

CA HOLIC LIFE

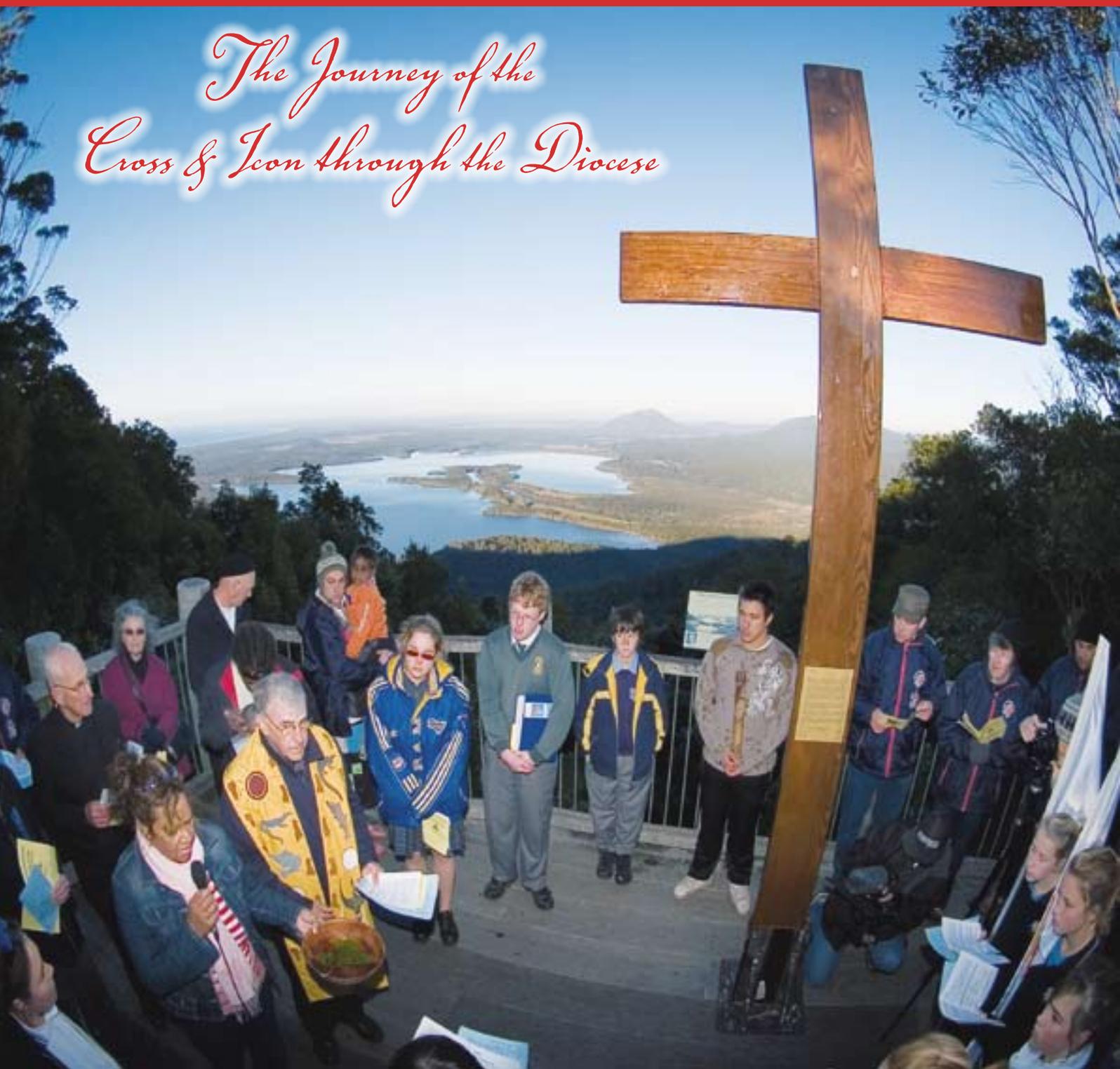
Diocese of Lismore

Tweed Coast to Camden Haven

www.lismorediocese.org

September 2007 Vol.5 No.3

*The Journey of the
Cross & Icon through the Diocese*



Catholic Schools at a Crossroads

A few weeks ago, as the Church in Australia was celebrating the Feast of Blessed Mary MacKillop, the Bishops of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory published a Pastoral Letter on Catholic Schools. My words in this issue of Catholic Life attempt to summarise that letter which jointly bears our signatures, including quotations from it as well as some comments of my own.

Deciding on the direction to take at a crossroads is not something new for Catholic schools. The distinctive 'jewel in the crown' of the Catholic community which is our school system traces itself back to the heroic decision made by our Catholic forebears following the Public Instruction Act of 1880. With the withdrawal of state aid in 1883, led by our bishops and priests, the Catholic people headed in the direction of funding our own schools; we would ensure at whatever cost that every Catholic child had access to an education in the atmosphere of the faith and its practice. The struggle was taken up, thanks to a great army of religious sisters and brothers establishing and staffing schools as an essential part of the mission of every parish.

Catholic education has passed various crossroads since. Overall it has flourished across many years of change and the demand for places in our schools continues to rise. However, today's social and religious environment is very different. Within the Catholic community fewer people attend Mass and for many families children at school are their only point of contact with the Church. There has been a fall in the number of Catholic children attending Catholic schools and a notable increase in the number of students who are not Catholics. Strong secularising trends in society, family dysfunction, confused moral values and an all-dominant consumerism also impact on our Catholic schools and make their mission more difficult.

Today's choice

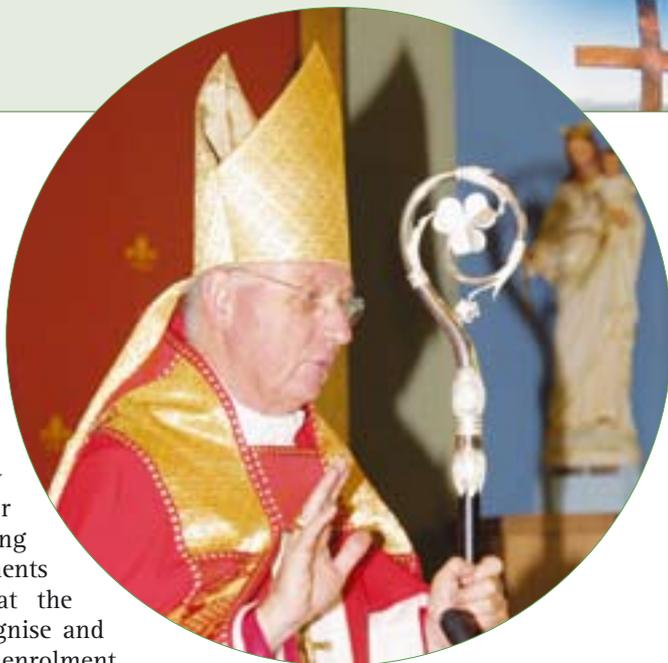
As bishops of the dioceses of New South Wales and ACT we believe our schools have arrived at today's crossroad. We hear voices around us proposing we should go in the direction of downsizing our school system to a scale at which we can choose students and staff who readily

embrace its essentially Catholic mission. Other voices, while bidding us cling firmly to the essential elements of the Catholic school, at the same time urge us to recognise and even embrace, changing enrolment patterns and see in these 'signs of the times' yet another new challenge. The Bishops of NSW-ACT believe that this second course is the better way forward.

Increasing the Catholic enrolment

We wish to increase Catholic enrolment particularly by addressing the situation in which half the students of Catholic families are presently enrolled in government and other schools. Our schools have always had a preferential option for Catholic children from families in difficult economic circumstances and this option needs to be made as practical as possible for them. We must continue to do all we can especially with those families who are regularly at Mass and enable them to transfer their children to a Catholic school, as they would wish if it were an affordable move.

With regard to other-than-Catholic children, our Catholic schools continue to welcome them when places are available for their accommodation. In the Diocese of Lismore we acknowledge the contribution which many of these families have made in choosing a faith-based education and in giving their support to our values as the reason why Catholic schools are good schools. Before a school enrolment of an other-than-Catholic student, all concerned should be clearly aware of this expectation of family support for the Catholic identity and mission of our schools. Those who cannot make this commitment, or who perhaps simply see Catholic schools as a relatively cheap private school alternative to government schools, would best be advised to seek an educational environment more accommodating to their outlook.



Centres of 'The New Evangelisation'

Evangelisation means proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. Its goal is bringing people to faith through a personal encounter with Him. With its heart in the parish community, this work today has to begin afresh - and urgently - in the context of growing numbers of non-practising Catholics, under-catechised Catholics and other-than-Catholics in our schools. All the life and activity of the school must turn upon the Person and presence of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour and promote and never contradict the teachings of His Church. In Christian schools the seeds of faith are sown in the heart and nurtured in a reasoning mind. 'Hearts on Fire,' as we sing in a confirmation hymn, is the foundation of the ongoing formation in faith which we call catechesis.

Places of religious literacy

Catechesis is the continuing work of religious instruction in the fullness of the faith that comes to us from the Apostles. Every Catholic child has a right to it, beginning with their parents as primary educators. Yet, as we are aware, many young people emerge after years in our schools with insufficient knowledge of the Catholic faith or interest in practising it. We realise that some teachers have received limited faith formation themselves and need particular support and professional development which the Church must look to provide. No student should leave a Catholic school without knowing the essentials of Catholic teaching and practice as found in the Catechism of the Catholic

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Bishop Jarrett *Writes* continued

Church and its Compendium. The religious education texts To Know, Worship and Love prescribed for use in all Catholic parish schools in the Diocese of Lismore are specifically structured on these authoritative foundations. The bishops believe that the time has come to look seriously at means of testing the level of Catholic religious literacy of our students. It seems to be the only area of learning, (which we believe to be the key area of all knowledge), which through the school years is not subject to systematic external assessment.

Leadership and staff of our schools

The bishops recognise how well and long our schools have been served by the professional and pastoral abilities of our leaders and teachers. With a vocational commitment and generosity many have gone more than 'the extra mile' for Catholic education. However, a good number of our most experienced staff – many of whom were originally members of, or were trained by, religious orders – are now retiring and need to be replaced.

Our challenge is how best to form the next generation of staff. No one doubts that the faith and practice of the leaders and staff in a Catholic school significantly affect the students and the character of the education offered. As in the past it will be essential that all those appointed as Principals and Religious Education Co-ordinators are faithful Catholics who readily embrace the mission of the Catholic school today and can

inspire their staff and parents accordingly. Likewise it will be essential that all teachers are committed to the mission of the school and teach and live in accordance with the teachings of the Church; as far as possible only practising and knowledgeable Catholics should be charged with the task of teaching RE.

The bishops look particularly to our Catholic tertiary institutions to provide effective formation in knowledge and skills for new staff and inservice and other support to enable teachers to uphold strongly the Catholic identity and mission of the schools in which they serve.

In our Diocese

Together with the other bishops in their respective dioceses I wish to lead the task ahead in focussing the energy of our schools, families, parishes and the Catholic Education Office in reflecting on the goals outlined in the Pastoral Letter and the work of moving towards their achievement. I have asked the Director of Catholic Schools, Dr Anne Wenham, to co-ordinate this process so that it can be worked on locally parish by parish with any assistance available from the CEO.

The full text of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter may be downloaded from www.ceo.syd.catholic.edu.au/cms/Jahia/site/ceosydney or copies may be obtained from the Catholic Education Office, Lismore.

With every good wish and blessing,

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ Geoffrey Jarrett,
Bishop of Lismore

Cover caption:
Reception of
the Cross & Icon
through the
Diocese at
North Brother,
31st July, 2007.

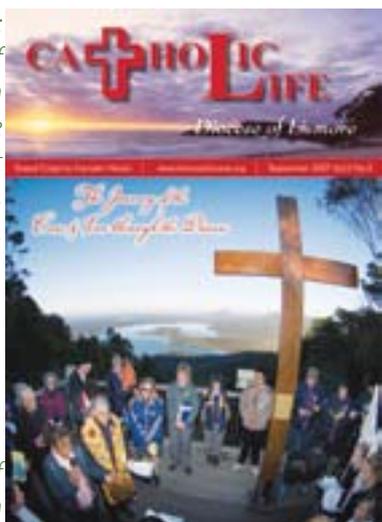


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Relevance and Inclusion



In our society there seems to be a concerted attempt to misrepresent religion of any tradition.

In our society there seems to be a concerted attempt to misrepresent religion of any tradition. What is even worse is the determination to mix religion with nationalism, ending in sanctifying terrorism and extolling racial hatred as a pious exercise. It is in this climate that we are challenged to promote the spiritual vision of God's love.

How do we as Church live in a secular culture that is limping between permissive legislation, fractured politics and moral decline? How do we regard the continuing exploitation of the defenceless, the scars of broken family life and the reduction of morality to private choice? Where is the safe space to be found for the running refugee and why is crudity, obscenity and blatant anger so easily tolerated?

In the spirit of the Gospels, *Where is the safe space to be found for the running refugee and why is crudity, obscenity and blatant anger so easily tolerated?*

we cannot disengage from society, throw up fences and build battlements. We have to try to engage society, be a leaven in our communities as we try to change society as people of welcome, peace and truth.

Our relevance as Christ's messengers of the Good News is about inclusiveness, about encouraging and welcoming. Christ positioned his church along the byways as well as the highways. He taught that God does not discriminate: His sun shines on all without the eclipse of discrimination. He did not choose to associate along lines of ideology. He

He was prepared to accept the pain, anger and confusion of every community he entered.

was prepared to accept the pain, anger and confusion of every community he entered. He did not patronise or discard. And he did celebrate the joy of seeing human failings redeemed.

The journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon through our Diocese surely highlights the Gospel message of inclusiveness and the welcoming embrace of God.

People of all faiths or none came to see and discern this sign of gathering.

we have made the decision to go out and proclaim hope and peace to all in these troubled times

Father Chris Ryan, the coordinator of the Australian pilgrimage of the cross and icon, gave an encouraging message: "The symbol of the cross is a powerful expression of our faith. In witnessing to the cross we have made the decision to go out and proclaim hope and peace to all in these troubled times. The decision to witness has to be a strong personal one."

We might decry the shortcomings of our society but if we ignore the call of Christ to engage that same society with tolerance and welcome, then we have failed to understand his message. We are told we are living in a time of change yet surely it is time to honour the human spirit and give back the dignity of respect.

If we become insensitive to the needs of those in our communities and place unreal demands on them, then the message will surely fade away and our churches will empty.

God's embrace is not a ghetto.

*Father Peter M. Karam
Editor*





Recently I found myself sitting on a very tiny chair at the back of a Year One classroom.

The teacher and the students were showing a group of visiting teachers how teaching and learning spelling takes place using an interactive whiteboard or 'smartboard'. In another classroom in another part of the Diocese some weeks earlier, I had been 'taught' by a kindergarten student how to record who is in the classroom every day using the same technology. In two secondary schools I have visited in recent times, computers and other digital technologies are utilised side by side with other sophisticated teaching resources. Classrooms and schools throughout the Diocese reflect the enormous advances in our rapidly changing world of technology.

As young people become highly competent users of the latest technologies, educators are being called to rethink the very nature of learning and teaching. There is no fear that computers will replace teachers. Teachers however, are leading a change in their classroom environments in which students are actively engaged in their learning, utilising the potential that is offered through the increasing range of technologies available.

With this significant shift in classroom cultures, there has arisen the need for teachers to undertake professional learning. Recently the Diocese of Lismore hosted an Interactivity Conference at St. Augustine's Coffs Harbour

for 200 teachers. This was a unique and creative response to the quality learning agenda that we face in our rapidly changing world. What was exciting about this venture was that teachers facilitated the Workshop sessions, many with students from St. Augustine's, sharing their wisdom and experience with their peers. The changing nature of the classroom today can be seen in some of these workshop titles:

- Podcasting and blogs in classrooms
- Web 2.0
- Flash presentations
- Google initiatives
- Learning objects
- Movie making
- School sites
- Global projects

Our teachers are responding with enthusiasm and professionalism to the changing teaching and learning agenda. I acknowledge all participants at our Interactivity Conference and thank the members of the organising team under the leadership of Dr Paul Thornton, newly appointed Assistant Director, Education Services, for their commitment to ensuring the success of this important venture.

This term two leaders in Catholic education in the Diocese have been informed that they have fulfilled all requirements for the award of Doctor of Education. This is a significant achievement and reflects commitment to many years of research, study and writing. We congratulate the following new Doctors:

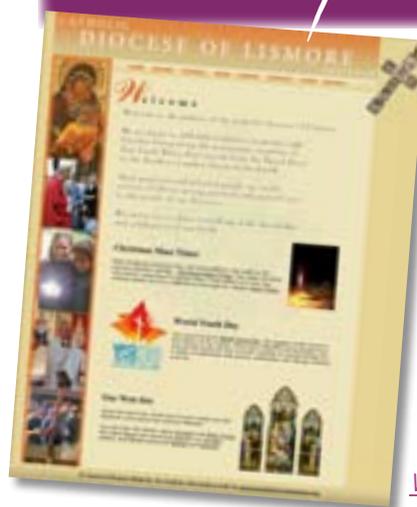
Dr. Jake Madden, Principal of St. Augustine's Primary School Coffs Harbour.

Thesis Topic: An exploration of the relationship between principal and teacher leader in nurturing student learning.

Dr. John Graham, Assistant Director, Religious Education and Faith Services.

Thesis Topic: An exploration of Catholic primary school principals' perspectives on the concept of community as applied to schools.

Website for Diocese



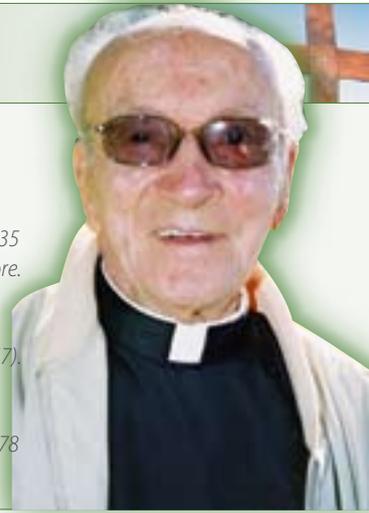
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Farewell to Rev. Fr. Thomas McEvoy by Father Jim Griffin PP, Kingscliff

Fr. Thomas McEvoy died about 7am Monday 30th July 2007 at the Eloura Nursing Home, Kingscliff. He was 96 years of age and beginning his 73rd year as a priest in the Diocese of Lismore NSW. He had been at the Eloura Nursing Home Kingscliff for several weeks after sustaining a fall at St Martha's Hostel in Tweed Heads.

*Reverend Father Thomas McEvoy
Born at Ballyreddin, Bennettsbridge in the Diocese of Ossory.
Educated at St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny.
Ordained Priest at St. Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny on June 9, 1935
by Most Reverend Patrick Collier, D.D., for the Diocese of Lismore.
Arrived in the Lismore Diocese on the 14th October 1935.
Appointments as assistant priest at Maclean, Mullumbimby
and Lismore. Administrator at Kempsey 5/8/1941 – 31/12/1957).
Parish Priest at Coffs Harbour (1/1/1958 – 3/12/1971)
Parish Priest at Kingscliff (3/12/1971 – 13/7/1984).
Moderator at Wardell. Diocesan Consultor from December 1978
until July 1984. Died at Kingscliff on the 30th July 2007*



He had left his retirement unit at Kingscliff for some respite care at St Martha's on 26th April 2007. For those who met him, he was a great inspiration and cared with a gentle disposition. He kept many cards and letters from parishioner friends from throughout the Diocese and beyond. Although his handwriting, eyesight and hearing began to fail some years ago, he did his best to maintain contact with his sister Alice in Callan, Kilkenny Ireland, his brother priests and people from the many parishes in which he served over 70 years.

Fr McEvoy had a very simple but faithful spirituality. He would be found in the Church in the parishes in which he served and in his retirement, unless the flu precluded it, everyday in St Anthony's. He was able to drive his car for sometime after he retired from Wardell and then to his trusty four-wheel scooter, which he turned over and escaped, injury on more than one occasion. In the last fourteen months Cath Togo his reliable and most generous housekeeper drove him to all appointments, doctors and otherwise and to the Church each day. Cath cared for Fr McEvoy for more than 36 years; from the time he came as the second parish priest of Kingscliff up until his death. As priests we all owe Cath Togo a great deal of thanks for her housekeeping and care of Fr Tom and the care she gave all of us who came to share his hospitality as priests at Kingscliff.

Fr McEvoy was very pleased to have led the building of St Augustine's Church Coffs Harbour, Sts. Mary and Ambrose Church at Pottsville and his first Church building as an assistant priest at Mullumbimby, when the Bishop of Lismore, Dr John Carroll with his Co adjutor Bishop Patrick Farrelly asked that Fr Tom take charge of building Our Lady of Lourdes Church at Brunswick Heads. Heads. All of these Church's were very special to Fr McEvoy and for the people and priests who followed him in their building of the faith.

Fr Tom celebrated Mass each day up until about a couple of weeks before his death. His love for the Eucharist is well known and his respect for the Mass and the Church was beyond question.

Throughout his life Fr McEvoy used his God given gifts and talents with people from all walks of life and long before ecumenism took on he promoted a

real outreach to Christians who were not Catholics. Fr McEvoy moved among, encouraged and was often able to bring them all together at various functions, work parties, fundraising ventures and when they came to the Church for weddings, funerals, Baptisms, he made them feel welcome.

There were a good number at his various Jubilee Celebrations 25th, 50th, 60th and 70th. Fr Tom was a great encouragement to young priests in the Diocese. His advice was simple, straightforward and gentle and often drew each line with a sincere bit of humour, which helped to secure an even approach to both joys and difficulties that may have assailed the life of the person seeking his advice and direction. At least that is what so many have told the writer and that the writer sought and received from Fr McEvoy over 32 years ago and since.

The day before Fr McEvoy died, Sunday 29th July, we prayed together a few simple prayers and then gave each other a blessing. It was a struggle for him but he was alert and lucid. I asked him to put in a good word for all us, when he got to heaven and with a wry smile he accepted the task.

His funeral Mass was attended by parishioners, teachers and school children of Kingscliff Parish, friends from former parishes and priests of the Diocese.

In his homily Bishop Jarrett spoke of Father Tom's commitment to priestly service and his kindness to those who came to know him as pastor and friend. He also paid tribute to the contribution to the Diocese by the priests, like Father Tom McEvoy, who came from Ireland. He said their spirit of sacrifice and generous service has become part of the history of many parishes.

Pallbearers were Fathers Tony Hoade, Paul McDonald, Peter Slack, Jim Reilly, David Gilbey and Colin Reinhard. Requiescat in Pace.

Jubilees of Ordination: A Combined 210 years of Priestly Service

Fellow Clergy, relatives and friends gathered at St. Carthage's Cathedral on Wednesday July 11 to celebrate Clergy Jubilees of Ordination.

Those celebrating their jubilees were Fr Eamon Leonard (Diamond Jubilee), Bishop John Satterthwaite, Emeritus Bishop of the Diocese and Father John Naylor celebrating their Golden Jubilee of ordination; Fathers Michael Roohan and Paul McDonald celebrating their Silver Jubilee of ordination.

Serving in many of the parishes of the Diocese, the Jubilarians welcomed former parishioners to the Thanksgiving Mass. Emeritus Bishop of the Diocese Bishop John Satterthwaite gave the homily of the Mass. Members of his former staff participated in the Offertory Procession. Now living in retirement in Port Macquarie. He was Bishop of the Lismore Diocese from 1971 – 2001.

Situation of Jubilarians

Father Eamon Leonard is living in retirement at Kingscliff. Bishop John Satterthwaite is retired and living in Port Macquarie. He is involved in aged care ministry in the parish of Port Macquarie. Father John Naylor is retired and living in Lismore. Father Michael Roohan is Parish Priest of Camden Haven Parish. Father Paul McDonald is the Parish Priest of Coffs Harbour Parish.

Priestly Jubilee Mass, Lismore, 11th July 2007

This is the full text of the Homily preached by Bishop Satterthwaite.

It would be difficult to think of any greater failure than the failure of Jesus Christ. His brief ministry in one tiny corner of the world ended in total failure when he was rejected by his own people. Betrayed by one of his closest followers and abandoned by the rest. While still a young man he died nailed to a cross as a criminal.

About seven weeks after his death his followers emerged from hiding to announce that he had risen from the dead and that they had been commissioned to bring this message to the world. It was a mission doomed to failure. They did not produce him as proof of their claim. They said that he had returned to heaven some ten days before. Everyone knows that when people die they stay dead and Roman soldiers who carried out the crucifixions made sure that bodies did not come down from the cross before they were well and truly dead. Why would anyone in his or her sane mind believe a handful of fishermen and peasants that someone had been raised from the dead?

The story went further. They said that he as the promised Jewish Messiah. For the Jews the Messiah was to someone who would drive out the Romans and establish a great and powerful kingdom. They could not accept a Messiah who had died such a shameful death. The Romans had no interest in the religious beliefs of these strange and troublesome people who lived in a remote corner of the empire. He was also claimed to be God himself who had come into the world in human form. For the Jews this was sheer blasphemy. For the pagans it was no big deal. Their gods flitted in and out of the world at will.

All that would have been hard enough to accept. There was more to come. Those who believed the story were to look on all others of both sexes, of all nations and of all social classes as brothers and sisters whom they were to love. They were even called on to love even their enemies and to forgive those who had injured them. This would be like asking Ian

Paisley to love the Pope or George Bush to forgive Osama Ben Laden.

Somehow the story spread. At first this was done by the Apostles. They were soon joined by deacons, then by priests and religious orders whose members carried out special works within the Church. In recent times we have come to understand that the message was also spread by lay people who witnessed to Christ by living out their vocations as housewives, farmers and school teachers.

This morning for obvious reasons we will confine ourselves to the priesthood. This priest is the leader of the parish community. He is a shepherd, a teacher and he brings God's grace through the administration of the sacraments. Theologically the Diocese is the basic unit of the Church. In practice it is the parish. The parish is where we live out our lives and as a community we worship God.

This morning I will restrict myself to speaking of the priest as the celebrant of the Eucharist. It is his most important work and it would be difficult to touch even briefly on his other roles and still remain within the seven minute limit that liturgical authorities impose on the length of homilies.

The Second Vatican Council called the Eucharist the summit and source of the Church's life. It is the highest act of worship we can offer to God and it is the source of all grace. It is significant that at the Last Supper Christ gave us the Eucharist and the great commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. It would not be possible to keep this commandment without the grace that comes from the Eucharist.

The American priest sociologist Father Andrew Greeley tells of a friend of his whom he described as being involved as one of America's greatest growth industries. He paints slogans on religious banners. Most of them sell as soon as the paint is dry. One that does not sell well is one that reads: Thank God our time is now. For priests this is most true when it comes to the celebration of Mass. Fathers Leonard, Naylor and myself spent several years celebrating the old Latin Mass. I am sure we loved it as did the people who attended. How much better is it now when we pray in a language that is understood and the congregation are no longer mute spectators but take part in a community act of worship?

The last few decades have been a turbulent time in the history of the world. The explosion in technology, especially in the field of communication has brought about an upheaval

Jubilarians after Mass with Bishop



Father Naylor

in almost every nation of the world. The Church could not remain unaffected.

There is a story told that some centuries ago the Pope commissioned an artist to do a painting depicting the Church as St. Peter's boat, the barque of Peter. Some time later that artist came back with a sketch of what he was planning to paint. On one side of the sketch was a storm tossed angry sea. On the other side was the barque of Peter resting safe, secure and serene in the tranquil water of a harbour. The Pope said NO. The Church, the barque of Peter, must be out in the midst of the stormy sea.

We can thank Pope John XXIII for calling the Second Vatican Council, not because of the changes that it brought about, but for preparing the Church for the inevitable changes that were to come. We were jolted out of our smug complacency. We came to see that we did not have the answers to all question and there was still much we had to learn.

They have been exciting times, For some they have been distressing times. The prophets of doom see only gloom and disaster ahead. We have the Eucharist and we have Christ's words: I am with you until the end of time. We need no more.

This morning I ask you to join with the five of us in thanking God for the years of our priesthood and that we will



Bishop John Satterthwaite preaching the Homily at the Mass

grow in our love of the gift he has given us. Pray also that other young men will answer the call to dedicate their lives to the priesthood.

Grafton Mercy Sisters Represented At PNG Golden Jubilee

2006-7 has been a year of Golden Jubilee celebrations for the Papua New Guinea Sisters of Mercy. Last year Sister Barbara Bolster travelled with other Australian Leaders for the celebrations in the Highlands. This year Sister Colleen Rhodes (Yarapos 1979-1981) represented Grafton Sisters in Wewak.



Twenty-five years ago a Mercy novitiate began in Wewak and growing numbers of Papua New Guinean women are embracing the Catherine McAuley's spirit; four members of the Papua New Guinean Mercy Leadership Team, including the Leader, are Papua New Guinean Sisters. National Sisters are active in health care, pastoral work, social work, education, vocations promotion and initial formation.

The Sisters visited Ulupu, Drekikir and Kunjingini where the local people gathered in their hundreds to honour the Sisters of Mercy and remember those who had taught them in the early days.

The main jubilee celebration was a joint venture at Divine Word University, St Benedict's Education Campus, Kaindi. Celebrations began on Friday, June 1. Bishop Anthony Burgess, Bishop of Wewak, the Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of PNG, The Governor of the East Sepik Province and other dignitaries were present. Students from St Benedict's and Kaindi Demonstration School provided entertainment. On Saturday, June 2, Bishop Burgess and priests celebrated the Jubilee Mass.



Rosary Sisters, Franciscan Sisters, Mother Theresa's Sisters, Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers, joined us to celebrate the Mercy contribution to faith and life in Papua New Guinea. The liturgy was typically Papua New Guinean, vibrant, colourful and inclusive. Later, 600 people were seated in the grounds of the University Campus for a Jubilee dinner.

In summary of the Golden Jubilee visit, Sister Colleen Rhodes wrote:

"I left Papua New Guinea with a sense of hope. The people are hospitable, friendly and keen to ensure a future for their children. Education and health care are improving. Papua New Guinean priests, sisters and brothers are doing wonderful work in faith development, education, health services, pastoral and social work. We passed beautifully kept villages that showed a great pride in local craftsmanship and an appreciation of the natural beauty of the environment. Yes, there is widespread poverty but changes are happening. The country, once an Australian Territory, needs our continuing support, our friendship and our prayer. Let's continue to hold this beautiful country and its people in our hearts."

NAIDOC Week at John Paul College

The message was clear: success should be measured not only in material ways but in how successful you are as a person.

This was the theme of David Prosser's inspiring speech during Naidoc Week celebrations at John Paul College.

David reflected on his success as a proud Aboriginal man who has enjoyed a thriving career in the arts, a career that has enabled him to travel the world and accumulate the material signs of success. Yet he sees his real success as the learning of his native language, an achievement that has given him the greatest sense of fulfilment.

David's testimonial was part of John Paul College's Naidoc week celebrations, where Aboriginal students joined with other student leaders in a celebration of Aboriginal culture. Students participated in the water ceremony and a procession of the symbols of reconciliation. These were shared by the school community as recognition of the richness of Aboriginal culture and a symbol of a united school community.

Another highlight was the performance of students from St Mary's in Bowraville who travelled to John Paul College to perform traditional songs for the appreciative assembly. John Paul College students Jason and Wayamba added to the cultural theme by skillfully playing the Didgeridoo

Local man and proud parent, Mr Terry Carberry, welcomed the gathering paying homage to the traditional owners



Left to right: Mr David Prosser (guest speaker), Mr Leon Walsh (Acting Principal) and students Jason and Wayamba

and commended the success of Aboriginal students in the college, including his daughter, Tamika. Fellow Year 12 student Tyson Ferguson demonstrated his newly acquired Aboriginal language skills, developed with the help of Pauline Hooler, a special guest on the day.

International Conference for Mercy Sisters

Every two years Religious Leaders from all over the world meet in Rome to share ideas and renew their commitment to religious life within the Church and in the World.

Sister Barbara Bolster, Leader of the Grafton Sisters of Mercy, went with other Australian Mercy Leaders to the Union of International Superiors General Plenary, May 6-10, 2007. The theme of the Conference was "Challenged to weave a new spirituality which generates hope and life for all". Keynote speakers from different countries addressed important issues relevant to Religious Life. 850 participants then worked in groups that drew on their creativity and enthusiasm as they explored new paths into the future.

Their final statement affirmed:

Our passion for Jesus Christ and for humanity and creation impels us to become weavers of hope and of life.

"I have come that they may have life and life in abundance." Jn. 10, 10

Throughout this Assembly, we have heard the invitation to live in covenant with God, as co-creators, generating life and hope, through relationships of respect, dialogue, inclusion, trust, co-responsibility and interdependence. Our growing awareness of our connectedness with the whole of life in all its forms challenges us to deepen a new vision and understanding of the consecrated life today.

Contemplating the Word of God, we are called to read the signs of our times with the eyes of God and with our women's hearts.

"I have seen the misery of my people... I have heard their cry... I know their pain. I have come to deliver them... Exodus 3,7

- This Word calls us to seek a prophetic response to the challenges we have seen and the cries we have heard:
- The longing of woman to rediscover her dignity and her true place in society and in the Church
- The groaning of our wounded earth for recognition of its sacredness as the home of all
- The thirst for a deeper communion between believers of all religions

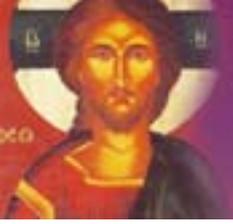


- The distress of millions of immigrants and displaced persons, of children and women victims of human trafficking seeking a more human life
- The call of the Spirit to create in our congregations links of reciprocity with lay people so that the charism of each congregation may be lived beyond existing structures.
"And now I send you... go and liberate my people... and I will be with you" Exodus 3, 10-12
- In gratitude for the mission entrusted to us, we will:
- Engage in on-going dialogue between the Word of God and life, the heart of our commitment as consecrated women called to follow Christ.
- Network and use the power of our collective voice to denounce unjust laws and structures which exclude people on such bases as gender, religion, culture.
- Promote all forms of dialogue and in particular inter-religious dialogue, recognizing our common responsibility for humanity.
- Grow in an ecological awareness and express this in concrete and consistent choices.
- Encourage a vision of Church as communion where a real partnership with laity is lived.
- Form consecrated women ready to respond to these challenges with faith and daring.

*With Mary, let us become Weavers of the Kingdom of God,
May the conversion of our hearts and minds uproot us.*

May we widen our tent.

*May hope and life for humanity and all creation surge
from our tireless weaving of a spirituality of communion.*



Liturgy

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'Christ is always present in his Church, especially in liturgical celebrations'

There's so much richness in the above statement of Vatican II, dear Readers, that I'm inviting you to keep on reflecting with me on some of its rich implications for our shared life, mission and prayer as the community of Jesus (the Church) in the world today: -

As baptised believers, you and I have been sent into the world by Jesus our Leader to be signs, instruments and servants of the kingdom of God. He says to us what he said to his first followers: 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you' (Jn 20:21). What does it mean to enter the kingdom of God? What does it mean to be citizens of God's kingdom? What does it mean to work for the coming of the kingdom of God?

To enter and live in God's kingdom is to recognise that God is king of our lives, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to live his teachings

To enter and live in God's kingdom is to recognise that God is king of our lives, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to live his teachings - especially that God is Father and Mother to all, that we are to love both God and neighbour, that we are to forgive without limits and that we are to show a practical loving concern for poor people, outsiders and outcasts. Whether we enter the kingdom or not, Jesus insists, depends upon our response to our neighbour (including our enemy) in need. Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' (Mt 7:21) belongs. It is those who feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger and comfort the sick, who inherit the kingdom (Mt 25:31- 46). It is they who bring God's loving and liberating presence to others.

The mission of the Church on earth is exactly the same as that of Jesus. His mission on earth was not only to set the human heart free from sin, as central as that might be, but also to deliver men and women from disease and oppression and everything that hinders their full development as human beings, who have been created by God and destined by God for everlasting life. Just as Jesus has been called 'the man for others', 'the person for others', so the Church may be called 'the community for others'. It is not itself the kingdom, but a seed, a budding forth, a sign, instrument and servant of the kingdom.

The kingdom is broader than the Church and includes men and women who are outside the Church. Working for the kingdom means working with others, both inside and outside the Church. Whenever and wherever people love one another, forgive one another, carry one another's burdens, work for justice and peace, the kingdom of God is happening.

The Church's role is not to dominate the world, but to be its loving servant in all the ways in which Jesus loved, served, helped and healed. He himself was the Good Samaritan to the lost, wounded and broken. We, the Church, must also be that Good Samaritan, working as instruments of God to remove injustice, discrimination, poverty and disease from human society.



The Church has always been concerned for human betterment. In ancient Rome the Church protested against gladiator fights and other forms of killing for sport. In the Middle Ages, prophets in the Church spoke in defence of the peasants against the tyranny of the nobles. Monasteries were the first hotels for weary pilgrims. The Church has always cared for widows and orphans. It has fought against slavery, against the dehumanization of factory workers and against the exploitation of migrants. In the 1960's Christians



marched for civil rights for black people in America. Today they march for the right to life in its many forms as well as for many other social causes, including a 'fair go' for refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and for a fair and guaranteed minimum wage as well as humane conditions for workers. Today churches are providing homes for the homeless, hospitals, hospices, refuges, soup kitchens, schools, literacy programmes, day-care centres, friendship and support groups, home visits, food parcels and clothing, etc.

Since Vatican II there has been nothing less than an explosion of lay ministries and activities of every kind - to sick, disabled and dying people; to bereaved families; to dysfunctional families; to youth; to migrants and refugees; to battered wives and to other people in need of counselling, therapy and protection. Lay persons function as teachers, principals, parish councillors, catechists, readers, ministers of communion, musicians and singers, prayer leaders, artists and architects. There are nurses, doctors and pastoral workers, who view their services as Christian ministries. Some lay persons are campus ministers, social workers, prison visitors, day care workers and foster parents. Some contribute their love and skills in the rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug addicts. Some work in marriage tribunals and in marriage counselling, some as canon lawyers, givers of retreats and spiritual directors and still others in the areas of social justice, ecumenical dialogue and co-operation. In some places lay people have become, almost equivalently, the pastors of parishes.

One of the most warmly received teachings of Vatican II is that salvation is not only concerned with the saving of souls but with the *One of the most warmly received teachings of Vatican II is that salvation is not only concerned with the saving of souls but with the saving of the whole human person, body and soul.*

saving of the whole human person, body and soul. 'The glory of God,' says St Irenaeus, 'is the human person fully alive.' A growing concern in the Church is for saving the whole of God's work of creation. This has given rise to a movement known as 'ecospirituality', which is passionate about the environment and ecological issues like the dire threat of global warming to the well-being and even the survival of the human race.

When I feel discouraged and disheartened about my own faults and defects and those of my church community, I think of the great and good things that are happening for the coming of the reign of God, such as those I've just been sharing with you. Thinking such positive thoughts make me feel better about life and the Church. What about you?

The Greatest Irish Woman of all Time by Sr. Mary Bruggy, P.B.V.M.

In Ireland On 24th June 2005,
Nano Nagle was declared the
Nation's Greatest Woman.

Anyone could nominate a person:
saint, writer, nun, poet, athlete,
rich or poor, urban or rural living
or dead and write an article in five
hundred words, giving reasons for their choice of
the person. Nano Nagle came top of the list, closely
followed by a politician and a swimmer!



Nano deserves to be called the Greatest Irish Woman as she championed the cause of the poorest of the poor in the 18th Century Ireland. She was the first person who risked her life during the Penal Days to give education to the poor catholic children of Cork. Her inspiration was such that the good work she began in the streets of Cork has reached far and wide across the globe.

Nano is the Nation's Greatest Woman because of her contribution to this country and countries across the world. She was a heroic woman who single-handedly pioneered radical catholic education in 18th Century Ireland. She was a woman who in her simplicity, yet dared greatly... dared to let herself be guided by the Spirit of God. Meet this woman whose love was stronger than the viciousness, injustice, greed and violence that swamped her city and nation. Challenging the brutal power of her peoples oppressors she spent her life on the 'razors edge of danger.' We are so proud she has been recognised by popular vote.

This will certainly highlight the positive contribution religious, especially women have made for centuries.

Nano in her time challenged structures and systems that perpetuated poverty and injustice. Today all of us are invited to continue to follow in her footsteps in promoting human rights, dignity of all, transformation of structures and systems that oppress peoples, nations and our planet earth.

'How often have we seen her, after a well-spent day, returning through the darkness of the night, dripping with rain, mingled in the bustling crowd, moving thoughtfully along by the faint glimmering of a wretched lantern, withholding from herself in this manner the necessities of life, to administer the comfort of it to others. The seasons however as they changed, occasionally spared her : her own regularity, as it did not change, was never permitted to spare her. The same laborious occupation occurred every day, and no day could charge her with ever having flinched from them' Dr. Coppinger

Nano Nagle, Foundress of the Presentation Sisters was in the year 2000 voted "Woman of the Millennium" for her pioneering work in Education, from the time of the Penal Laws in Ireland.

Nano Nagle was born in Ballygriffin, Co. Cork, in 1718. Living in Penal Ireland meant that she attended the forbidden local Hedge School. It was here and also in the Nagle home that Nano received her Primary Education. Later she and her sister Anne went to Paris to complete their education.

When Nano finished school she was a very sophisticated, talented, well-educated, wealthy and beautiful young woman, with a charming personality. In her own words, she was a "lover of dress and vanity" and delighted in the social life of Paris. Early one morning, while returning from a Ball, she saw some people waiting for the church to open so that they could attend Mass. It had a deep impact on her. She returned to Ireland. Like Saint Patrick, God was calling her back to her homeland. She returned and became the HELPER OF THE HELPLESS and was also known as THE LADY OF THE LANTERN

The Penal Laws made it very difficult for her or any Catholic to do anything to help the Irish people. Nano began by renting a small cottage in Cove Lane in Cork, and invited the local children to come to school. She believed that in educating she would liberate. Word spread among the families in the city, so with a certain curiosity and interest, they came in their droves to be educated. Nano knew that there would be a price on her head if discovered, so she gave each child a small piece of fabric, a needle and thread, along with a cláirín. If the Redcoats came, the sewing would be the reason they were all gathered in the small cottage. Nano taught the children about God, and how to read and write. Within a short time there was no more space in the cottage, and therefore she rented six more cottages throughout Cork. Education in Ireland had just begun, pioneered by Nano Nagle.

Urged on by her faith in her own mission and by her desire to give stability to her works, Nano founded her own Congregation of Presentation Sisters on Christmas Eve, 1775. Since then, the Sisters have worked tirelessly in schools and many other diverse ministries to bring education and liberation to people all over the world. From this Congregation of Presentation Sisters, developed the Christian Brothers, the Presentation Brothers, the Mercy Sisters, the Sisters of Charity.

Love was her driving force - love for God and her neighbour. She spent several hours in prayer before making her rounds to her seven schools in the city, where she taught the children she loved. This she did in all kinds of weather, even when she was worn out and in bad health. Her self-sacrifice, endurance and total dedication were extraordinary. She died in 1784.

Truly Nano Nagle is the greatest Irish woman in history.

In the face of fear;
she chose to be daring,
In the face of anxiety,
she chose to trust,
In the face of impossibility,
she chose to begin.
To universal misery,
she proposed ministry to persons;
To ignorance, knowledge;
To disillusionment, tenacity of purpose;
And to multiple vexations, singleness of heart.

Faced with failures,
he held fast to hope; Faced with death,
she believed in a living future;

A programme for the future she gave in one word:
LOVE

Poem by Raphael Consedine P.B.V.M. Melbourne Australia

World Youth Day *St Joseph's Primary, Kempsey*

Students at St Joseph's Primary School prepared for the arrival of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon with a mini pilgrimage of their own. Year six students prepared fourteen beautiful banners which were placed around the school oval, each banner depicting a special person/saint who has devoted their life to Jesus. The students of the school were given time at each banner to hear of the life of the saint and to join in a prayer with their

fellow peers. The mini pilgrimage concluded with a prayer focus in the hall and an opportunity to reflect on the children's individual faith journey with God.

The World Youth Day cross and Icon was welcomed into the All Saints Parish in a moving ceremony on Wednesday, 1st August. The significance of such an important event had a profound influence on the children of St Joseph's Primary School and they were honoured to play a part in this special day.

Year six students displaying their banners for the St Joseph's School mini pilgrimage

