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MASS THIS WEEKEND

(Lyra Sat – 16:30)
St Joseph's: Sat – 18:30
St Joseph's: Sun – 08:30

LITURGIES *THIS WEEK*

Mon 8 Sep — 8.00am
Liturgy of the Word and H.C.
Tue 9 Sep — 7:30am
Wed 10 Sep — 11:45am
Thu 11 Sep — 8.00am
Liturgy of the Word and H.C.
Fri 12 Sep — 5:30pm

MASSES NEXT WEEK

(Wallangarra Sat – 16:30)
St Joseph's: Sat – 18:30
St Joseph's: Sun – 08:30
Villa Carramar: Tue 16 – 10:30

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Thursday 4pm–Midnight;
& Friday 8.00am Holy Hour

VINNIES CONFERENCE

3rd Wednesday of the month
1:30pm – Mary Agnes Centre

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

First Tuesday of the month
7pm – Mary Agnes Centre

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Friday 17:00 in the church.



Welcome as you would welcome me

SUNDAY 23 IN ORDINARY TIME (C)

6–7 Sep 2025

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

“What is within our grasp, we find with difficulty.” (Wis 9:16)

Long ago—it seems as if in another world—I took part in a televised debate over military expenditures and nuclear bombs. The woman I faced was such a good debater that the producer of the program called me three times beforehand to make sure I knew what I was getting into. He seemed amazed that I was still willing to go through with it.

She drew blood. Her most wounding thrust was scripture-based. “Jesus himself,” she said, “told us, ‘If a king is about to march on another king to do battle, will he not sit down first and consider whether, with ten thousand men, he can withstand an enemy coming at him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, he will send a delegation while the enemy is at a distance, asking for terms of peace.’”

I remembered the story from Luke’s Gospel, but before I could think of the context, my opponent came at me with the coup de grâce. “It’s easy for you to lay down arms and to be a pacifist. You don’t have a wife and children to take care of. If you did, you’d thank God for the bomb.”

What a sweet paradox it all was. The military analogy from Luke is actually about the vigilance we need for discipleship, especially in letting go of the earthly things that we cling to as our property.

That is why Jesus concludes the story with, “in the same way, none of you can be my disciple if you do not renounce all your possessions.” It has nothing to do with the evangelical approval of armies. It has everything to do with the dangers in clinging to things and people as our possessions. Jesus’ recommendation of vigilance against possessiveness comes in one of the harshest passages found in the New Testament, a saying about family life. “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” We must, rather, take up our cross and follow him in discipleship.

Clearly he is speaking here of renouncing our loved ones as possessions or as barriers to the redeeming cross. We can never possess another. (This is why Paul, in his Letter to Philemon, undercuts slavery by insisting that Onesimus is not a slave, but a loved brother.) What is more, we can never be another’s god. Nor can another human serve as ours. No one can save us but Christ. I cannot speak from direct experience of having spouse or children, but I suspect that there is a great and paradoxical truth in what Jesus says. If we treat our children as if they are either our possessions or our gods, it will not only be impossible to follow Christ; it will be impossible to love them. We will strangle them by clinging to them as if they were our property or crush them with the impossible burden of saving us and making us happy.

*“For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure
are our plans. ... Scarce do we guess the things on earth,
and what is within our grasp, we find with difficulty.”*

I may have lost the debate. But I found something else.

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PLAY FOR PURPOSE: RAFFLE 28 AUG – 18 SEPT 2025

Support the restoration of the historic St Patrick’s Cathedral and go in the draw to win luxury prizes - including two Audis and \$60,000 in gold by joining our Play for Purpose raffle today! Learn more and purchase tickets via <https://playforpurpose.com.au/catholic-diocese>.

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2 LUXURY AUDIS

+ \$60K GOLD

TICKETS \$10

CLOSES 18 SEP

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First Reading **Wisdom 9:13-18b**
1. It is hard enough “to guess what is in our grasp”— according to the Letter to the Hebrews, “let alone the things of heaven.” Can you relate to that statement? Is there anything you are uncertain about in the political arena in your country? Is there anything you are uncertain about in your spiritual life?
2. Does God give you help when you are unclear? Which do you think God prefers in you, perfect certainty— or your best guess, trusting in God?

Second Reading **Philemon 9-10, 12-17**
1. How did Paul bring about a change or a conversion in Onesimus? What part does love play in any change for the better? Has love worked any changes in your life?
2. Slavery was an accepted institution in Paul’s time but he states a revolutionary idea anyway: there are no divisions in Christ. What causes social divisions in the world today? Can you do anything to change that?

Gospel **Luke 14:25-33**
1. Is following Jesus a one-time choice or do you have to make it daily? Which would you rather have, all the possessions you could ever want, without Christ, or Christ with no possessions? Can you name some people who lived/live in Christ and have possessed nothing? What does this freedom allow them to do?
2. “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Do crosses make discipleship desirable? Is there anything that makes us want discipleship, even though it involves crosses? © 2025, Anne Osdieck

JUNIOR SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM
First Holy Communion classes have resumed. Contact Dorothy at the office for details.

TEEN RETREAT IN THE BUNYAS 22–24 SEPTEMBER
Nathan will be leading a retreat for teens in the first week of the school holidays. Offered in the Storm King Youth Camp series; details at stormkingyouthcamp.org. Promising formation, fun, and friends a plenty!

PRIESTS RETIREMENT FOUNDATION APPEAL
Many priests have dedicated their lives to serving our communities. In retirement, they are supported by a special Foundation. Your tax-deductible gift helps provide essential wellbeing and supports for these men. Please consider giving today: www.twb.catholic.org.au/donate.

PASTOR / PARISH PRIEST
In this part of the English-speaking world, we use the term ‘Parish Priest’ to designate a priest in charge of a parish or group of parishes. The more literal translation of the law (used in the Americas) terms the same role as ‘Pastor’; this highlights the shepherding role as opposed to the sacerdotal or even sacramental functions.

Once appointed to this role, a cleric is designated with the postnominals of ‘PP’. This is not an abbreviation of the English ‘Parish Priest’. Rather it is the Latin ‘*Pontiff Particularium*’ (Little/particular bridge-builder). The pastor is attributed with building bridges between God and God’s people in a particular place (withing a Diocese) and way, which in turn is an application of the duties of a priest to offer sacrifice on behalf of people.

Fun fact: Popes in office are afforded the postnominal ‘PM’ (*Pontif Maximus*; Big/est Bridge); but are buried as one among the pastors, with the inscription ‘[Name] P.P.’ But in this case, it means ‘*Pastor Pastorum*’ (Shepherd of Shepherds).

IN OUR PRAYERS
RECENT DEATHS: **Bonnie Hickling** (02.09.2025
Cleveland -Wife of Brian [Dec], Mother of Robert, Debbie & Kenneth [Dec] – Funeral Arrangements to be advised),
Venera Tornabene Terry Leotta, Eileen Vichie, Alfina Leonardi, Salvatore (Sam) Grammatico, Therese ‘Tere’ Bonner
TO REMEMBER: Eugene Carniel, Stefan (Snr) & Maria Wurst, Stefan (Jnr), Michael, Andreas, Albert & Karlheinz Wurst, Minnie Cooney, Fr Myles Patrick Smith, Most Reverend William Brennan DD
FOR THE SICK: Robert Ebenestelli, John Morrison, Greg Fletcher, Lucy Targato, Nick Brac, Nancy Hickey, Renee Simpson, Con Torrisi, Paul Russell, Tina Ryan, Iva Baxter, Grace Marini, Catherine, Elizabeth & Monika, Terry Hopgood, Jack Lawson, Margaret Doro, Hayden Smith, Nalda Sciuto, Graham (Gossie) Vale, Liz Billings, Sr Cecelia OCD, Alan Colyer, Amanda Boardman, Bron Larner, Sr Therese Margaret OCD, Russell Fahey, Norma Bertinazzi, Lesley Robbins, Wayne Jackson, Angela Gannon, Glen Slater, Cassie May, Sam Leonardi, Josie Torrisi, Barry Driscoll, Steven Campbell, Paul Voss, Des Fossey, Kate Sturgeon, Anne Black, and all the sick and elderly of Parish & families.
FOR VOCATIONS: For all the young in our parish; Rev. Fr. BJ Perrett, Sister Teresa Gasparin, and Sister Marie Tania as they continue their vocation journeys. For an increase in vocations to priesthood and religious life from our own communities.

MINISTRIES	SATURDAY 13 Sept 2025	SUNDAY 14 Sept 2025
READERS	Genevieve Gasparin	Megan Mahoney Johanna Campbell
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION	Clelia Patti Bernice Steele Norm Steele	Lance Guteridge Cecilia Campbell Carmela Nicastro
COUNTERS		Anna Brisotto Danielle Hannigan

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK
Mon 8 Sept – The Nativity Of The Blessed Virgin Mary
Tues 9 Sept – St Peter Claver, priest
Fri 12 Sept – The Most Holy Name Of Mary
Sat 13 Sept – St John Chrysostom

IGNITE CONFERENCE BRISBANE
Thu 25 to Sun 28 September. Groups attending from Stanthorpe and Warwick. Travel and subsidies possible on application. For more info, please contact Nathan or Mary <mary.roberts@twb.catholic.edu.au>.

SUPPLY – WHAT A JOY TO HAVE FR BRIAN BACK!
It is such a joy to have Fr Brian back in the parish on supply. Indeed, I have full trust that the parish will be all the richer for the time he has generously offered. Please keep an eye on the weekday Mass times this month.

PARISH PRIEST APPOINTMENT
Following the usual consultation process, and with his own considerations, Bishop Ken has appointed Nathan Webb as parish priest for the customary period of 6 years from 1 September. Please pray for Nathan and the parish.

ABSENCE
Nathan will be away most of September between conferences, retreats, and two weeks leave. Nathan will be back briefly for First Holy Communions late September and then back full-time from the beginning of October.
For further details, see the ensuing two pages.

Abstract Thoughts

What's with the Rome trip? Well, one of the extra-parochial roles that I hold is to sit on the steering committee of a philanthropist-funded 'Theologies of the Priesthood' research project run through Australian Catholic University. Though not a theologian in my own right, I have expressed an interest in the subject (more than the field) and was offered a seat at the table by one of my Seminary Professors. This has led to a novel opportunity. The trip to Rome is for a seminar where members of the project had the opportunity to work together on a book for imminent publication. The project drew interest at the European Society for Catholic Theology (ESCT) conference the week or so prior. Below are excerpts from the (a very rough draft) chapter that I presented for feedback at the gathering.

MODI MUNERA: ARRIVING MINISTERS FORMING PRESBYTERATES

[...] Two questions form the genesis and denouement of this paper: Firstly, what does it mean for arriving priest from other cultures to minister in Australia; and, what does it mean for the Church throughout Australia to be ministered to by/with international priests? Behind both of these are questions of intent – from ordinaries and individuals in the first case through local churches in the latter.

It is the goal of this chapter to continue the work of receiving the Second Vatican (Ecumenical Council [Vatican II / the Council]. In particular, and commemorating the publication sexagenary of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Optatam Totius* (1965), the focus is a matter of pressing concern for the excellent order of presbyterate and a decisive part in fulfilling the desire of all for the renewal of the Church. From the experience of an increasingly cosmopolitan Church and presbyterate, and furthering the proclamation of the Gospel, I hope for one fruit: "to improve the standard of daily Christian living among Catholics" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1; Tanner translation).

[...] will there be a new Australian way, shaped by these migrants and visitors? Perhaps there are dimensions of priesthood and Church that can be (re)learned or received. The influences of media and international digital communities cannot be ignored in this dynamic.

[...] As a core contribution(/annoyance) of this work, I would like to pose this as a question worthy of further investigation. Can we accurately articulate a specific *Modus munera* [methods of ministry] (or a few) for the presbyters working in these particular Churches? This would be invaluable for arriving ministers to know what 'modi' are likely to have traction already; and it would be a gift for the Churches in Australia to learn some new 'modus' or 'modi' from those whose *munera* are practiced in other ways.

Here a gap in language as much as literature begins to limit the discussion. Dulles' 'models of Church' denotes that true justice for the various aspects of the Church requires working with different models.¹ Perhaps an investigation along similar lines into 'models of presbyterate' could advance the language; in turn an exchange of hospitality (/communion), synodality (/participation), and mission can be empowered by this language. If this is best considered as 'models of presbyterate' or '*modi munera*' might require exploration of its own.

[...] It is understood that many ministers (have) come here as missionaries. The last wave of Irish missionary priests shaped the style of Church here as they did elsewhere throughout the world. So, how can we best receive the gift of priesthood from these international arrivals? Surely true hospitality and synodality would suggest we can expect it to change the Churches that they serve and the way that the mission is carried out?

[...] Here I call to mind Möhler's example of the choir, echoed by Poper Francis' comments on synodality.² In essence, this paper is arguing that the choir that is the Church in Australia must be disposed toward welcoming additional voices. Welcoming is not simply tolerance or to fill substantive roles; this is a space for dialogue that can and should add layers to the harmonies already at work.

This approach to dialogue and mutual exchange can impact the selection and formation of arriving clergy as well as initial and ongoing formation of locally-born/formed clerics. It can also assist in managing expectations among the faithful and the institutional structures of Churches throughout Australia that serve them. I would welcome some sort of project that tests these thoughts with a local Australian presbyterate (Toowoomba Diocese, for example) as a case study.

The Church, from the pews to the Cathedra, must empty itself to receive the gift of priesthood that continues to arrive. The Church in Australia will not be all that God has in mind for her until and unless she receives and is shaped by these migrant and missionary ministers. *Quod Erit Demonstrandum*.

N. P. Webb

¹ Dules, Avery. 1974. *Models of the Church*. New York: Doubleday & Company, INC.

² Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 194; c.f. Final Synod Document "For a Synodal Church."

HOPE, ANCHORED IN FAITH: NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

It was a pleasure and joy to travel to Cairns to attend the National Catholic Education Conference 20–22 August. While there, I joined the main plenary sessions in the auditorium with ~1,500 other participants. I also participated in workshops on prayer, sacramental programs, staff upskilling and engagement, child safety, family engagement.

The first day had an overwhelming theme of synodality. This included a presentation by Sr Nathalie Becquart xmcj, Undersecretary for the General Secretariat of the Synod in Rome. She spoke with conviction and sensitivity into the work of synodality (working/walking together) from a global perspective. This is fast becoming the *modus operandi* for the Church throughout the world, promoting conversation, listening, discernment, and a more developed co-responsibility.

The second day began with a conversation between Anthony Fisher OP (Chair, Bishops Commission for Catholic Education) and Jason Clare MP (Federal Minister for Education), moderated by Jacinta Collins (Executive Director National Catholic Education Commission). Church and state were at the table. The broad and long-term benefits of Catholic Education were discussed; further comments were made on the future.

Through the days, I rotated between what proved to be very helpful workshops. I have come away with renewed interest in long-term staff development in our schools, and open to further progressing how our sacramental programs/processes are coordinated.

While I missed the last (half) day to be back for a wedding, I heard from participants that the conference continued with the same calibre. Hope was a theme that ran through the conference. I return with revitalised hope for the Church, but in particular for the ongoing work of Catholic Education here in Australia.

At numerous times throughout the days, various statistics were cited. One which was raised with (what I perceived to be) caution was the association between enrolments and active (Catholic) Church attendance. Trends in faith practice have been rapidly declining on most every scale. While some minor anomalies have shown resurgences of faith – mostly with traditional tropes – the trend and associated concern is consistent. This might appear worrying at face value.

Stanthorpe could be used as a case for this, with all the positive tropes at play. Thought my work in the parish and focused presence in the School, I have come to witness many people of faith. Some practice religion quietly or with our separated brethren of other churches; others live the faith in more subtle or anonymous ways. In the classroom, the context that influences delivery of catechesis poses a real but surmountable challenge. The teachers we have delivering the Religious Education curriculum carry out no easy task. Beyond the statistics, faith can be found.

This faith takes on a variety of forms, and is anchored in hope. My experience tells me that there are parallel ever-increasing needs and effective methods for the delivery of religious education within a decidedly Catholic context.



PARISH RENEWAL

Back at Pentecost there was a pilgrimage walk after the morning Mass. This initiative was formed by and from the parish renewal group. Last week the team met for the final session of Module 1 of the Genesis Compass. Pictured here is the team with some original artworks composed in one of the debriefing activities. Another walk is being planned **after Mass 12 October**; details to follow.

With Module 1 (*Missional Prayer*) done, the plan is to push forward into module 2: *(Re)planting and Evangelization Initiative*. The team will re-form with some changes to membership. If you are interested in knowing more about the Genesis Compass or this process of parish renewal which we are undertaking under the guidance of Divine Renovation Ministries, feel free to chat to one of the Module 1 team members. Information can also be found via the link in the parish QR code.

