



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

The Witness

Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

December 2018 Newsletter

GREAT AND WONDERFUL ARE ALL YOUR WORKS LORD MIGHTY GOD (Apoc 15:3)

As we come to the end of our Church year and look forward to Advent, the Psalm from today's Mass reminds us of the mighty power of God and His wonderful works and ways. Verse 4 says, "*For the Lord comes. He comes to rule the earth. He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with fairness.*" A timely reminder from the Word as so much in the world around us depicts doom, gloom, darkness and despair.

The star in the night sky at Bethlehem and the joy and amazement shining on the faces of Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and Wise Men, not to mention the new born baby boy, fills our hearts with hope and anticipation that our world can change and our lives be filled with gratitude and love. This is God's promise to us and becomes flesh in our lives as we surrender each day to His Lordship – not always easy to do but The Spirit is ever present and available to help us.

How blessed we are to be part of the **Catholic School of Evangelisation!** Through participating in the various courses of the school, each of us has received our personal invitation to grow in grace and holiness. By continuing to be involved we are



able to share our gifts with others. Luke's words from today's gospel urge us on - "*Your endurance will win you your lives.*" (Luke 21:19) We are especially grateful to those who pray regularly for the work of the School.

On October 22nd we held our 2018 Annual General Meeting. At this meeting some changes were made to personnel. Carmen Sylvester resigned as Deputy Director of Committee of Management but retains her role as Adelaide Coordinator and Lucy Grasso resigned from her position as Sydney Coordinator. We thank Carmen and Lucy for the many years of service they have contributed to the School and ask God's very special blessings on them both. Our thanks and prayers go out to Eddie Grasso also. Fiona Fisher accepted the position of Deputy Director – thank you Fiona.

My grateful thanks to all who have worked tirelessly throughout 2018 to present the various courses and promote the School. May Our Dear Lord fill you all with His love and peace. I do hope each of you can experience a time of rest and refreshment during the holiday period.

Ann Serong

THE PHILIPPINES - TYPHOON of BLESSINGS

The fifty seminarians from the Mary Help of Christians College Seminary and aspirants who gathered for two days to do the '7 Young People in the Gospels' course in Dagupan City, Philippines.

See pages 3, 8 & 9 for more . . .



The Witness

This newsletter is published by the Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

ABN 133199185

Published three times a year.

Committee of Management:

Ann Serong	- Director
Fiona Fisher	- Deputy Director
Janine Witten	- Secretary
Beata Dawidowska-Gajda	- Treasurer
Janine Witten	- Editor
Julianne Hoffard	- Publisher

Please direct all correspondence to:

The Director
3 Sloans Road
Warrandyte
Vic 3113
Ph: 0437 127 326

Email: judith.serong@gmail.com

*Check out information about the
Catholic School of Evangelisation
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 email: janinepwitten@gmail.com

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

Melbourne CSOE Team In The Philippines

The Melbourne CSOE team had a very busy, but successful three weeks in the Philippines in September and October running eight courses and building on the work they had done there in 2017.

Both Archbishop Socrates and Bishop Daniel extended invitations to the team for return visits to present new courses in the future.



Photo above: Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas (Fr. Soc) centre with Melbourne team and Pastorelle sisters who supported them.



Above: San Fernando La Union Bishop Daniel Presto third from right with Melbourne team, Sr. Nelia, 2nd from left, and her Pastorelle sisters.

We thank the Melbourne team very much for the giving of themselves so generously to do the Lord's work. May they and their families be richly blessed.



A Land of Contrasts — By Miriam Markis

God of surprises! It's a term I've heard many times but I was not prepared for the invitation to accompany the Catholic School of Evangelisation's team on a mission to the Philippines recently. I wasn't as quick as Our Lady, who responded with an unconditional FIAT to the Angel's invitation. Nevertheless, after due discernment and not knowing fully what lay before me, I took the plunge and set off on mission for three weeks.

God sojourned with us. In all our travels around the main island it was the long and arduous road trip at night through Manila's traffic and highways before eventually arriving at our destination tired, but unscathed, at a sleepy 4.00 a.m. in the morning, that remains impressed in my memory. What a marvellous adventure! The other road trips during the three weeks stay were a breeze compared to that.

God is healer. And so it was that, although I was called to pray for the CSoE course participants when needed, that the Lord also began a good work in me, bringing me out of a place of previously unrecognised deep seated sadness and loneliness to where I was surrounded by loving concern by the team members and the wonderful naturally warm, unbelievably courteous, respectful and very loving Filipino people. I was especially touched also during 'The Fringe of His Garment' and the '7 Young People in the Gospel' courses which were the instrument of healing. It was during the times of silence before the Blessed Sacrament that I felt

the Lord's healing power and presence palpably. A highlight was also the unexpected visitation of the 1st class relics of St JPII & St Faustina which was a cause for great joy!

God is faithful. I saw the hand of God upon the Filipinos due to their great devotion to Him. I sensed His presence everywhere. During the daily very early morning Masses that are celebrated in beautifully decorated Spanish style churches that still dot the landscape and in the daily Masses celebrated throughout the courses as well. I was never more attentive to the Mass than when I was in the Philippines. I loved the recitation of prayers for the protection of the country after the Mass and thought it would be a wonderful idea if we could do that both in Australia and worldwide and admired their strong devotion to Our Blessed Mother.

God is Provider. Our everyday needs were attended to with much love and concern for our wellbeing by the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd, who certainly anticipated all our needs. There were many moments of humour and laughter and their hospitality was truly wonderful.

God of grace. Through His grace my heart has been prised open to love in return a people and place I honestly never thought about, but who hold a special place in His Heart and now mine. This land of stark contrasts has been indelibly printed on my heart. I thank God for the grace and opportunity to serve Him and grow in His Love.

The Eucharist Course - St. Joseph's and Holy Cross Parishes

By Trish Spiteri

I had a meeting with Father Varghese, Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Elsternwick, Vic, early in 2018 to brainstorm some ideas for his parish. This brought about an *Alpha* program for his Parish. Father Varghese then decided that the Alpha graduates should have ongoing nourishment, so 'Cells' was born and they are now part of a Cells of Evangelisation group.

Father Varghese wanted to educate and develop his Parishioners and after mentioning some of the courses that the School of Evangelisation run, *The Eucharist* course was then planned for November 2018. Some of the *Alpha* graduates were able to attend together with parishioners from St. Joseph's, Holy Cross and other Parishes. Parishioners that attended were astounded by the amount of information they learnt about the Eucharist. It intrigued them that there was so much to know about the Eucharist being the Source and Summit of Church life and so much in the Old and New

Testament prefiguring and promising the Eucharist. We hope that as Pope Saint John Paul II put it, each one of them went away *shaped by the Eucharist* and have drawn closer to God and are ready to assist others to do likewise.



Daniel's attempt at a group selfie almost fitted everyone in – pity about those who left early!

Celebrate Emmanuel 2018 - Westfield Tea Tree Plaza

By Carmen Sylvester

The day dawned with slight trepidation as to what awaited us as we start a new era of presenting Celebrate Emmanuel at a new Precinct. I have perused the place prior and the beautiful garden setting with lounge chairs and umbrellas scattered around the area plus coffee shops, eateries and a children's play area all recently launched, promised to be an ideal setting for our yearly Christmas outreach.

Children's gift bags packed with Godly material were all ready to go and our eager Santa's helpers were all smiles.



With our large banner with its message of 'Celebrate Emmanuel: The Reason for the Season' leaving no doubt in people's minds that we were there to remind everyone that Christmas is about Christ. That is of course besides the many times presenters unashamedly spoke about Christ and his message of salvation.

At the end of the concert I felt a deep gratitude for God's faithfulness as we try to serve Him and it was with elation that I left there, after the management of Tea Tree Plaza asked us if we could come back next year. God willing we will be there in 2019.



The new precinct



The children sing their heart out

Our presenters once again outdid themselves and certainly the saris of the South India Church Choir brought a lot of admiration and festive feel to the day.



Bags ready to go

Blessings of Christmas to all.
Carmen Sylvester



Colours of India



Getting ready for action

Famine & Feast - Faith on Fire Seminar

By Carmen Sylvester

It seems ironic that when we are dished out a feast of Spiritual food, we get a famine response. Just a small gathering of people gathered on the 6th of October for our last Faith on Fire Seminar for the year and it must be the first time in my memory that only twenty people gathered for this day offering praise and worship, teachings, fellowship and a grand finale with the celebration of the Eucharist. Our guest speaker Fr Philip Marshall, the Administrator Delegate, seemed rather pleased that he could call us all closer to him for a more intimate time of reflection & sharing.

Like a little child: A path of simplicity towards God!!! was the theme.

When Fr Philip opened the retreat with an invitation to close our eyes as he prayed Psalm 63 it was for me like a blast from the past. My heart missed a beat as I slowly began to recite -

*"O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water.
So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory."*

I remember a day retreat with Bishop Joe Grech and he used the same psalm for our reflection. It choked me up then, to realise my total weakness and yearning for God to quench my thirst within and a revelation that only He can do it. Today I realised that I am still parched and my soul still thirsts.

Father Philip directed our reflection towards the cross and Jesus so blatantly exposed. What did we see? Certainly different for all of us and some of the sharing proved that. For me it spoke "Peace that defies all understanding." It brought me back to my time of total devastation as I struggled with ill health and I could not pray even if I wanted to. My only consolation was holding and looking at the cross and peace that left me bamboozled descended upon my heart and soul and never left me throughout my ordeal. Looking at the cross gave me a profound understanding that God is with me and most certainly when I was suffering.

The famine of participants certainly did not detract Fr. Marshall from feeding us a feast of spiritual insights quoting from many saints and one of my favourites, John of the Cross.

Like a little child: A path of simplicity towards God!!

One of his most startling statements was there is no path towards God. God IS.

We cannot go from A to B and meet God. God is already there in every circumstance of our life.

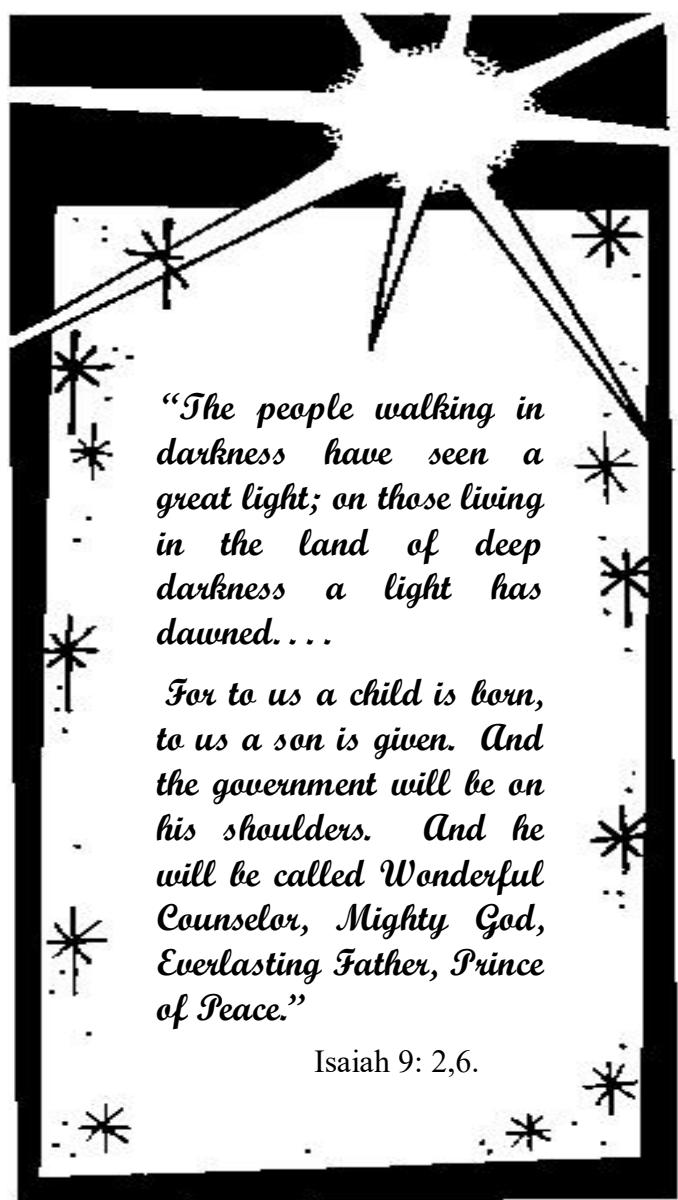
Good or bad. Quoting John of the Cross: "If God ceases to look at you for a split of a second you will cease to be."

I was so touched by this statement that when I went home I quickly downloaded an e-book on John of the Cross and although at times difficult to understand, I am finding more and more as I reflect on his words the simplicity of our faith. Yet we make it difficult for ourselves by searching for truth in all the wrong places when all we need is there in the teachings of Jesus, in all the Scriptures and in the teachings of the Church.

It was indeed a beautiful banquet of spiritual food that Fr Marshall dished out and it seems the table keeps over flowing from the wisdom of John of the Cross. Explore him one day and be blessed.



Fr. Philip Marshall



'The Eucharist in God's Plan of Salvation'

By Pearl Forrester



I attended the intense one-day course – ‘The Eucharist in God’s Plan of Salvation’ at St Francis of Assisi, Mill Park on 16th November 2018.

Zikkaron – The one word which made it all fall into place for me. **Zikkaron** – the collapse of time and space, which offers the clarity at each Mass that we are back where it started, at the Lord’s Supper where Jesus uttered the words, “*This is my Body...This is my Blood.. take this and eat.. do this in memory of me*”.

Heaven meets earth at each Mass where Jesus is present four-fold – in the priest, in the Word, in the Eucharist and in the congregation or gathering of people. Jesus our Saviour dwells among us at each Mass to provide that boost in our faith journey, so that we can go out time and time again to do battle against the evils we meet during our daily living.

Throughout the day, fact after fact was presented to offer us no alternative. It is real and unequivocal that Jesus is our Living Bread and that all we need to know and do is to surrender to Him and all will be well. I also found that the explanations gave me confidence about the terminology, connection between the Old and New Testament, Church rituals and various technical aspects of Mass. I feel equipped to answer some questions from unchurched friends or even children who have simply followed their parents to Mass every weekend because it was the thing to do and now as young adults, question the validity of Christ’s presence and need to attend regular Mass. (The typical, “I can pray to him without attending Mass” argument or “Bible written by man” argument).

I particularly noted that there was humour in evangelising and calling it out as it is - a term for people leaving immediately after Communion – ‘The Judas Shuffle’. Awesome.

More importantly, the day was about spiritual nourishment and fellowship. To be among friends knowing that our lot at least at St Francis of Assisi ‘got it’ after today, or for those who already ‘got it’ an opportunity to be re-charged. The bonus was ‘Zikkaron’ – a new word to use at Scrabble.

BLOOD CONFIRMS UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Just when I thought we couldn’t add anything to the *Eucharist* course, I have stumbled upon a new insight which I found profound and so I want to share it with you.

Where blood has been tested from various Eucharistic miracles it matches the blood on the Shroud of Turin. You might be thinking, well, yes, so...? It is identified as blood group AB.

Now comes the insight - AB blood is referred to as universal receptivity. The person with this blood type can receive blood from any donor.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16)

There you have it, proof that no one is excluded – Jesus has died for each and every one of us sinners to be taken up into His Divine life, a profound confirmation of the theological understanding of Jesus’ universal salvation.

By Sandra Bishop

'Elijah'

St. Clare's Parish, Box Hill North

Do you like to travel? I have been to a few countries and enjoyed the different cuisine, sights and culture? But then I have also experienced the trials of communicating in a different language and feeling out of my cultural norm. That is probably why the opening words in the Elijah course caused me to think about this prophet in a whole new way.

In September this year Carlos Macias de Lara said in the introduction to the 'Elijah' course that Elijah was a prophet always on the way ... We never see him standing still, but always on the go. Carlos promised that as we listened and took part in this weekend course, we would walk together with Elijah, because we have been asked to live the same experience. We are not a tourist or a spectator, but companions on this journey called life. The experience was especially enriching for us as our presenters, Carlos Macias de Lara and Fr. Francesco Galioto, spoke in both Spanish and

where his journey was transformed by God into a pilgrimage. God then sent Elijah to Abel Meholah to fulfil the mission of calling Elisha as his disciple. But his work was not finished, as God then sent Elijah to confront King Ahab at Jezreel, over the injustice of killing Naboth and stealing his vineyard. Finally Elijah's journey took him beyond the



Fr Francesco Galioto

Jordan and surprisingly it did not end in his death. There was a deep unity and closeness between Elijah and Elisha; the master and his servant. It was Elijah's mantle that divided the water of the Jordan for them to cross over. After Elijah is taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot, Elisha takes up his master's mantle and returns to the community of prophets. We too are pilgrims on a journey and just as Elijah did, we will be called to enter the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of our earthly life.

This course also revealed something of God's power when we are called to confront evil and injustice, even at the highest level of government or society, when there is a faithful prophet willing to speak out. Elijah was not without fear; in fact he had to run for his life under the threat of a death sentence. Despite that, Elijah trusted God, who protected him and provided for his

needs. God's call is always in the form of an invitation – calling for a heart response from us. It is a personal call and other people need to see the Gospel in our lives, especially in our ordinary life at home, at work and with friends.

Maryann Street



Translator: Angela Ricci & course author: Carlos Macias de Lara

Italian respectively. With the help of a very skilful and insightful interpreter, Angela Ricci, we truly entered into Elijah's journey, one which has universal appeal and which transcends culture and language.

The teachings of this course drew on the story of Elijah's adventures and troubles, as told to us in the books of 1 and 2 Kings. This was a journey that took Elijah to seven different places as he obeyed God's command to "Go". Commencing in the Wadi Cherith, a place of prayer and dialogue with God, Elijah was then sent to Zarephath, where he was sustained and fed by the widow, and later raised her son to life. Next Elijah was sent to Mt Carmel, where he confronted and defeated idolatry in a battle with the priests of Baal. From there he ran in fear to Mt Horeb and this was the place



THE PHILIPPINES - TYPHOON of BLESSINGS

By Emilia Sacchetta

A return mission trip to the Philippines by four members of the Melbourne CSOE team was made possible by the generous financial and prayerful support of many people throughout Australia and beyond. From the 24th September to 13th October, 2018, Daniel Ceccon, Trish Spiteri, Miriam Markis and myself visited three Dioceses, presenting '7 Young people in the Gospels', 'Eucharist' and 'The Fringe of His Garment' courses in various parishes, as well as providing resources required for courses to be duplicated in school and parish communities.

Despite many difficulties and setbacks leading up to the departure date including major back surgery required by the Melbourne Co-ordinator, Sandra Bishop which prevented her from accompanying the mission team, and communication delays and interruptions due to recent typhoons in the Philippines, the mission was mightily blessed. It was exciting to witness the presence of the Holy Spirit as He touched the lives of so many participants, religious and lay alike.



Above photo: Lingayen - 'Fringe of His Garment'.



Above photo: Lingayen - 'Eucharist' to teachers and leaders.

Schools, Dr. Everlita Quinto.

This desire was echoed by both Archbishop Socrates Villegas and newly installed Bishop of San Fernando, La Union Diocese Most Rev. Daniel Oca Presto, who were most generous in their hospitality and

welcome of the Melbourne team. Their enthusiasm and openness for the courses, especially as a means of forming as many young leaders as possible was obvious, especially in their repeat invitations for the team to return in 2019!

This mission also gave the team an opportunity to see first-hand the fruits of the 2017 mission. It is a great joy to confirm the 7YPIG course has been included in the Year 11 and 12 curriculum of the Jesus Good Shepherd School in the Diocese of Imus, Cavite to complement their Religious Education program, and the 'John the Beloved' course is being implemented in the parish of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception in the San Fernando, La Union Diocese as a formation program for the Dominican laity.



Groups 1 RE Teachers - San Fernando La Union

The Fringe of His Garment course was enthusiastically received by 2 groups of Religious Education teachers and Campus Ministers, representing a number of different schools in the San Fernando, La Union Diocese, some of whom had participated in 'John the Beloved Disciple' during our visit in 2017. The desire expressed by teachers and campus ministers to pass on their experience of the course to others was reiterated by the Superintendent of the Commission on Diocesan



Groups 2 RE Teachers - San Fernando La Union

Touched by the Fringed Healer

By James Gascon

Dagupan City, Pangasinan, Philippines – The Fringe of his Garment, a course about humility and forgiveness, was given to the Mary Help of Christians College Seminarians on 27th—28th September this year. The course was held at the Lay Formation Center in Bonuan, Gueset, Dagupan City given by the Catholic School of Evangelisation, Australia.

The seminarians, who did not just receive prayer, also had the chance to rekindle and increase their love for God through music, praise, and worship.

The course aims at making people closer to God though reflections, teachings, and prayer that are patterned from the scriptures found in the bible especially those that show the healing power of God.

On behalf of the Mary Help of Christians College Seminary, we would like to thank our friends from the Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia for giving us this wonderful course. Yes, you have taught us about the importance of trying on the shoes of the sick woman and be brave enough to touch the garments of our Master. But most importantly, you have touched the hearts of each and everyone in this room, and for that we thank you: Kuya Daniel, Ate Emilia, Ate Trish and Ate Miriam. You have become an instrument of God's voice and love and we hope that you may continue your mission in spreading God's light in the lives of many people. This might be a temporary good bye but our spirits would surely be connected. We hope to see each other in God's time. Thank you, goodbye, long life, we love you.
Kuya = older brother; Ate = older sister.



THE PHILIPPINES - TYPHOON of BLESSINGS By Emilia Sacchetta

Continued from p.8

Of course, this return mission would not have been possible without Sr Nelia Llanto SJBP, a Pastorelle Sister, whose passion and enthusiasm have been a source of great joy for us. She has been instrumental in the major organisation of the logistics of this mission, liaising with the Melbourne CSOE and the schools and parishes in the three Dioceses. As a participant herself of various CSOE courses, she is using her knowledge and experience in providing assistance and guidance to the local facilitators and keeping the new Bishop updated with developments.

Thank you, Sr Nelia! And thank you to all of those who made this mission possible through their generous financial and prayerful contributions.



"The Fringe of His Garment" for youth leaders of the diocese.

LUKE at ST. MARY'S, GREENSBOROUGH

By Sandra Bishop



To prepare for Advent and the year of Luke's Gospel an animated group gathered for three nights to first meet Luke himself, then his Gospel and finally his Jesus.

The question was asked: If Luke did not meet Jesus himself how could he have prepared the material for his Gospel? The answer: He interviewed people and listened to their heart experience of Jesus.



CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION PROGRAM 2019

9 th —11 th March	'John the Beloved'	Sacred Heart School Hall, Newport	For 5% discount BOOK at https://www.trybooking.com/XOAT Rose - 0411 650 339
16 th —17 th March	'The Fringe of His Garment'	Watsonia	Rose - 0411 650 339 https://www.trybooking.com/ZPVV
30 th March	'The Lord's Hands'	St Francis of Assisi Mill Park	Trish - 0438 010 018 Rose - 0411 650 339

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

2019 EXTRA ACTIVITY PROGRAM S.A.

Name of Event	Date(s)	Venue & Time
Faith on Fire Seminar Pre Lent	February 16 th Parable	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich 10.00am—3.00pm Fr. Patrice
Pre Pentecost	May 18 th Parable	
Pre Advent	October 19 th Parable	
Abraham	Lent : March 16 th & 17 th	Dulwich 9.00am—5.30pm
Eucharist	Before Easter 6 th & 7 th April	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich
Pentecost Weekend	8 th & 9 th June	1 A Stuart Road, Dulwich 9am—4.00pm
Healing Seminar	July 6 th & 7 th	10.00am—4.00pm 1A Stuart Road, Dulwich
Isaiah	24 th & 25 th August	
New Life	September 28 th & 29 th	
Celebrate Emmanuel Christmas Concert	Nov 24 th	12.00pm—3.00pm

Contact details: Carmen 0883392573 or 0419144872

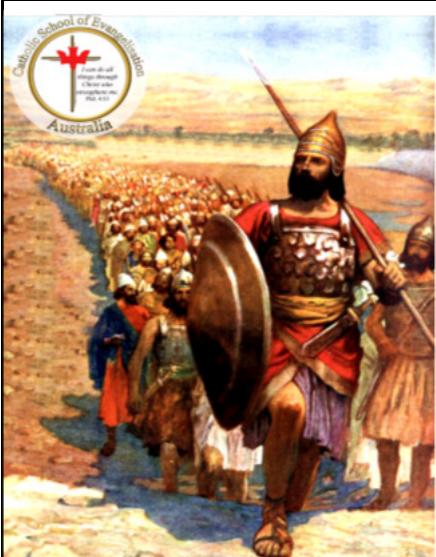


LUKE at ST. MARY'S, GREENSBOROUGH

Continued from p.10 . . .

Etched into the memories of those present were the ‘interviews’ carried out in the spirit of Luke. The Holy Spirit was hovering when ‘Luke’ interviewed ‘Zechariah’ and ‘Elizabeth’ who was startled to find she was pregnant. Another ‘Luke’ interviewed those who had been present at the foot of Jesus cross, giving their firsthand account of what they had seen and overheard. Two ‘Disciples from Emmaus’ were eager to tell all to the ‘Luke’ interviewing them. ‘Zacchaeus’ made a public confession before many with ‘Luke’ making note of his promise of restitution.

Sandra Bishop



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:**

Beata Dawidowska-Gajda, CSOE Treasurer
7 Edgewater Place, BURTON SA 5110
ph: 08 8280 3804

NB change of email address: beatagajda@internode.on.net

please ENROL me in GIDEON'S ARMY

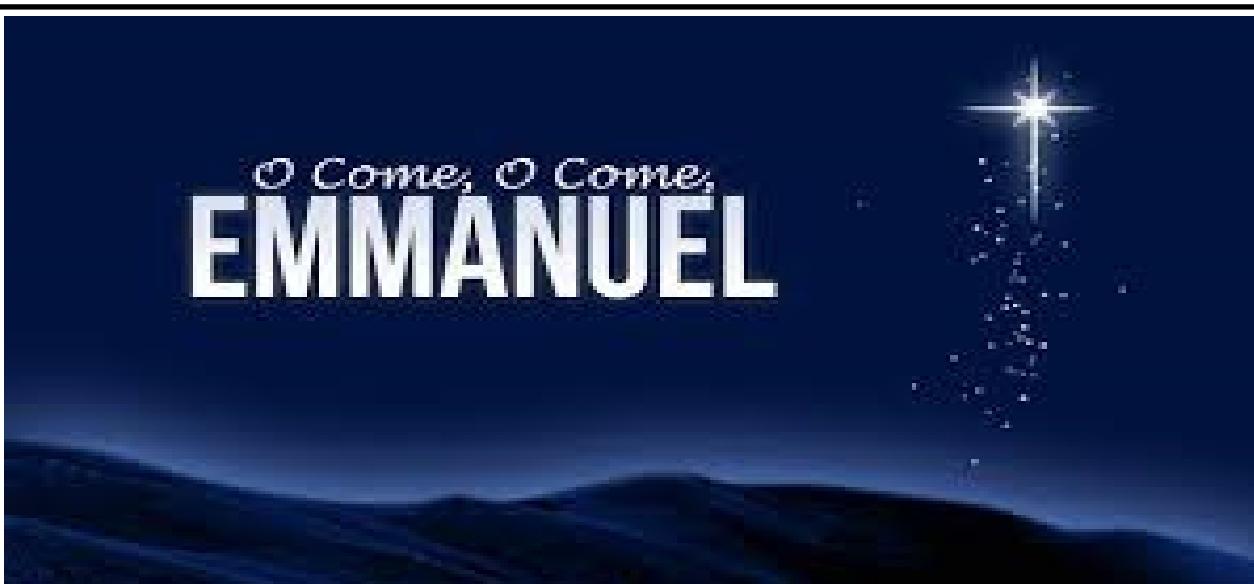
please RENEW my GIDEON'S ARMY commitment

NAME			
ADDRESS			
EMAIL			
PHONE			
payment enclosed	\$	Please forward details to make arrangements for monthly direct debit payments	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please make cheques payable to: *Catholic School of Evangelisation*)

Catholic School of Evangelisation
3 Sloans Road
Warrandyte
Vic 3113
Ph: 0437 127 326

THE WITNESS



O Come, O Come,
EMMANUEL

Attention! Attention!

Like our new Facebook page. Join our community and keep in touch with other Catholic School of Evangelisation graduates.

**Thanks to Joanna Lamek, the CSOE Facebook site is up and running so -
Find us on facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Catholic-School-of-Evangelisation-Australia/159676367450609?ref=hl>