



The Witness

Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

September 2023 Newsletter

Rejoice...you are sharing in Christ's suffering!

Maryann Street, Deputy Director

Dear friends,

Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Why does it come as a surprise when we are caught in the midst of an ordeal? Peter's first letter is very clear that we are not to be surprised, but rather expect opposition and suffering. Somehow when we are in the midst of a difficult situation, we cannot see that. It is such a comfort to have other Christians who can remind us that what we are suffering is not unusual and in fact can be a source of JOY.

The International Intensive that was held at St Thomas the Apostle Parish in Greensborough during June and July School holidays was definitely a joyful occasion. However, there were also challenges. Three international visitors, Fr Adam Samsel from Papua New Guinea, Wency Provido and Ramille Ibarra from the Philippines, arrived in wet and cold Melbourne in preparation for the four CSOE courses. An example of the

difficulties in getting here is flight delays from PNG to Brisbane meant that Fr Adam had to overnight at Brisbane airport before another delayed flight from Brisbane to Melbourne, meaning that he had an exceptionally long travel time. Another person from PNG who wanted to come to the courses was not granted an Australian visa.

Several locals participated with our international visitors in the John the Beloved course and the Moses course. Team members were encouraged by the openness and readiness of participants to receive – like sponges soaking up the living water of the Holy Spirit. The experience of being together in person rather than on Zoom was also joyful, allowing friendships to be formed and renewed. The International Intensive was only possible because of the generous support of each team member. Many different roles and responsibilities, but one aim. The outcome from all that effort was amazing blessings, not only for participants but for all the team too. Everyone was deeply touched by the teachings, sharing and liturgies – as well as the great catering and nourishing food.

Continued P 3 . . .



Photos from International Intensive courses.
See inside for more.



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*Check out information about the
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on our web page:*

www.schoolofevangelisation.org.au

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

A Paraphrase of the Our Father

By St Francis of Assisi

Our Father: Most Holy, our Creator and Redeemer, our Saviour and our Comforter.

Who art in Heaven: In the angels and the saints. Who gives them light so that they may have knowledge, because Thou, Lord, are Light. Who inflames them so that they may love, because Thou, Lord, are Love. Who lives continually in them and who fills them so that they may be happy, because Thou, Lord, are the Supreme Good, the Eternal Good, and it is from Thee that all good comes, and without Thee there is no good.

Hallowed be Thy Name: May our knowledge of Thee become ever clearer, so that we may realise the extent of Thy benefits, the steadfastness of Thy promises, the sublimity of Thy Majesty and the depth of Thy judgements.

Thy Kingdom come: so that Thou may reign in us by Thy grace and bring us to Thy Kingdom, where we shall see Thee clearly, love Thee perfectly, be blessed in Thy company and enjoy Thee forever.

Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven: So that we may love Thee with our whole heart by always thinking of Thee; with our whole mind by directing our whole intention towards Thee and seeking Thy glory in everything; and with all our strength by spending all our powers and affections of soul and body in service of Thy Love alone. And my we love our neighbours as ourselves, encouraging them all to love Thee as best we can, rejoicing at the good fortune of others, just as it were our own, and sympathising with their misfortunes, while giving offence to no one.

Give us this day our daily bread: Thy own beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to remind us of the love He showed for us and to help us understand and appreciate it and everything that He did or said or suffered.

And forgive us our trespasses: In Thy infinite Mercy, and by the power of the Passion of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the merits and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all your saints.

As we forgive those who trespass against us: and if we do not forgive perfectly, Lord, grace us to forgive perfectly so that we may indeed love our enemies for love of Thee, and pray fervently to Thee for them, returning no one evil for evil, anxious only to serve everybody in Thee.

And lead us not into temptation: Hidden or obvious, sudden or unforeseen. But deliver us from evil: Present, past, or to come.

Amen.

Rejoice...you are sharing in Christ's suffering!

Continued from front page . . .

In the previous issue of the Witness, I spoke of the need to discern God's will for the CSOE - where to from here? Currently, the position of Director for the National Committee of Management is vacant, we have reduced income and support from donors, increasing pressure on remaining members and very few paid members (18). In June we held a reflection day with those members and it was facilitated by Fr Robin Koning.

As we prepared for the day, we were invited to pray and reflect on three themes:

- 1) Gratitude,
- 2) Freedom and
- 3) Light.

This reflection day enabled us to discuss and explore possible courses of action for the future of the CSOE. These include (but are not limited to):

1. Continue as we have been – and we will limp along for possibly a few years and then be faced with the same decision.
2. Wind up – not practical at the time as we had the International Intensive and bookings being taken for other upcoming courses, but possible later in the year.
3. Re-energise – change the way we do business; review all courses and what might be re-shaped in them; re-energize promotion; consider how to engage younger people.
4. Hand over the courses to overseas people and/or to a local group in Australia, and perhaps hand over leadership as well.

It was decided that we all need time to think and pray about the outcomes of the day. These courses of action will be considered again later in the year, most probably when the AGM is scheduled.

Please continue to pray for the school and all who are associated with the CSOE.

Maryann Street, Deputy Director



Photos of SOE team on their Reflection Day



GET INVOLVED

- ▶ Have you enjoyed taking part in one or more Catholic School of Evangelisation courses?
- ▶ Are you passionate about the role of the CSOE, to conduct courses for the training and formation of Catholic evangelisers and trainers of evangelisers?
- ▶ Do you want to be more involved? Become a Member. As a Member you will be part of a team and have access to training to help with courses. You will have a say in the future of the CSOE.
- ▶ Did you know that to become a member of the Catholic School of Evangelisation will only cost \$5 per year, with an additional \$10 joining fee for the first year?

To join please email info@schoolofevangelisation.org.au and you will be sent an application form.

How Intensive was the Intensive?

Even the lead up to the Intensive was intense with dramas regarding visa applications and flights etc. Thankfully, Emilia was burdened with all that, while I took off to Europe.

Speaking of Emilia, I doubt many would know that although she presented 20 of the 65 sessions, she also had around 40 other sessions prepared as a backup. She had also spent time working with other presenters in their preparations, as well as working several days a week and enjoying granny duty on the other days. And, these two weeks were her “holidays” from work!

Emilia and her husband also provided accommodation for Wency and Ramille from the

Philippines and on one of the free days, Emilia took them on a sightseeing day out.

Not, in any way, to undervalue the incredible work of our team of 10, I think it would be fair to say that Emilia’s involvement was by far the most intense.

Thank you to all the team for your assistance in the leadup, during the courses and even on the free days taking our overseas participants on sightseeing excursions. The pack-up and wind-up dinner was a wonderful effort too. God bless you all with a renewed energy and continued enthusiasm to spread the Good News.

Sandra Bishop



John the Beloved



Jesus in the Four Gospels



God's Presence –
Our Present



Beyond the Desert –
The Life of Moses

INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE - Testimonies

Lovelyn Hector – John the Beloved Course.

Jesus touched me in a way that has lead me to encourage others to visit the CSOE website to check on the courses and see if groups within the parish can be trained or are interested in attending. I cannot stop talking and thinking of CSOE.

I am now able to understand better by

* listening to others

* practicing meditation and slow breathing.

My personal experience during the pastoral formation program was the making of a heart and hands out of clay. I gave my heart to Jesus and He wanted my hands to be used for His work.



As

a leader of my own community, this course of CSOE helped me to evaluate myself, in the context of Moses' life, and my means of leadership to others. Like Moses, imperfections make us perfect to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of God's people — an important characteristic of His shepherds."

Jacek Holewa – MOSES COURSE

I personally found the Moses course thought provoking. I learned the Lord strung out Moses' relationship with him.... 40 years living in Midian looking after sheep.... 40 years in the desert.... Then never actually entering the Promised Land. Moses felt inadequate in approaching Pharaoh, so God gave him his brother Aaron to help him.

Being a servant of God is not a smooth ride.... Moses ended up not getting into the Promised Land because he disobeyed God in a few things, so God only permitted Moses to see the Promised Land from a distance. It seems to me that I learned from the Moses experience with God that He wants us to believe He will provide for all situations we experience in life.... however, we need to always communicate our situation to Him and follow His promptings and direction.

Ramille Ibarra —

THE LIFE OF MOSES



I can still remember the testimony about a woman devaluing the Old Testament, citing the New Testament as the ONLY testament needed. However, this course is one of the many reasons indicating that it remains an essential and relative account for our Christian faith. Personally, I find this course interesting, giving a unique perspective and way to form leaders, in context of the life of Moses. He is indeed known as one of the most favoured prophets and servant of God, talking to Him face-to-face, and witnessing God's righteous and glorious presence. But despite these graces, Moses faced a lot of obstacles and struggles in life. Probably a necessity to test one's faith, rather than just plainly speaking about it. Through his 'deserts', I am also able to reflect upon my own 'deserts' as a leader, and as His child. Like Moses, we experience troubles and challenges in life that strengthens our faith in God. Without these, we might overestimate, or even underestimate our faith in the LORD. Moses showed a genuine Christian model of leadership. Someone who is weak in the face of God, but strong in the face of the people. Someone who is humble enough to ask for help from the LORD and seek advice from others, regardless of their origin and background. Recognising God's voice from others is also an important aspect of leading. More than learning from Moses' life as the leader of Israel for 40 years, I am also able to reflect on my own life as a leader, as well. It is interesting how Moses, who lived millennia ago, shared common problems and struggles to the people of current generation. Thus, proving that God and his nature is eternal. We need Him in our own ministries, regardless of the time we are in, for He is eternal, and He is God.

INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE - Testimonies

Ramille Ibarra - JOHN THE BELOVED

How blessed I am to experience Jesus' love and healing in my life? The 'John the Beloved: Formation of Disciples' course of CSOE reminds the participants of what it really takes to be a disciple of Christ — a disciple who makes other disciples through the way of life they are living.

What do you think a Master would look like? A man distant to his servants? A man wearing gold robes, accessories, and sandals? A man who has all the earthly possessions and wealth? Think again. These stereotypes we have for a master do not apply to Jesus. Rather than being distant to His servants, he made them His brothers and co-ministers. Rather than wearing gold robes, accessories, and sandals, He wore regular linen robes, with no accessories, and a plain pair of sandals. Jesus showed an image of a Master far from what it is supposed to be. Jesus is a Master, yet we can be close with Him. Jesus is a Master who chooses to be with His servants, than to be distant. A Master who loves us — His disciples. May we also learn from the example shown by John the Beloved. A life of a true disciple, who is blessed enough to be with Jesus in the key moments of His life and ministry. A relationship built from personal connection and commitment to follow Him, wherever He goes. A relationship so strong that he was entrusted to take care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. May we be true disciples, who are ready to share the love of God and His Good News to others, forming more disciples in our community. A disciple who forms disciples from living a genuine Christian life.

Ramille Ibarra -

JESUS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

This course offers unique ways to be immersed in the Gospels written by the Four Evangelists —Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. It definitely changed my understanding on Jesus' ministries and teachings, with knowledge on the context of how the evangelists, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wanted to share Jesus in their Gospels.

Before attending this course, I found it hard to understand the different 'versions' of the Gospels. Why there are different accounts of the ministry of Jesus, with slightly varied contents? But this course enlightened me with a clear answer to this 'mind-boggling' question. The context in which the Gospel is written played an important role in displaying Jesus. St. Mark, though having written a relatively shorter Gospel, focuses on Jesus as the Good News. Rather than highlighting the Words spoken by the LORD, he used the acts and miracles of Jesus to introduce Him in his Gospel. Moreover, I also learned that Mark is Peter's secretary, and the one who accomplished the Gospel first. St. Matthew, on the other hand, introduced Jesus in his Gospel in a different way. He highlighted Jesus as the Teacher, and the fulfilment of

the Old Testament prophecies. Giving importance to Jesus as the Christ and the Messiah being referred to in the Old Testament books. Moreover, I am moved by how St. Matthew left his sinful life as a tax collector to follow Jesus. Leaving his worldly lifestyle for an eternal and spiritual one. St. Luke presented Jesus as the Merciful One. He who is compassionate with the poor and to the sinners, showing His universal love and mercy. St. Luke's investigative way of accumulating accounts of Jesus ministry is one of my main takeaways, as well. Lastly, St. John presented Jesus' important ministries. It is his advantage to reflect longer on Jesus' life, and witness firsthand His ministry. He was able to write about Jesus, in a perspective closer than anyone else. Nonetheless, the four accounts of the Gospel are inspired by the Holy Spirit and must be reflected upon. But with the knowledge of its context and historical past, we can witness Christ the same way the evangelists did.

Ramille Ibarra -

GOD'S PRESENCE - OUR PRESENT

The Good News or Joy of the Gospel cannot be contained in the heart of Christ's believer — it should be shared with others, especially to those who have not been reached. This CSOE course is close to my heart as I am able to evaluate my definition of genuine evangelisation. As an evangeliser, I should respond to the call of Pope Francis, for the Church, and for Christ.

Evangelii Gaudium is Pope Francis' first apostolic exhortation as the head of the Catholic Church. How beautiful it is to feel the joy of the Gospel and recognizing Christ's presence in the Word? I can never forget the cited line from this document that highlighted the necessity of Christians to share the joy of the Gospel to others. And it is true. How can we contain in our hearts the joy of sharing the Word of God? If we immediately share our success and other worldly happiness to others, why can we not share the ministry and offered salvation of the LORD, which is for eternity? May we respond willingly to the call of Pope Francis to be modern-day evangeliser. The world is a lot different, nowadays. The faith of the people is slowly being shifted to other tangible things — *such as Science and Technology. As Christians, we are grateful for it, but may we be reminded that the LORD is much more superior than these fields. He is the Alpha and the Omega. Thus, we should give Him back the glory. May we share Christ to others, effectively and creatively. Sharing Christ by not imposing our faith and threatening others, but by sharing the Word of God through deeds and actions. If we are a genuine Christian living the same way as Christ, we will be an effective instrument of God's love for others. Seeing Christ in us, rather than sharing Him in words undevoted, is much better*" (Pope Francis)

May we continuously share the joy of the Gospel to others!

International Intensive bearing fruit in PNG

Evelyn Kunda – Goroka PNG:

I am very happy and interested in this Evangelisation School because God is happy when I am sorry for my sins. In this School course I recognise myself that God is the Father of Love. He will never forget me. He wants to forgive me and He waits for me. He has compassion and mercy for me so now I know myself completely about God's love. I am like a lost son. Thank God for sending His Son to die for us. I am happy for this School. I recommend and ask that all the nine Catholic Parishes in Goroka can get this School of Evangelisation to bring back many Catholics to the Church and save souls. Thank you Fr Adam and God bless you. "Allow myself to be loved by God".

New Life Course - Theresia, Goroka PNG.

Fr Adam was the main facilitator and three other lay volunteers who participated in helping out with the course. There were forty participants who came from different parishes in the Diocese of Goroka. The topic was New Evangelisation and the input given was on the works and functions of the Holy Spirit.

Topic 1 – Session was on God loves you personally.

Topic 2 – Session was on what is sin.

Topic 3 – Session was on salvation in Jesus.

Topic 4 – (a) Faith
(b) Conversion
(c) Jesus, Lord my God.

Topic 5 – (a) Promise of the Holy Spirit
(b) Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Topic 6 – The community of faith.

I attended all the sessions and was very attentive to the different sessions of the course. I saw video clips and wrote prayers and did rituals after each session. All these activities and the powerful talks inspired me deeply. I truly felt that the Lord had come to me personally and I felt the sweetness of each Word of the Lord. Just by listening to the talks I felt touched by it. I heard God saying to me, *"Theresia, I love you so much. Do not feel ashamed of your anger rising up. I am carrying you."* Upon hearing this insight I felt lighter and some joy and happiness overwhelm me.

Teachings were simple but with so much deep meaning and has made me change right away in some of my sins or wrong doings. I came to realise where I was in the light of God. I claimed Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, whether I live or die I belong to the Lord.



Thank you Fr Adam and the helpers for the way you presented this course so powerfully. May God bless you. I have asked other members of the course and they too have many meaningful experiences with the Lord. I feel each one in the course has got the fire of the Holy Spirit burning in them too.

Song: Amen, we affirmed. Amen, we encourage. Amen, we bless and we celebrate for Jesus is our Saviour and the Lord.

Could I suggest you give this course to the youth of today because your presentation has more activities, fun and is inspiring for personal conversion in the proclamation of the Word of God in today's times.



SCOTLAND REPORT – Sr Mary Gianna

We have been offering the Philip Course, Emmaus Course and John the Beloved for several years as part of a diocesan discipleship formation programme in the diocese of Aberdeen, Scotland. These weekend retreats have taken place at beautiful Kilcoy Castle near Inverness, which is owned by a generous friend and benefactor.

The retreatants have had powerful encounters with Jesus, the Gospel and the Church and so we keep running these retreats every year. I remember one person with tears in her eyes after hearing the talk on God's Love in the Philip Course saying, "I've never heard this before." She finally had the love of God proclaimed to her and it touched her so deeply.

Also a Mother's Prayer Group started after one of these retreats years ago and the women are still meeting to pray together, having formed lasting bonds of friendship based in faith. Many have experienced internal healing and a deep sense of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The goal is for the participants to develop their relationship with Jesus and as a result to cultivate a missionary heart that is committed to evangelisation. We are so grateful to the Catholic School of Evangelisation for creating and sharing these transformative courses!

Margaret Fraser –

A participant in 'John the Beloved' course stated – One of the blessings of the 'John the Beloved' retreat was coming away really renewed in faith and believing that God is with me, in my heart all the time and that the Holy Spirit is guiding me.'

Juliane Graham —



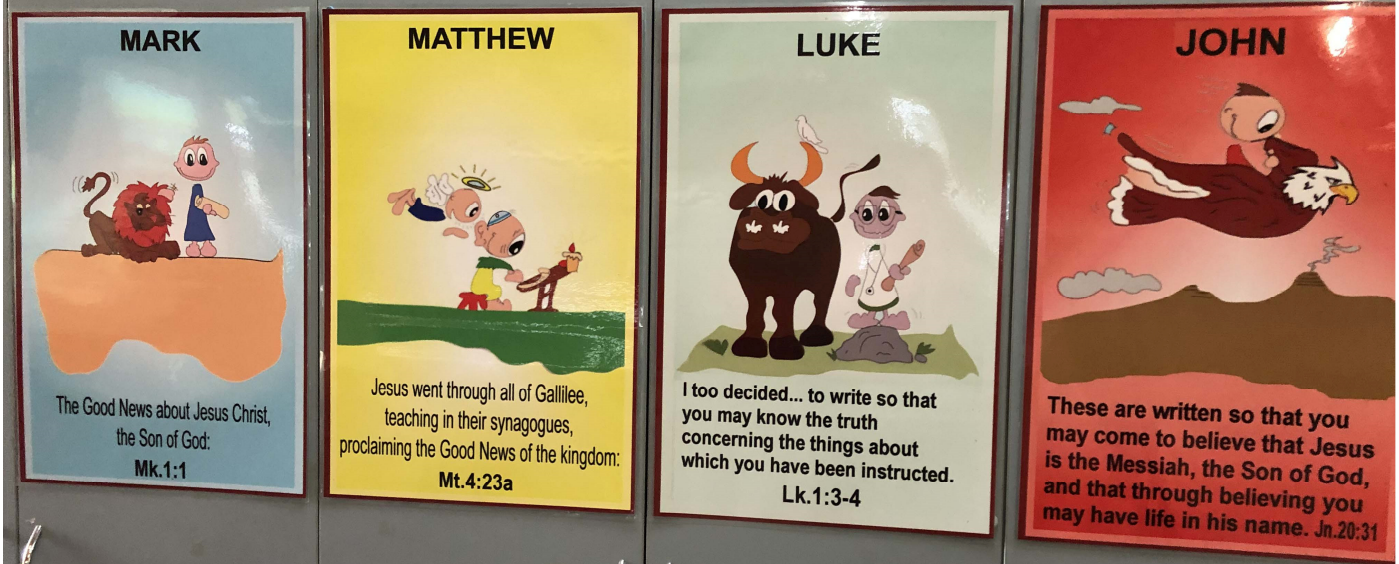
All three retreats were extremely valuable in growing my faith. The material really made the Gospel come alive and inspired me to action many changes I have been wanting to make in my prayer and family life. Additionally, I met many women who are facing similar challenges with living the faith in a secular culture, and received much inspiration on how to navigate motherhood from women young and old.

Dominic Haye —

I found the retreats invaluable in supporting me on my faith journey.

I arrived at the first event demoralized feeling lost and a little world-weary. A few days later, leaving the retreat I felt renewed, had a strong bond of fellowship with the other participants and friendships in Faith that have continued to develop beyond the event. I returned to my Parish with a renewed sense of purpose, greater trust in the Lord, and the understanding of developing a personal

JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPELS - Banner



Intensive Courses

.... By Patsy Heffernan

JOHN THE BELOVED – Forming Disciples.

This course focused on Jesus forming and instructing all who would listen to His teaching. He came to establish the Kingdom of God. He taught his Apostles and their successors in turn, how to teach us. The three days of intensive study of Jesus was a rare chance to examine my relationship with my Saviour.

MOSES

By receiving a detailed description of Moses' life and his relationship with God, the Father, I became aware of many similarities in my response to God in my life. I am glad I did it. By observing Moses' strong belief in God, and then, how he had many failures, I am able to focus on the many times I have turned away from God and indulged myself. The 4-day study of Moses' life has given me a new understanding and appreciation of trusting and building my closeness to God, the Creator.



Thanks Sandra to you and all the presenters and back-up members who gave of their time and expertise. It was inspirational!

CONGRATULATIONS

To our CSOE Chaplain Fr. Brendan Lane on the occasion of your 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the priesthood. May you continue to be blessed in your ministry.



FR. BRENDAN LANE
A PRIEST OF GOD'S PEOPLE
ORDAINED
25th August, 1973
ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL
Melbourne
GOLDEN JUBILEE
25th August, 2023
ST MARY'S PARISH
Dandenong



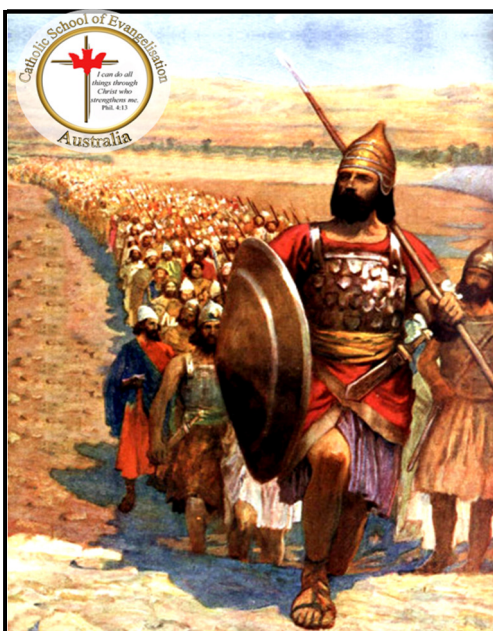
*"If God is for
us, who is against
us.... who shall
separate us from the
love of Christ."
"Let us pray for one
another"*

Romans 8 v 31-35



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THE WITNESS



GIDEON'S ARMY

A big THANK YOU to the generous people who have made a financial commitment to assist the ongoing running of the CSOE, 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 payments please contact:**

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Ph. 9870 7625
Email: jacekholewa@hotmail.com

CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION PROGRAM 2023 & 4

21 st —22 nd October	'Eucharist—Source & Summit of our Life'	St. Joseph's, Quarry Hill, Bendigo Book at: https:// www.trybooking.com/CLSSY
22 nd & 29 th November, 6 th December	'Meet Mark, His Gospel & His Jesus'	Zoom meeting, book at: Book at: https://www.trybooking.com/ CLYVL
25 th —27 th November	'John the Beloved'	Youth at Imus, Philippines
24 th & 31 st January 7 th & 14 th February 2024	'Reflecting on the Hebrew Letters'	Zoom meeting, book at: https://www.trybooking.com/CLYSX

Courses subject to confirmation and may change. Please contact local co-ordinator for further information.