



At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ

Easter 2017

Fostering collaborative leadership

Matthew's gospel is shaping our communities in 2017. And it is very timely in the light of the hearings of the Royal Commission, as we hear Jesus exhorting us that the change of heart God requires means putting 'new wine into fresh wineskins' (9:17). The focusing framework for such change is, of course, Vatican II, and across the diocese we are continually seeking the wisdom to put this into practice. This mostly happens in our local parish, where we engage in bringing forth God's reign of mercy – as the 2nd Vatican Council's 'People of God'.

Sometimes we can benefit from looking beyond, as well, to the wisdom of an outsider, attending to their particular experience and how it bears upon our call to be people of mission - perennially juggling the tension between new wine and old wineskins.



Cardinal John Dew of
NZ will visit in May

One of those people is Cardinal John Dew from Wellington Diocese in NZ. While here in May as keynote speaker for the Association of Catholic School Principals (ACSP) NSW Conference he will share with us the way that their diocese has for some years engaged in fostering collaborative leadership, through their 'Launch Out' process. Ideally his thinking will confirm what we are already doing well and raise further considerations. See details of all visiting speakers on back page.

Easter encouragement

Spread hope, preach Christ, don't worry about numbers, pope says

In a recent visit to Milan Pope Francis was asked about evangelisation methods that do not seem to result in 'catching fish'. He replied that the work ...of all Christians...is to set and cast out the nets. It's the Lord who catches the fish. Preoccupation with numbers is never a good thing.

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Faith formation courses provide a helpful opportunity for us to deepen what it means to be people of faith in a changing Church. Some recent participants reflect on their experience.

Christian Formation Course

'I needed some encouragement to begin ... and over the 2 years I learnt so much.' (Elizabeth)

'I loved the course so much I have enrolled in further studies.' (Lyn)

'The group forms you as a community. I would recommend it to anyone: searchers and seasoned Catholics.' (Jennie)

'It was beneficial to me – even though a Catholic and regular churchgoer, there was very little I knew.' (Michael)

Christian Ministry: Integrity in the Service of the Church

'I certainly recommend the course to those who give their time as a lay church worker.' (Naomi)

'Our faith journey is lifelong, with many questions as we journey. This gives us the resources needed to continue our quest.' (Lidy)

'This was a great way to rekindle the fire of faith we all have, no matter what ministry we are called to serve.' (Geoff)

'Deepened my spiritual awareness of why and what I do.' (Elaine)

Receiving & sharing
the living tradition



New wine into fresh wineskins

Matthew reminds us to put new wine into fresh skins ... 'innovatively'. So does Dianne Kibble, who was recently awarded the Monsignor Coolahan Award for Innovation in Teaching.

The human thirst for what is good, true and beautiful

This is my 40th year of teaching. I love my work and working with young people. I love mathematics. One of my passions has always been to make mathematics, this beautiful subject, interesting and accessible to all of my students.

The innovation component of this Award is specifically in recognition of a program that we have been working on at SFX (College Hamilton) which provides an avenue for very talented students to accelerate through the HSC Mathematics Course. So, in terms of innovation, we have tried something different; identified a need and put in place a program for a very special group of students.



In education, as with any organisation, creativity in problem-solving and a willingness to try new ideas are vital if we are to adapt to our changing world.

Congratulations, Dianne!

Sandwiches for the Soul

Bernadette Gibson, of the CSO and a member of the Adult Faith Formation Council, also responds creatively to need.



Sandwiches for the Soul is an initiative run by St Benedict's Catholic School at Edgeworth for the spiritual well-being of parents. One current challenge seems to be the separation parents feel from their faith, a confusion about what the church teaches and how some have behaved. Sometimes it is a complete alienation because they may not be Catholic

but have their children enrolled in a Catholic School.

St Benedict's seeks to support parents on this journey – as prime educators of their children. Since 2015, the school has held a number of opportunities for them to gather in conversation, prayer, reflection, supportive conversation and meditation. They discuss aspects of the Catholic Faith which their children are being taught and which as parents, they need to assist their children understand, just as they assist in other learning areas.

Openness to all

Michelle Collins, Religious Education Coordinator, is central to this journey. Her witness and deep relationships with the families calls them in trust and hope, to come together and journey towards greater understanding. Parents at the conclusion, always ask when the next occasion will be – feeling renewed, supported, nurtured and unjudged. *Bernadette Gibson*

Taking another angle

Sr Val O'Hara rsm takes another angle on the value of movies in our personal growth.

Movies, says Fr Richard Leonard SJ are modern day parables. Since 2008, bi-monthly Saturday matinee viewings at Mercy Services Centre, Tighes Hill, provide social and informative afternoons. The chosen films are generally not those that are commercially popular – offering new, varied, interesting views of life. Some are foreign, true life stories, comedies, dramas, musicals - all have something to ponder.

Sister Val, who facilitates the afternoons, prepares well, offering critical points of interest about the directors, cast, cinematographers, plots, and characters. Viewers are encouraged to explore the values of the films – moral, ethical, family, paradoxical, metaphorical... 'any which way' they perceive these modern day parables.



These movies, not necessarily 'catholic' or 'christian' provide a venue for meeting with people and events, where they are in their often messy lives. Our exploration of their themes and stories challenges us in our personal, human growth and faith development. *Val O'Hara rsm*

Further information:

Mercy Spirituality Centre:

<http://institute.mercy.org.au/toronto> or P 02 4959 1025.

God's presence permeating all reality



A new venture: CPE at Morisset

For six weeks until March 10, Morisset Pastoral Leadership Team participated in Introduction to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

Facilitated by April MacNeill, Pastoral Care Coordinator at Calvary Mater, it was specifically tailored as a key formation element for members of diocesan Parish Leadership teams.



The team reflected on their experience:

'I have discovered a lot about myself and the importance of being and bringing a compassionate presence to a number of situations.'

'Very enlightening.'

The journey that is life

'I have really enjoyed having an insight into my thinking about pastoral care.'

'Confronting! I have been challenged to take a good look at myself and my own motivations ... to reassess my expectations.'

'A chance to reflect on parish situations that arise, and pastoral tools to use when dealing with them.'

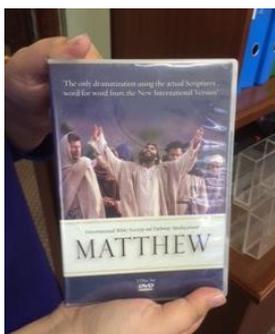
'Inspiring and enriching.'

'What an experience!'

'Thanks to April for her warm approach.'

Warm congratulations on the completed journey to Daphne, Emily, Jenny, Jodie, John, Juliet, Uta ... and April!

Lenten reflection at Denman



Angie Carroll reports on a group of parishioners, including three from the Uniting Church, who meet during Lent.

This year we decided to try something different: a DVD and discussion, reflecting on Matthew's gospel.

The comparison between 'tensions' experienced for early Christians and 'tensions' in our lives here and now sparked interesting discussion. The early Christians had to deal with the 'Old Law', Pharisees, Roman rule and Jesus showing and telling them things that differed from all they had been previously taught.

Today's Christians also have 'tensions' that unsettle as we try to grow our faith and love of God. The findings of the Royal Commission ... the decline in numbers in our church ... how will it survive? ... am I doing things right?

In the Upper Hunter we have been fortunate to have Father Richard Shortall and his *Prayer in Everyday Life* during Lent. He coached us through the St Ignatius way of praying: reading a gospel passage, imagining the scene as a painting or movie and placing ourselves in it. For someone who is not very good at meditating or imagining, the fact that I had recently been watching 'Matthew' was a huge help. I could picture the face of Jesus, his beautiful smile and gentle way of talking to the apostles and the crowds and then place all of this into the gospel passage.

Face to face engagement

A very different, thought-provoking journey through Lent in 2017! We are continuing after Easter. *Angie Carroll.*

Spiritual companionship

In Matthew's gospel Jesus often takes time apart to discern his choices. Having a spiritual companion or director is a valuable way for us to do the same ...

Spiritual Direction helps a person notice how God is with him/her in the happenings of everyday life. This recognition of God-with-us helps a person to become aware of the individual way God relates with each person's uniqueness. The person begins to be aware of a mutual friendship developing between him/her and God.

Spiritual Direction can be received as an individual, or in a group. There are professional spiritual directors available in our diocese. For those in country areas, it is possible that a spiritual director could be organised to visit the area.

Sr Lynette Pearce, rsj

God's Spirit alive & active in each person

You may like to contact one of the directors to mull over the possibility ... or contact the Adult Faith Formation Office. See diocesan website for details.



2017 Adult Faith Formation opportunities

These events offered in the coming months may interest you

- May 6-27** **Christian Ministry: Integrity in the Service of the Church** formation for those serving, or seeking to serve, in parish or diocesan ministry. Offered at no cost over four Saturdays, 9am to 4pm at Diocesan Offices, Newcastle West.
- May 16** **Mums' Night Out**, an evening for mothers and grandmothers to share a meal and talk about the experience of being a mother. \$20, 5.30pm, Blackbutt Hotel New Lambton.
- May 23** **Cardinal John Dew** of Wellington NZ Archdiocese will speak on *Leadership for our Church Today*. 9am to 3pm, Toohey Room, Diocesan Offices, Newcastle West.
- May 23** **Tri-Diocesan Covenant Service of Worship** 7.45pm, St Luke's Anglican Church Wallsend.
- May 25** **Cardinal John Dew** will speak on *Collaborative Leadership*. 9am to 12pm, Victor Peters Suite, Newcastle West.
- Jun 6** **Rural eConference** presented by Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese. 10am to 3pm at venues across the diocese.
- Jun 7** **Interfaith Forum** on Catholic Eastern and Western Rites. 6.30pm, Ukrainian Catholic Church, 105 Gosford Rd Adamstown.
- Jun 19-25** **Rev Dr James McEvoy** of Adelaide Archdiocese will speak on *Being Church in the contemporary world* at various locations across the diocese.
- Jul 18** **Prof. Massimo Faggioli**, a foremost contemporary theologian from Philadelphia USA, will speak on *Leadership in the Church*. 9am to 3pm, Victor Peters Suite, Newcastle West.
- Aug 3** **Interfaith Dialogue** (Muslim-Anglican-Catholic). 7pm, venue and topic TBA.
- Aug 10** **BBI eConference** will discuss *Gospel leadership in times of Chaos* with an excellent panel of speakers including Massimo Faggioli. 10am to 3pm, various locations across the diocese.
- Sep 8** **Richard Gaillardetz**, Boston College theologian on *Reimagining Church*. 3.30 to 7pm, Victor Peters Suite, Newcastle West. Includes light refreshments. \$25 / concession \$5.
- Sep 14** **Interfaith Forum** on Muslim faith. 6.30pm, Mayfield Mosque, Victoria St Mayfield.
- Oct 3** **Two Bishops Dialogue** 7pm, St Luke's Anglican Church Wallsend.
- Nov 22** **Interfaith Forum** on Salvation Army Church. 6.30pm, 67 Cleary St Hamilton.
- Dec 10** **Carols in the Cloister** 6.30pm St Joseph's Convent Chapel, Lochinvar.

For more information on these or other formation opportunities contact the Liturgy and Adult Faith Formation office of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese on P 4979 1134 or website at <http://www.mn.catholic.org.au>.