



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

The Witness

Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

July 2021 Newsletter

BE STILL BEFORE THE LORD AND WAIT

By Ann Serong, Director.

Psalm 37:7

***"I ask you my friends to be still
And know that I am here with you.
The longing in your heart I will fill
For I now make my home in you."***

We often sing these words when we gather together for Prayer and Praise. In many different places the words of Scripture exhort us to be still, to quieten the inner and outer noise and to listen with our hearts. For some of us this happened in a new and exciting way when we participated in our first CSOE course and indeed any subsequent courses and it is why we want to offer others this same opportunity.

As Catholics we have many and varied ways to receive God's love, grace and mercy. Mass, sacraments, Scripture, prayer time, retreats, conferences and spiritual reading can each present us with an invitation to experience God's healing and renewing power in our lives. Each of the many courses of the CSOE invite us to believe and receive what the Lord yearns to bestow on His children. The knowledge that we are indeed a precious and much loved child of God can be life changing for those who doubt this truth.

Some years ago I was a participant in the **MOSES** course. At the time I was experiencing much sorrow and heartache whilst facing the prospect of making some very difficult decisions. During the course we read from Exodus 14 where Pharaoh and his army were chasing the fleeing Israelites. The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord as they fled. The sea was ahead and the Egyptian army in pursuit. Father Joe Grech read the following passage several times over in a very loud voice. ***Moses answered the people, "Have no fear! Stand firm, and you will see what the Lord will do to save you today: the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will do the fighting for you: you have only to keep still."*** This passage was indeed life changing for me.

During June I received an email from Alex Heath from Northampton, England who, together with his wife Maria and a small team work in the area of evangelisation called Mission Northampton. Alex asked if we could help with some materials to support their evangelisation initiatives.

Last Friday evening a small group of us participated in a zoom meeting with Alex and Maria. They shared with us their dream of holding CSOE courses again as they had trained back in 1995 and subsequently ran courses for a number of years. Sandra offered to provide some Power Point and other materials to help them get started. Maria shared how she and a friend were excited at having enrolled in our upcoming JAMES and EMMAUS courses on Zoom. This meeting was indeed GOOD NEWS and we will follow up with them in the future. How encouraging it was for us to listen to what the Lord had put on their hearts. May the Lord bless abundantly their future endeavours and we look forward to cooperating with them and hearing of the fruit of their work.



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This newsletter is published by the Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.
ABN 133199185
Published three times a year.

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The Director and other members of the National Executive Committee of the Catholic School of Evangelisation do not necessarily endorse opinions expressed in articles within this publication.

Catholic School of Evangelisation **MISSION STATEMENT**

To contribute to the formation of evangelising parishes by offering a formation program which:

- ▶ FORMS DISCIPLES
- ▶ TRAINS EVANGELISERS
- ▶ ESTABLISHES PARISH EVANGELISATION TEAMS

Quotes from Pope Francis.

“In this day and age unless Christians are revolutionaries they are not Christians. They must be revolutionaries through grace! Jesus Christ makes us revolutionaries because He changes the heart.”

“Do not drink a diluted form of faith. Faith is whole and entire, not something you water down. It is faith in Jesus. It is faith in the Son of God made man who loves me and who died for me. God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.”

“Beware of the temptation of jealousy. We are all in the same boat heading for the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each other, which belong to all.

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelisation !”

The Gift

My Lord gave me a present
I looked at it and said:

‘Why did You give this to me,
I’m not ready to be led?’

I have so many faults Lord,
I’m unworthy through and through.
It would be better used by those
Who always follow You.

I sat and pondered my precious gift
And stored it, put aside.
How could I ever be free
To use it without pride?

The Lord is good to me
And listens to me whine,
He does not take His present back
But gives me much more time.

It is not God that I am doubting,
It is my faithless self!
The Lord is patient yet again
And shows my folly to me.
‘Tis not my faith He needs to wake
But His love built up within me.

Each time He blesses me
And each time I heed His sway.
A layer of love is placed in store
For me to give away.

I take my present from the shelf now
And look at it with awe,
For the power of the gift is with
The giver, not with me at all!

Deidre Herring

TOWARDS THE EMPTY TOMB

By Carmen Sylvester

On the 27th March on the eve of Palm Sunday we gathered for an Easter Retreat with Fr Josy Sebastian with the theme of Towards the Empty Tomb.

We were all eagerly looking forward to the end of Lent and to celebrate Easter with relative freedom after experiencing Easter in lockdown in 2020. The memory of such a painful experience made this retreat bittersweet.

Teachings were powerful as was the time of adoration and of course as always Mass was the highlight of the day.

Empty, brings with it a sense of foreboding. We feel empty when sadness visits us and our life is disrupted. Finding the empty tomb was heartbreaking for Mary Magdalene as would have been for Peter & John. Yet Father Josy took us through a different understanding of how the empty tomb was a place of transformation.

To understand the Empty Tomb brings with it awe and wonder at God's plan for our Salvation.

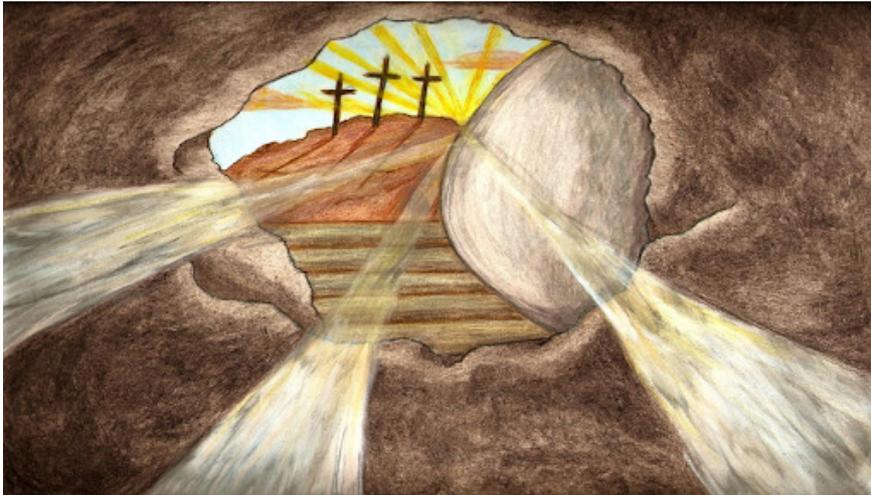
The next day we would be listening to the Passion of Our Lord at the Palm Sunday liturgy but this time I felt deep within a bubbling of joy at the anticipation of the Empty Tomb.

Perhaps for the first time I could appreciate St Paul's words. "If Jesus did not rise from the dead our faith would be in vain."

Just imagine if Jesus went through all the torture, all the pain and crucifixion and He would remain in the tomb. Could any of us really believe we have been saved when there was no proof that Jesus overcame death.

The Disciples were behind closed doors in fear of their own possible death. Their hearts were only healed and transformed when they saw the risen Lord. And to convince them that he had risen from the dead Jesus retained the wounds of His Passion. He was no imposter.

Fr Josy pointed out the transformational power of the empty tomb with the story of the young man who ran away naked and in fear



from the Garden of Gethsemane to that of the young man at the empty tomb.

We encounter a young man dressed in white and sitting in the empty tomb encouraging the women not to be afraid because Jesus has risen and will be waiting for

His disciples in Galilee.

Fr Josy made a poignant comparison between these two young men, one running away in fear and the other so transformed by the resurrection of Jesus that he was calm, at peace and willing to share his experience to bring New Life into other people's lives.

Of course this connection is also important for us to understand that once we experience a transformation of heart we can bring others to love Jesus and accept that he died especially for me and for them. That is of course the Power of Evangelisation. It is the Power of the Empty Tomb.

We Are Prophets of a Future Not Our Own

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view,

*The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
The magnificent enterprise that is God's work.*

We plant seeds that one day will grow.

*We water seeds already planted, know that
They hold future promise.*

We cannot do everything

And there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something,

And do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,

A step along the way,

An opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

*But that is the difference between the master builders,
And the worker.*

We are workers, not master builders,

Ministers, not Messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Reflection on '7 YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE GOSPELS' - PNG

..... By Sr. Cecilia Babate

I am a teacher but now doing my studies at the University of Goroka. I was very privileged to be invited by Fr Adam to attend the course on the "Seven Young People in the Gospels". It was given at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre-Kefamo in Goroka. There were 14 of us, 5 nurses, 2 student teachers, 5 Primary teachers and 2 TVET teachers. We had a male among all the female participants. We started on Friday evening 12th March to Sunday 14th March 2021. A weekend well spent.

I was very happy to attend the Course. We started off with the Introduction where we were asked to identify some young people in the gospel. It was very interesting, most of us didn't name the seven young people that we would look at during the course.

After the introduction we started looking at the 7YPIG beginning with -

1. The Rich Young Man
2. The Puppet Girl
3. Young Man Raised to Life
4. Boy Made A Miracle
5. Palace Doorkeeper
6. John Mark –The Evangelist
7. Young Man dressed in White

The course was given by Fr Adam and assisted by Sr Rosemary.

What was very inspiring in the Topics were the "To Grow and Mature" phrase at the end of each topic. For me it was something worth reflecting on for some days. The words were very deep and very encouraging. It was the truth about living a spiritual life depending only on Jesus.

We did the spiritual exercises at the end of each topic. It was a healing time for me. I had to reflect on my own character after looking at the characters of each of the Young People in the Gospels. I was challenged by most of those exercises and was open to reflect on my own weaknesses. It was a prayerful experience as we went through it reflectively with Fr Adam. Some spiritual exercises like the Backpack of riches or the treasure chest, the ties, where we had to cut off the string of manipulation and unhealthy dependency, bringing all our burdens to Jesus by writing them on the paper and offering it in front of the Blessed Sacrament and the other prayerful exercises on the other topics were very enriching. The reflection questions that were given in each of the topics also were very challenging. The songs played during the sessions were appropriate for each topic. It was very meaningful.

Reflecting on the 7YPIG I saw that I had some of their characteristics in me both positive and

negative. But what stood out very clearly was the character of the boy who made a miracle possible. I identified myself with him. The boy was very generous, he gave the little that he had and Jesus made the miracle to feed the five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish. This boy has taught me a lesson, I must not waste anything that I have but use everything well. As I reflected on my background, I was brought up in a family where my parents taught me to give, even though we had little, they believed in God's blessing. I also have seen a lot of blessing when I give from the little that I have. That is why the character of the boy has touched me very much.

As a teacher, the course was very challenging. The characters of the Young People reminded me of the students I teach every year. They have different characters, behaviours and attitudes because they come from different backgrounds and families. Sometimes I don't understand them when a difficult situation arises. I don't look for a third option but judge them wrongly. This course has taught me to look for a third option to help them, not to let them down but to give them the hope. This is a very good lesson for me as I go back to teach.

We ended the Course with the Eucharistic celebration where all our intentions from the spiritual exercises were presented to the altar during the Offertory. I honestly enjoyed the course and I have learnt a lot from it.

I would like to thank the School of Evangelisation team in Australia for a job well done. The course was very enriching and well prepared. CONGRATULATIONS. Looking forward to attend some more courses from your team. God bless you all. I am very grateful to Fr Adam for facilitating the course and to Sr Rosemary for assisting him.



Sr. Cecilia is standing third on the left.

FR ADAM'S JUBILEE MASS

Fr Adam Samsel msf is the CSOE Co-ordinator for PNG. He recently celebrated, in his native Poland, his Jubilee Mass of 25 years since ordination which took place on June 22, 1996 in Kazimierz Biskupi, Poland.

More than 25 years ago, Fr Adam had asked God to stop bothering him. It was then he felt God say to him "I'm not bothering you, I am proposing to you". Finally the message got through and this year Fr Adam celebrated his jubilee, together with his family in Poland. Little did he know that God's proposal and his acceptance would take him to the PNG Highlands.



Photo left:
Fr. Adam centre, with his fellow priests before the Jubilee Mass.



Photo right:
Fr Bill Burzawa msf on the left of Fr. Adam and Fr Stan Michalik msf on his right.
Both priests were in the first group of missionaries of the Holy Family in PNG, in 1989. They work in Poland now.



Reflecting on the Year of St Joseph

By Carmen Sylvester.

The first Saturday in June was a Day of Reflection with Fr Peter Zwaans, a young priest whom I had the pleasure of seeing growing up from a boy serving at the altar of the Cathedral to being ordained Priest at the same Cathedral. When Covid hit he introduced a podcast aptly called ‘Corona of Thorns’ which was our daily input of Gospel teaching while in lockdown. Being a very busy Parish Priest and a much sought-after speaker, I was so thrilled when he accepted our invitation to do a day retreat with us. His instant reaction was “How about on St Joseph?” We had very little input here in SA on St Joseph even though it has been declared the year of St Joseph by Pope Francis. This was a great opportunity to receive some beautiful teachings on St Joseph, a very dear saint for me and of course a very dear saint to Jesus and Mary.

The following is a very small extract from two hours of recordings. The theme was from Mat. 1:20 **“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”**

St Joseph has been presented to us at a very providential time and for a very important purpose as well. The reason why Pope Francis declared 2021 as the year of St Joseph is because it is the 150th Anniversary of St Pius IX declaring St Joseph as the Patron Saint of the Universal Church which happened on the 8th December 1870. What is interesting is that while devotion to Mary started from the beginning of the Church, devotion to St Joseph is only 500 years old. It took a while for the importance of the earthly Father of Jesus to emerge out of obscurity which is perhaps because he was very much a background figure. Yet, when we pause to examine his life from the little we know of him, we see that although a background figure he is truly essential.

There is no Jesus without Joseph. One of the titles given to St Joseph is that he is called the saviour of the Saviour. Because he rescued Jesus from King Herod’s hands in those early days of Jesus’ life. So, just as we can say there is no Jesus without Mary we can also say there is no Jesus without Joseph. This reality has emerged into the consciousness of the wider Church more and more over the years. Pope Pius the XII named him the Patron of workers and St John Paul II wrote a beautiful exhortation entitled **REDEMPTORIS CUSTOS** (*The Guardian of the Redeemer*).

All this has given a ground swell as Joseph is being presented to us as the Patron and as an Example. Firstly I’d like to speak about St Joseph as Father. Father of Jesus absolutely, but also a Father for us. Quoting Pope Francis from the Apostolic letter on St Joseph called *Patris Corde*.

The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the Father of Jesus. In this way, he placed himself, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, “... at the service of the entire plan of salvation.”

Pope St Paul VI pointed out that Joseph concretely expressed his fatherhood *“by making his life a sacrificial service to the mystery of the incarnation and its redemptive purpose. He employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home.”* Thanks to his role in salvation history, St Joseph has always been venerated as a Father by the Christian people. This is shown by the countless churches dedicated to him worldwide, the numerous religious Institutes, Confraternities and ecclesial groups inspired by his spirituality and bearing his name, and the many traditional expressions of piety in his honour. Innumerable holy men and women were passionately devoted to him. Among them was Teresa of Avila, who chose him as her advocate and intercessor, had frequent recourse to him and received whatever graces she asked of him. Encouraged by her own experience, Teresa persuaded others to cultivate devotion to Joseph.

There is a good question here for us. In what sense is St Joseph a Father for us, but firstly we need to ask the question: In what sense is St Joseph a Father to Jesus, because there is always this hinge point in the Scriptures about who Jesus’ father really is?

We hear in scripture **“How can this man talk like this he is the son of the carpenter?”** Certainly, He is the son of the carpenter but not just. He is the Son of God. God in fact is Jesus’ Father. However, we need to acknowledge that Joseph is also His Father, not in the biological sense, but in the real sense because he gave his name to Jesus. He is the carpenter’s son but Jesus is also the Son of David because Joseph the carpenter is the son of David. So we are talking about a fatherhood that goes beyond biology.

In the ancient world the question of adoption was quite common. Sadly for us, adoption has become a rather foreign concept partly because of the reality of abortion. We don’t have unwanted children anymore. Partly it is because we have better health care and children do not lose their parents and become orphans with the need to be drawn into another family.

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In the ancient world if you were adopted you were not a tack on to the family, you actually belonged to the family. There were not the natural sons and then the adopted sons, there were just sons. When you were drawn into the home of the Father, you became a son (or daughter) of the Father. This was very strong within the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar who claimed divine status was murdered and Octavian, his adopted son, became his successor. Octavian took the title Augustus Caesar (The Great One) for himself and then, to seal his claim as Emperor, he reasons that if Julius was god, then I am the son of god and gives himself this title. Interestingly this strong link to family through adoption is also reflected in the code of Canon Law. When a couple are preparing for marriage, the priest is obliged to ask the couple if they are related to each other by birth, marriage or adoption. If you are adopted, even though not biologically related, the Church sees this as an obstacle to marriage as you are in reality a brother or sister.

If we insert ourselves into the ancient world we get a glimpse of the relationship that emerges between Jesus and Joseph. He is my boy: Of course, He is my son: He is the one who is mine and He is the one for whom I pour out my life. I think that is the first important thing to remember about the Fatherhood of Joseph. Often Joseph is referred to as Foster Father of Jesus but he is more than our understanding of Foster Father. He is not just an add on to Jesus and Mary, he is not just someone who hangs around until not needed anymore. You have to feel for St Joseph, it must be hard to live with two people who are sinless and so easy to accept that whatever goes wrong must be his fault. However living with two perfect people does not make Joseph an extra in the drama of Jesus' life. He is not one in the Holy family who just flits in and out in the background. Mary totally relies on him, Jesus relies on him and without his Fatherhood there is no Mary, there is no Jesus.

This becomes such an important moment for us in our western contemporary culture where Fatherhood is seen as a tack on. As an optional extra: Where Fathers are seen as flitting in and out in the background. If you observe the portrayal of Fathers in modern communications such as sitcoms, movies and on social media. Who are the TV Dads these days? Homer Simpson, Ray Romano - Raymond from Everybody Loves Raymond. How often are Fathers depicted as idiots, bumbling, self-indulgent, drunken and selfish. Not so bright, but that's ok because everyone can get along without them anyway.



How tragic!!! How tragic to put an example before men that they are not needed and it does not matter if they don't take up the responsibility that has been entrusted to them. How tragic when young men grow up to think that their presence or their absence is kind of irrelevant because everyone gets on fine without you. Joseph stands up as a challenge to that picture, he is the saviour of the Saviour. Without Joseph there is no Jesus. Without Jesus there is no US.

There is something more to consider. When we look at the way Joseph's Fatherhood extends to the Church. Stop and reflect. Joseph is not just **like** a Father to us, Joseph **IS** a Father to us and there is a very important reason why, and it relates to the way that Jesus has drawn us to Himself and into His life. The intimacy by which Jesus has drawn us into Himself is a mystery, that for many of us, we have not allowed it to properly weigh upon us. On the feast of Holy Trinity we read a very short reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:14-17. This reading packs such a punch that it changes our ideas of what it means to be Christians. If we can truly understand this Scripture it will change how we view our relationship with Christ and how we are drawn into His saving work. We forget this point.

What does it mean to be a Father? What does it mean to be a son? At its most basic level I am the son of my father because I have received life from my father, and the life he has given me is human life. Pretty basic really. In what sense is then God my Father? Strictly speaking I can say he is not, because I have not received my life from Him because the life I live is that of a human and not of God. I am a creature and He is my Creator. He is like a Father to me because He has protected me, He has sustained me, He has loved me, He has blessed me with all that is good, so He is very much like a father. But is He, strictly speaking, my father? Only if I had His kind of life I would be his son, but I am certainly not divine. **BUT** the Son of the Father, the One who is God from God, Light from Light, begotten not made, One in being with the Father, this Son takes flesh from the Blessed Virgin Mary and is made man. This is what we call the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is the enfleshment of the Son of the Father Who takes on flesh and now in the person of Jesus we find someone who is Son of God. Truly God and son of Mary, fully man. In Jesus we find the fullness of Sonship and we find One who is like us. So what did Jesus come to do? He has come to make us share in His sonship. The way He has done that is by giving us His life. Think about that!!!

Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist

By Franca Wollensack

Sunday 18th April 2021 will be a day that I'll never forget! It was my first ever experience as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. This occurred at the St Francis of Assisi Parish in Mill Park at the 10.30am Mass. I had undergone some training around a month earlier with Ruth Lees and Sr Ignacia Coching. The truth is I had been wondering, praying and discerning for around 3 years, as to whether it's God's will that I assist in this ministry. Completing the Eucharist Course, presented via Zoom by the Catholic School of Evangelisation, helped with my discernment. This course was held over three Monday nights from 1st February to 15th February.

As a result of this Eucharist Course, I fell into a deeper love of this beautiful Sacrament. Furthermore, my thoughts were stirring again about volunteering as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. One blessed day, in late February of this year, I telephoned Emilia Sacchetta and shared with her my thoughts. Emilia and I chatted for a

while and she gently encouraged me to volunteer.

This brings us back to that memorable day, Sunday 18th April. I was nervous and excited at the same time. After distributing the Holy Communion to the parishioners, I returned to my pew, knelt down and prayed and reflected. In my reflection, I felt privileged and so happy that I was able to 'give Jesus' to others.



During that Mass something else happened that was unexpected and wonderful. Before I distributed the Eucharist to the parishioners, myself and two other Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, stood on the Altar waiting to receive Holy Communion from Fr Anthony. When I received the consecrated Host, it tasted sweet and pleasant in my mouth. This sweet and pleasant taste lasted around 30 minutes. This is the first time I experienced this and it was definitely a gift from Jesus.

Samuel 1:27-28

"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there."

With a heart full of joy and gratitude to the Lord, we are happy to announce the birth of our son Ebenezer Adom. Ebenezer literally means 'stone of help'. The stone that Samuel erected was a constant reminder to the nation of Israel that God had protected them and led them to victory. Adom means 'God's grace' in the Ghanaian Akan language.

So in summary, God has been our help through all the changing scenes of life and this is how far He has brought my husband and I through His wondrous grace.



Genevieve Osei

Reflecting on the Year of St Joseph

Continued from p.7

I want the family of human beings not simply to be my creatures, I want them to be my brothers and sisters, and the way that can happen is if they are adopted into my family. That can happen if they come to receive the kind of life that the Father gives. Jesus describes this to Nicodemus as being born from above. Being born of the Spirit. You receive a whole new life, a whole new identity and besides a whole new family. What do we receive from Jesus? We receive from Him Divine Life: We receive the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit dwells within us it is such an intimate indwelling that it transforms us from within. We receive a whole new identity. We become sons and daughters of the Father. We become brothers and sisters IN Christ.

With that background let's visit the letter to the Romans again. ***"Everyone moved by the Spirit is a son of God. The Spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves that brings fear into your life again, it is the Spirit of sons and it makes us cry out Abba Father!"***

St Paul is reminding us that we are now sons and daughters of God, not slaves living in fear. We are sons in the Son, and we can now call God our Father as He taught us to pray. So with that background knowing that we have been drawn into God's family because of Jesus, who is Joseph to us now? By the mission entrusted to Joseph to care for Jesus, to protect Him, to be His example, to be His teacher, as he is all of this, Joseph is for us as well. Not in the biological sense but in the adoptive sense. He is our Dad too. The Church has taken a long time to work through all of this and truly express who Joseph is for us. He is not just one saint among many others. Just as God entrusted the care of His Son Jesus to this man, this son of David, so too we who are the Church, we who are the Body of Christ, we who are drawn into the Sonship of Jesus, we too are entrusted to his care.

GOD'S ECONOMY

By Sandra Bishop

This year my studies have taken a different form, instead of attending lectures I am completing a double supervised reading unit. Approval has been granted for me to prepare a course for the CSOE on Jacob's twelve sons and the blessings they received from Jacob (Gen 49) and Moses (Deut 33) at the end of their lives.

The two passages were used by Marc Chagall as inspiration to design twelve windows for the Synagogue at the Hadassah hospital at Ein Karem, Israel.

When I was attending the Bat Kol Institute back in 2019, one of my fellow students suggested we head to explore Ein Karem during one of our afternoon free times. On previous trips to Israel, I had been there and I was wondering if my time could be put to better use exploring an unfamiliar site instead. However I decided to go and some of us took off piled into two taxis.

The Brother of Zion who was showing us around, took us to all the places I had been before... I tried to appear enthusiastic. Finally, he announced that he would show us the hospital. Thankfully my poker face did not give away my innermost thoughts! When we arrived at the hospital, he then told us we were going to visit the Synagogue within the hospital. And there they were, the twelve magnificent windows designed by Marc Chagall. Brother Joel did not know that for some time I had felt a need to prepare a course on Jacob's sons. Obviously I needed a push to do more than just think about it. The following year I was able to draw on some of the material for an essay in "Reimagining Creation and Incarnation through Art" unit. But more was to unfold.

When approval was finally given for this year's work, more of God's economy became evident. My Supervisor had also used free time

during a pilgrimage to visit the Hadassah hospital Synagogue a few years back. I had visited the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow in 2017 when searching for Rublev's Trinity Icon, and was honestly unimpressed with Chagall's work there. Suffice to say Chagall has grown on me. He is a most interesting character and I cannot believe that a movie has not been made of his life. A Russian Jew born dead, according to his autobiography, he survived stillbirth and lived through, pogroms, revolutions, two world wars, finally dying in 1985 in his 98th year after a day working in his studio.

Research referred me to international Dead Sea scroll expert Lawrence Shipman. Carmen Sylvester and I had attended a lecture of his back in the 90's in a synagogue in Melbourne. Another lead referred to the genizah at the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo which I just happened to visit in 2018.

And on it goes... but what really blew me away was this 1931 painting by Marc Chagall of a tiny synagogue in Safed, the highest city in Galilee, Israel. Our Bat Kol group also visited the same fascinating synagogue and I sat on the seat by the window just where the shadowy figure is seated.

I am disappearing behind a mountain of books: Chagall's autobiography, several biographies, bibles, commentaries, dictionaries etc and with much of the very Jewish material opening from back to front I am a tad twisted. Stay tuned, so far I am at about 13,500 words having worked on eight

of the windows / sons / tribes, four more to go. Using the Chagall widows as an alternative form of biblical commentary can be compared with deciphering a cryptogram. No doubt there will be more evidence of God's economy while discovering how the blessings illuminate and inspire us today.



Above: Chagall's painting of the tiny synagogue at Safed, Galilee, Israel.

JOSHUA TESTIMONIES

The following are testimonies from participants who attended the Joshua course earlier in the year via Zoom.

‘Joshua’ taught me to be more courageous especially in dealing with the realities of my life now. Losing a loved one, especially the pillar of the house, during this toughest of times is indeed painful and difficult. But, like Joshua, I learned to trust the Lord more and allow Him to enable me and my family to move on, despite the loss.

Similarly, teaching others to become like Joshua requires only one thing and that is witnessing. We could only direct them to God if they could see our total dependence on Him in all our words, deeds and actions in all kinds of situations.

God bless CSOE team.

Wency Provido

During one of the sessions on ‘Joshua’ I was healed from one of my problems that I surrendered to the Lord. I was constantly playing games on my iPhone. I have stopped that now, miraculously.

Also today, when I offered to Jesus my problem of fear during the prayer before the crucifix, I saw a lot of fire around me. I am sure that the Lord will heal me of fear as I have surrendered this terrible feeling, and I trust Him.

God bless you and your team for your prayers and support in knowing the Bible and Jesus better.

Lovelyn Hector

At prayer group on Wednesday we were asked to write on the bricks of the wall of Jericho any insurmountable problems. We then marched around the brick wall 7 times to the trumpet blasts. This is what I wrote – ‘I believe in Jesus, I believe in miracles!’

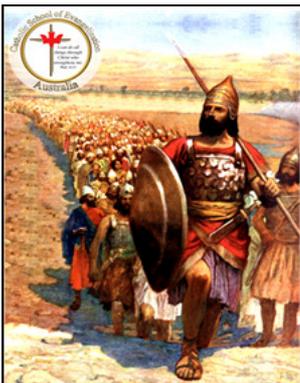
On Wednesday, overnight, the walls of Jericho came down healing me of an open seeping wound that has existed since my operation nine months ago. Alleluia and thank you Lord.

Val Interlandi



Above: Participants who attended the Joshua Course.

Below are the participants who started the James course via Zoom on Thursday nights. It runs from 15th July to 2nd September. The Sydney past participants are hosting it and participants are attending from across Australia, Philippines and UK.



GIDEON'S ARMY

A big THANK YOU to the generous people who have made a financial commitment to assist the ongoing running of the CSOF. Without you we would not be able to continue our mission which is our response to the last 4 Popes' call for a New Evangelisation.

To make arrangements for direct debit or to forward donations please contact:

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The Good Shepherd watches over us.

James participant, Wency in the Philippines was unable to attend a zoom session recently because of internet instability due to a typhoon. She sent a short video showing the wind and rain they were experiencing at the Jesus the Good Shepherd School in Cavite. When we stayed there a few years back it was a very different scene. Thankfully all is well, the Good Shepherd watched over them.

Sandra Bishop

