

Fr Martin's Reflection

A story I have borrowed from parish pastor and writer, William Bausch, offers us an insight into how even very ordinary happenings can contribute to transforming our lives:

A taxi driver received a call to a run-down neighbourhood. As it was around 2.30am, he was tempted to honk the horn, wait a few moments and then drive off. Over the years, however, he had encountered many people for whom taxis were their only means of transportation. So, he got out of his cab, walked to the door and knocked. A tiny, elderly woman emerged, struggling with a small suitcase. "Would you carry my bag to the car?", she asked. This he willingly did, and returned to help his passenger into the cab. When they were settled, she gave the driver an address and asked: "Can we go via the downtown area?" "It's not the shortest way, you know", he replied. "I don't mind", she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice. I don't have any family left. Besides, the doctor says I don't have very long". At that, the driver reached over quietly and shut off the meter.

For the next two hours, they drove around the city. She showed him where she had once worked as an elevator operator. They stopped outside the house where she and her husband had lived just after they were married, and

then in front of a furniture warehouse that had been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. As the dawn was breaking, she announced: "I'm tired now. So, we had better go." When they reached the convalescent home, two orderlies hurried out to collect her, while the cab driver followed up with her case.

How much do I owe you?", she asked, reaching for her purse. "Nothing", he replied. "You have to make a living", she protested. "There'll be other passengers", he said. And almost without thinking he bent down and gave her a hug. She held him tightly. "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy", she said. "Thank you." He squeezed her hand and walked into the dim morning light. Behind him a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

The taxi driver finishes the story in his own words: "I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove around aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of the day, I was lost for words. What

might have happened if she had gotten a driver who was impatient to finish his shift? What if I refused to drive her downtown? As I reflect on it, I don't think I have done anything more important in my life." Then he added: "We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But truly great moments often catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what others see as only plain."

If we are ever to attempt to explain the Christian story to others, then we must first let them tell their story to us. God always takes us where we are.

As we celebrate the season of Easter once again where do I find myself in the journey of my life and faith?

Let us remember that we are Easter people and the last word is not death but resurrected life. How does this reality offer to change my life?



Fr Martin with Carey Menz-Dowling who facilitated the Parish Pastoral Council Retreat / Strategic Planning Workshop

A CONTRIBUTING LIFE



Richard and Trish Parkinson

Richard recently wrote a detailed account of their life for their children. He has entrusted it to Heartbeat to share with his beloved parish.

Richard was born in 1943. He was the first born of five children, two boys (both doctors from UNSW) and three girls. He comes from a very strong Catholic family background and his formal education was entirely in Randwick. 'Trish' (Patricia Jeanne Murphy), was the youngest of twelve children of Scottish Catholic parents who settled in Randwick from Glasgow. Sadly, her father passed away when she was only 10 years old and her devoutly Catholic mother raised the large family on her own with support from many 'extended family'. She was taught by the Brigidine Sisters and became a leader at a young age, being elected School Captain in Year 9.

Trish and Richard met in 1959 when they were both teenagers. Their friendship developed slowly during their final years at school and intensified when Richard was at university but they did not marry until Richard became an intern in 1967.

As young people, both Trish and Richard were very involved in Church life. Richard had been an Altar server and became an Acolyte in his local Sacred Heart Parish. He was also involved in the Guild of St Luke which exposed him to the Jesuit approach to faith—a broad and inclusive one. Trish had been a very active member of the Children of Mary Society. They had four children of their own and included two other children through adoption and fostering and guardianship. Their love was also bestowed on the many children they have fostered by becoming Emergency and Acute Medium Term Foster Parents (1981—2004). Given Richard's rosters, on-call duties, career moves and church-based responsibilities, most of the child raising responsibilities fell to Trish.

Richard was a salaried Medical Officer all of his working life. He entered administrative medicine in 1973 as Clinical Superintendent at the Wollongong and Port Kembla hospitals. After seven years, he took up a post that brought him to Wagga Wagga and then onto Albury in a key role in public health. He reports that while administrative medicine is not a popular career choice, it is satisfying when care improvements can be seen over time, and as acknowledged in a 2012 journal article, this type of work needs a medical officer with age maturity and a mature clinical base.

During his professional years, he was not able to be involved in his children's schools as he desired, but Trish certainly was!

For both, their Catholic education, its emphasis on an ethos of service; its teaching that "faith without good works is dead" (James 2:14-26); the example of their family; association with many religious men and women through their lives; (and seeing the change wrought by a multi-denominational, non-denominational chaplaincy and church visitors service in Port Kembla and elsewhere postings): have all been formative. They all focussed during a recent life-threatening illness and hospitalisation where Richard missed the spiritual support that Pastoral Carers try to offer. Retirement saw Richard wanting to use his time and skills for others' good as a Pastoral Carer. He found the training course for Pastoral Care difficult—a totally new approach to patients' illness where one was there to offer friendship and support, to complement the care of others and not make clinical or critical comments, or try to fix things. Richard appreciates the privilege and honour being afforded him and finds he is being invited into a person's deepest feelings and beliefs/doubts. This is particularly significant as people approach death, sometimes as a conscious choice. The change from his executive role has been immense!

Trish has equally been influenced by her Catholic background and her firm belief that her purpose in life is to help others. She "gets in and helps!" whether as volunteering for maintenance, for assisting at the schools, fetes, providing reading assistance to students or secretarial support to the schools as well as canteen management. Most recently she was the co-ordinator of Lavington St Vincent de Paul Care and Support Centre (cont. pg 8)

HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS

Sandi and Bill Mathey were married on 15th January, 1972 (fifty years ago) by Fr Bongiorno at Sacred Heart Church. Sandi had always lived in North Albury, attended Sacred Heart and was very fond of Fr Bongiorno. Bill came from Wodonga, but when it came to where they would live and worship, he wanted to please Sandi. Bill laughed when reflecting on the wedding decision. "Fr Bongiorno had a great sense of humour" he said. "He tapped me on the shoulder, just before we were married and said "There is still time to get out!" Bill hadn't wanted to get out. He had been smitten since they had met. Sandi and Bill's courtship began 'on the job' - a voluntary job. They were both keen on the sport of ten pin bowling and served on the committee. Bill was president and Sandi was secretary and they met at the AGM. Their love has blossomed ever since. They now have two boys, Jason and Stephen and three grandchildren who are a delight to them. Both boys live locally so they have the opportunity to be involved in their lives.

Being part of the parish has always been an important aspect in Sandi and Bill's lives. They remember the old YCW, Knights of the Southern Cross and Legion of Mary. Shared prayer is part of their daily routine and they still practice the rules of Our Lady of Medjugorje movement. Bill and Sandi are almost always the first to arrive at Mass on Saturday night. "This extra half hour gives us time to get our thoughts together and to pray" said Sandi. Sandi and Bill recounted stories with fondness, about their relationships with the Parish Priests over time. "Fr Bongiorno was such a character, and everybody just loved Fr Flanagan. And Fr Martin is like that. He is sympathetic to what is actually happening in people's lives".

Family life is definitely multicultural in the Mathey household. Their son Stephen's partner is Spanish. They have a sister-in-law who comes from the Philippines. Bill himself, is Dutch. His sister's husband is of German descent. And Sandi is 'just fussy' (She laughs!). Caring for a pet is also part of the family picture. For a long time they had a corgi, Ginger and they still miss her. But they currently have a cheeky Jack Russell / Maltese cross named Jessica.

Despite health problems Sandi said they consider themselves to be incredibly lucky especially when you understand what can happen in war, such as the current events in Ukraine. Bill knows this first hand. He was born in Heerlen in Holland where he lived until he was 15 years old. It was war time and he remembers how hard it was for his parents. Food was in very short supply. His mother had to dig in the fields for potatoes that the farmers had ploughed in, just to feed the children. She had to bribe a shop keeper to get bread and milk. Many Dutch people supported the Nazis and one never knew who you could trust. When he was 16yrs Bill had the opportunity to get out of the situation and he came to Australia through shared family/government sponsorship. It took a while for him to get on his feet but he became a paint salesman and worked at this until he retired. Sandi has worked in the disability sector.



REFLECTION ON EASTER

A man was driving along the road when he saw the Easter Bunny hop into his lane. He swerved to avoid hitting the bunny, but couldn't do so. The basket of eggs went everywhere. The driver felt guilty and began to cry. A woman saw the man and pulled over. 'What's wrong?' she asked. 'I accidentally killed the Easter Bunny', he explained. The woman knew exactly what to do. She went to her car, pulled out a spray can, walked over to the bunny, and sprayed the entire contents over the little furry animal. Miraculously the Easter Bunny came back to life, jumped up, picked up his eggs, waved at them and hopped on down the road. Not far away the Easter Bunny stopped, turned around and waved again. He kept doing this for as far as they could see.



The man was astonished. 'What in heaven's name is in that can you sprayed on the Easter Bunny?' The woman showed the man the label. It said: 'Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair. Adds permanent wave.'

We do not believe that God simply revived Jesus' corpse in the tomb, as our driver resuscitated the bunny in today's story. Easter Sunday does not celebrate the resuscitation of Jesus, but his Resurrection. We know his 'glorified body' was not the same as his human body because Jesus' presence could be encountered in several places simultaneously and he is reported to walk through walls and to vanish. The link between both resurrection traditions is the importance of Jesus' death. In the empty tomb accounts, the writers give us extraordinary details about the grave clothes. In the apparition narratives there are usually references to Jesus' wounds.

Whatever way they came to experience the Resurrection of Christ, the disciples knew that this was Jesus who actually died and was buried and that their personal encounter was with the one who was crucified.

What God did through the death and resurrection of Jesus is what Christians have done with local customs and festivals ever since: he entered into it, understood it, took it on board, domesticated it and vanquished its power. As a result we believe that God empathises with the full limitations of our human mortality and promises to remain faithful to us in death as he remained utterly faithful to Jesus.

That is why on this day 1,600 years ago St John Chrysostom could say on behalf of us all:

Hell took a body, and discovered God. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it could not see. O death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is Risen, and you, O death, are destroyed! Christ is Risen, and evil is cast down! Christ is Risen, and angels rejoice! Christ is Risen, and new life is set free! Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, becomes the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!

Fr Richard Leonard SJ



More than 20 people meet each week for the Lenten group reflections with Fr Martin and Fran Kernaghan using the Wollongong resource "Remember".

Do You Have Questions in Life...

TRY ALPHA

alpha.org.au



Earlier in 2021, I accepted the opportunity to engage with members of our parish on a journey to explore questions of faith. What followed was a series of gatherings that resounded with fellowship, prayer, reflection, discernment and renewal. Each week, our small group (of 6—8) came together to take part in the Alpha program—an initiative that originated in the UK that seeks to raise opportunity for discussion of the place and love of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives. We gathered to share a meal and to pray together first, then we watched the provided video with a different focus each week, and then engaged in thought provoking and considered discussion about the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It was a chance to embrace an evangelisation—a chance to recognise the need for the Spirit and a chance to acknowledge the blessings that are afforded to each one of us. The program joined us together in an opportunity to pray for ourselves and each other, to pray for the enlivening of our faith and to pray for our world. It was most enlightening and invigorating



Liz Phegan, Barbara Cameron, Michael Regan and Fran Kernaghan, prepare for the introduction of ALPHA to our parish during 2022. For further information check the website alpha.org.au or speak to Michael or Fran through the parish office

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE)

This is a brief summary of NSW Department of education Policy No: PD-2002-0074-01-V01.0.3. The document can be viewed on the website under “Special Religious Education”, and this thread will also lead you to a video presentation by some SRE Teachers.

Special Religious Education (SRE) is the beliefs and practices of an approved religious persuasion, delivered by authorised representatives of that persuasion. It is the distinctive religious tenets and beliefs of the home and family, provided by the churches and other religious groups for children of parents expressing the desire that they receive such teaching.

Schools are responsible for Communication about SRE. Parents/caregivers have the right to know how SRE will be organised each school year and which religious organisations will be available to deliver it. Principals must allow time for SRE where authorized representatives of approved providers are available. SRE is an integral part of school activities, taking place during school hours and under the jurisdiction of the school.

Where appropriate, a member of Staff may be appointed as the school’s SRE coordinator, to arrange meetings early in Term4 of each year with approved providers to discuss SRE organisation for the following year.

Providers must have the approval of the Minister for Education to deliver SRE. Only persons authorised by an approved religious persuasion are permitted to teach SRE. Providers are responsible to recruit, train and authorise sufficient teachers of SRE, and to inform the school of the names, contact details and date of birth of SRE teachers, and ensure that all personnel have a WWC clearance.

The Policy includes some provision for religious persuasions to provide a combined arrangement for the efficient use of scarce resources. Approved content is available for combined arrangements, but each religious persuasion involved must be an approved provider.

The Policy is presented in the expected bureaucratic language, but the take-away for us is in deciding the extent of our involvement. SRE in Albury is struggling with a shortage of teachers.

ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Welcome to 2022! This year has gotten off to a flying start of learning and fun. Some of our highlights so far this year include:

Kinder's First Day

We welcomed 52 students into our Kinder classrooms this year. While they were settling in to the life of school with teachers Miss Tayla Vogel and Mr Dereck Singe, parents were invited to share a complimentary morning tea to celebrate the milestone of their child beginning school.

Opening School Liturgy

We celebrated the beginning of the new school year with a Liturgy presided over by Fr Martin. This year's theme is 'Beacons of Hope.' Fr Martin invited our Year 6 students to share how they were going to be 'Beacons of Hope' to our school community this year. Our Year 6 School Captains and Councillors were also presented to the community and they officially received their blessed student badges.

Sporting Events

Some of the sporting events that were provided for students this term included:

Swimming Carnival – Students in Years 3-6 participated in a swimming carnival. A great day was had and it was wonderful to welcome parents and family members back to our sporting events. It was a closely fought carnival with Flanagan House (Green House) claiming victory.

Athletics – Students in Years 3-6 also participated in an Athletics carnival this term. Participation by all students was incredible and Bongiorno House won the carnival overall.

Diocesan Sporting Trials – Students in Years 5 and 6 have had the option to nominate to trial in various team sports, including Soccer, Netball, AFL, Touch Football, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Hockey, Softball, Basketball, Tennis and Cricket.

Xavier Led PE lessons – Students in Year 10 from Xavier have run a series of coaching clinics for our St Anne's students in Years 3-6.

Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day

We celebrated Shrove Tuesday with pancakes offered for a gold coin donation that would go towards our fundraising efforts to Project Compassion. We particularly thank the parents and staff members who assisted in the making and cooking of these for students, as well as the Year 6 Liturgy Team who assisted also.

St Patrick's Day

To celebrate St Patrick's Day, Year 6 Hospitality students sold lime spiders with the proceeds going to Matt Kean's Melanoma Awareness Ride. Matt spoke to Year 6 students about the importance of Melanoma prevention and will complete a 1000km bike ride around the Riverina. (Matt is the Principal at Holy Spirit School.) All students were also invited to wear a little green to help celebrate the day. We thank Mr Chris Lewis and the Year 6 Hospitality group for organising and running this fundraiser.

Harmony Day

Harmony Week celebrates Australia's cultural diversity and is about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. Students from Kinder to Year 6 gathered together for a liturgy to celebrate and commemorate this before engaging in a variety of activities.



VEX Robotics

On the first weekend of March, Sophie, Matt and Isaac (Team Brainees) travelled to Adelaide to compete at the VEXIQ National Robotics Championships. They had been working hard for the past 12 months designing and building their own robot. They had dedicated many lunchtimes and afternoons in order to work out the best strategies in order to score the most points. They displayed great communication and sportsmanship skills, and were commended on the way they represented St Anne's. Team Brainees finished 13th out of 21 teams, just missing out on a spot in the finals. A special thanks to Miss Lauren McLeish who led and supported the team in this fantastic adventure.

Xavier High School Term 1 2022

It has been a fantastic start to the year for our school in 2022. In my second year here at Xavier High School it has been a privilege to continue on the great work of Ed Brown as Leader of Faith Formation and Mission.

Xavier is a proud school that is growing in numbers and accomplishments. We welcomed over 187 new Year 7 students this year. This combined with approximately 100 new students across the year levels, contributes to an amazing 858 students currently attending Xavier.



It is exciting times as we move back towards a normal school environment with the ease of restrictions and a break from online learning. Xavier High School, endeavoured to take every opportunity to return to this normal state of faith formation for our students and we did this by running the Yr 12 Retreat, Yr 7 Camp/retreat, Project Compassion launch, Catholic Schools Week, Opening Mass in our new St Francis Xavier Centre and hosting St Anne's in a collaborative Stations of the Cross performance to finalise the term.

The Year 12 Retreat took part in week 2 of Term 1 at Greenhills Centre, Canberra. The theme was 'RISE' and the year group took part in a variety of activities that allowed them to reflect on their past, present and future faith journey as part of the Xavier Community. A highlight was the Mass they ran at sunset in the hills of the retreat centre that many students proclaimed was the pinnacle of the retreat.



The Year 7 camp involved over 230 students, which included Yr 10 leaders who were exceptional in mentoring and facilitating activities for the Yr 7's. The theme for this camp was 'belong' with a focus on the 5 C's of Xavier. The camp was a huge success and a highlight once again was the presence of Fr Martin with the Mass and the inclusion of Aboriginal spirituality through music and welcoming leadership of Darren Wighton.

Catholic Schools Week was then celebrated in style at Xavier with a huge week of events. It began with Shrove Tuesday, Twilight Tours led by students, Ash Wednesday Liturgies across 8 houses, launch of Project Compassion and lunchtime Music in the Quad to celebrate the skills and gifts of our students! It is all about celebrating who we are as a Catholic School and the proud nature in which we conduct ourselves as a learning community of faith.



It is these opportunities and events that see our students continue to grow in their understanding of what it means to go to Xavier, and to thrive as *Courageous, Challenged, Collaborative, Compassionate* and *Christ-like* members of our faith community.

We look forward to keeping you up to date with our future experiences. You can always follow us on social media to see what we are up to. Please be in contact with the school for any feedback or suggestions on how we can continue to live mercy in our community.

Yours in Catholic Education

HEATH NEVILLE

Director of Faith Formation and Mission
Xavier High School, Albury



FOLLOW US:
FACEBOOK



FOLLOW US:
INSTAGRAM



XAVIER
HIGH SCHOOL ALBURY

(from pg 2)

Both Richard and Trish have had major volunteer service in Parents' and Friends Committees, Parish Councils and School Boards. Trish believes she has mirrored her mother's parenting skills in caring for her own and extended family. Richard and Trish have both tried to lead by example.



Trish shows her gift to friends and colleagues at St Vincent de Paul

***While much has been said,
one of their proudest
moments was their daughter
Donna speaking at their 50th
wedding Anniversary ,
echoing her sister, Jane:
“Every love story is beautiful.
Yours is a model to live
by.....”
“No marriage is perfect, nor
does it always go according
to plan, but you, Mum and
Dad, have been our role
models of how to make it
last”.***

TRISH RETIRES

Trish Parkinson retired from her role at St Vincent de Paul after almost 14 years service in March this year. She had co-ordinated the administration and also done client interviews before Covid. Trish said her motivation had always been to help people, and she just happened to have a talent for administration. “Commercial – as it was then called - it was what we were trained for at school”, she said. She loved the work, and misses it a bit now that she has retired, but she acknowledges that there are only so many hours in the day and wants her focus to be primarily on supporting her family. She was co-president with Anthony Foley in her last term as leader and Anthony has now assumed the main role. Many of Trish's former tasks have also been delegated to other members of St Vincent de Paul.



Chairperson of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Ed Brown, presented Trish with a gift from the parish. The gift was a travel package from Martin's Travel and Tours to see 'Cinderella the Musical' in Melbourne. Trish is pictured above, true to form, nursing her great grandson, Thomas.



Trish Parkinson is acknowledged and receives a Certificate of Service and gift at a celebration in the Lavington Care and Support Centre on 23rd February.

Pictured on the left with Trish is Cathy Nyhan, Lisa Whillans, Diocesan Client Support Officer, Anthony Foley and Lyn Hamilton