



Sandpiper e-News

SANDHURST MISSION AND PASTORAL COUNCIL

Bishop Shane and the selection panel are delighted with the strong field of candidates who expressed interest in joining the Council. The panel are committed to ensuring the best possible outcome for our Diocese and are therefore taking more time for discernment. An announcement will be made as soon as the SMPC Members have been finalised.

ALL ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN CHRISM MASS

**11.00 A.M.
Tuesday 4 April
Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo**

This beautiful solemn Mass is a celebration of our entire Sandhurst Community. It gathers priests, professed religious and laity from every parish of the Diocese to be witness to Christ and, with Bishop Shane, unite as one people of God. All people in Sandhurst are strongly encouraged to attend.



The Chrism Mass, also known as the Mass of the Holy Oils, is essential to the sacramental life of the local Church. During the Chrism Mass representatives from all forty parishes of the Diocese will bring oils to the altar. Bishop Shane will bless the oil of catechumens and the oil of the sick; and consecrate the oil of holy chrism. Representatives from every parish will then take

these three holy oils back to their parish to be used in sacraments throughout the year.

During the Mass, clergy of the Diocese will renew their priestly vows, professed religious sisters and brothers will renew their vows, and lay people will resolve to live out their baptism, taking on missionary responsibility of worship, witness and works in their families, communities, and society.

This year, Bishop Shane will also commission the Members of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council, a significant milestone in our Diocese's synodal story.

Each year in Holy Week, the Chrism Mass is celebrated in Cathedrals in every one of the 2900 dioceses of the Global Church. At each Mass, ancient rituals are employed to bless and consecrate the Holy Oils to be used in tens of thousands of parishes over the year.

Deeply symbolic, the Chrism Mass provides a rare opportunity to gather with people from all parishes in worship. Your attendance in person is strongly encouraged.

For those who are unable to attend, the Mass will be livestreamed via the [diocesan website](#), [YouTube Channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

REFLECTION ON THE SOLEMNITY OF ST PATRICK AND THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ELECTION OF POPE FRANCIS

Director of Mission and Pastoral Life, **Dr Chris Cotter**, reflects on the "deep awareness of identity and purpose" of two prophetic Christian leaders; Pope Francis, who is leading the reimagining of the global church and St Patrick, whose legacy resonates in our daily life, 1600 years since he first went to Ireland.



I was educated by the Christian Brothers, sometimes known as the 'Irish' Brothers. I remember a school assembly on a St Patrick's day in the late 1970s. Brother Patrick O'Malley led prayer and gave a short talk on St Patrick. The only part of the prayer and talk I remember is this: that in the 1960s the local bishop had turned up at our school on St Patrick's Day and sent all students home to celebrate this great feast

day. I don't think I was the only boy at the assembly who was hoping Brother O'Malley would suddenly send us all home to celebrate St Patrick! Alas, it wasn't to be, and we trudged off to class wondering if we had been born in the wrong decade.

This week also marks the tenth anniversary of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio's election to the office of the Bishop of Rome, our Pope. There are some interesting parallels between St Patrick and Pope Francis. One of the things that has marked Pope Francis' pontificate is his advocacy for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people who have been trafficked. Along with his concern for the environment, it is one of his signature causes. We don't know a lot about St Patrick, and what we do know comes mostly from two documents attributed to him.

In his Confessions we are introduced to the young man 'Patrick', from a land that we now called England. Patrick is captured by pirates and sold into slavery or 'trafficked'. He ends up in Ireland herding sheep. Patrick reports that this servitude was important for him as he got to know and understand himself and to become a Christian. He also came to know the situation in Ireland. After six years he escaped and returned to his family. Soon a sense of destiny grew within Patrick; he came to understand that his future was to be an apostle to the people of Ireland. This "servant boy" was called to go and "walk among" the people where he was once enslaved.

Pope Francis also has this same sense of manifest destiny. In his Apostolic Exhortation, (*Evangelii Gaudium*) The Joy of the Gospel, Francis says:

"My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world." (par 273).

The deep awareness of identity and purpose, of being called and sent to be a missionary disciple is there in Francis, just as it was in Patrick.

In his encyclical (*Fratelli Tutti*) On Fraternity and Human Friendship, Pope Francis urges the whole human family to loving collaboration and partnership in work, in ministry and in every human endeavour. Despite the popular image of St Patrick as single-handedly Christianising the whole of Ireland, it is certain that he had collaborators and followers.

In recent years the figure of St Brigid has emerged as an important figure in the development of Christianity in Ireland. It seems that she saw herself as a fellow missionary of St Patrick. In the readings for the solemnity, we observe collaboration in ministry. In the Gospel, our Lord sends the seventy-two out in pairs, and Paul and Barnabas continue their ministry among the pagans in Acts. Finally, Jesus reminds us to rejoice, not because of our great deeds or great collaborative efforts, but because our "names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

PATRICK ORATION: "YOUNG PEOPLE YEARN FOR A CHURCH THAT IS YOUNG WITH THEM"

In his Patrick Oration at the Mass of St Patrick for Schools, **Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli** suggested that rather than questioning why young people are decreasing in numbers, we should focus on Christ's eternal youth. "Perhaps we are trying to fit our young people into old wineskins, rather than acknowledging the vitality, and seeing the possibilities that are among us?" he asks.

[Read more online](#)

THE DEER'S CRY, A LORICA OF ST PATRICK

Although there is no way of knowing for sure, this well-known Prayer is attributed to St Patrick, who is said to have written it in the early fifth century (433 A.D).

Originally spoken in Old Irish, it was officially translated into English in the 19th century.

A Lorica is a prayer of protection. Lorica means 'breastplate' and such prayers were commonly prayed in Celtic cultures at the time of St Patrick. Legend has it that, when St Patrick and his followers were being chased by King Leoghaire of Tara's men, they prayed this prayer and were then transformed into the likeness of a deer, thus evading capture. Hence, the prayer is also known as 'The Deer's Cry'.

See the last page for the full prayer.

A JOSEPHITE PRESENCE IN OUR DIOCESE



When Sr Nellie Versluys left Rushworth for Melbourne in February this year, she became the last Josephite Sister in Sandhurst – at least for a month or two. Later this month, Sr Marianne Zienstra will inherit the 'last Josephite in Sandhurst' title when she arrives in Numurkah to continue the good works of her predecessor, Sr Janet Nolan, who left Numurkah late last year.

Since they started the first Victorian Josephite school in Numurkah in 1890, the Josephites have kept a constant presence in Sandhurst, meeting the pastoral and educational needs of Sandhurst parish and school communities with warmth, humility and dedication.

The Josephites have played an important role in the pastoral life of Rushworth parish for seventy years. When the two Sisters living in in Rushworth left at the end of 2009, Father Owen Doyle made a request to the Josephite Regional Leader at the time, for a continued Josephite presence in the parish.

Sister Nellie was approached by the Regional Leader to respond to this request, and she was very happy to do so. Sr Nellie had left the Kimberley at the end of 2006 and had spent the following three years filling in for Sisters who were

on leave. It turns out that her time in Rushworth was the longest amount of time she had spent anywhere in her whole life!

Sister Nellie found the people of the Rushworth Parish (which includes Rushworth, Colbinabbin, Murchison and Stanhope) very welcoming. "Father Owen made great efforts to make me feel at home, introducing me to the people on home visits, home Masses and when taking Communion to the people at the Hospital and Hostel," Sister Nellie explained.

"Though I could not fill the void that was left when Father Owen retired, I was inspired by his pastoral care to carry on!" Sister Nellie continued with an element of surprise in her voice. She noted that beside the above ministries in the parish, people sometimes requested help with preparing for a funeral for a loved one; visits to people dying in hospital; and the desire in people to learn more about scripture. As Sister Nellie had designed a special programme for Scripture Study for her Master of Arts in Pastoral studies with a concentration on Biblical Spirituality for Aboriginal people, she found this method to be very well received by the people of the parish when studying the Gospel with them, and the writings of St Paul. People were keen to further develop their understanding of the Bible.

When asked if she considered herself like a town chaplain, Sr Nellie replied, "I was a Josephite presence." Then on reflection added, "I didn't want to be involved in Pastoral Ministry, but I suppose that's what I was doing in the end. I would always join the pastoral associates of the Diocese when they gathered."

Sr Nellie said she became totally immersed in community life and this taught her lessons she has shared with others.

"I can remember there were times when I'd think – "meetings again!" and then, this voice would come and say – "You're a Josephite presence, so go and be present." That was a real urge within me, to be a presence, to be, and to be present, was a focus for me. To really be present to people, give people time, give them your ear, give them your heart, really."

"In our busy, busy world people long to be given time, but we also need to give ourselves time. I often used to recommend that people tap into Christian meditation – just give themselves time to be still, to pray, to meditate. It's very much [John Maine](#), if you can be still for just five, or ten, or maybe extend it to twenty minutes in the morning and the evening, it settles life. It really brings balance. It's very important. If you're not aware of what goes on around you, if you're not aware of God, you miss out. People would often say to me, "So many people have left the Church and haven't come back. But this is the point – it's about a personal relationship with Jesus, not the Church and religion. You have to talk to Jesus every day – he's your friend. If you don't, there's something missing. That's what I think."

Sr Nellie firmly believes that if God wants her to do something, then she will somehow find strength to do his will irrespective of the circumstances. "When I first went up to Wyndham – being Dutch –people questioned whether I'd survive the heat, but if you're called to do something, you find the strength to do it. That's how I ended up in Rushworth and in the Kimberley – God wanted me there," said Sr Nellie emphatically.

"I think I've always been drawn to Jesus; I have always felt very close to him," said Sr Nellie. "My Mother was once a Novice in the Netherlands. She was a very religious person; she would tell us stories of the saints, and she prepared me for my First Holy Communion in the Hague," said Sr Nellie.

Sr Nellie's journey to become a Josephite was rather straight forward. After a parish mission, she one day shared with her mother that she would like to become a religious Sister. So, they visited the parish priest together and he asked which Sister? Of course, Sister Nellie replied "Sisters of St. Joseph" as they were the only Sisters she knew, having been educated by them in various places in Victoria. So, the parish priest arranged an interview with the Josephite Provincial at Hawthorn East.

Sr Nellie jokes about choosing the wrong Religious Order while on her first appointment as a teaching Josephite in Morwell, where she was tasked with educating fifty prep. students.

"Our Provincial came to visit us at the school, and I said to her – I really don't think I'm meant to be a Josephite, I think I'm meant to be a Poor Clare! The Provincial looked at me and said, "That, my dear, is a temptation!" laughed Sr Nellie.

In all seriousness, Sr Nellie said teaching young children is very rewarding, "I loved teaching little kids; there's such joy watching little tots learn how to write and read, it's a very satisfying job," she said.

Sr Nellie's full name is Cornelia Imelda Maria Versluys. She was born in Warmond in South Holland, the Netherlands. In 1950, when she was nine years old, she migrated to Australia with her parents and three younger siblings. Her father was continually looking for the ideal share farm so after living for a month in Bonegilla Migrant Camp, the family moved a lot, from Launching Place, near Warburton, to Lancefield, Monegeetta, Kilmore and eventually ending up in Melbourne.

After completing teacher training in North Sydney Sr Nellie taught in various Josephite schools in Victoria, including Morwell East, Stawell, Warburton and Richmond.

Sr Nellie went on to teach children in remote parts of the Kimberley, after becoming interested in Aboriginal culture and ministry with Aboriginal people during a year of study at the National Pastoral Institute for Religious Education. She taught at St Joseph's Primary School Wyndham, in the Kimberley, and was inspired to learn more about teaching in Aboriginal communities. She studied at the Pacific Mission Institute in Turrumurra, then completed a Bachelor of Education in Perth, before returning to the Kimberley where

she was teacher and principal of St Joseph's School in Halls Creek for six years. After further studies at the Columban's Pacific Mission Institute in Turrumurra, she returned to the Kimberley to work in Pastoral Ministry in Warnum, an Aboriginal Community 3000 km north of Perth (formerly known as Turkey Creek).

Sr Nellie recounts a series of events which she believes God had a serious hand in.

"I remember my Provincial asking me what I'd like to do after I'd completed my appointment in Halls Creek. I said, 'I've come to Halls Creek and helped prepare children for the sacraments and their parents as well. These people are yearning to develop their faith. So, I'd like to do scripture study to teach Aboriginal adults about their faith.'"

"After Halls Creek I went to Catholic Theological Union (CTU) Chicago and went on an Israel Study program. It was amazing how it all happened! I was in Perth on a short break, and I popped into Australian Catholic University (ACU) to make some inquiries about Scripture Studies. Someone there said, 'Actually a Good Samaritan Sister has just come back from Chicago, and if you'd like you could move into her apartment.'"

At Warnum, the Josephites operated the Meruliki Spirituality Centre, we ran programmes for teachers and Adult Faith Education. Michael Fallon came up to give a talk and I asked him about different places to study, he suggested CTU Chicago, then I met others who all highly recommended CTU Chicago for its missiology programme."



Sr Nellie in Warnum

Of course, Sr Nellie listened to the call, and she studied at CTU completing the Israeli Studies program which she said was very helpful because much of it was how people live off and relate to the land, which relates to Aboriginal peoples.

Sister Nellie noted that the Aboriginal people are incredibly resilient, having suffered so much and yet in the face of everything, are still strong and still keep on going. Of their spirituality she recounts the story of an Aboriginal Elder :

"Groups of Aboriginal Elders would come to Meruliki Spirituality Centre in Warman to speak about their lives. They'd do things like take people to an old Boab tree which was a massacre site. There were massacre sites all over the Kimberley. Hector was asked, "How can you forgive

us?" To which Hector replied, "If we didn't forgive people, the devil would enter into us, and we would become like the people who did the killing." I'll always remember that wise old man."

Sr Nellie has no doubt that her life has been blessed. "I've had a very fortunate life. I say that all the time, I'm just so, so fortunate," she said.

Sr Nellie has been living life to the full in service, yet her life has not always been easy. As a young child, Nellie and her family experienced all the challenges of post-war migrants. The move from town to town as her father searched for the perfect farmland; the loss of an infant brother at eight months old; the loss of her younger brother when he was ten years old and her mother's subsequent broken heart; the loss of her father who died of a heart attack the day she entered the convent; and the loss of her mother not long after.

Sr Nellie would tell you it's the time she spends in daily prayer nurturing her relationship with God that has been her strength.

"During my childhood Jesus was absolutely my friend. Ever since I was a kid, I loved being in a quiet spot by myself. I love nature too, I think that's why I linked up so well with Aboriginal people – being on Country. Being in touch with nature. It wasn't one thing or the other, it was all one. It's a wholesome way to live, I think. People in the country have an advantage in that direction because they are in the midst of it. The spiritual aspect of nature is something that draws you closer to God.

As Catholics, we have inherited a rich spiritual tradition, and we have some wonderful saints whose spirituality was focused on their relationship with Jesus. We are just so lucky to have this tradition, we just need to take the time ... "

Sr Nellie is now living in Community with fellow Josephites in Melbourne.

NOT A STEREOTYPE

Eaglehawk parishioner, **Kobi Paine**, sheds some light on why the world still needs World Autism Awareness Day. "Every day, autistic people battle with a stereotype; ingrained misconceptions about what Autism is and how it presents in people," writes Kobi.

April 2 is International World Autism Awareness Day. Many wonder what the point of it is – isn't most of the world aware already of autism? And yet, the day exists, mandated by the United Nations in 2007. For those who are autistic or are active in the community, there would be no question as to why this day exists. Every day, Autistic people battle with a stereotype; ingrained misconceptions about what Autism is and how it presents in people. For most of society, they think of Autism as a line with 'Can Pass For Normal' at one end, and 'Very Much Not Normal' at the other, with violence, social inadequacies and obsessiveness increasing the more a person gets to the 'Very Much Not Normal' end of the scale, along with other 'characteristics'. But we do not exist

on a line and never have. Some of us are better at understanding traditional social cues than others, some are more verbal, some are less. Some are in romantic relationships, some are not interested in them in the slightest. Some enjoy sensory experiences, some do all we can to avoid them. We vary just as much as those who are considered 'normal' – and the greater portion of humanity does not exist on a linear scale themselves of 'Not Human' to 'Very Human', so why should we?

Often, the violence people think of when they think of Autism is because the communication between autistic and those around them has failed, or because their nervous system has been overloaded with sensory information and they have been unable to decompress. It is not an inherent part of Autism, nor should it be expected. It is no different from when a baby cries – that is their way of communicating something, and for we Autistics, if we are 'exploding', it is because we have been unable to communicate any other way.

We get labelled as 'violent', 'difficult children', 'challenging to employ', 'social outcasts' and a whole host of other things. For me, I was never violent, nor was I difficult as a child – according to my mother, I was a delight to raise. While I can be somewhat awkward socially and on the fringes of a social group,

I have never been a 'social outcast' and, as far as I am aware, none of my employers have ever regretted hiring me. And yet here I am, Autistic. I frequently get the 'No, you're not!' argument when people discover that I am autistic, as well as the 'But you're so normal!' Yes, I am, and no, I am as far from what society considers 'normal' as you can get, but what I am is very, very, very good at pretending that I'm like everyone else. If I were a professional actor, I'd get every award that existed, and surprisingly, there are many other autistics who would as well.

Every day, autistics get up and arm themselves for a war with a society that often sidelines us. We are present in every community, every religious congregation, every classroom, every industry, and yet, people are constantly surprised and combative when they find out.

This is why we need International World Autism Awareness Day, because we are not a stereotype. We are human, just like every other human on the planet, just with a slightly different nervous system.

In Australia, 1 in every 150 people is autistic, with every 1 in 4 being female. 74% of autistics in Australia are reliant on the Disability Support Pension. (Information accurate as of 2014, sourced from Australia Institute of Health and Welfare).

For more information about Autism, please visit Amaze at www.amaze.org.au.

BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY INSTALLED AS NINTH BISHOP OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

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Bishop Michael Kennedy officially committed to his role as the Ninth Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle on St Patrick's Day at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton in Newcastle. The former Bishop of Armidale replaces Bishop William Wright who returned to God in November 2021.

Over 550 people gathered at the Liturgical Reception to witness this significant holy event, including the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Balvo and Archbishop Anthony Fisher. Bishops from around Australia and representatives from every parish in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese, gathered to celebrate the Ordination in Hamilton on Friday 17 March.

Elders of the Awabakal nation greeted Bishop Kennedy on his arrival at the Cathedral and welcomed him to Country.

He was then met by Rector of the Cathedral, Fr John Lovell, who presented him with a crucifix to venerate. As part of the Rite of Installation, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Charles Balvo, read the Papal Bull (Apostolic Letter of Appointment), and Archbishop Fisher guided Bishop Michael to the cathedra. Once formally seated in the cathedra, Bishop Michael was installed as the Ninth Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle and welcomed by representatives of the people of the Diocese, including parishioners, families and clergy.

Then, in front of the altar, Bishop Kennedy was welcomed by representatives of other Churches, faiths and civic authorities. "When the Nuncio asked if I would accept Pope Francis' appointment to be the new Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle, I did not hesitate to say 'yes'," said Bishop Kennedy in the March edition of Aurora magazine. "It is an awesome privilege and responsibility. I accepted the role willingly and heartily, knowing that like all new endeavours, it will hold both joys and challenges," he said. The Bishop's motto is 'euntes docete', referencing Jesus' final words to the apostles to 'go forth and teach'.

CATHOLICS AND JEWS 'WALKING TOGETHER'

The Australian Catholic Bishops have launched a new document to highlight Christianity's unique relationship with Judaism and to celebrate the positive relationship the two faiths enjoy in Australia.

Walking Together: Catholics and Jews in the Australian Context comes 30 years after the Bishops Conference published a set of guidelines and recommendations to enhance Catholic-Jewish relations.

That document built on the foundations of Nostra Aetate, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.

Bishop Michael McKenna, chair of the Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-Religious Dialogue, said Walking Together “aims to help Catholics understand more deeply the uniqueness of our relationship with Judaism, our elder sisters and brothers in faith”.

President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Jillian Segal AO, delivered the Jewish Community response. “Walking Together bears eloquent testimony to the intimacy of the connection between Judaism and Christianity,” she said.

Ms Segal said the document affirms “the essential Jewishness of Jesus and the fact that he prayed and worshipped as a Jew; the ongoing, irrevocable nature of the covenant between God and the Jewish people; and the fact that Jesus and the Pharisees were in alignment, not in opposition, to one another”.

Bishop McKenna said the document’s launch, followed by a kosher lunch, allowed for a deepening of the Catholic-Jewish relationship, which he says has “a long and good history”.

“Since Vatican II, which renewed and clarified the Catholic understanding of our relationship, our friendship and mutual help has grown,” he said.

Jeremy Jones, co-chair and foundation member of the Annual Conversations between the Bishops Commission and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, underlined that friendship in a vote of thanks at the launch event.

“It is not often that we witness seismic changes in relations between two communities, but it is no exaggeration to describe the present era of Catholic-Jewish relations as a Golden Age, after a history of too many Dark Ages,” said Mr Jones.

“The positive, meaningful contact and mutual respect is unprecedented.”

Mr Jones called Walking Together “a cry from the heart and a call for action”.

The document acknowledges some of the challenges in Catholic-Jewish relations in the past, but also proposes ways to continue to heal the wounds that were created.

[Download Walking Together](#)

The Catholic community response to Walking Together was delivered by Dr Teresa Pirola, ThD, a Sydney-based Catholic faith educator who specialises in studies of the Torah. If you would like to learn more about the Torah and traditions of Jewish people, check out ‘Light of Torah: Christians learning from Jews and Judaism’, a website established by Teresa offering a breadth of educational resources.

“Christianity is grounded in Judaism as a plant is rooted in the earth. As Christians we acknowledge that we cannot live

apart from the soil in which we are planted. Further, we recognise Judaism as a ‘living tradition’, to which Christians can turn as a deep well of knowledge, and Jewish communities as vital dialogue partners. This website models what this can mean in practice. The resources are created by a Catholic listening to Jewish tradition and pondering its wisdom for her own Catholic life and faith.”

Visit the [Light of Torah website](#) to explore the riches of the Hebrew Scriptures (‘Old Testament’) through tradition, drawing on Jewish sources from ancient to modern times.

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION IN BENDIGO A RARE OPPORTUNITY

A part-time Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) will be conducted in Bendigo in Semester II 2023. This highly recognised program of supervised education for provision of spiritual and pastoral care carries extensive credit in tertiary religious and theological study programs. It is highly recommended for anyone contemplating working in pastoral or spiritual care.

The North-East Victoria CPE Centre will conduct sessions from Wednesday 12 July to Thursday 7 December 2023 at the Bendigo Baptist Church in Junortoun. Classes will be supervised by Anne Wieczorek and Louise Ross. Anne is an accredited Provisional Clinical Pastoral Educator and Spiritual Care Practitioner at Bendigo Health. Louise is a Provisional Clinical Pastoral Supervisor and Pastoral Carer at Wharparilla Lodge, Echuca Community for the Aged.

This CPE Program is rarely available outside the metropolitan area. It is highly recommended for anyone contemplating working professionally, or as a volunteer, in pastoral or spiritual care, or anyone who is working in roles which care for or assist people.

The program will be conducted on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Attendance on three Thursdays is also required (13 July, 5 October, and 7 December). A further one and a half days each week is required for delivery of pastoral care in an approved placement, and further time is also needed to write reports on pastoral encounters. Participants therefore need to be able to devote at least three days each week for the 22 weeks of the program.

The cost of the CPE program is approximately \$2,000.00. For those enrolled in theological studies, the cost will be the equivalent of two Units of Study, payable through their university.

Prospective applicants should contact the Course Coordinator, Anne Wieczorek, at annewz@westnet.com.au or on **0401 979 417**, for further information and to request an application form.

You will need to request an application form before **30 April 2023**, and applications must be made by **15 May 2023**.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

RECORD NUMBERS ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

New Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data reveals a record number of students attending Catholic schools and support for faith-based education. Catholic schools today are educating one in five Australian students.



“Ten new Catholic schools opened across Australia over the past 12 months with 1,759 Catholic schools educating nearly 794,000 or one in five Australian students and employing over 104,500 staff,” said National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins.

The latest Census data shows Catholic education remains the major provider of education outside of government, with enrolments growing from 766,088 students in 2017 to 793,729 in 2022. Ten new Catholic schools opened across Australia over the past twelve months with 1759 Catholic schools educating nearly 794,000 students and employing over 104,500 staff.

National Catholic Education Executive Director, Jacinta Collins, said:

“As the largest provider of faith-based schooling in Australia, this growth shows the great importance Catholic school families place on choosing a school that meets the needs of their child and reflects their values and beliefs. We’ve seen this growth in all faith-based non-government schools across Australia in recent years, with enrolments increasing 7.7 per cent from 2017-2022. Overall, enrolments in faith-based schools increased from 1,211,242 in 2017 to 1,304,909, according to the 2022 ABS data.”

Ms Collins said the growth shows the value Australian families place on faith-based education. “It is a timely reminder that school choice is a highly valued component of the Australian education system and parents want an authentic faith-based education for their children.”

Ms Collins said Catholic education is extremely disappointed with the proposed reforms outlined by Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) in its current inquiry into religious educational institutions and anti-discrimination laws, which threaten the ability of faith-based schools to be authentic. “The proposed changes would

remove or severely restrict the ability of Catholic schools to prioritise the employment of staff and enrolment of students from our faith background, or to operate and teach in accordance with our Catholic ethos,” Ms Collins said.

A survey on school perceptions showed 63% of the general population, 82% of Catholics and 79% of Catholic school parents believe religious schools should be ‘entitled to require employees to act in their roles that uphold the ethos and values of that faith’ and the school should be free to favour hiring employees who share these values (Utting, 2021).

“As the first and foremost educators of their children, the right of parents to choose a school based on their religious beliefs is recognised in international human rights law, and Australian laws need to reflect this right,” Ms Collins said. “Catholic schools are highly valued and respected in the community and should be free to continue to be Catholic.”

SOCIAL JUSTICE

BE A GOOD EGG THIS EASTER

As Pope Francis reminds us, any purchase is a political act and perhaps none more so than when we buy chocolate eggs to celebrate Easter. Key issues to consider are child labour, trafficked labour, fair-trade, environmental sustainability (high water usage, food-miles, landfill, greenhouse emissions, opportunity cost of agricultural resources)..

Challenge yourself to become more aware of the issues and maybe even post on social media when you've found the right egg (it might not even be chocolate!).

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) is running the 'Be A Good Egg This Easter' campaign to raise awareness about slavery in the chocolate industry.

ACRATH reports that much of the chocolate sold in Australia is made using cocoa beans picked by children, many of whom have been enslaved or forced to work in exploitative conditions.

The International Labour Rights Forum estimates that more than 1.5 million children are working in the cocoa sector in West Africa, where about 70% of the world's cocoa is produced.

The 'Be a Good Egg this Easter' campaign invites us all to be 'good eggs' and commit to buying slavery-free chocolate. On top of that, the campaign challenges us to create awareness about the exploitation of people, particularly children, in the production of chocolate.

You can do this simply by talking to your family and friends, or take it up a notch and post on social media when you've found the ethical egg (you can use the [2023 Chocolate Score Card](#) to help you do this.

You can also place the '[Be A Good Egg this Easter Poster](#)' on your parish or school noticeboard to encourage others to do the same.

To read more from ACRATH about the '[Bitter truth of Easter Chocolate](#)'

You might also like to read "[Know a Good Egg?](#)"

RURAL AUSTRALIANS FOR REFUGEES (RAR) SUPPORTING HAZARA FAMILIES IN BENDIGO

The Rural Australians for Refugees Bendigo Branch reports that the two Hazara Afghani refugee families sponsored by their CRISP (Community Refugee Integration Support Pilot) Team are now busy settling into their new lives in Bendigo.

Rural Australians for Refugees Bendigo Branch reports that the two Hazara Afghani refugee families sponsored by their CRISP (Community Refugee Integration Support Pilot) Team are now busy settling into their new lives in Bendigo. Their CRISP Team is now preparing for a third family who is waiting in Iran, a Hazara widow and her two teenage sons who are expected to arrive in Australia in a month or so.

RAR Bendigo reports in its newsletter that "The whole team agreed this is exactly the type of vulnerable family we wished to help. The mother was hoping to find a home in a welcoming Australian town that also has a Hazara community. A great fit!"

However, with the tight rental market, finding a place for the Hazara widow and her sons to live has proven difficult. CRISP and RAR support the first four months of their sponsored families' rent but, after that, they are expected to manage for themselves. So, although RAR acts as guarantor for the rent, it is still very difficult to secure a lease. RAR Bendigo would therefore greatly appreciate anyone with information or ideas about an appropriate rental.

Please contact rarbendigo@gmail.com.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

If you would like to assist the Hazara families in Bendigo, you can donate directly to the RAR CRISP Campaign.

Account name: Rural Australians for Refugees
BSB: 633-000
Account No: 117 607 580
Bank Reference: CRISP <Your name, optional>

TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AND SEND A SIGNAL TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT:

When you join the Palm Sunday Gathering, or the other 'Show of Hands' activities, you're not only showing solidarity with refugees and advocating for a fairer deal, you're also showing your support for the many groups of Australians who work tirelessly to assist refugees in Australia practically and financially, and those who advocate for a fairer system.

There are people in Australia seeking political protection, who have no permit to work and very little welfare support who would be destitute if not for the many groups in Australia who assist them. Even those with refugee status who have a permit to work might not be able to find work or find work which provides the financial means to sustain their families. These refugees have already suffered, and their suffering continues in Australia, this in turn leads to stress for those assisting them. As stated by Catholic Social Services Victoria recently: -

"We know from the work of RAR members the incredible distress that is being held in our communities and valiant efforts, often by small groups, parishes, congregations, individuals and organisations, to assist. We stand in solidarity with those efforts — this is one of the reasons why we are actively promoting participation in the Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees."

PALM SUNDAY JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES ACTION

12.30 p.m.
Palm Sunday 2 April 2023
Bendigo Library Gardens

Will you put YOUR hand up for refugees this Palm Sunday? Join in the Gathering at the Library Gardens, Bendigo, on Sunday 2 April for a 12.30 p.m. start. Or assemble at St Kilian's Church or Sacred Heart Cathedral by 12.00 noon to walk with others to the Library Gardens.

NO RALLY NEAR YOU?

If there is no Rally near you, your parish or school can still create and share a visible display of support for refugees.

[Ask your Parish for the Flyer](#)

AROUND THE DIOCESE

ECUMENICAL PALM SUNDAY SERVICE

4.00 p.m. for 4.30 p.m. start
Palm Sunday 2 April 2023
Dookie Quarry

This year, Homilies will be delivered by Rev. Dr Helen Malcolm and Rev. David Kerr priests from the Anglican Parish of Shepparton. Fr Doroteo Bravi from the Community of the Sons and Daughters of God will lead the Prayers of the Faithful. BYO Chair, torch, mosquito repellent etc. Park at the Dookie Recreation Ground. (Please note this is not a Mass).

THE WAY OF THE CROSS Passion Play

7.30 p.m. Good Friday 7 April 2023
Rosalind Park, Bendigo

BYO Chair and join us for this live outdoor theatrical production telling the story of the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This ecumenical production aims to articulate the depths of love given to humankind and through this message will bring hope to the world.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

2.00 - 5.30 p.m.
Sunday 16 April 2023
St Brendan's Church, Shepparton

Celebrations will commence with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Reconciliation, followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet in Song, Benediction, Holy Mass celebrated by Fr Jackson Saunders and Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image.

NOTRE DAME ORGANIST TO PLAY AT SACRED HEART

6.30 p.m.
Saturday 22 April 2023
Sacred Heart Cathedral Bendigo

Listen to works by Bach, Mendelssohn and others played by Johann Vexo, Choir Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, Organist Titulaire at Nancy Cathedral in France – and the Organist who witnessed the catastrophic fire at Notre Dame in April 2019.

RAR FUNDRAISER AT STAR CINEMA

6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. start
Thursday 13 April
Star Cinema: Town Hall Peg Leg Rd Eaglehawk
Tickets \$22.00

'LIVING' (PG) Starring Bill Nighy. A terminally ill veteran civil servant sets about creating a legacy for the next generation.

For tickets phone Star Cinema: 5446 2526

[Bendigo RAR fundraiser: Living at Star Cinema - movie times & tickets](#)

EVANGELISE CONFERENCE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Parishes are invited to utilise the range of presentations, including five Plenary Sessions and 21 Keynote Sessions from the Evangelise Conference held online from 20-22 October 2022. Check out the Plenary Session livestreamed from the Chancery in **Bendigo**, or **Bishop Shane's Keynote** on moving forward after the Plenary Council.

[Catholic Video Library | Evangelise Plus](#)

HOLY WEEK RETREAT

Join Fr Rob Galea and Pastor Phill Brake as they prepare our hearts and open our minds to the power of the Cross. This event is free and open to everyone. All sessions will be recorded and available for later viewing for those registered.

[Events — FRG Ministry](#)

Bishop Shane's Calendar

- Tuesday 28 March – Principals and School Advisory Chairs Commissioning Mass and Dinner, Shepparton
- Sunday 2 April – Palm Sunday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 11am
- Sunday 2 April – Bendigo Churches / Rural Australians for Refugees Gathering, Bendigo, 12.30pm
- Tuesday 4 April – Christ Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 11am
- Thursday 6 April – Holy Thursday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 7.30pm
- Friday 7 April – Good Friday Liturgy, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 3.00pm
- Saturday 8 April – Easter Vigil Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral, 7.30pm
- Sunday 9 April – Easter Sunday Mass, Sacred Heart Cathedral

SHARE YOUR STORY

Got a story to tell? We'd love to help you share it. The e-News is not just a way for Bishop Shane or people in the Chancery to provide information to you, but also a way for people in our parishes and schools to share their stories to inspire, motivate and share the good news.

Contact Katrina on:

Mobile: 0419 015 696

email: editor@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

Post: PO Box 201 Bendigo VIC 3552

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Diocese of Sandhurst recognises the traditional owners of the lands upon which we live, serve and worship. We respectfully honour and acknowledge their ongoing custodianship and their connections to the land, waters and animals. We pay our respects to their culture, their Elders, past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of their peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and commit ourselves to actively working alongside First Nations people for healing, reconciliation and justice.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
of the Creator of creation.

I arise today

Through the strength of Christ's birth with His baptism,
Through the strength of His crucifixion with His burial,
Through the strength of His resurrection with His
ascension,

Through the strength of His descent for the judgement of
doom.

I arise today

Through the strength of the love of cherubim,
In the obedience of angels,
In the service of archangels,
In the hope of resurrection to meet with reward,
In the prayers of patriarchs,
In the predictions of prophets,
In the preaching of apostles,
In the faith of confessors,
In the innocence of holy virgins,
In the deeds of righteous men.

I arise today, through

The strength of heaven,
The light of the sun,
The radiance of the moon,
The splendour of fire,
The speed of lightning,
The swiftness of wind,
The depth of the sea,
The stability of the earth,
The firmness of rock.

I arise today

, through

God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From snares of devils,
From temptation of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
afar and near.

I summon today

All these powers between me and those evils,
Against every cruel and merciless power
that may oppose my body and soul,
Against incantations of false prophets,
Against black laws of pagandom,
Against false laws of heretics,
Against craft of idolatry,
Against spells of witches and smiths and wizards,
Against every knowledge that corrupts man's body and
soul;

Christ to shield me today

Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wounding,
So that there may come to me an abundance of reward.

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
of the Creator of creation.

