



SANDPIPER

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Living Faith at Work

St Brendan's Shepparton Youth explored what it means to live their faith while they work at a 'sunset session' on Thursday 20 June. Guest speakers Bernie Sullivan (Catholic Mission and theatre nurse at Shepparton Private Hospital), Tiff Chandler (teacher at Notre Dame College) and Fr Jackson Saunders (Priest at St Brendan's Shepparton) shared their thoughts and experiences on the subject, which was followed by general discussion and a shared meal.

Newly appointed Shepparton Youth Ministry Worker, Emma Christy organised the event after discussions with young adults in the parish about the dilemmas they face sometimes at work.

"I also work as a nurse. In a healthcare environment living your faith can feel a bit more complex because we are serving people with so many different values and beliefs. I have often asked myself, 'How can I be true to my faith, but not interfere in someone else's healthcare journey?' It then came to light that so many other young people have been asking themselves the same sort of questions; so we thought we'd explore it more fully at a parish youth gathering," said Emma.

Emma said she was pleased with the evening; "All of the participants were very engaged and we had such a great time," she said. "I hope, as the year goes on, and more of these events happen, that we gather momentum and snowball," says Emma, describing her vision of a vibrant youth scene at St Brendan's. She sees so many benefits from the connection these gatherings offer young people and wants to share this spirit.

Emma moved to Shepparton to follow her nursing career as a young adult, so she knows first-hand what it is like to be new to a place. She believes youth events can help young people, especially those who are new to a parish, to make friends and feel more at home. Offering advice to other young people she says, "Just reach out. It's scary, but it doesn't have to be a big leap. Reach out to the person you sit next to at Mass; send emails to the parish; or give them a phone call and ask if they have anything on for young adults – which is kind of what I did. It only takes a phone call."

Emma is concerned with making St Brendan's a more welcoming and inviting place, especially for young people, seeing the benefits of community and connection for all aspects of anyone's

life. “In my role as Youth Ministry Worker I’m aiming to make opportunities which are specifically targeted so that young people can meet like-minded people, in a same life-stage, to learn about and discuss topics of interest.”

“We need to create opportunities, especially for young people, to connect to the church in their own way,” says Emma. “Now, as an ‘official’ Youth Ministry Worker I am more in a position to help do that.”

Emma continues to work as a nurse and works for St Brendan’s in Youth Ministry for ten hours a week. “I was originally volunteering in the parish but, now, my role is firmed up and I feel I have more authority. I now feel like I have the power to take initiative or change things, as a volunteer you don’t feel so comfortable taking the lead,” Emma explains.

Youth Ministry at St Brendan’s aims to provide opportunities to engage with parish life for primary school-aged children, high school students, and young adults up to the age of 35. Emma says, she is planning age-appropriate opportunities with the guidance of her Pastoral Supervisor, Brendan Lindsay (Notre Dame College) and Fr Jackson Saunders, (Assistant Priest at St Brendan’s).

So, dear reader: back to the question explored at the Sunset Session: “What does it mean to have faith while you work? What does this mean to you? We’d be interested to hear from you:

Here are some considerations as a start:

- See Christ in each of our colleagues and co-workers.
- Don’t judge, (love the person, not their actions or choices)
- Trust in God, that he will guide you, and know not everything is in your control.
- Accept outcomes, know you have done your best and be at peace with outcomes.
- Work diligently, giving every day your best.
- Find authentic joy in little things.

If you would like to share your ideas about this, please email Katrina at:

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