



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

The Witness

Newsletter of the Catholic Schools of Evangelisation
April 2005

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Special Point of Interest:

Gideon's Army Mission

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Harvest Time

by Pat Kelly



"Well, I tell you, look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest! Already the reaper is being paid his wages, already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life, so that sower and reaper can rejoice together." (Jn 4:35-36)

When I was a young man my first job was with a hay-carting gang. We brought in the harvest of hay in the summer to provide winter feed for the cattle. It was physically the hardest job I ever had and made every job I've had since seem easy by comparison.

We would work from dawn till dusk in the scorching summer heat and hot, dusty north winds, loading the bales of hay onto a truck and then stacking them into the hay sheds. Even though it was exhausting it was satisfying to survey the empty paddocks and the full sheds at sunset. It was satisfying to have a

beer with the blokes and talk about the adventures of the day... snakes and falls and near misses with power lines.

The thing about bringing in a harvest is that you have to do just

We have been called by virtue of our baptism to evangelise. It is not an optional extra for some people - it is an essential part of being a follower of Christ.

that... bring it in. It is no good sitting on the verandah in the shade, sipping your iced tea and talking about it. There's an urgency about harvest time, the hay has to be brought in before it rains. It's the same with the harvest of souls - it's no good just sitting in our churches talking about it. We need to get out there in the world and get to

work.

"The baptised must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God." (CC 1270)

We have been called by virtue of our baptism to evangelise. It is not an optional extra for some people - it is an essential part of being a follower of Christ. This is a call which demands sacrifice and commitment. But it is also a call that brings tremendous joy and satisfaction. At this time of Easter we remember the sacrifice that was asked of Jesus on Calvary but also the joy of the Resurrection. Unfortunately we have a tendency to want the maximum blessings with the minimum effort. We want the joy of the resurrection without the cost of the cross.

Cont p 8



Just a quick note...



From the editor

The Witness

The Witness is published each April, August and December.

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- Gary Stephens — Melbourne Co-ordinator
- Nan Deakin — Assistant Melbourne Co-ordinator
- Jenny Hagan — Cell group Co-ordinator
- John Breheny — Secretary
- Anna Breheny — Editor

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

Check out information about the School of Evangelisation on the CCR web page: www.ccr.org.au

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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 Coordinators involved in the distribution of

The Witness. May God bless you.

Greetings to everyone in this Easter season, when the risen Jesus reigns in our hearts.

Much is happening within the School and these times are both exciting and Spirit filled. In our prayer groups there have been words of knowledge of the Holy Spirit surging powerfully like water through Australia. This ties in with the recent Franklin Graham Crusade in Melbourne, from which the Catholic Church hopes to receive and nurture many lapsed Catholics.

These past months have been a challenging time of growth for me personally. Ever since I completed the Formation of Evangelisers course last June, many things have mysteriously begun to happen! I have officially been received into the Catholic Church. We have formed a Parish Evangelisation Committee (PEC) in our parish of St Leonard's, Glen Waverley. We are holding our first Catholics Returning Home program this April. The School of Evangelisation is beginning a relationship with our parish so that the courses can be held at parish level. This is only what's happened so far. I could give you a whole list of things I'm planning and praying for!

I believe all these happenings are a movement of the Holy Spirit. Much of the time, I was not even initiating them, but reacting to someone's request. For example, I have been praying for a long time for the parents of the school children and for conversions among them. One day, our parish priest approached me and expressed his concern regarding the fact that the children were receiving the sacraments but not being brought back to Mass by their parents each Sunday. We recognised that the parents had to be evangelised so that a conversion could take place and they would *desire* to bring their children to the church. Father suggested a meeting between us and a couple of other people to discuss the possibilities, which resulted in Gary Stephens, Melbourne Co-ordinator of the SOE, being invited to the parish to present the Evangelisation Program. It was received well by Father, praise God, which means that the powerful and Spirit filled SOE courses may now be introduced at parish level and to the parents of the school children. I always dreamed about this, but never thought it could be possible. With God all things are possible.

We don't have to be superstars to evangelise. We don't have to be theologians, or even very learned. We just have to be FAT - Faithful, Available and Teachable. The Holy Spirit will move through us and other people to make things happen.

If you would like Gary Stephens to present the Evangelisation Program at your parish, please contact us. Let's move forward to make our parishes spiritual **Centres of Mission**. There are people out there desperately searching for Jesus. By virtue of our baptism, we are the ones who are called to introduce them to Him.

God bless you and love you and shine His face upon you this Easter season.

Anna



Divine Healing of an Addict

by Michael Bryant

I have been gambling since the age of eighteen, and since 1996 the problem was getting progressively worse. I was betting seven days a week, I was in constant frustration, we had no money and were living on a shoestring. I had come to a place that was not of God.

One day I went to the TAB. We had no money, so someone had lent me \$20 and I lost it gambling. This was rock bottom. I was so enraged, that I told my wife, June, I was going to jump off the top floor of the Knox City shopping centre. I believe this is where God intervened, because June screamed so loudly, that two blokes appeared from nowhere, grabbed me and stopped me. I believe the Lord made them react so quickly, so as to save me.

I went to confession and confessed my sins. During absolution I felt a strong anointing. After that, at the Body of Christ Prayer Group, I had an urge to get up and tell everybody what type of person I had become. But since Tom and Janine Foster, two

members of the core group, were giving a talk about their pilgrimage overseas, I didn't.

Tom and Janine blessed us with water from a place called Walsingham. This was ordinary water, which is blessed by Our Lady when we pray to her.

My wife, June, went up the front and prayed two things: that I give up gambling and that her mother be placed in a nursing home. I went up to the front half heartedly, with the thought, "here I am praying to give up gambling again."

At this stage I had not yet decided to give up. After the meeting, I told Ron Joseph, another member of the core group, about how I felt like telling everybody what type of person I had become. After our talk, it seems the Lord acted upon my surrender in confession and responded to June's prayer.

I DECIDED THEN AND THERE TO GIVE UP GAMBLING!

I gave up gambling on 16th November 2004 and have not placed a bet since. With the Lord's help, I have gone from a gambling addict who attempted suicide several times, to a new person, free from any addiction. I know now, that through Jesus Christ, I will not go back. And not only that, but the Lord blessed June's second prayer, too, and her mother found a place in a nursing home.

Praise and all glory to God.



New Life—St. Josephs Hermitage Retreat Centre

by Judith Neczypor



The Brisbane School of Evangelisation recently held a New Life course to the Spanish Community. Being an English Australian there was a barrier with our spoken language, but there was certainly no barrier between us in our spiritual language, or the language of love between everyone the entire weekend.

I was enriched by the outpouring of prayer and praise and the power of love for the Lord and it

could be felt by us all. The Holy Spirit had plugged us in and turned on the switch. The experience of the Light was dazzling. There were no empty vessels, we were all overflowing. God did His job - it's now up to each of us to go out and direct that overflow to the areas of drought where it is most needed.

As a team it was our first presentation and the Holy Spirit guided us every step of the way.

SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION—PROGRAM 2005

Date	Course Name	Location & Contact Details
April 18-23	Formation of Disciples	Canberra ACT—Les (02) 6254 5977
April 23-25 & May 1	Formation of Disciples	Cranbourne VIC—Cathy (03) 5174 3001
May 2-10	Formation of Evangelisers	Canberra ACT—Les (02) 6254 5977
May 28-29	New Life	Adelaide SA—Carmen (08) 8339 2573
June 3-4	New Life	Mill Park VIC—Gary (03) 8802 1416
July 23-24	Emmaus	Mill Park VIC—(03) Gary 8802 1416
August 27-28	Emmaus	Bairnsdale VIC—Cathy (03) 5174 3001
September 2,3,4 & 21,22,23	Formation of Disciples	Mill Park VIC—Gary (03) 8802 1416
September 10-11	Emmaus	Wagga Wagga NSW—Kay (02) 6933 1444
October 8-9	Emmaus	Pymble NSW—Lucy (02) 9670 4440

New Life Sydney

by Lucy Grasso

The Sydney School of Evangelisation has started this year by running two courses of New Life, one at Our Lady of Lourdes, Seven Hills, Parramatta Diocese, and the other at Sacred Heart Parish, Pymble, Broken Bay Diocese, with extensive promotion of both courses.

The CCR Parramatta Diocese Service Team invited us to run the course at their "Holy Spirit Mission 2005", on the week-end of 26-27 February. This Mission is run every year and usually it attracts a large number of attendants. It was a challenge for the School to take on this big event and many hands were put to work to get dynamics ready for a big crowd. Adrian Commadeur and Nan Deakin joined us from Melbourne to present this course on a large scale and we thank them for supporting us and appreciate their expertise on how to handle a large number when it comes to dynamics. This was truly a united effort from the



surrounding School of Evangelisation Teams to work together and evangelise. We thank Les Roberts from Canberra and the Wollongong Team who put in a huge effort to be with us. We also thank all team members and helpers from Sydney who gave tirelessly for the spiritual success of this week-end.

It was a pleasure to work in conjunction with the Parramatta Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Team who provided the essentials and who also worked hard for this event. The Music Ministry from

two local Prayer Groups was a highlight of the week-end leading us in song and worship with great enthusiasm.

Overall we had 100 participants who were on fire for the Lord by the time the week-end was finished. Their comments witness how much they benefited from this course. They found it enriching, inspiring, challenging, with each session helping them to understand their faith in a meaningful and practical way. They also experienced a deeper encounter with God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The group dynamics had an impact upon them and made the course more lively and interesting. One participant explained it this way: "I have gained a deeper understanding of the Word of God and have been given confidence to evangelise. I also have been inspired to gain a deeper knowledge of Scripture." Another said: "A wonderful, enriching experience. Thank you."



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The Witness

Donations Acknowledged

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

Lisa Ogle	NSW	100
The Way Prayer Group	VIC	50
Gimi Stoppa	VIC	100
Peter & Sue Tracey	NSW	100
Anonymous		100
Janine Witten	VIC	100

TOTAL 550

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

Are you able to take on a new ministry?

The School of Evangelisation is seeking a small team of people to take over the distribution of The Witness in Melbourne.

The work would take a small group of people, one day (approx 4 hours) to complete, once every four months. Would suit a cell group or a prayer group. If you can help,

please contact John Breheney on 9561 9069

or email jandabreheney@iprimus.com.au

Thank you and God bless you.

Gideon's Army Mission



by Pat Kelly

Dear Graduate of the School,

As I rejoice with you on your participation in the Schools and congratulate you on your ongoing proclamation of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I bring to you and invite your involvement in, an exciting new initiative to enable a revolution in the work of the Schools.

Founded by Bishop Joe Grech in 1994, the Schools have relied on proceeds from courses and ad hoc donations, generous as they have been, to fund the courses. This will no longer be enough to finance the most important new roles into which the Schools are being called by the Holy Spirit.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- 1 We need to present ourselves as a professional organisation in our approach to parishes, and in training and empowering them as centres for evangelisation. Funds are therefore needed to make this enormous task as effective as possible.
- 2 We need to present a larger and more effective range of brochures and promotional materials for all purposes, including our approach to parishes.
- 3 We need a portable display unit, lap top computer and projector for presentation to groups and parishes.
- 4 We need to provide the professional insurance

coverage now required by groups wanting us to provide these services for them.

- 5 We need to fund the travel costs of our people performing these tasks, instead of having them pay their own way as now.
- 6 We need to update our website so that it adequately supports the above works.
- 7 And we need to support fledgling schools until they can stand on their own feet.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Consider this passage from The Book of Judges: *Gideon divided the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside . . . Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands . . . they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran. (Jdg 7:16-21)*

Let us form a **Gideon's Army** with three hundred friends of the Schools prepared to commit themselves to \$100 per year. The \$100 would not have to be given in one lump sum, it could be paid in easy instalments from 1 X \$100 for those who wish, or any combination to 10 X \$10. Members need not be

limited to individuals, they may be families or groups of friends.

I am writing to you to ask you to be part of this new and important Gideon's Army. I am asking you to be part of the School's financial support. Please give this appeal serious thought and prayer. Do you want to be part of the 300 who weren't afraid, but who were prepared to go forward and win a victory for the Lord?

Of course it may be that you are not in a position at this time to respond to this appeal. However everyone is in a position to support their diocesan School of Evangelisation in some way. Please throw your weight behind your local School; support their courses, either as a participant or as a helper; provide financial and material help, promote the work of the school among your friends and fellow parishioners and above all else pray that we will follow the plan that the Holy Spirit has in mind for us.

I'd like to finish with the word of St Paul to the Corinthians: *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Cor 9:7-8).*

Many thanks and God bless,
Patrick Kelly
National Executive Officer
School of Evangelisation.

Would you please pray for us? Prayer to St Michael the Archangel

We include here, the prayer to St Michael the Archangel. Would you please join us in praying this every day for your own protection and for the protection of the School and School leaders against the attacks of the Evil one.



St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the hour of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God restrain him, we humbly pray, and may thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust Satan into hell and with him all the evil spirits who wander through the earth seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Call of Guadalupe

by Anna Breheny

Many of us may never stand outside an abortion clinic in protest; or have to talk a friend out of committing suicide; or be in the position of stopping a nurse from administering excess medication in order to quickly end a suffering patient's life. Geraldine Lee, producer of the new Catholic musical, **Call of Guadalupe**, has been in every one of these situations.

Having worked as a pregnancy counsellor, in a half way house for single pregnant women, as a midwife, a youth group leader and a pro-life activist, Geraldine has found pro-life to be a very controversial topic. "I've had people walk away from me mid sentence, become violent, swear at me, push me aside, hold up signs at me. The musical is good because it's true entertainment, enjoyment and relaxation and we can give a message to people in an unthreatening way."

Call of Guadalupe is a voluntary, non-profit production, incorporating strong dialogue and fast action, with contemporary music, dynamic dances and spectacular costumes. It offers over two hours of breathtaking entertainment while simultaneously challenging its audience with the vital message of the dignity of human life.

The play is about a couple faced with the idea of aborting their child for the sake of improved lifestyle. They are thrown into conflict and confusion as they struggle with their decision. The story flashes back to a distant place of long ago, where Our Lady miraculously intervenes. Her message is as powerful now as it was then and the outcome is both touching and inspiring.

Geraldine shares her passion for the pro-life cause and her deeply personal reasons for her commitment to the play: "I have three siblings who were diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy. The disease they have can now be found in utero and many women are aborting such children.

"I see how my parents decided to keep having children even though the doctors told them not to and advised them to be sterilised. But they had one after the other – three disabled children. Now I see that these children have become successful people – two lawyers and a social worker - with strong faith in the Lord. I'd like to say to women, even if your unborn child is diagnosed with a disability, there's so much potential. Each one of my siblings is incurable, yet



each one is deeply loved by many people and they are all a centre of spiritual attraction to their friends and acquaintances.

"Euthanasia is seen as cost effective. There's a misguided kindness amongst medical staff, where if you're going to die, we'll make it quicker. It's really hard to do the right thing when the right values are not in place in people's minds and hearts.

"People want to commit suicide because they don't value life. They are in this culture of death, where, if there's pain, we must cut out the pain as soon as possible. The computer games young people play, teach that death is so easy. Press a button and annihilate someone. But press another button and bring them back just as easily. It's not like that in real life, but that's something they don't realise. Once you kill yourself, there's no coming back. Often people who have unsuccessfully attempted suicide,

have gone on to fix their problems and realise they *do* want to be alive.

"I'd like all people to be involved in pro-life in some way. We hear the screams of the desolate people in the tsunami disaster. It's easy to want to help them. But what about the silent screams of the babies in the womb? Who will come to their rescue? We live in a society where on one hand, our governments give billions of dollars to help suffering people, yet on the other hand, they provide money to fund abortion. This is contradictory and very anti-life."

Geraldine's father, John Lee, is the writer and director of the play. He speaks of his reason for embarking upon this impressive project: "My niece had a dream where Our Lady of Guadalupe told her she wanted a play to be produced with a message of life, hope and courage against the epidemics of abortion, euthanasia and suicide cursing the world today. Our Lady said she would bless such a play and that it would be shown all over the world. When my niece asked me to write it, I decided to take up the challenge."

The story is based on Our Lady's apparition in Guadalupe, Mexico, in 1531. The picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, imprinted miraculously on the cloak of a peasant, stopped the human sacrifices to pagan gods, causing that community to be converted to Christianity. Today, the picture attracts more tourists than Lourdes and Fatima every year and has had many miracles attributed to it.

John appeals to all Catholics for their support, even though this play is not for Catholics alone. "We hope to bring in everybody – every race and religion – to spread the message of the supremacy and sanctity of human life. However, we are still in much need of support and we are appealing to all Catholics. There are three ways people can help:

Cont on page 8

New Life Sydney—Lucy Grasso cont from page 4

The following week-end of 5-6 March, we set off to Sacred Heart Parish, Pymble, Broken Bay Diocese, for another New Life Course. Still on fire from the week-end before, we welcomed the 20 participants who accepted the invitation. This course was an outreach to the Pymble and West Pymble Parishes. We felt very welcomed and encouraged by Fr Tadeusz, Parish Priest, who is very supportive of the school to evangelise his

parishioners. Considering that both parishes are so busy with many activities going on at the same time e.g. Alpha course, etc., it is commendable to the people who attended for their participation in this course.

The first course held in the Broken Bay Diocese was at Sacred Heart Parish, Pymble, with the course Formation of Disciples in July 2003, followed by a New Life Course in September 2004. Some

of the previous graduates of the New Life course supported us. It gave them an insight of what goes on behind the 'scenes' and an opportunity to evangelise their brothers and sisters in the parish. We are looking forward to our next evangelisation outreach at Pymble and West Pymble when we will be conducting the Emmaus course in October this year. We pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send more labourers for the work ahead.

HARVEST TIME—PAT KELLY CONT FROM PAGE 1

So I ask you to be prepared to make sacrifices in answering the call to evangelise. Two of the biggest sacrifices we can make are of our **time** and our **money**.

We have seen that because of our baptism we have an obligation to evangelise. Well, if we have an obligation to evangelise I think we have a right to expect to be trained and equipped so that we can fulfill this obligation. This is the work of the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit works through human beings. The Holy Spirit is working through the School of Evangelisation to train and equip Catholics to be able to fulfill their call to mission. The School provides this training primarily through the Formation of Evangelisers (Paul) course. It is our

goal to provide this course at least once in every State, every year so that everyone has the opportunity to be trained as an evangeliser. We don't want people saying "I know I should evangelise but I don't know how." However, people have to be prepared to make a real sacrifice of their time to attend this course and be trained as evangelisers. It takes time to train people you—can't do it in one or two days.

The second sacrifice we are asked to make is our money. They say the hip pocket is the last thing we surrender to the Lord. Well if you haven't already done so I appeal to you to sacrifice some of your finances to help in this work of evangelisation. On page 6 of The Witness there is a copy of an appeal

letter for The Gideon's Army, which some of you may have received in the mail. Please read this letter and respond. The harvest is ready but the reapers have to be paid.

We want the Lord to be able to say of us what Paul said of the Philippians: *"I shall find that you are standing firm and united in spirit, battling, as a team with a single aim, for the faith of the gospel, undismayed by any of your opponents...(1:27-28) ... for you have been granted the privilege for Christ's sake not only of believing in him but of suffering for him as well (1:29) I appeal to you, make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind."* (2:1-2)

CALL OF GUADALUPE CONT FROM P 7

1. Prayer – Pray deeply and constantly for the project, for only God can make it a success.
2. Talents – Participate in whatever way you can in the staging of the play, drawing from the natural gifts that God has given you.
3. Funds – Please give the COG project a generous donation that reflects your gratitude to God's blessing and gifts in your

life.

"We're all working voluntarily for the glory of God," says John. "I am just thrilled by all the people who have already come forward and I see their motivation – they love Jesus, they love Mary, they love their faith and they're doing this out of their own free will."

This gives all evangelisers something to think about. Even though we may never be full on pro-life activists, we can still help by supporting this vitally important and

worthy project. Every person who gives their support in any way and invites others to do the same, will be EVANGELISING for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls.

For further details, check out the website: www.callofguadalupe.org

Please post donations to John Lee, 19 Glenvale Road, Glen Iris, VIC, 3146. Phone 9885 9943 for ticket purchases. (Tickets priced at around \$30).

Underneath are the Everlasting Arms

by Anna Breheny

for Katerina

In all the years she had been alive, she was not aware of the love of God. She did not know he was there, waiting to catch her when she fell, to hold her up in her brokenness, to teach and guide her the right way. There had only ever been confusion and unanswered questions. Just one thing seemed certain - the peace of death would follow the chaos of life as surely as night followed day. How or why was irrelevant. It was only a matter of when.

In a movement so slow, she rose and walked to the kitchen, picked up a chair and walked towards the back door, unaware of its rungs thudding mutely against her shins. A myriad of faces belonging to people from the Renaissance Age peered down at her from their golden, heavily framed tapestries hung high on the walls of the dim corridor.

The rope was already outside as she stood the chair beneath the steel basketball hoop jutting out of the brick wall. There was relief in her heart after the decision was made. So with the loop positioned around the pale, delicate skin of her neck and the chair kicked away, the weight of her body worked together with gravity to complete the job she started...

...As she passed from this world to the next she came into the presence of God. She had not known of his existence in that earthly world full of lies, but in this place there was only truth. She had imagined death would be as welcome as a night thunderstorm after a scorching day, but her soul now saturated with the greatest source of Love, felt what he felt. Pain - excruciating, grieving agony. And how indescribably sad was the knowing she had hurt God this way.

He showed her, her parents as they found her and allowed her to feel the rippling and far reaching effect of her action which was soon to cause their separation. As she watched them and all the people who loved her and felt what they felt, there was such intense suffering in her soul, she wanted to cease to exist. She felt her mother's sense of self-blame and was desperate to tell her it wasn't her fault. Knowing she would never be able to, knowing her parents would grieve the rest of their lives without rest, knowing the pain she caused so senselessly, was tortuous punishment for her.

Here in this place of truth she had full understanding of everything. All unanswered

questions were answered, all her life was put into perspective so she saw it as clearly as if she were looking through glass. Here there was no mystery, only a Love she so longed to be a part of, a Love she now realised she could have had in her earthly home, yet never allowed herself to attain, a Love beautiful beyond description.

As God asked her to judge herself, to tell where she thought she now belonged, she would rather have cast herself into a thousand hells than lie to him. She committed a grave and mortal sin and her heart revealed to him the great regret she harboured there. And he, in his eternal grace and mercy forgave her, for she knew not what she was doing when she did it.

His love and forgiveness washed over her like a waterfall, but it did not yet bring her peace. Instead she suffered more as her unworthiness loomed like a giant within her. God faded away and she knew she must remain apart from him until he came back to take her home. But he didn't leave before showing her all the people in her earthly home who would be praying for her. There were thousands, all faithful followers of Christ, praying for her soul to enter heaven as soon as could be. These were people she never knew, yet it was their charity and intercession which was to help her so greatly. As God lovingly received their prayers, her gratitude towards them was immense.

*She wanted to thank her parents for their love and tell them she would be loving them from this new place of truth. She wanted to tell them it would be alright in the end, that one day soon they would be together again. She wanted to tell everyone in her earthly home, that as surely as death followed life, life followed death. And she wanted to tell them to believe and trust in God who was with each of them, waiting to catch them when they fell, to hold them up in their brokenness, to support them with his *everlasting arms*. (Deut 33:27)*

I was patient with them because they did not yet have faith and did not know what they were doing. (1Tim 1:13)

(For the Church's standing on suicide, see Catechism 2280-2283)



MY 'CALL'

by Eddie Grasso—CoOordinator, Sydney SOE

In May, 1999, Lucy and I attended a School of Evangelisation course named, 'Moses', recently renamed, Formation of Leaders. This six day course was held at Cowwarr, in the Sale Diocese, in Victoria.

It took us 12 hours of driving from St. Clair, near Penrith, to get to Cowwarr. Yes we were tired and exhausted. When we arrived, we met some people who were also staying at the old convent. Of course the people we met were pleasant, polite and very friendly, but I still felt like 'a fish out of water'. That first night was not pleasant for me at all. I was restless and hardly had any sleep so I was not looking forward for the next day, the start of the course.

This was a disaster as far as I was concerned. I even told Lucy that I felt like packing up and going home that very same day. Lucy was very patient with me. She calmed me down and encouraged me to stick it out. She said, "I know something good is coming out of this". I frowned but I stayed rather reluctantly.

The next day was the third day of the course and it was announced that during the night there would be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We were urged to spend some time in adoration and prayer, especially for the spiritual success of the course.

It was about 2 o'clock in the morning when I woke up. A thought came to my mind; 'Would you spend one hour with me?' Immediately I felt a deep desire in the depths of my heart to rise and go to the church. May is a cold month in Cowwarr, so I dressed well, crossed a short distance to the church and knelt in the pew in front of Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament. It was peaceful and quiet, there was one other person there at the time.

After some time in perfect silence, away from the hustle and bustle of the busy world, I remember as if it happened yesterday, a gentle, sweet voice spoke to me in the depths of my heart; 'I brought you here for a purpose, I want you to

serve me in the field of evangelisation and I am giving you the School as a means for this mission. This field is very vast and the labourers are very few. Go, talk to people about it, go to priests and tell them about it, go even to bishops if necessary and tell them about it. Advertise the School of Evangelisation as much as you can, as far as you can and however you can. Do not be afraid, I will walk with you.'

I immediately thought about what Lucy said to me the day before, 'Something good is going to happen.' I said to the Lord; 'Is this

**"Something
good is
going to
happen..."**

truly for me, Lord? Am I capable of serving you in this field?' And the Lord answered me again with a gentle voice, 'Why do you question me? Believe, trust and obey, leave the rest for me. Am I not to choose whom I will?' 'Thank you, Lord, I'll obey.' Could I say 'no' after this assurance from the Lord?

Two hours later, I stood up to leave and go back to sleep. I felt I was still in this beautiful dream, except it was not a dream. I went to the room, Lucy was still asleep. I could not sleep, my mind was still active and my heart was still pounding. As soon as Lucy woke up I shared with her what happened to me. My attitude changed from night to day. The people around me seemed like angels.

Thereafter I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the course and I participated with interest and enthusiasm. I thought the course

was fast coming to an end, and soon I had to leave those newly made friends who I felt I knew for much longer than the few days I was with them.

2005 is the thirtieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation, *On Evangelisation in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*. This triggered my mind to remember that night in May 1999, when Jesus called me to participate in His plan of evangelisation. Reading again Pope Paul's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, it struck me to the core, with what the Pope wrote: '*But who then has the mission of evangelising?*' The Second Vatican Council gave a clear reply to this question; it is upon the Church that "*there rests, by divine mandate, the duty of going out into the whole world and preaching the Gospel to every creature. And in another text; "... the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelisation is a basic duty of the People of God". (EN VI 59)*. I feel it is also proper at this point to quote the words of St. Paul where he reminded himself *and us 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel! (1Cor 9:16)*, very well emphasised in 'Formation of Evangelisers' course presented by the School of Evangelisation.

Since May 1999, I have attended numerous courses in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and two in New Zealand. I can truly say I have enjoyed every one of them and am always looking forward to the next, seeking to learn something new so I can walk closer with Jesus as best I can. Since I have thought in some of the courses, met so many beautiful brothers and sisters and made so many friends, I have come to appreciate the School of Evangelisation so much that it has become an intrinsic part of my life. Since my encounter with the Lord in May 1999, I have taken his call to evangelise seriously and very much to heart and I have come to a deeper realisation of my responsibility to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ without fear or compromise. (cont on page 11)

BOOK REVIEW: *WITNESS TO WONDERS* BY FATHER JOHN REA



For those who already believe, this book will rekindle your faith in miracles. For those who don't believe, it will introduce you with

great simplicity and firm conviction, to the everlasting love God has for his people, reflected in the countless healings he performs for them every day through people like Fr John Rea.

In this light hearted, yet heartwarming and often moving account of Fr John's ministry over the past 25 years, we are presented with a never-ending list of healings the Lord has performed through him, from physical and mental, to spiritual and even demonic.

Fr John, a graciously polite and gentle man, writes about praying with the afflicted easily, simply and without fuss. He shares

experiences of long distance healing, healing through renewal of baptismal vows and even healing of animals. He shares how there is a healing dimension in all seven sacraments—not only Anointing of the Sick and Eucharist as is commonly believed - and shows how he draws on this power.

An important lesson learned by Fr John is that there are no rules in regard to praying for the sick. No one prayer is more effective than another and there are no specific rituals to be followed. This, he has found immensely freeing.

Hundreds of examples of healing continue, one after the other, making it seem like the most normal and ordinary thing in the world, causing the reader to realise that God is *waiting* to heal us. Sometimes it seems he's so eager to heal, he even does it without anyone asking him to!

Included in the book are

examples of healing and miracle prayers, healing prayers based on the psalms, Rosary healing reflections, the power of prayed over handkerchiefs, information about Family Tree healing, the "surprise in 24 hours" prayer, curses, oppressions and how healing can be used to evangelise believers and non believers alike.

He poses and answers many interesting questions: Why isn't everyone healed; what are the four distinct kinds of healing; how does Jesus heal today; what is the one essential thing we must bring into healing prayer; can anyone pray for healing?

If you would like to know the answers, don't hesitate to contact Adrian Commaeur to purchase your copy of this inspiring book. Price \$17.50, phone (03) 9337 2051 email:comsoda@21century.com.au

As one healed person says, "Praise the Lord! How inadequate those words seem."

My Call—Eddie Grasso Cont. from p 10

I felt an urge to share my call to serve the Lord with brothers and sisters in the School of Evangelisation, firstly to publicly give Him glory and thanks. Secondly to encourage some of the participants who might have been called to take an active part in the School, by

whatever talents God has given them and for some reason have missed that opportunity. I believe the Lord is calling you again, in fact he has never stopped calling. *"Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth, go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I*

am with you always, until the end of the world!" (Mt 28:18-20).

Remember, you do not have to be a scripture scholar or a theologian to serve Jesus, just be 'FAT' – faithful, available and teachable. He is inviting you again and giving you another opportunity to respond, to be courageous and to act. The Lord is waiting for you, do not delay, **NOW IS THE TIME TO EVANGELISE!**

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