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase in labourers for your Church, fellow labourers with Christ, to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Amen

“31 Club” Daily Prayer for Vocations

Heavenly Father, help us to respond to, and live out, our mission in the Church. Help all your people to know their vocation in life and assist them to prepare for it. For Your greater glory and for the service of your people, call many to be Priests and Religious. Give those whom you call the grace to respond generously and to persevere faithfully.

Amen.

VIRTUS GLOBAL GAMES

Shepparton's Damon Vasterink is one of many Australian athletes who will compete at the sixth edition of the Virtus Global Games, the world's largest elite sport event for athletes with an intellectual impairment. Thousands of athletes from Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Oceania will compete across ten main sports in Vichy France, from 4-10 June.

A new logo for the Games has been created. The colours used within the emblem representing the host country are -- red, white and blue this year!

The Games are designed to be conducted every four years, in the preceding year to the Paralympics. Many athletes who have made their international debut at the Global Games have gone on to win Paralympic titles. This 2023 event will again provide a world class stepping stone for athletes with an intellectual impairment on the journey to Paris 2024.

The goals of the Virtus Games are changing attitudes, challenging perceptions, creating opportunities, developing pathways and strengthening communities. We believe that Australians of all abilities should have equal access to sport and physical activity opportunities.

Australia has a proud record at Virtus Global Games, finishing on top of the medal table at all Games except the first, where the team finished second.

Main sports include athletics, swimming, table tennis, rowing, basketball, futsal, tennis, taekwondo/judo, equestrian (debut) and cycling. Other sports to feature at the event in France will be karate, handball and hockey.

A total of 121 athletes are expected to represent Australia in the green and gold across ten sports. Team members have been fundraising to ensure all athletes are supported to their needs as they vie for the honour of being recognised as the best in their field.

The high level of commitment to their sport is obvious as athletes train and build team spirit. Squads in the Australian team have a good combination of experience and youth. There is friendly rivalry and the welcoming inclusive spirit of the Games.

In the men's basketball team, the Boomerangs, there are two young guns along with two seasoned campaigners who will provide depth and experience on the court. The head coach of the women's teams, the Pearls, said they have a balanced mix of players, all of whom have worn the green and gold before.

Damon Vasterink has been honing his talents in Taekwondo for more than ten years. He will be trying to add to his long list of achievements as he represents Australia at the Global Games. Damon has not let his disability stop him from enjoying life. Taekwondo has been an outlet for him during some difficult times. Damon now has an exciting opportunity to realise his dream of collecting another medal.

Some of the 50+ Membership countries have put in bids to host the 2027 Global Games. Organisers aim to announce the winning bid during the Closing Ceremony in France.

Be aware of Channel 7 showing the sixth edition of the Virtus Global Games, although I am not sure of the breadth of the coverage. You can also watch events online and send encouragement to our athletes.

Mary Pianta,
Disability Contact Coordinator,
Diocese of Sandhurst.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Join Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) and Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) at a series of webinars to discuss the upcoming referendum on Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the Voice to Parliament.

Learn from legal, historical and theological experts, and hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders about their experiences, hopes and concerns for the Voice referendum in 2023.

This Webinar Series is open to anyone of goodwill who is interested in better understanding the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Voice to Parliament and the upcoming referendum.

Together, we will be exploring questions like:

- What is the history of the referendum?
- Should First Nations Peoples have a Voice to Parliament? Why now?
- How has the Catholic Church engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples over time?
- How might Catholic Social Teaching be applied to the questions that lie before us in 2023?

• What is some of the thinking of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in Catholic social services and beyond in relation to the referendum?

This three part webinar series will include:

- **25 May: What is The Voice to Parliament all about?** Hear from Professor Melissa Castan, Director of the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University
- **29 June: The Church, Catholic Social Teaching and engagement with First Nations Peoples;** Hear from Fr Frank Brennan SJ, Australian Jesuit priest, human rights lawyer and academic
- **27 July: First Nations Voices;** Hear from a panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about their views and experiences: Uncle Ron Briggs (Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand), Aunty Violet Sheriden (Ngunnawal Elder) and Esmal Manahan (MacKillop Family Services)

Registrations are available for all or selected sessions. Limited spots available so register fast!

Time and Dates

4-5pm - 25 May, 29 June and 27 July

Costs CSSA and CSSV Members: Free
Non-members: \$12 per session or \$30 for the full series

[Register for selected session or the full series here.](#)



Bishop Shane's Calendar

- Tuesday 30 May - Pathways Victoria AGM
- Wednesday 31 May - Ordination of Bishop-elect John Panamthottathil as Syro-Malabar Eparch, Campbellfield
- Thursday 1 June - Catholic Education Sandhurst Reconciliation Mass, Nathalia, 11am
- Sunday 4 June - Sunday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 11am
- Tuesday 6 June - Backhaus Trustees Meeting, Bendigo
- Thursday 8 June - Corpus Christi College Trustees Meeting, Melbourne
- Thursday 8 June – Victorian Bishops Meeting, Melbourne
- Thursday 8 June - Catholic Theological College Senate & Annual Mass, Melbourne
- Sunday 11 June - Sunday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 11am

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The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 57th WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Speaking with the heart "The truth in love" (Eph 4:15)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After having reflected in past years on the verbs “to go and see” and “to listen” as conditions for good communication, with this Message for the LVII World Day of Social Communications, I would like to focus on “speaking with the heart”. It is the heart that spurred us to go, to see and to listen, and it is the heart that moves us towards an open and welcoming way of communicating. Once we have practised listening, which demands waiting and patience, as well as foregoing the assertion of our point of view in a prejudicial way, we can enter into the dynamic of dialogue and sharing, which is precisely that of communicating in a cordial way. After listening to the other with a pure heart, we will also be able to speak following the truth in love (cf. Eph 4:15). We should not be afraid of proclaiming the truth, even if it is at times uncomfortable, but of doing so without charity, without heart. Because “the Christian’s programme” — as Benedict XVI wrote — “is ‘a heart which sees’”. [1] A heart that reveals the truth of our being with its beat and that, for this reason, should be listened to. This leads those who listen to attune themselves to the same wave length, to the point of being able to hear within their heart also the heartbeat of the other. Then the miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division.

Jesus warns us that every tree is known by its fruit (cf. Lk 6:44): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (v. 45). This is why, in order to communicate truth with charity, it is necessary to purify one’s heart. Only by listening and speaking with a pure heart can we see beyond appearances and overcome the vague din which, also in the

field of information, does not help us discern in the complicated world in which we live. The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth.

Communicating cordially

Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time. Those who speak in this way love the other because they care and protect their freedom without violating it. We can see this style in the mysterious wayfarer who dialogues with the disciples headed to Emmaus, after the tragedy that took place at Golgotha. The Risen Jesus speaks to them with the heart, accompanying the journey of their suffering with respect, proposing himself and not imposing himself, lovingly opening their minds to understand the profound meaning of what had happened. Indeed, they can joyfully exclaim that their hearts burned within them as he spoke to them on the road and explained the Scriptures to them (cf. Lk 24:32).

In a historical period marked by polarizations and contrasts — to which unfortunately not even the ecclesial community is immune — the commitment to communicating “with open heart and arms” does not pertain exclusively to those in the field of communications; it is everyone’s responsibility. We are all called to seek and to speak the truth and to do so with charity. We Christians in particular are continually urged to keep our tongue from evil (cf. Ps 34:13), because as Scripture teaches us, with the same tongue we can bless the Lord and curse men and women who were made in the likeness of God (cf. Jas 3:9). No evil word should come from our mouths, but

rather “only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (Eph 4:29).

Sometimes friendly conversations can open a breach even in the most hardened of hearts. We also have evidence of this in literature. I am thinking of that memorable page in Chapter XXI of *The Betrothed* in which Lucia speaks with the heart to the Innominato [the Unnamed] until he, disarmed and afflicted by a healthy inner crisis, gives in to the gentle strength of love. We experience this in society, where kindness is not only a question of “etiquette” but a genuine antidote to cruelty, which unfortunately can poison hearts and make relationships toxic. We need it in the field of media, so that communication does not foment acrimony that exasperates, creates rage and leads to clashes, but helps people peacefully reflect and interpret with a critical yet always respectful spirit, the reality in which they live.

Communicating heart to heart: “In order to speak well, it is enough to love well”

One of the brightest and still fascinating examples of “speaking with the heart” is offered by Saint Francis de Sales, a Doctor of the Church, whom I wrote about in the Apostolic Letter, *Totum Amoris Est*, 400 years after his death. In addition to this important anniversary, I would like to mention another anniversary that takes place in 2023: the centenary of his proclamation as patron of Catholic journalists by Pius XI with the Encyclical, *Rerum Omnium Perturbationem*. A brilliant intellectual, fruitful writer and profound theologian, Francis de Sales was Bishop of Geneva at the beginning of the XVII century during difficult years marked by heated disputes with Calvinists. His meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love. One could say about him: “A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies” (Sir 6:5). After all, one of his most famous statements, “heart speaks to heart”, inspired generations of faithful, among them Saint John Henry Newman, who chose it as his motto, *Cor ad cor loquitur*. One of his convictions was, “In order to speak well, it is enough to love well”. It shows that for him communication should never be reduced to something artificial, to a marketing strategy, as we might say nowadays, but is rather a reflection of the soul, the visible surface of a nucleus of love that is invisible to the eye. For Saint Francis de Sales, precisely “in the heart and through the heart, there comes about a subtle, intense and unifying process in which we come to know God”. [2] By “loving well”, Saint Francis succeeded in communicating with Martin, the deaf-mute, becoming his friend. This is why he is also known as the protector of people with impairments in communicating.

It is from this “criterion of love” that, through his writings and witness of life, the saintly Bishop of Geneva reminds us that “we are what we communicate”. This goes against the grain today, at a time when — as we experience especially on social media — communication is often exploited so that the world may see us as we would like to be and not as we are.

Saint Francis de Sales disseminated many copies of his writings among the Geneva community. This “journalistic” intuition earned him a reputation that quickly went beyond the confines of his diocese and still endures to this day. His writings, Saint Paul VI observed, provide for a “highly enjoyable, instructive and moving” reading. [3] If we look today at the field of communications, are these not precisely the characteristics that an article, a report, a television or radio programme or a social media post should include? May people who work in communications feel inspired by this saint of tenderness, seeking and telling the truth with courage and freedom and rejecting the temptation to use sensational and combative expressions.

Speaking with the heart in the synodal process

As I have emphasised, “In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another. It is the most precious and life-giving gift we can offer each other”. [4] Listening without prejudice, attentively and openly, gives rise to speaking according to God’s style, nurtured by closeness, compassion and tenderness. We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters. I dream of an ecclesial communication that knows how to let itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, gentle and at the same time, prophetic, that knows how to find new ways and means for the wonderful proclamation it is called to deliver in the third millennium. A communication which puts the relationship with God and one’s neighbour, especially the neediest, at the centre and which knows how to light the fire of faith rather than preserve the ashes of a self-referential identity. A form of communication founded on humility in listening and *parrhesia* in speaking, which never separates truth from charity.

Disarming souls by promoting a language of peace

“A soft tongue will break a bone”, says the book of Proverbs (25:15). Today more than ever, speaking with the heart is essential to foster a culture of peace in places where there is war; to open paths that allow for dialogue and reconciliation in places where hatred and enmity rage. In the dramatic context of the global conflict we are experiencing, it is urgent to maintain a form of communication that is not hostile. It is necessary to overcome the tendency to “discredit and insult opponents from the outset [rather] than to open a respectful dialogue”. [5] We need communicators who are open to dialogue, engaged in promoting integral disarmament and committed to undoing the belligerent psychosis that nests in our hearts, as Saint John XXIII prophetically urged in the Encyclical *Pacem In Terris*: “True peace can only be built in mutual trust” (No. 113). A trust which has no need of sheltered or closed communicators but bold and creative ones who are ready to take risks to find common ground on which to meet. As was the case sixty years ago, we are now also living in a dark hour in which humanity fears an escalation of war that must be stopped as soon as possible, also at the level of communication. It is terrifying to hear how easily words

calling for the destruction of people and territories are spoken. Words, unfortunately, that often turn into warlike actions of heinous violence. This is why all belligerent rhetoric must be rejected, as well as every form of propaganda that manipulates the truth, disfiguring it for ideological ends. Instead, what must be promoted is a form of communication that helps create the conditions to resolve controversies between peoples.

As Christians, we know that the destiny of peace is decided by conversion of hearts, since the virus of war comes from within the human heart. [6] From the heart come the right words to dispel the shadows of a closed and divided world and to build a civilization which is better than the one we have received. Each of us is asked to engage in this effort, but it is one that especially appeals to the sense of responsibility of those working in the field of communications so that they may carry out their profession as a mission.

May the Lord Jesus, the pure Word poured out from the heart of the Father, help us to make our communication clear, open and heartfelt.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, help us listen to the beating of hearts, to rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and to disarm the hostility that divides.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word of truth and love, help us speak the truth in charity, so that we may feel like protectors of one another.

4 Rome, Saint John Lateran, 24 January 2023, Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales. FRANCISCUS

[1] Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005), 31.

[2] Apostolic Letter *Totum Amoris Est* (28 December 2022).

[3] Cf. Apostolic Epistle *Sabaudiae Gemma*, on the IV Centennial of the Birth of Saint Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church (29 January 1967).

[4] Message for the LVI World Day of Social Communications (24 January 2022).

[5] Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 201.

[6] Cf. Message for the 56th World Day of Peace (1 January 2023).