



I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Phil 4:13

The Witness

Newsletter of the Catholic Schools of Evangelisation

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New Life brings New Life

By Adrian Commadeur

The School of Evangelisation's **New Life** course has brought participants a breath of fresh air and renewed hope. This two day course on the basic message of the gospel, the kerygma, is ideally suited to renew the life of faith and deepen relationships with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Presented in various states as well as in New Zealand, the course is proving both popular and effective. In the teaching style of all courses of the School, from the loved *Formation of Disciples*, and practical *Formation of Evangelisers*, to the less commonly presented *Secret of Paul* and *Apollos*, **New Life** is full of surprises, activities, adoration, affirmation and renewal of faith.

In content, the course develops the theme of the New Life offered by Jesus. It allows God to act in the lives of participants in such a way, that they will experience forgiveness of sins, the Lordship of

Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It is not so much a course for intellectual understanding, but rather a workshop experience where God is at work - like a sculptor, making something beautiful from raw cut marble.

... A deep joy seems to permeate the participants...

Explicitly based on images, characters and teachings of Jesus in the gospels, the course is also illuminated by the real life examples of the teachers. One is constantly surprised how the Holy Spirit takes a simple statement of testimony from one of the speakers and brings forth wonderful fruit in the heart of an individual needing to hear that freeing statement.

The course has been prepared by Jose 'Pepe' Prado and Carlos

de Lara, of the St Andrew School of Evangelisation in Mexico. Although prepared for an audience of a different culture and Catholic character, *New Life* seems to be applicable to any audience, be they well formed in religious practice or recently returning to the faith. Religious brothers, non-Catholic women, business-men and youth leaders have all shared how they appreciated the content of the course and the style of presentation. Though there may be some skepticism at the beginning of the course, by the end of the second day there is obvious and discernable growth. A deep joy seems to permeate the participants.

While it is not right to give away the secrets of the course, suffice to say that some activities demand a great deal. There is a certain amount of dying to self, to sin, to false ways, and a surrender to a new sovereign, a new way of life, an openness to the Spirit of God.

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Special Point of Interest:

PAUL—Formation of Evangelisers Course

This June/July

Enrol now - see p 4

Invite a friend

The Witness

The Witness is published each April, August and December.

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- Gary Stephens — Melbourne Co-ordinator
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- Jenny Hagan — Cell group Co-ordinator
- John Breheney — Secretary
- Anna Breheney — Editor

as well as all School Diocesan Co-ordinators in Australia.

Check out information on the School of Evangelisation, on the CCR web page:

www.ccr.org.au

**Deadline for the next issue
Of The Witness
10 June 2004**

Post, email or fax your articles of an evangelical nature, personal testimonies, jokes, news items, photos, advertisements, competitions, Bible trivia etc. to the Editor at the above address.

The Director and other members of the Decision Making Body of the School of Evangelisation do not necessarily endorse opinions expressed in articles within this publication.

The School of Evangelisation acknowledges the efforts of all Diocesan Co-ordinators involved in the distribution of **The Witness**. May God bless you.

Just a quick note...



From the editor

Blessings everyone!

Here we are, already in our April edition, with the year progressing quickly forward.

It is with sorrow that we announce the resignations of our Melbourne Co-ordinator, Maria Luff, and our Canberra Co-ordinator, Anne Clementine. We pray peace, joy and rest for Maria and Anne as well as their families.

It is with joy that we introduce our new Co-ordinators, Gary Stephens (Melbourne) and Les Roberts (Canberra). They have both entered their respective positions with enthusiasm and zeal. We welcome Gary and Les and look forward to a long and fruitful association with them.

Our exciting news is that **the Witness is now available on the web and via email**. We will automatically email it to people whose addresses we already have and we encourage all others with email connections to send us their addresses, as this process will save money for the School.

As for what's coming up this year, please check page 4 for the healthy array of available courses, including **"Paul" Formation of Evangelisers** in June/July.

May God be with you and bless you all this Easter season,

Anna

...cont. from page 1

When Jesus says in John 10:10, *'I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance'*, this promise is being fulfilled in our midst as we experience the merciful love of the Father, the saving work of Jesus and the abundant life in the Spirit.

This course is ideal for parishes. It is a non-threatening course which enables ordinary Catholics to experience their faith in such a way that they appreciate and understand it. As one person said: "I knew about the death of Jesus, about salvation, but only now do I grasp how I can **experience** salvation." If this realisation made it worthwhile for this Catholic, it is likely that thousands of parishioners would find the course worthwhile. The School would like to offer the course to all parishes. We are working at multiplying teaching teams so that the increasing number of requests can be adequately met.

The School is entering a time of fresh hope and new opportunities to fulfill its task of Catholics evangelising in the market place.



EMMAUS COURSE (Luke 24:13-35)

by Josephine Baluyot
Adelaide

The March Emmaus Course held at the Holy Spirit Parish Adelaide had a small number of participants. The Lord was with them, blessing them with the measure of contentment that we find in God's endless grace, unconditional love, and unwavering mercy.

Sandra Bishop travelled from Melbourne to the School to help with the teaching - we were so thankful for her giving up her time to be with us. God also blessed us with Carmen Sylvester, who inspired and encouraged us with her leadership and teaching. Harry Thorsen and Dwayne Crabb impacted profoundly with prayer and worship.

In the **Emmaus Course** we saw how the two disciples on the road to **Emmaus** did not recognise Jesus even though they walked

and talked with him as he warmed their hearts with scripture. We could be the same, walking roads every day and failing to see God as He is walking with us.

My search brought me to a place of turning, where I was led ultimately to the heart of God - the only place of rest, belonging and ultimate contentment. God wanted to refresh my soul, to replace anxiety with peace, to give me rest in a place of weariness. In other words God wanted me to find contentment in **His Word** and in receiving **His Love** and **Grace**.

The ability to use our lives as joyous and divinely inspired reflections of our Maker and Creator is there for our asking, but I realised I needed to seek the solution solely and directly from God. *Keep on asking and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on*

looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened (Matt 7:7).

Jesus has directed me to persist in my pursuit of Him. Sometimes I want to give up after a few half-hearted efforts and conclude that this is not really what God wants for me. But knowing God takes faith, focus, and follow-through, and Jesus has assured me, that I will be rewarded. The message is, "don't give up". Continue to ask Jesus for more knowledge, patience, wisdom, love and understanding. He will give them to us.

Towards the end of the **Emmaus Course** I came closer to Jesus with His healing presence, to a place where hope was restored, as I now have a new awareness of Jesus, with **His Word**.

The Land Of The Long White Cloud



Nan Deakin

A small Melbourne team comprising, Adrian and Anne Commadeur and myself were the guests of the Hamilton School of Evangelisation, New Zealand from 26 February to 9 March. The invitation to visit followed the attendance of four of the Hamilton team to Melbourne in October 2003 for the History of Salvation and Jesus in the Four Gospels courses. They were Christine and John Lewis, and Liz and Bruce Fraser-Jones. Their school comes under the auspices of the Commission for Outreach and Evangelisation. It is one of nine commissions under the local bishop, and receives much support both from the bishop and members of the commission.

We presented two weekend courses - **New Life** and **Emmaus**. The courses were held at Te Aroha - a small town nestled at the base of Mt. Te Aroha, 952m, (the Mountain of Love) in the Waikato (river) region. The town retains much of its heritage,

architecture and charm of yesteryear. It is a beautiful historic Edwardian spa town, famous for its hot springs, mineral water and the racing industry. Te Aroha is approximately sixty kilometres north east of Hamilton.

While some participants were billeted locally, others drove various distances - some commuting daily from Hamilton. The team and the teachers stayed at the local convent of the Sisters of Mercy. So also were the two coordinators of the Sydney School of Evangelisation, Lucy and Eddie Grasso, who also attended the courses. This enabled much fun and sharing among the group.

Weather wise we saw two New Zealands - the first weekend course, **New Life** (51 participants) was held in wet and windy conditions; the second course **Emmaus**, (48 participants) in warmth and sunshine. One of the features of the New Life course, was the desire of participants for a

fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with the release of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially tongues. One participant expressed how she had understood the message of salvation but had not known until this weekend how to grasp salvation for herself by faith and conversion.

In Wellington we attended a spirit filled prayer meeting at St Gerard's Monastery, International Catholic Program of Evangelisation, ICPE. It was a joy to see so many young people praising God and wanting to evangelise with power. Adrian spoke to the group about perseverance, encouraging them to continue on their evangelistic journey no matter what struggles and obstacles they may encounter. They were reminded to always remember Philippians 4:13 "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" This is also the motto of the School.

SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION—PROGRAM 2004

Date	Course Name	Location & Contact Details
May 1-2	New Life	Sorrento VIC— Ronnie (03) 5988 8489
May 14-17	JOHN—Formation of Disciples	Adelaide SA—Mary (08) 8294 0666
May 15-16	New Life	Sandhurst VIC—Denise (03) 5441 5488
June 11-14	Evangelisation with Power	Sydney NSW—Lucy (02) 9670 4440
June 19-20	Emmaus	Wagga Wagga NSW—Kay (02) 6933 1444
June 26—July 4	PAUL—Formation of Evangelisers	Clayton VIC—Cathy (03) 9503 9282
July 30—Aug 1 Aug 6-8	JOHN—Formation of Disciples	Wollongong NSW—Paul (02) 4297 1570
Aug 21-22	New Life	Bairnsdale VIC—Cathy (03) 5174 3001
Sept 9-12	JOHN—Formation of Disciples	Wagga Wagga NSW—Kay (02) 6933 1444
Sept 27-30	Evangelisation with Power	East Brunswick VIC—John (03) 9561 9069
Oct 3-7	Secret of Paul	East Brunswick VIC—John (03) 9561 9069

EMMAUS COURSE—WOLLONGONG

By Paul Farrugia
Co-ordinator, Wollongong SOE

Offered for the first time in the Wollongong Diocese, the **Emmaus** Course, hosted by the Wollongong School of Evangelisation with the support of Eddie and Lucy Grasso (Sydney SOE) was attended by 22 participants.

Through sharing of time and scriptures we were all further enriched in our walk of faith. The following are some graduate comments based on the course:

"Inspirational - awoke in me a great joy and Spirit.... so wonderful to hear the Scriptures read out with so much love... revitalised in me a love of God's word again."

"Has given good counsel. Now I have Jesus and the Word of

God as my strong support and Helper."

"Has enriched my insight in my religion and the Bible - given me resolve to study and learn from the Bible, to love and believe the Word of God. Gave the Old Testament a greater meaning."

"Has given new and better understanding of the importance of the Old Testament and how it relates to the New Testament. The walk to Emmaus gave me an outlook on life as it is today, the sadness and then the joy of knowing that under all circumstances, God is there with me."

Praise and thanksgiving to our God for allowing us to share the running of this enlightening

course with so many beautiful people.

A special thanks to Father Paul O'Donahue (Fairy Meadow Parish Priest) for the wonderful support he has given the School of Evangelisation, intercessors for their prayerful support and all who played even the smallest part in making this course a memorable one for all who participated.





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NSW - Wagga Wagga	Kay Judd	(02) 6933 1444
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QLD - Brisbane	Ferdi Sedhoff	(07) 5448 4462
SA - Adelaide	Carmen Sylvester	(08) 8339 2573
WA - Perth	Irene Piercy	(08) 9443 3686

Have you seen

The Passion of the Christ?

Mel Gibson is proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to every corner of the earth. You too can learn to proclaim Christ in your own personal way.

Read Bishop Mark Coleridge's Commentary on page 6.

Then see the film, if you haven't already.

Then enrol in our course:

PAUL—FORMATION OF EVANGELISERS

June 26—July 4

For details phone Cathy (03) 9503 9282

Help!

The School of Evangelisation trailer needs a home once again.

A garage which is large enough or not in use would be ideal.

If you can help, please contact:
Adrian Commadeur
on (03) 9337 2051

The Witness

Donations Acknowledged

The following donations have been received and are acknowledged with many thanks.

Emmanuel Intercessory Group
VIC \$157

Good Shepherd Community
VIC \$100

Scripture Diary Ministries
VIC \$100

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7).

Further Donations, made payable to:
School of Catholic Evangelisation
and sent to:
The Secretary
11 Joyce Avenue
Glen Waverley, VIC 3150

**THE SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION
THANKS YOU WITH GREAT
APPRECIATION FOR YOUR
GENEROUS GIVING**

GOD BLESS YOU ALL

MEL GIBSON'S—THE PASSION

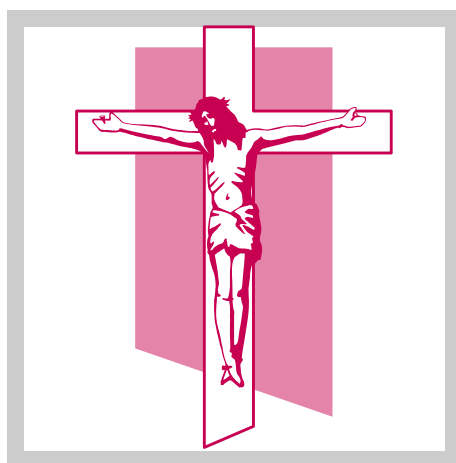
A commentary by
Bishop Mark Coleridge

Of the Passion movies I have seen, Mel Gibson's is undoubtedly the one that has stirred me most as a Christian and impressed me most as a work of art. Often when a great story is filmed, it all becomes rather one-dimensional and disappointing. Think of movies like *Moby Dick* which turns that vast and mysterious novel into a Boy's Own adventure yarn, or the equally mysterious *Wuthering Heights* which on the screen becomes a Mills and Boon love story. The danger is all the greater with a film of the last hours of Jesus, a story which has shaped my own life in its depths and shaped the lives of billions. A film like this runs the risk of reducing the story so drastically that it's not worth the effort of watching.

Well, this is not the case with Gibson's film. The figure of Jesus he portrays is compelling, in large part because of the interplay between restraint and unrestraint. The film gains much of its power because Gibson, like the Gospel-writers, decides that less is more. This Jesus is very much a human being, a more physically striking figure than other cinematic Christs I've seen. Yet Gibson also evokes the far reaches of Jesus which look to his divinity. There is a strangeness and self-containment about Gibson's Christ which is faithful to the New Testament account. This effect is made stronger by Gibson's decision to use Aramaic, Hebrew and Latin with sub-titles. It sets a kind of distance between the viewer and the characters, in part by avoiding the jarring effect of the characters speaking with American, British or whatever accents. As a device, it works very well.

Yet in other ways this is a most unrestrained film. I found the violence of the scourging of Jesus disturbing, almost obscene in fact. It's true that the actual event would have been horrific; and yet the New Testament is very terse in what it says. In that sense, Gibson's film is

not true to the Gospel story at that point. The same is true of the Crucifixion scene, which is again more gruesome than the very stark account we find in the Gospels. It has been said of Jesus in the Gospels that he is "as direct and as distant as lightning". Gibson comes close to capturing that extraordinary two-edged effect; but in the end his Christ is more direct than distant, more of this earth than of heaven.



This is perhaps inevitable, given the nature of cinema; and this is a film that leaves you pondering the difference between reading a story and seeing a film. In reading a story, much more is left up to the reader, who has to imagine the scene and characters, fill in the gaps, work hard to create the reading experience, in fact to create the story. In the partnership between writer and reader, the reader is very active. With film, however, the viewer is more passive. You sit there and watch what is up there on the screen; and the only adjustment you can make is to close your eyes if the depiction becomes unbearable. In other words, the director of a film makes many decisions for you which you yourself make when reading a story. And although Gibson has struggled to be faithful to the New Testament account, this film is inevitably the fruit of his own deep and genuinely pious reading of the Gospel story.

It's intriguing to ask why Gibson, who is so restrained at certain points, is so unrestrained at others; it is also intriguing to ask why Gibson, who generally opts for a scrupulous realism, at other points favours dramatic devices which are anything but realistic. In all of this, you sense that Gibson is caught on the horns of a dilemma: he wants to transcend the need for interpretation, which in fact he can never escape. He tries to efface himself and simply tell the story "as it was"; and yet it's always through his eyes that we see, even at those moments in the film where Gibson has us see through the eyes of Jesus. They are still the eyes of Mel. In that sense, the film tells us as much of the agony of Gibson as it does of the agony of Christ. Yet that too has its power, both spiritual and artistic. To interpret this agony is always to interpret our own agony.

What Gibson has created is a great cinematic lamentation of Christ's Passion, deeply personal but also in its way universal, visually stunning, emotionally draining and spiritually stirring. Yet he does not, and perhaps cinema cannot, make the crucial step from lamentation to proclamation, despite the brief and rather pallid evocation of Easter at the end. Christians don't lament the death of Jesus, however shocking it was, because if that were so, we could only lament the evil of this world and do nothing to overcome it. Christians proclaim the death of Jesus as the great victory over death, as the triumph of divine love over the power of evil.

Gibson shows us unforgettably that power at its murderous best; and he strives hard to show most of the characters caught up in the vortex of evil and somehow complicit in the death of Jesus. That's why I think it odd to see the film as anti-Jewish. Certainly the Jewish leaders are darkly portrayed, but so

Continued on page 7

SANDHURST DIOCESE PRESENTS:

THE POWER OF THE NEW ERA & THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW AGE



Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and will do even greater ones than these. Jn 14:12

A Diocesan Conference will be held at Dookie in the Sandhurst Diocese in July 2004. The Conference spans 2 days, commencing Friday evening and finishing Sunday afternoon.

Speakers: Fr. Vic Farrugia and Bishop Joe Grech.

Theme: 'The power of the new era & The Challenge of the New Age'.

Dates: July 2-4

Venue: Dookie College

Cost: **\$25 a day**. Includes lunch and breaks. [Dinner \$15 extra]

Full accommodation is available at **\$165.00 for whole weekend**
[includes all meals]

A \$25.00 booking deposit is required prior to June 18.

To be sent to: Mary McIntyre, 104 Stawell St. Echuca 3564.

Booking Contacts:

Wangaratta	Margaret West:	03 5722 282
Echuca	Mary McIntyre:	03 5482 1273
Wodonga	Gerri Boldrini	02 6056 2442
Bendigo	Denise Ilott	03 5441 5488
Ballarat	Bernadette Eccles	03 5567 1014
Melbourne CCR	Mary Quin	03 9629 2544
Sydney CCR	Rozelle	02 9810 2499
Wagga Wagga	Kay Judd	02 6933 1444

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me! Jn 10:27

THE PASSION

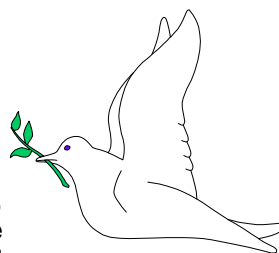
CONT FROM P. 6...

too are the Romans. Gibson's point – and the New Testament's – emerges most clearly when, in one of the film's most telling dramatic devices, we see a mob of children hounding Judas to his death, just for the fun of it. Even they, the supposedly innocent, are caught up in this vortex of evil. No-one is exempt.

In the end, a great lamentation never becomes the proclamation of this death, the celebration of the saving power which the Cross is for Christians. This extraordinary film lingers hauntingly in the eye and mind and heart. But for it to linger more powerfully and deeply in the soul, as Gibson wants and the New Testament intends, the viewer may need to go from the cinema to the Gospels themselves and then on to the Christian Eucharist where a crowd gathers not to see the horror and weep, but to celebrate the death which the film depicts and so become part of its mystery.

Emmaus and New Life—New Zealand

By Ronny Pitts



The Emmaus Course was one of the most direct, in-your-face, truthful, honest, exciting, uplifting, humorous, at times frustrating, emotional times I've had since the Discipleship Course 3 years ago.

I think I experienced every emotion there is during the weekends of Emmaus and New Life. I went from being really excited before the first course, to feeling quite angry, frustrated, anxious, extremely afraid through parts of the course, exhausted—to

feeling uplifted, excited, peaceful, loving and in the end, very, very grateful that I had seen both courses through.

Two things became clear to me. First, that I lacked trust in the Lord when it came to physical healing of my disease of many years. Second was my lack of knowledge of scripture, and the one thing which sticks in my mind, was the words Adrian spoke, "If we don't know the "Word" we don't know Jesus". They were very

powerful words for me. I was angry at first, then discovered my anger came from the knowledge they were soooo right.

I can't thank (the teachers) enough for all you did for me over these two weekends. May God continue to bless you all, to keep you filled with His strength, courage, love and peace so you can continue to spread His Word to others.

JORDAN'S FISHING STORY — BY Frank Mastellone

I have just read the "Fishing" story in the December 2003 Witness and feel I must respond with my own fishing story.

In the summer of 2002, Jordan my seven year old son, was a sad little boy. His parents divorced, he became withdrawn and confused. He cried in his class at St. Michael's Catholic School in Baulkham Hills N.S.W.

I decided to take him fishing, a sport which gave me great happiness in my youth. The first weekend we tried our luck, however no fish. The second weekend we tried another spot. Still no luck, not a fish. The third weekend we tried another spot, the little wharf at Manly NSW.

The wharf was full of fishermen with fancy rods, lures of every kind and a variety of bait. These were the old salts who really knew how to fish. I had not been fishing for forty years. We only had two simple fishing lines, some prawns as bait and a bucket to hold the potential catch.

As we looked around the wharf we noticed that nobody was catching any fish. All these experienced fishermen were with empty buckets. My young son,

Jordan, looked at me with great sadness.

"Daddy," he said, "nobody is catching anything, lets go home. There are no fish."

My heart sank to its greatest depth. I felt I had let my son down again. I felt a great sadness, a great guilt over the divorce. I was overcome with helplessness. I felt I had failed my son again. The pain was great. I cried out to Jesus with great emotions, "Jesus, Jesus, my son is very unhappy, make him happy, let him catch fish."

I then tossed in a fishing line and gave it to Jordan to hold. Within seconds of the line hitting the water, he cried out, "Daddy, Daddy, help me, I have caught a big fish!" I helped to pull in this large trevally. It was fighting hard with the line, zigzagging across the water. Jordan's face shone like the sun. He was very happy and proud that he had caught this large fighting fish. Other fishermen looked on in amazement - a seven year old kid had caught the first fish. A big one!

I then baited the line and tossed it out again. Again as soon as the line hit the water, Jordan

yelled, "Daddy, Daddy, I have caught a big fish - another huge trevally!"

This continued with a large fish being caught every time the line hit the water. The fish were large trevallies, huge leather jackets and large bream. Soon we had a big bucket full of fish.

By this time the fishermen had gathered around us, asking what type of bait and hooks we were using. The little wharf was full of people who were looking on in amazement as Jordan caught all these fish as soon as the line hit the water. None of the other fishermen, with all their fancy equipment, bait and lures, caught anything. They were in stunned silence.

After an hour we stopped. Our large bucket was overflowing. Jordan had a huge smile on his face. I thanked Jesus. We then took the fish to Jordan's grandmother. She was stunned with so many fish and Jordan was overjoyed with her praises.

I now take Jordan fishing every Saturday. Every time we have a good catch, he turns to me and says, "Daddy, have you been praying to Jesus again?"

THE MESSIAH IS ONE OF US - AUTHOR UNKNOWN

In the mountains near the church there lived a retired Bishop. It occurred to the pastor to ask the Bishop if he could offer any advice which might save the church. The pastor and the Bishop spoke at length, but when asked for advice, the Bishop simply responded by saying, "I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

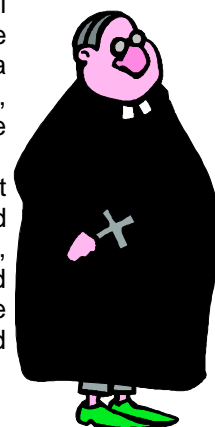
The pastor, returning to the church, told the church members what the Bishop had said. In the months that followed, the old church members pondered the words of the Bishop. "The Messiah

is one of us?" they each asked themselves. As they thought about this possibility, they all began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that that one among them might be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each member himself might be the Messiah, they also began to treat themselves with extraordinary care.

As time went by, people visiting the church noticed the aura of respect and gentle kindness that surrounded the five old members of the small church. Hardly knowing why, more people began to come

back to the church. They began to bring their friends, and their friends brought more friends. Within a few years, the small church had once again become a thriving church, thanks to the Bishop's gift.

Treat others and yourself with love, and you will find yourself and the people around you better for it.



CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME

Have you ever felt interested in the ministry of inviting lapsed Catholics back to the Church? If so, this is a calling of the Holy Spirit and there is a program which may be suitable for you and your parish.

Catholics Returning Home was developed by Sally Mews, a lapsed Catholic herself, who suffered for many years with feelings of anger and resentment towards the Church. Not only did she find her way back to the Church, but she experienced a profound conversion, the fruit of which is this program. Her book, entitled, **Inviting Catholics Home**, gives full details of how the program is run, including all the advice and know-how needed to begin and to make it successful. Also available, are training videos and start-up kits.

In August 2002, Jan Heath and Kathy Robby from Brisbane were trained by Sally in America and on their return, piloted the program in their parish. It was a success. The power of God's healing love and compassion was experienced by all 6 returnees and team members and Jan and Kathy realised the enormous potential of this program.

Last year the program was run in 9 parishes in Brisbane with the full support of Archbishop John Bathersby, who said, "My desire is that every parish community would have a welcoming heart for CRH."

The program has further spread all over Australia and New Zealand. This year it will be held in no less than 8 additional parishes in Brisbane. Over 200 videos and 300 resource kits have also been

purchased, indicating that many other parish communities are planning to introduce this program in 2004.

People want to come back to the church, but so often are not asked. Jan Heath was asked 3 times before she made the hesitant and fear filled decision to come back. Sally Mews said she would have come back earlier, but no one asked her to.

As per Pat Kelly's article in the December 2003 Witness, only 16% of Catholics attend Mass on a regular basis. This program encourages us to minister in the spirit of how Jesus ministered - by reaching out to that 84%, showing kindness and listening to people. We are called to imitate Jesus.

After being involved for many years with Catholics returning to the Church, Fr William McKee said, "It has been my experience that the parishes which reach out to the stray sheep are never the same. Neither are those individuals who work in this field. The compassionate and loving Jesus is our generous master. He does not let his workers in the field go unrewarded."

For training resources contact:

Office for Spiritual
Renewal
GPO Box 282
Brisbane Q 4001

ph: (07) 3224 3340

email:
osr@bne.catholic.net.au

One Big Happy Family at Cowwarr

By Julianne Hoffard
and Dorothy Smith



A small group of young people gathered together at Cowwarr over the long weekend 5th—8th March, to experience a Discipleship Course. Although the numbers were few, the weekend was voted a great success by all those involved. By the end of the course we had become like one big happy family.

The following are a few comments by the participants:

- ◆ "All the weekend was very good, I enjoyed everything. Also it all made sense."
- ◆ "The content of the speeches showed some good information that I had never been shown before."
- ◆ "This weekend has helped me because I would like to discover Jesus and one day even touch His cloak, so I can be healed".
- ◆ "The different dynamics were good and made the talks better and yeah—go the dynamics."
- ◆ "Yeah! It was great. The activities involved everyone and they were actually not boring!"
- ◆ "I learnt more about how to be a disciple. I've been told about Jesus, God etc. but never about being a disciple or about evangelisation."

We thank God for these young people who came to this weekend to learn more about their faith. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them in their walk with Him.

Your Last Mass - Victor R. Claveau - USA

During a period of the Church's terrible persecution in Mexico, a number of priests went underground in order to bring the sacraments of the Church to the populace. These men risked their lives every day in the service of Christ.

One Sunday morning, as a priest was about to begin the celebration of Holy Mass, in what was supposed to be a safe and secret location in the jungle, a horde of hostile federal soldiers swooped down on the group with the intention of putting the entire congregation to death. The priest begged the leader, not for their lives, but to be allowed to finish the Mass. Reluctantly, the officer consented.

The Mass went on, with the priest and the people praying as they never prayed before. As the Holy Sacrifice ended the helpless little group was unmercifully put to death.

How that priest must have offered that Mass. How those people must have followed every prayer and gesture. How closely they must have united themselves with the crucified Christ. It was to be their last Mass.

Suppose you knew that your next Mass and Communion would be your last. Suppose you knew that after that Mass you would die or be killed. How devoutly, and attentively would you spend that last hour? Mass lasts such a short while. During Mass we come face to face with the living God. After Mass we will not see Him again until our next Mass or when we stand before Him on our day of judgment. May our joy at Mass be the joy of which our Lord speaks of in Matthew's Gospel: "I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (16:22).

That joy will be ours if we enter into the Mass with the proper attention. It is incumbent upon us, as Catholics, to understand each and every aspect of the celebration. The best method of

attending Mass is with a missal, which will enable you to follow the prayers of the priest at the altar. An educated Catholic knows what is being said and being done. The prayers in the missal have come down to us from saints and scholars and from the Apostles themselves.

Unite yourself with Christ in the Mass. Offer your Mass for the desires of His Sacred Heart. Just as the priest has a special intention for each Mass, so you should have some special intention each time you attend. Make the intention thoughtfully and clearly. Offer the Mass for something definite, your family, friends, the conversion of sinners, peace in the world, the end of abortion. There are thousands of possible intentions.

Remember, that the purpose of the Mass is to come together for the four purposes of sacrifice, namely, to adore God, to ask favors of God, to thank God, and to beg God's pardon. To adore God means to tell Him everything in thought, word, and action that He is the absolute center of your life, that His is above every thing and every one. To thank God means to express your gratitude for all the countless blessings that He has bestowed upon you, the blessing of body and soul, and especially for the gift of His Divine Presence in the Eucharist. The best time to adore and thank God is during the Mass. It is also the best time to ask for special favors or intentions, and to beg God for His pardon. We offer the gift most pleasing to Him, His own Divine Son, asking Him for material and spiritual blessings, and begging His pardon for failing to use His gifts properly in the past.

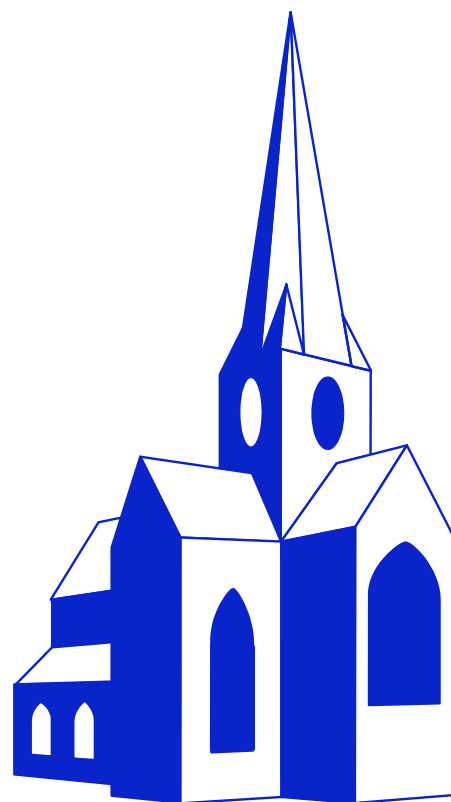
Many find it inspiring to follow every action of the priest. Understanding the ceremonies of the Mass will require study, but such a study will be a labor of love.

We should understand that the Mass is our participation in the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. When the priest says the words of consecration, in that sublime

moment, the Holy Spirit makes present on the altar the one same sacrifice of Jesus. We are there, transported, as it were, back in time to the foot of the Cross and are kneeling with Mary, the Blessed Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and John, the disciple Jesus loved. The Mass is Calvary made present.

When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist in a worthy manner, He will cleanse our souls and live within us. He will sanctify us and enable us to live holy lives. No person can love to the degree required by God unless Jesus dwells within his soul. When we worship God in the manner He prescribed we will enter into eternal life. The Mass is the entrance rite into heaven.

One day, you will attend your last Mass and receive your last Holy Communion. How do you want Jesus to remember that moment?



THE WITNESS VIA EMAIL

The Witness can finally be sent to you via email!

We would like to encourage as many people as possible to receive the Witness by email, as this helps us tremendously with distribution and postage costs.

The School's ever increasing costs and existing \$4,500 annually spent on printing and postage, mean it is sometimes difficult to stay afloat.

Emailing the Witness is one way of cutting these costs, so please consider this seriously.

If we have your email address on file, we will, from now on, automatically email The Witness to you. If for any reason you wish us to continue sending it to you by post, please notify us at:

jandabreheney@iprimus.com.au

If we do not have your email address and you would like to receive the Witness via email, please email us your address. Thank you.

**The Witness is now
on the Web!**

Go to:

www.ccr.org.au

**And follow prompts
to School of Evangelisation**

"JOHN" THE BELOVED DISCIPLE—CANBERRA

By Nathan Ahearne

In so far as courses or retreats go, the "John" Course stands out as the most life changing and challenging I've ever been on.

I am 21, and have been really committed to growing in my faith for about the past 5 years.

The "John" Course gave me so many things to think about in

so many different areas of my life. The people, the prayer and the scriptures are what made this such a great experience for me.

I felt welcomed from the moment I arrived, and disappointed to leave my newly adopted family when I had to leave.

I have never been showered in so much prayer in my life and felt truly blessed over the weekend to be prayed over

constantly.

I have attended many retreats, but none have put so much importance on the scriptures. The course covered so much, but at the same time I never felt like any of it went over my head.

Thanks so much to the School of Evangelisation—you have set me on a new direction.

SANDHURST—HEALING MASSES

Bishop Joe Grech will be celebrating these Healing Masses throughout the Sandhurst Diocese in 2004.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Place:</u>	<u>Contact:</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
May 15	Wodonga	Mary Murray	02 6024 4358
May 30	Shepparton	Pat Cooper	03 5821 1671
July 18	Euroa	Lorelei Goodall	03 5798 5331
Sep 26	Wangaratta	Lorraine Vaughan	03 5721 7304

Please confirm venues and times closer to date.

