



THE BRIDGE

A RESOURCE FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS
STRIVING TO SHARE THEIR FAITH

APRIL 2020

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all. Acts 4:33



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IN GRATITUDE

The Catholic Enquiry Centre responds to enquiries about our faith by phone, mail and email. It offers information and free materials and connects enquirers to their local church.

As a measure of our sincere gratitude to all who support our work, please be assured of our regular prayers for you and your families. We hope and pray that your giving is richly rewarded, both in this life and in the life to come.

For more information about how to make a bequest please contact us directly.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM CORONAVIRUS (EXCERPT)

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. (Full text: <https://www.sacredspace.ie/pope-francis-coronavirus-prayer/>)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Family having dinner together, Lightstock.
Anzac Day, crest of the Catholic Military Ordinariate.

If you love your printed copy, that's great. But if you'd like to use less paper then email us today and we will email your next issue.



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THE NCE IS AN AGENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE IS A WORK OF THE NCE

VOL 1 No.3 APRIL 2020 ISSN 2652-421X (online)
Permission to copy with acknowledgement

YOUR SUPPORT

To aid the Catholic Enquiry Centre in its mission in Australia

While our hope is that your main contribution to the work of the Centre will be a prayer, some may still like to offer a small donation.

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APRIL 2020

FROM THE DIRECTOR WILL WE SURVIVE OR THRIVE?



The sudden and rapid change in our societal and religious practices in recent times due to COVID-19 has taken many by surprise. It has definitively changed daily life as we re-organise workspaces and procedures, try and shop for essential items, listen to regular news services, attempt to remain connected to family and friends, and find ways to live out our faith and sacramental life.

Firstly, let me say how important it is to listen to government and Church leaders, now and into the coming months. Many of the instructions which challenge our regular routines and way of life are in fact grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. Actions taken to stop the spread of the virus are about preserving the dignity of all human persons, particularly those most vulnerable, and are serving the common good.

There is no need to list all of the new restrictions and conditions, as we are living them every day. Looking forward, they may continue for some time. Do we then continue to find ways of surviving, or can we seek out new ways of thriving in different ways? COVID-19 offers us a renewal of some Catholic traditions as well as an invitation to find new ways of being Church.

Almost overnight our social media feeds changed. People are praying via social media and Eucharistic celebrations are being streamed live. What I consider an amazing offering of grace are those musicians and speakers who have had their sources of income completely cancelled for the rest of the year, and are now providing mini presentations and concerts online for free. These continuations of what we already do, but now in different ways, provide security and normalcy in this time of crisis and uncertainty. We will be drawn to them.

Community is a significant part of our faith life and spirituality as Catholics, but so too is retreat and immersions in silence. As the streets clear and we are no longer gathering for sporting or community gatherings, how can we enter willingly into a period of self-reflection and retreat? We can nurture our own personal prayer routine amidst the silence of this new way of life. The Scriptures

and communion of saints are full of those who have benefited from times of retreat and silence. How can we draw upon these and find new ways of listening to the Holy Spirit in this newfound silence?

Pope Francis' Laudato Si' calls for a renewed look at how we exist as society, our habits and our treatment of our common home. Now seems the perfect time to revisit this invitation and re-consider our habits driven by consumerism or finances, and to consider how we are contributing to the renewal of our environment and communities. In renegotiating what we can no longer do, how can we begin to make a more positive impact on our common home?

Our new way of life for the immediate future can also present an opportunity for evangelisation, most importantly within our family setting. In these times of social isolation, we must ensure we nurture the core relationship of our family. We must avoid long periods of binge watching TV, or even only passively watching prayer or Mass experiences online. Take time to pray together, read and discuss Scripture together, play games together, do activities together and re-connect.

We will also see many friends and colleagues ask deeper questions about why something like this has happened. Like the devastation of the bushfires earlier in the year, people around us may become alarmed and begin to delve into questions which may be stirrings of the Holy Spirit in their life. We must be present and ready to accompany those who ask questions and to share our own story, as Jesus did on the road to Emmaus.

Many have shared that the first Mass after the gathering restrictions have been lifted will be a big celebration. Well, have you started planning? Or do you intend to return to the regular routine celebration you used to have? In the coming weeks, what if we review our liturgical preparations and make them the best they can be. Our first returning liturgy must be worthy of the joy we find in returning to the risen Christ in Eucharist.

There are many more ideas and options for making the most of this new way of life. Of building and thriving, rather than just surviving. We must be proactive and positive to see what the Holy Spirit is offering us amongst these challenges. If we are a temple of the Holy Spirit, as we are Baptised and Confirmed to be, how will we be the joyful disciples of Christ over the coming months?



MALCOLM HART
Director
National Centre for Evangelisation
Catholic Enquiry Centre



Catholic Enquiry Centre
Reaching out in faith

EVOLVING WITH A GROWING AUDIENCE

With the amalgamation of multiple Bishops Conference offices into the new National Centre for Evangelisation (NCE), we have been exploring the best way to serve and respond to our new and broader audience. This has already, and will continue to, bring change and developments to our work and communication. We anticipate these changes will provide greater connection and collaboration to the Church's evangelisation efforts.

This will be the final issue of The Bridge in its current format. A new format is being developed which will have a greater number of articles covering more diverse ministries and initiatives. The Bridge will reduce in frequency to six issues per year, and we will be enhancing our social media strategy.

We would like to thank Dooley's Catholic Club for their sponsorship in recent years. Their support has been critical to our ability to print and distribute The Bridge, getting it into the broader community.

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE (CEC)

The work of the NCE and the CEC continues to develop. As Australia moves from one crisis to another through bushfires, flood, droughts and now an international pandemic, the Holy Spirit continues to stir in the hearts of many. The CEC continues to take phone calls, answer emails and send out resources to those seeking to learn more about Jesus.

In 2019 we updated the CEC website and online resources for enquirers. With a few updates still to come, we hope to launch the website and a renewed campaign around the CEC later in the year. We also aim to share greater insights with you into the diversity of the CEC's work.

Your ongoing assistance to promote and financially support the work of the CEC is critical to this important mission. We sincerely thank you for your partnership. Please consider the CEC donation form in this month's newsletter.

AGENT OF EVANGELISATION

ROBY JOSHUA



When I sat down to interview Roby Joshua a few weeks ago, I was amazed by his passionate desire to share his Catholic faith. Within seconds, Roby was suggesting that we begin the interview with prayer, and then he started asking me questions. And here I was thinking I was doing the interviewing!

As our conversation got going I was concerned that this story

was going to be a bit too pious for some of our readers. I thought to myself: I want people to be inspired to share their faith, but not be overwhelmed by stories of people who seem to have no difficulty in engaging in public evangelisation. Yet, over the next hour Roby was able to explain his motivation, his regular nervousness about sharing his faith in front of others and the impact of having a supportive wife. Roby is an ordinary fellow, but he is determined to get his priorities right.

Roby was born in Kerala, India, and came to Canberra to study at the Australian National University. Eleven years later he is a nationalised Australian working in the public service as a business analyst. He found the love of his life through a good mate, married her, and they now have a beautiful daughter. Life is good for Roby. He earns a good salary and can afford a comfortable home. But "comfortable" is not a word that sits well with Roby.

Life would be comfortable, except that Roby's first priority is to do the will of God. And it seems that God is constantly calling him out of his comfort zone. Since arriving in Canberra he has been involved as a catechist for primary school children, as a sacristan and leading youth groups. He has been heavily involved with Jesus Youth for many years. He assists with various ministries in three parishes, including the Syro-Malabar parish in Canberra. The Syro-Malabar Church is one of the many Eastern Churches which, together with the Latin Church, are governed by the successor of St Peter.

I asked Roby about his own youth, and what were the factors that led him to become so involved with the Church. He reflected that

in Kerala he was surrounded by a culture of Catholicism. You lived and breathed your faith every day, not just Sundays.

He noted that coming to Australia presented him with a very different culture. It was not always easy to navigate the temptations of what secular culture offered, with his own desire to stay faithful to God and the Catholic Church. In some ways, his own journey of not always getting it right has helped him to be able to minister to young people.

I posed to Roby the question of how a second generation of Syro-Malabar Catholics would stay strong in their faith. He was conscious of this being an issue. As with other ethnic Catholic groups that have migrated to Australia, there can be a sense that, with each new generation, the faith gets watered down.

This is one of the reasons why he devotes so much of his time to youth ministry. He also wants his own small family to stay strong in the faith. Going to Mass, being part of the parish community, praying and reading the Bible at home, and surrounding themselves with other Catholics are non-negotiables for Roby and his wife.

But Roby feels God is calling him to do more than just nurture his own family. Roby is involved in street ministry and explains that this can be challenging, but rewarding. At work, he took the brave step of walking through the office with his Bible. He had contemplated doing this for weeks, but was just too nervous. On the day he plucked up the courage to publicly display his faith, a woman asked him if he was a Christian. This led to a small Bible study group being established by a group of Christians from different denominations.

Our hour-long interview comes to an end. Yet, even as I'm walking Roby to the carpark, he's sharing a number of evangelisation initiatives that he's been praying about. He's excited and energised about the prospect of making these ideas come to life. And you know what? I think he has every chance of making it happen.



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ANZAC DAY 2020

CATHOLIC MILITARY ORDINARIATE



Anzac Day is likely to look a little different this year. As this publication goes to print, it seems that there will be no large-scale dawn services, no marches and none of the beautiful liturgies which allow us, as a community, to bring before God all the women and men who have served in past times and who now serve our nation through the armed forces. We remember in our prayers those who paid the supreme sacrifice, and praise God for the example of their service.

But lest we forget the important work and sacrifice made by these women and men, especially in recent months as they battled bushfires across our nation, we thought we would share with you some information about how the military is pastorally supported in Australia.

The Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia is charged with the pastoral care of uniformed members of Australia's Navy, Army and Air Force, their families and of the civilians employed by the Department of Defence.

The Ordinariate functions as a diocese. Its Chancery Office is located in Canberra, but its geographical jurisdiction covers all Australian states and territories. The Most Rev Max Davis is the Bishop of the Ordinariate, and he is supported by three Episcopal Vicars, one each for the Air Force, Navy and Army.

Chapels located in each state are served by dedicated chaplains. These chaplains also assist with the preparation for and celebration of the sacraments for service families. But possibly more importantly, they are on the ground with the service personnel in times of war and other natural disasters. Their ministry is very hands on, and certainly in line with Pope Francis' call to be serving at the peripheries.

If you would like to read more about the Military Ordinariate, please visit their website: <http://military.catholic.org.au/>

"JUST AS SO MANY AUSTRALIANS DRAW STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM THE MEMBERS OF OUR DEFENCE FORCE, MANY OF THEM DRAW SUPPORT AND PASTORAL CARE FROM THE CATHOLIC MILITARY DIOCESE. I COMMEND THE WORK OF THE CATHOLIC MILITARY DIOCESE AND THEIR EFFORTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN THROUGH FAITH."

*General Sir Peter John Cosgrove AK, CVO, MC
Former Governor-General of Australia*

RESOURCES + EVENTS

RESOURCES



CORONAVIRUS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Resources to assist people with disability and their families/carers during the Coronavirus pandemic.

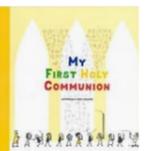
<https://www.afdo.org.au/easy-read-covid-19-resources/>

Tips for avoiding coronavirus <https://www.scopeaust.org.au/about-scope/coronavirus/tips-on-avoiding-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Widgit Symbols support communication

PRAYERS IN WIDGET

A symbol-based prayer book: https://www.widgit.com/resources/curriculum/re/prayer_books/index.htm



A NEW PUBLICATION FROM THE YOUCAT SERIES: MY FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

This new release from the makers of the YOUCAT series is an ideal gift for children celebrating their first Communion. Children will be able to read, fill in, colour if they wish and stick in photos of their special day.

Available from Freedom Publishing: orders@freedompublishingbooks.com.au, or go to their website: <https://www.freedompublishingbooks.com.au/>



DISCOVERING PRAYER: A 30 DAY PRAYER JOURNEY OF ENCOUNTERING GOD, AND LOVE

Published in 2017 by the National Centre for Evangelisation, this small prayer book is an ideal gift for those being fully initiated into the Church. At just \$3 (plus p&h), you might also like to purchase a few copies to send to friends/parishioners who might be isolated, and in need of some spiritual accompaniment. Available from the ACBC online shop: <https://bit.ly/39jicwb>

RESOURCES



COVID 19: THE CHURCH'S ADVICE & RESOURCES

Dioceses and parishes across Australia will be keeping parishioners up-to-date with local arrangements as they respond to the Government's protocols for the global pandemic of COVID-19. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is providing regular advice, which can be found at <https://catholic.org.au/coronavirus>. They are also providing information about the responses from dioceses in each Australian state and territory. A new webpage has also been established to bring you resources that can be used in the home. These can be found at <https://catholic.org.au/prayathome>.

For those of you who do not have access to the internet, **Mass for You at Home**, is shown every Sunday morning at 6am on Channel 10.

If you are unable to find ideas or advice regarding how to accompany your catechumen and candidates this Easter, then we recommend you take a look at TeamRCIA from the USA. They are offering a number of ideas for RCIA teams. Here is the link: <https://teamrcia.com/>. Please note, there may be differences between the health protocols being advised in the USA and Australia, so please ensure your local advice is followed.



CATHOLIC EMERGENCY RELIEF AUSTRALIA

(CERA) has emerged as a Church-wide collaboration of the key Catholic ministries that serve the Australian community. Those ministries include parishes, social service agencies, schools and universities, hospitals and aged care providers, and religious congregations. CERA evolved as a result of the recent bushfires.

Please visit their new website: <https://cera.catholic.org.au/>

CONFERENCES

A number of events and conferences are being postponed, cancelled or presented in a new way. As revised dates are set we will attempt to list them on the homepage of www.nce.catholic.org.au.



CHRISTUS VIVIT - CHRIST LIVES AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY CONVENTION 2020, HOBART
Online options now being considered.



ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT CONFERENCE BEING THE COMMUNITY CHRIST CALLS US TO BE
Postponed – Date to be advised as soon as possible



CATHOLIC MEN'S GATHERING - BROTHERS WHAT MUST WE DO? ACTS 2:37
Postponed – Date to be advised as soon as possible



CATHOLIC WOMEN of Australia

LEADERSHIP FOR MISSION PROGRAM

Thirteen young women from across Australia have been successful in gaining acceptance into this program, which allows them to undertake post-graduate study in Scripture, theology, spirituality and leadership. The program invites participants to explore how their personal mission and vocation can contribute to a vision of leadership for a Church and society which promotes equity, equality and reconciliation. This initiative was unable to commence this semester, however the NCE and Australian Catholic University are working together to ensure that our participants will begin their journey of formation and academic study in the near future.