



The Witness

Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

May 2011 Newsletter

Bishop Joe Memorial Reunion

.... By Gerri Boldrini & Pat Kelly

‘When we discover Jesus we discover the promised land.’

Those were the final words in Bishop Joe’s Scripture talk on November 13. Bishop Joe did not only discover Jesus but was His close companion and disciple. Through our pain and sorrow at losing this wonderful man these words must bring some comfort to our hearts. We know he is with His beloved Jesus.

‘To inflame every heart with the love of God.’

And to bring each one of us to this place was his life’s work. On this path he made many friends and was deeply loved. We may now have a glimpse on how bereft the disciples felt when Jesus died and the Christians when they said their final goodbye to Paul.

Bishop Joe was many things to many people. World renowned and in great demand he always had time for every person he met. He remembered names and family events. He was mentor and friend, a ‘people’s Bishop’ and a true people person. We were greatly blessed by the presence of this wonderful man and having him as our Bishop even though our time with him was cut short.

‘Larger than life’

Was one media comment. He may have been small in stature but was a giant in his work for Jesus and the Church. He loved the Scripture days he gave in the Sandhurst Diocese and talking about the Scriptures and his beloved Jesus was never work to him but a real joy.

Goodbye, beloved friend, mentor

and Bishop until we meet again.

Gerri Boldrini, Co-Ordinator, Catholic School of Evangelisation, Sandhurst Diocese.

These thoughts expressed by Gerri Boldrini reflect the feelings that so many people had towards Bishop Joe Grech. He was

greatly loved as a man who did his best to use his gifts to bring people to Jesus. As a priest and bishop he had the vision to want to go beyond this to train others to bring people to Jesus. He did not have a clerical view of Church, he had the desire and the trust to want the laity to take a leadership role in the work of evangelisation.

The natural place for the lay person is in the world proclaiming the reality of the Risen Jesus by their actions and words. Their actions witness to the fact that Jesus is alive in their life and their words invite others to make the same commitment so that Jesus becomes alive in their life as well.

The challenge for us as graduates of the School of Evangelisation is to make Bishop Joe’s dream of the Catholic Church as an evangelising Church a reality. The same Holy Spirit that motivated and inspired Bishop Joe wants to inspire and motive us. We have a choice, we can sit in the grandstand and admire people like Bishop Joe or we can get out onto the field and



join them.

With these thoughts in mind and with a real desire to preserve the memory of Bishop Joe as the founder of our Catholic School of Evangelisation it has been decided to hold a special reunion day on **Saturday July 23rd at the CCR Centre in North Fitzroy.** The purpose of this reunion is to bring together all

those who want to continue the work of Bishop Joe as active evangelisers. The day will focus on the three elements. First Kerygma – we need to know the kerygma and know how to share it. Second Charisma – we need to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and to share our Testimony as a witness to Jesus alive in our life. Third Koinonia - we need to experience Jesus alive in his brothers and sisters, the Body of Christ, as we come together in joy and friendship to celebrate the wonder of being able to call God our Father.

Let’s make this Reunion day a day of re-birth for the School of Evangelisation. Let’s recapture the vision of Bishop Joe and re-commit ourselves to a lifestyle of evangelisation. We will be joined by Fr Brendan Lane, Rector of Corpus Christi seminary, who is a great supporter of the School. I certainly will be looking forward to renewing friendships and sharing many memories and I am sure that this reunion will be a wonderful testimony to the work of Bishop Joe.

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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 National Executive Committee of the School of Evangelisation do not necessarily endorse opinions expressed in articles within this publication.

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May God bless you!

School of Evangelisation MISSION STATEMENT

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

- ▶ FORM DISCIPLES
- ▶ TRAIN EVANGELISERS
- ▶ ESTABLISH PARISH EVANGELISATION TEAMS.

Love LOVE!

One of the great saints of the past, I think it was St Francis of Assisi, was out walking with his brothers one day when he broke down in tears and gut wrenching sobs. His alarmed brothers rushed to him and asked, "Brother Francis what's the matter?" St Francis lamented over and over again "LOVE isn't loved! LOVE isn't loved!"

St Francis had such a love for God that the thought that there were so many people around who never even thought of God, let alone loved him that it broke his heart. St John tells us that God is Love and that God so loved us that he didn't even spare his own son but sent him to die for our sins so that we could receive eternal life. Greater love has no man that he would lay down his life for a friend but, as St Paul says, Jesus loved us so much that he laid down his life for us while we were his enemies.

Often in our Christian walk the focus is on me, we know how much we need Jesus in our life, we know how completely dependant we are on him. Even when we reach out to others, to share our faith in Jesus, the focus is on them and their overwhelming need for God. How often do we just put the focus on God? How often do we just praise him, worship him and give him the adoration he deserves just because he is God? How often do we love LOVE for no other reason than the fact than God is LOVE.

This is what should motivate us to evangelise, we have encountered pure LOVE in Jesus Christ and we want to respond to that love with love. We want to gives others, especially our family and friends and those we love, the opportunity to be caught up in that embrace of love so that we could all together love LOVE.

The fact that the word love is overused and thrashed to death in every corny pop tune or advertising jingle doesn't make it less real. We are made for love, to love and to be loved and the satisfaction of that fundamental human need is only found in our relationship with God. God is love and we only find our true selves when we enter into that relationship of love with God.

Open your heart now to the all Holy God and simple say to him:

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; I love you.
Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: I love you.



Bishop Joe Grech - Our Best Friend

By Maria Luff

Today we received a card from England, it said, "We are all so very sorry for the loss of a truly lovely man, our thoughts are with all of you." Love, from Dimpy & family.

You may say why we are writing this, well; a few years ago we had the pleasure and privilege of spending a day with Bishop Joe in London. We took him to Hampton Court Palace which he thoroughly enjoyed. We also showed him the hotel where we had our wedding reception which he often referred to after. After searching for 40 years we traced our best man Dimpy, who had served with John in the Royal Navy, he decided to come and visit us. When Bishop Joe heard this immediately he said "I would love to meet him, bring him for lunch one day." OK, we arranged a day, and I might add Dimpy not being very familiar with our faith although he didn't say so at the time, thinking he would be a very pompous kind of man, was a little apprehensive, but then so very surprised.

On the day we called Bishop Joe to make sure everything was OK. "Of course" he said, "see you at the house 12.30pm." To Pauline's (Housekeeper) total amazement we arrived, he had forgotten to mention it to her, very embarrassed she invited us in, got us a drink and went to the shops. We all laughed so much, I helped prepare lunch and we had a great time. On the way home Dimpy shared with us what a wonderful person he was, how he felt so comfortable in his presence and said what he loved about him was the fact he was human, "human" just like us. He returned to the UK telling everyone how proud he was that he had met a Bishop who was such a lovely person even though he barracked for Manchester United! Well no

ones' perfect!! Bishop Joe made such an impression on him that it caused him to change a lot of ideas regarding his faith. And even just by telling his family and friends about this lovely person, Bishop Joe, in his own way he was evangelizing, spreading the Word. Another person has been touched!! Praise the Lord!! Even though he only knew him for a few hours!!

I am sure all of you have your special stories, special memories with Bishop Joe, I know for us we have many, one of the things that really touched me was how kind he was to every one making us all feel so special. In 1996 when we were on pilgrimage in Holy Land, he was like a mother hen with all her chicks taking great care of our needs. One time we realized one of the pilgrims had been left behind and another tour guide had to bring him to us at the next town. After that Bishop Joe did a head count every time we got on the bus, there were 54 of us!

John was unable to come with me because of work commitments, but when he called me Bishop Joe said, "Why doesn't he join us in Jerusalem?" Unbeknown to me they plotted secretly like two little kids to do just that. When John arrived Bishop Joe hid him in his room relaxing having a beer. All the hotel staff knew but I had no idea until dinner time when Bishop Joe announced we had special guest who had come a long way to be with us. To my absolute amazement it was John! Bishop Joe never stopped making people feel very special.

In January I met some fellow pilgrims at the conference and we shared so many stories. What a blessing, what a treasure we had in our midst. It was a privilege to have known him as a very dear friend, work colleague, and

Spiritual advisor.

I could write a book but I will finish here with a poem on our card from Dimpy

"There is a time to weep and a time to mourn and the darkest hour is just before dawn. And the tears, the sorrow, the hurt and the pain, make you feel you could never be happy again. Yet the sun will still rise on each fresh new morn and the memories of the love you knew will comfort you your whole life through."

On Tuesday 28th December 2010 we received a call to say our Bishop Joe was on life support. For days the Hospital kept saying: no calls, no visitors, but this time we decided to go in anyway. We were there when the clock struck three, and when we heard the sad sad news we were outside ICU praying the novena. We went in and hugged him, saying our goodbyes, telling him we loved him and we had the privilege of blessing him with some holy oil from Jerusalem.

Good bye to our dearest friend and brother in Christ. Thank you for all you taught us. You caused me to read the Scriptures, you caused me to love the scriptures, to study and teach them to the best of my ability.

One time you told us that on your epitaph it would be nice if people said "Ah there's Joe, he was a nice fellow." But what he would really like is:

"Ah there's Joe nice fellow! & didn't he make our hearts burn for Jesus"

Well dear Bishop Joe you certainly did that for me, each time you shared Gospel message my heart truly was on fire for Jesus. John & I will do our best to pass on all you have taught us. Until we meet again, goodbye dear friend and Pastor.



GOOD NEWS ...By Mary Sellars

The 2nd weekend in April was special as the 'Good News' was coming to Noarlunga SA. Pat Kelly came from Victoria to present the two day course and with Carmen Sylvester, turned on an amazing weekend with many 'light-bulb' moments.

In 1John: 1-3 we can be certain that Jesus wants us to share our faith with others. This is evangelisation, but in order to do this we have to know Jesus and allow ourselves to be guided by His Holy Spirit.

Pentecost Sunday reminds us that the Holy Spirit sent the apostles out of the upper room to spread the Good News. We have to be prepared to do the same. It's our vocation to simply witness and allow the Holy Spirit who is the principle agent of evangelisation to empower us.

The Good News = Kerygma and the six steps to embracing it are:

1. Experience God's love.
2. Sin is a barrier to God's love.
3. Salvation through Jesus.
4. Faith & Conversion: Believe & proclaim Jesus as our Saviour.
5. Receive the Holy Spirit.
6. Join the Church Community to experience a deeper relationship with Jesus.

The salvation of us and others is much bigger than sin and God has a plan to enfold everyone to Him. Sometimes there is risk, but God knows all our limitations, our lack of trust, our fears and sins, but the most exciting and empowering knowledge of all is that He is still willing to use us.

A prayer to start the day would be the prayer of the evangelist: *Holy Spirit anoint my eyes, lips, ears and heart to evangelise all who I see today.*

We are to be the bearers of the Good News, the messengers sent in the name of Jesus. Always it is Jesus who does the healing though. We can join a community of friends at a prayer meeting with fellowship and a simple meal. This is known as 'Agapito', incorporating prayer, formation and teaching. From this will stem evangelisation and friendship with hope as the core.

The Adelaide school is very grateful to Pat Kelly for his willingness to enthusiastically evangelise all who are open to hear the word of God.

The Power of Intercession

By Mary Sellars

At Adelaide's first 'Faith on Fire' seminar for 2011, we welcomed Anne-Marie Gatenby from Sydney on 2nd April. The previous night she spoke at the Monastery at a joint evening with Catholic Charismatic Renewal Leaders and Team members of the SOE.

The topic for the Faith on Fire Seminar was Intercession. The need for it, the power of it and the fruits from it. These are some of the thoughts that Annemarie so beautifully and powerfully imparted to a group of thirty-eight people:

What is Intercession? It is the power of prayer interceding for another, standing in the gap or pushing against evil forces. It is similar to sending an official petition to a king or standing against or on behalf of someone. The greatest intercessor is Jesus who stands before the Father always interceding for us.

There are many areas of intercession and God will use us differently as He does with our gifts received from the Holy Spirit.

Some ways where intercession can be manifested are in administration, mercy motivated, crisis, warfare, evangelisation, prophetic word, prayer lists and rosary which is an important family prayer.

In order to be effective in intercession we need to have a relationship with Jesus, to walk with Him, to discern the heart of God. This can happen in praise and worship in silent reflection and meditation and of course in prayer.

Small discussion groups proved popular and fruitful as ideas and personal experiences were exchanged.

After a shared lunch we were privileged to have Fr. Peter Dunn celebrate Mass. This is always a



very special experience for those attending the seminars. His homilies are always gentle and full of inspiration. We pray God grants him good health to carry on the work planned for him.

Another Spirit filled day that God had prepared for us.

Thank You
Annemarie and Fr Peter.

NEW MELBOURNE LEADER - Tony Grieve

My name is Tony Grieve, I'm an accountant and live in Healesville. My wife Ann and I have been married for 40 years - we have four children and three grandchildren

For some years now I have felt a call to evangelise but did little about it. About two years ago this call became quite intense so I attended the Catholic School of Evangelisation's John the Baptist (Personal Testimony) course at Bennetswood. Now due to the generosity of spirit and courage of the Melbourne team I find myself as the new leader in Melbourne.

Thanks to Adrian Commadeur

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the long and devoted service given to the Melbourne School over many years by Adrian Commadeur who because of care commitments to his lovely wife Anne has passed the baton of leadership to me. I ask for your prayers and support that I may in some way be able to live up to this responsibility of leading here in Melbourne the spreading of the Good News of the Power of the Love of God, which has been passed on with such conviction over the years by Adrian and the Team .

Hopes for the Melbourne School

The Melbourne School of Evangelisation is in a

transition, and awaiting opportunities for Parish Evangelisation to open up, with special emphasis on training people to witness by testimony and presenting the Kerygma..

1. As a first step in this process and as a way of annually remembering our founder Bishop Joe Grech, we will be holding the inaugural **'Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Reunion'** on **23rd July 2011 at the CCR Centre** for all past graduates of the School. Emphasis for the day to be on evangelization through
 - (a) giving personal testimony,
 - (b) presenting the Power of the Love of God using the kerygma.

All other interested parties welcome.

2. The school is sending me to Italy at the end of July to attend a two week course on evangelization given by the Koinonia John the Baptist Community. This is a very exciting development for my personal faith journey which I hope and pray will bear fruit for the Melbourne School.

Please keep me and the School in your prayers.



NSW CO-ORDINATORS' MEETING

At the end of April the NSW co-ordinators, representing the Sydney, Pymble and Wollongong Teams met at the CCR Centre in Rozelle. In reviewing the work of the School in the last six months and in trying to judge where the Holy Spirit is leading us, the discernment was that there was a definite move to work more closely with the prayer groups of the Catholic

Charismatic Renewal. We feel that we can make a real contribution to the prayer groups in helping them to grow into more committed and effective evangelising communities. The prayer group members are very open to the Holy Spirit and have a great desire to be more effective evangelisers.



This does not mean that the School will not be available to offer courses to the wider parish community. If an opportunity presents itself we will be only too delighted to present evangelisation and formation courses wherever they are requested.

By Pat Kelly

SALVATION HISTORY – AN EASTER REFLECTION

By Len Forster

The richness of our scripture readings over this Easter period leads us to appreciation and celebration of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord and saviour Jesus. It also brings to question, not only the why and how of this redemption by the Son of God, but also on our own life and existence and our relationship with our creator.

Nobody was around to write down a history as the world unfolded. Even if they had been, the knowledge, skill and means to do it would not have actually developed for millions of years anyway. Thanks to human intelligence, revelation by God and our scientific development we are able to gain great insight and an albeit incomplete, knowledge of both the material world and our salvation history. We are never going to have the complete detail like an instruction manual or scientific formula, but the overall picture is instructive, satisfying and certainly able to be believed.

We are able to assume from all we now know scientifically, that millions and millions of years ago, matter came into being out of nothing which is truly the nature of creation. It is logical to assume that something in the nature of the 'big bang' theory occurred whereby out of this nothing, the materials, chemicals and elements which are the building blocks of the universe the world and everything in it including living beings, evolved as part of that creation plan. It was originally formless.

At the very start of the bible we learn in Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*". The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is therefore both the architect and the builder of this plan of creation. Still in the same chapter of Genesis 1:26 we read,

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" At this time, the creation since in God's image, had to be and indeed was perfect, until man himself destroyed the status quo.

Continuing through Genesis, we learn of the temptation of our first ancestors Adam and Eve, their sin of disobedience, their shame and the consequence of that original sin, of not thereafter being able to bask in the favour of God. Pain, suffering, toil and death itself became the lot of man as we read Genesis 3.19, "*By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.*"

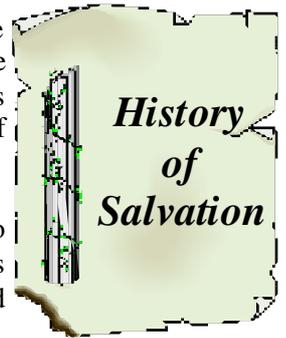
Our omnipotent, magnificent, loving and merciful God of all that is good did not abandon us. Though we continued to sin He built and guided the human race. We remember Noah and his family, faithful to God, singled out for rescue in the time of flood, after mankind had brought destruction on itself. Then Abraham became known as our father in faith, as our ancestor from whom we all descended and the races of the world of today grew and prospered. The still wayward chosen people, known as Israel, who descended through Isaac, for their unfaithful and wayward actions, finished in Egypt.

Their Exodus under the leadership of Moses, is celebrated in our ceremony of Holy Thursday night in their ritual of the Passover. In this we see our God again rescuing his people to signify His faithfulness and mercy. Their chequered growth and development through Judges and then Kings, sometimes in victory and sometimes defeat, in their own land or in exile was a chronicle of their

own failure to embrace the goodness and mercy of God continually offered to them. In His mercy, God sent

numerous prophets to guide them, but they even killed some of them rather than listen to the message they did not want to hear, because it would intrude on their idea of material progress, success and fame among the other nations. Yet as recorded in the prophet Isaiah 54:10 "*Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,*" and in the next chapter 55:3, "*I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.*" Perhaps even more expressive and evocative of this prevailing intention of our God and creator is the proclamation of Ezekiel 36:26, "*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*"

The scriptures we have just assimilated in our Easter Triduum relate the events by which the promises of this divine covenant were fulfilled by our God. At the appointed time, following the prophet John the Baptist, a child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin from the line of King David as prophesied. His name was Jesus. He spent His lifetime demonstrating the love and compassion of God, His Father, in healing, teaching and setting the most perfect example for His people. Yet He was opposed, persecuted and executed by crucifixion in the most unspeakable miscarriage of justice the world has known. Continued p.7 ...



"The Risen Jesus is with Us"

..... By Patricia Henwood

I would say I have been a cradle Catholic all my life, educated in Catholic schools most of my years of study. I went to Mass and confession regularly and prayed but... I really did not have personal relationship with Jesus. I believe that my faith was more an exercise in routine, and head knowledge not a loving relationship with Jesus. To me He was someone who I believed and prayed to when things got really tough.

I believe my journey in building a real, living relationship with Jesus began later in my adult life when my faith was seriously challenged and my quiet and mundane world fell apart. My husband of 28 years, died suddenly in my arms, at 56 from a massive heart attack, after three major heart surgeries. Then four years later, I lost my only daughter to the horrible disease of anorexia and suicide. It was a devastating time for me, like I had been hit over the head with a baseball bat. I wondered what God was doing to me. To lose a beloved daughter to suicide, as well as a husband dying in my arms was more than I could endure. I was angry, hurt, guilt ridden and just completely lost. How I got through all the funerals, fights with lawyers over business deals of my husband that I knew very little about, I know now it was by the grace and mercy of Jesus but then... I was searching and completely overwhelmed.

During my daughter's illness, the Lord put me in contact with our new parish priest Fr. T when I arrived at a weekday Mass lost bewildered and afraid, a priest who fortunately had great compassion for me. He came and saw Jenny in hospital and offered his support, which was more than I received from the doctors at the time. He anointed Jenny a few days before she actually died and told me about the Divine Mercy of Jesus; and gave me the prayer of the Divine Mercy to pray all the time while she was dying. Little did I know then, that this powerful and beautiful prayer would be such a great blessing for my daughter and my life. As she was dying, while holding her hand and watching the expression on her face, I saw through the window, a great light shining on her. I somehow knew that the Merciful Jesus met her and embraced her, for the appearance on her anguished face relaxed as if all the suffering was gone and a sense of peace came over her whole body. She had chosen the most excoriating way to die, by setting herself on fire and 50% of her body was burnt. With the anorexia, which had weakened her body terribly, she had little or no hope of surviving what she had done to herself.

After Jenny's death I was devastated, blaming myself for her illness. I was desperate, but somehow I was drawn to the devotion of the Divine Mercy which I continued to say every day. I got involved in the ALPHA course, which Jen and I were planning on doing. Attending the ALPHA Course I discovered the Holy Spirit and His power to heal my broken and battered heart. I joined the charismatic prayer group and on one weekend retreat I encountered the Holy Spirit, who flooded my poor aching soul with such love, peace and healing, that my life began to change for the better. I

began to experience the living risen Jesus who loved me no matter what I had done in the past.

I must have experienced what the apostles experienced on that Pentecost Sunday with the infilling of the Holy Spirit at that retreat, for when the eight people laid hands on me and prayed over me, the warmth and fire of the Spirit filled my soul with such love, joy and peace, that I had never known before. It was astounding, beautiful and overwhelming. After that Jesus became my sole love and service for Him, my greatest desire. My faith was no longer just a mundane routine and my sufferings and trials no longer obstacles in my life but means of drawing closer by my Lord.

So with renewed hope I began my journey to discover more fully my beloved Lord Jesus. I travelled to many holy places, including Poland, Rome, the Holy Land, and Medjugorje. Reading and mediating on Holy Scripture became an important part of my new prayer life, listening to Jesus. The Holy Eucharist, Mass and Adoration and Reconciliation became more important to me as a means of staying close to Jesus. I had also developed a burning desire to serve the Lord and became very involved in my parish of Pymble doing Mother's Prayers, being a Catechist in high school and primary schools, working and leading youth groups, and helping with sacramental programs most of which I still do today. My love of Jesus has increased and my desire to serve Him has filled me with such joy, peace and love. I have experience the living Jesus and I will serve and follow Him and proclaim His mercy, love, forgiveness and healing for all, till the day I die.

He is alive in our church, in the sacraments and in the Eucharist - the risen Christ is with us as He promised! I have experienced Him through the eyes of my heart. How I would love to help you find Him too!!! Let me help you discover His great love for you no matter where you are right now in your life or what you have done. He is knocking at the door of your heart. Won't you let Him in and experience his love and mercy and a changed life?

History of Salvation - An Easter Reflection

Continued from p.6

Immediately following that Passover celebration of the Jews nearly two thousand years ago, the most significant event in all of history, the salvation of all mankind, our salvation by the redemption through the voluntary sacrifice of the life and blood of the Son of God, was accomplished. This salvation is once only and for all time. Each individual man or woman has to choose to accept this or not and make Jesus the Son of God our Lord in our repentance and our following in His path.

If we choose, we are saved to eternal life with Jesus, as we read in St. Paul's letter to the Romans 6:8, "*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*"

BEING JOHN THE BAPTIST

. . . . By Lucy Grasso



Our Lady Queen of Peace Prayer Group, Greystanes - Witness course

In February – March the Sydney Team presented the John the Baptist Testimony course over four weeks to the Our Lady Queen of Peace prayer group, at Greystanes, during their weekly morning meeting. The prayer group encourages its members to share testimonies each month and this course was the ideal way to teach them how to give an effective testimony.

The course was also presented to the Jesus the Healer prayer group in Bossley Park as a one day seminar in April. The prayer group members found the course beneficial and it made them hungry for more formation in kerygmatic evangelisation.

Some comments by participants -

- This course will provide the proper guidelines in making a Christ-centred testimony that is interesting, concise and bring the person being witnessed to Christ.
- The course is so enlightening, informative, inspiring and truly formative. It is an effective tool of

evangelisation which the world needs today.

- We have been commissioned by Jesus to *"Go out and be my witness."* This course enlightened me how to be an effective witness. The course has a good structure, was easy to understand and was well delivered. This has been encouraging and will help me to take Jesus' command more seriously and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I feel I will be emboldened to witness more effectively.
- The course has given me the structure, the method and important elements of a true testimony that is effective for evangelisation.
- Overall the course has enlightened and broadened my mind to learn and be a witness to other people, to evangelise more people to become closer to God.

The John the Baptist course is a very effective way of learning to share your testimony. If you would like to do this short course in your parish or prayer group please contact us.



'Jesus the Healer' Prayer Group, Bossley Park - Witness Course

JESUS IS ALIVE - CHOOSE LIFE!

When I was twenty-eight years old I met a girl who would later become my wife. During this time I was a non practising **Christian** living against the law of sex before marriage. My girlfriend became pregnant and wanted to abort the baby. For the first time I was faced with a moral decision which I knew, from being raised as a **Catholic**, I had to do what was right in my heart, which was life.

My girlfriend went back to Japan and she was afraid and uncertain in what decision to make. I found myself praying for the first time sincerely, as I knew there was nothing I could do on a physical or psychological level and I needed **God** to intercede for me. I found myself praying in front of the tabernacle and had a vision of my girlfriend breast feeding. I felt a peace come over me and for the first time in the six week ordeal found a peace and knew internally that things would be fine.

Soon after this I was on a plane to Japan where many doors were opened which would have been closed if it was not for the intercession of the Blessed Mother and Jesus. I was married and our baby boy was born. We have since had a baby girl. I know in my heart if it were not for Jesus my son would not be here.

Michael

Everyone loved my father. His quiet dignified presence, warm smile and genuine sincerity when talking to people endeared him to young and old alike. So when my mother died very suddenly the Christmas of 1997 and he (as we all were) so devastated by her loss it was not hard to make the decision for my husband and I and our then three children to move in and look after him.

He was of a generation of men who did not cook but rather relied on their wives / mothers to be the homemakers. It was a win/win situation. Dad was wonderful with the children and to us, taking them to school, helping with homework, listening and spoiling them in the nicest possible way as all grandparents do.

Early in the new year of 1999 Dad suffered a heart attack and the next day I found out at forty-two years of age I was having another baby. This was not in the plan. The other three children were all at school and as working parents we felt that we had just finally "turned the corner" and were coming out of those difficult years of juggling working life with parenting and the enormous costs associated with childcare.



"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." Mk 9: 37

I was looking forward to getting a little more time "for me".

To add to this I had absolutely no idea what physical condition my father would be in after his heart attack and what level of care this seventy-eight year old man would need. I cried. I prayed to God and said to Him, "I hope that you know what you are doing. I certainly don't, and I need your help". I had a strong faith but this time I did not know how I was going to cope.

In addition because of my age, although I was in excellent health, my doctors told me that I was very much in the high risk category of having a baby with a disability. My husband is a Christian however not Catholic. He and I discussed our situation and decided I would not have any tests to determine whether the baby had any abnormalities and that we would accept whatever outcome was presented to us.

At this time I felt that everything was beyond my control and I put my life, my father's, my baby and my husband and family's future in God's hands.

My father ended up having a "single bi-pass" surgery to repair his artery which had caused the heart attack. He made a complete recovery in a very short time and was in wonderful health and the happiest of grandfather's when on the morning of 21st September 1999 **Anna**, a healthy and most beautiful little girl was born. There were no complications. She breezed into the world in two hours and the doctor never made the delivery but arrived in plenty of time to look, check and admire this absolutely perfect little being. I cried again. How miraculous. How Blessed were we. How could I have doubted His plan.

Anna is now 11 years old and enjoying everything a happy, healthy little girl should. She loves and is loved.

Her grandfather lived for another ten years, most of which was in good health, but certainly long enough to enjoy life and his family. He often thought that this little girl had many qualities that reminded him of her grandmother, his beloved wife. He enriched her life and her siblings beyond measure through love and faith in God.

The Lord most certainly did know what he was doing. Those events did change my life. I thank God every day for the blessings of my family and for giving me the faith to trust in Him.

Mary Ann

House of Prayer: My HOPE

. . . . By Anne Kelly

The House Of Prayer (HOPE) is a method of evangelisation based on a weekly home meeting developed by the Koinonia John the Baptist community. Pat and I experienced the HOPE meetings when in Europe last year. The HOPE is the first point of contact between believers and non believers or those who are not sure what they believe. The theory is that those who do not know Jesus come to the House of Prayer with all of their problems and with the prayer and encouragement received from the other participants they come to know Jesus as their Lord, Saviour and Friend.

The reality of the HOPE in my experience is that often we do not know many non believers or if we do we do not know how to handle them. As a committed Catholic I often felt that I was being too presumptuous to offer Jesus as a solution to life's problems because if that is what people wanted they would come to him by themselves. I failed to see the reality that some people have no idea who Jesus is or what he has done for us. They have never had a real experience of Jesus as a person and certainly have no idea who the Holy Spirit is or that the Father wants to talk to them.

After returning from Europe we made it a high priority to start a HOPE. We invited many people and had very little response. Of course we became discouraged and began to wonder what we were doing wrong. However we knew that God had given us this job and we remained faithful to the HOPE. Each week we met with the same few people feeling frustrated that we were failing to evangelize.

After twelve months of hosting a HOPE our fruit is this: One lady we were praying for throughout her battle with cancer died after being baptised a Catholic and coming to know Jesus as her personal friend. I believe she was looking forward to meeting him in person. Another of our members has been received into the Church at Easter and although already a Christian has found his home. He has a wonderful faith and often sees things slightly differently from the home grown

Catholics. He is a great encourager and has the gift of listening to the Lord and sharing his prophetic words.

We have established great friendships with each other and I am constantly surprised by the way the Lord lifts us up and also humbles us through each other. One of our members has become a really good friend who is always there with an offer of help in any way that is practical. Her generous spirit often astounds me. Another of our members is physically very frail but her faith has humbled me and I have come to see her as one of my mentor in the faith. Because we pray together we really have come to love each other.

I think the Lord is going to do greater things through the HOPE but at the moment He is teaching us not just to trust Him (that is easy) but to come to trust each other. He is teaching us that there is no correct way of doing or being, that what we need to focus on is Him. He wants the salvation of each one of us and our family and neighbours. We need to be faithful by learning to love each other as he loves us. That is admitting we are not perfect, not letting our egos or theology get in the way when we have the opportunity to share what God has done for us. Through the HOPE I can see the strength that God sees in others.

I have had a change of attitude through the HOPE as now I do not see Jesus as an optional extra for those who need Him. I see Him as the centre of our being and if we do not share Him with others we do not really love them. However I think there is a time when each individual is ready to receive the Good News. If the time is not right the seed will fall on rocky ground. While we are waiting for the right time to evangelise we need to be praying for that person and being their friend.

I recommend the House of Prayer as it keeps us focused on evangelisation and teaches us to love unconditionally. It gives us a good strong core of friends with whom we can share our joy and frustration and connects us to the early Christian community when they met in their homes and shared all with each other.

SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION PROGRAM 2011

DATE	COURSE	LOCATION	CONTACT
May 21 st - 22 nd	NEW LIFE	Waitara NSW	Jill: 02 9449 8098
May - June	JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPELS	Greystanes NSW	Lucy: 02 9670 4440
Aug 20 th - 21 st	EMMAUS	Noarlunga SA	Carmen: 08 8339 2573
September	EMMAUS	Ashfield NSW	Lucy: 02 9670 4440
Sept. 24 th - 25 th	TBA	Narre Warren Vic	Pat 03 5672 2772

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

LOVE EQUALS COMMITMENT

By Pat Kelly

Answering the call to follow Jesus and live as his disciple involves a life of loving commitment. This has many aspects but I would like to emphasis a few in the context of Gideon's Army.

The first is the call to daily prayer. Jesus is our friend and we need to speak with him every day, especially through the words of scripture. This involves the discipline of discipleship as we respond to the call to holiness. Often this is not easy but we can do it as the Holy Spirit draws us closer to Jesus so that we can do the will of the Father, just as Jesus did.

Second is the call to love our brothers and sister in Christ, as Jesus said, "They will know you are Christians by the love you have for one another." This love expresses itself in many ways such as the way we use our gifts and talents to take care of our brothers and sisters and by the way we reach out in friendship with the Good News to those who don't know Jesus.

Finally this way of life is marked by generosity with our time, our gifts and our financial resources.

Gideon's Army is one way we can be generous with our financial resources to support the work of evangelisation. Please be generous, keeping in mind the promise of Jesus that God our Father would look after our physical and financial needs if we "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

God Loves a Cheerful Giver. 2 Cor. 9: 6-11
"The point is this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. . . . He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us."

SOLDIERS FOR GOD – GIDEON'S ARMY

"Yahweh then said to Gideon, With the three hundred who lapped the water, I shall rescue you." Judges 7:7

Would you consider becoming a new member of the Gideon's Army appeal? \$100 annual subscription. New soldiers urgently needed!

Thank you to all existing members - May God bless you abundantly!



GIDEON'S ARMY	Thank you for filling out this form!
Please enrol me/us in Gideon's Army:	Please make cheques payable to: School of Evangelisation, and return them to: GIDEON'S ARMY School of Evangelisation P.O. Box 168 Wonthaggi, Vic. 3995 Enquiries: Pat Kelly ph. (03) 5672 2772
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To handle yourself, use your head;
To handle others, use your heart.

Sometimes all a person needs
is a hand to hold
and a heart to understand.

Bishop Joe Memorial Reunion

Saturday, 23rd July 2011

9.30am - 4.00pm.

CCR Centre

101 Holden St, Nth Fitzroy.