



The Witness

Catholic School of Evangelisation Australia Inc.

April 2017 Newsletter

Plant Seeds for God to Grow

By Sandra Bishop

When did you last plant a “God seed” by showing a person the direction to the “Promised Land” or say “Follow me”?

Was it an invitation to Mass, to prayer group, to bible study, that offered an opportunity to draw closer to God in order to experience His love and mercy? Did you see a response?

In today’s society it is all about performance and success. Performance evaluations, performance and development appraisals, goal setting and tracking. We are living in a world which is fast becoming, if it has not already become, an ‘instant society’. Google shows multiples of instants for each letter of the alphabet, from instant access to instant zoo. Today’s society is in a rush and has a need to see results. Consequently when we evangelists ‘plant seeds’ we tend

to look for instant results and become disappointed if we don’t see the seeds sprout before our eyes.

St Paul understood the potential for a P.E.T. a ‘planting evaluation trap’.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”
1Cor.3:6.

Currently at a weekly ‘Emmaus’ course at Eltham, we have heard how God’s Word is effective; it causes things to happen, whereas our word is affective. We may never know the affect of our evangelism seed-planting words. Hello! It is not all about us and our results, as Paul reminds us, we plant, others water, but God gives the growth.

A great seed-planter, Leon Le Grand, passed away on 20.3.17. I don’t expect he ever

REJOICE !



The Stone Has Been Rolled Away. HAPPY EASTER !

completed a performance and development appraisal of the affect of his words when he spoke about Medjugorje. He planted seeds. People were pointed in the direction to the ‘Promised Land’. In my case, the seed Leon planted was tended by many others, but it was God who firstly prepared the soil for the seed and then made it grow. I know of many others who say it was Leon who first planted the seed which led to their conversion.

May Leon rest in peace. Without his seed-planting, (see page 2) God only knows where I would be. Let us follow Leon’s example of planting seeds and pointing people to the ‘Promised Land’ without falling into a P.E.T. and becoming discouraged.



‘Joshua’, alias Mariann Street, who led the way to the Promised Land alerted all that Yeshua, the future Messiah, would invite all to, “Follow me”, to the Celestial Jerusalem. ‘Synagogue Leader’ Ann Serong is in the background.

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

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

WHERE IT BEGAN

By Sandra Bishop

I had a very surreal few minutes during the recent 'John the Beloved' course in March at St Thomas the Apostle Parish, Greensborough North.

I can't remember which session it was, - evidence of short term memory issues! There I was mid sentence and I suddenly realised – this is where it all started!

We were using the parish hall which used to serve as our church before our chapel was built. I used to take my boys and my mum to Mass there. I would sit and watch them go up and receive Holy Communion. It was during my 13 year sacramental drought.

I was finding ever increasing challenges trying to be Mum and Dad to 2 teenage sons and with my Mum who was suffering with dementia I could be anyone she imagined, but rarely her daughter! Within the hour I could be: 'Sandra', her 'Mum', 'the cook', her 'niece', or 'the person who took her in'.

In March 1998 I did something very out of the ordinary. I was in the church / hall and it wasn't for Mass. That day I had been drawn to the parish newsletter which was still sitting on my kitchen table. There was a notice that Leon Le Grand was to be at St Thomas' that very night to speak on Medjugorje. I had seen something on T.V. about Medjugorje and my curiosity was aroused.

Off I went and listened to the fellow – I have no idea what it was he said that actually hit me. Enough to say that within the week I was back to the Sacraments and the Easter of 1988 was the first time that I had received Holy Communion together with my Mum and my sons. My Mum, herself had experienced a sacramental drought in my younger years.

I had been given a form to fill out at the Medjugorje night asking if I wanted more information. I received a follow-up phone call and was invited to a small bible study group. They were the people who prayed for me on 12 July 1988 for the release of the Holy Spirit. What a journey the ensuing 29 years have been! What a difference being open to the grace of the Holy Spirit made to my life.

The challenges I was facing did not disappear, in fact in many ways they increased. Something else also increased – my reliance on God's grace. I wasn't doing it on my own anymore. I was sure of my identity, the daughter of a loving Father and the sister of someone who thought I was worth dying for. It was then I could confidently say, "***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me***" Phil.4:13.

I wasn't the only one having a 'St Thomas' hall moment'. Fellow presenter, Emilia Sacchetta also shared how her faith journey took on a new dimension at the same hall and she could identify the very spot where she was handed an invitation to attend something on prayer. It was an invitation to a Life in the Spirit Seminar and that was where the head information became a heart experience for her.

Through the St Thomas the Apostle Parish faith community we have both been able to truly experience God's love and proclaim, as did St Thomas, "***My Lord and my God!***"

Tsunami of Graces : Holy Spirit Revives

By Carmen Sylvester, Adelaide

What better way to ease into the season of Lent than with an overabundance of blessings at the Faith on Fire Seminar with Father Matheus Wuwu from the Missionaries of God's Love.

I suppose that is the only kind of indulgence that we should never shy away from. The banquet was abundant with uplifting Praise and Worship, inspired teachings, Mass, adoration, confessions and a healing service. Delicious food for the soul and also some delicious food for the body before the fasting season crept upon us.

Fr Mat made a startling comparison with the Tsunami of Secularism that destroys our soul not to mention our society, our Christian beliefs and morality, to the Tsunami of graces that pours out through the Living water of the Holy Spirit.

The imagery of Living water and Breath of God are two images that we are all familiar with, but Fr Mat gave them new depth. At the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem during the day, the priest led a procession to the pool of Siloam and drawing water in a golden pitcher processed back to the altar amidst the joyous shouts of the people. Singing the Hallal, that priest will pour out the water on the west side of the altar and another priest pours a wine offering on the east side of the altar. For 7 days this ritual took place reflecting, Is 12:3 ***"With joy you will draw water from the wells of Salvation."*** On the 8th and final day of the Festival this ritual was not repeated. It was on this day that Jesus made a startling announcement.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture says from within him will flow rivers of the living water." Jn 7: 37-38

On the one day that water was not poured out Jesus stood up and offered the water of life; The Holy Spirit.

Why do we use water to indicate the grace of the Holy Spirit? St Cyril says, "Because water is a necessary element in the makeup of all things: whether we talk of animal life or plant life, it is water that gives rise to life."

You can understand why the man born blind believed that he could be made clean with the water that cleanses the temple altar. The water from the pool of Siloam.

The Breath of God "Ruach" in Hebrew is synonymous with The Holy Spirit. A profound insight into Jesus' last breath on the cross.

Mark & Luke said *"He breathed his last"*. Matthew records, *"He gave up His Spirit."*

John Said, *"He handed over the Spirit."*

John looked for a deep, symbolic meaning in the events of Jesus' life. He saw something deeper than just the end of Jesus' life. The last breath of Jesus was the first breath of the Spirit for the little community that stood at the foot of the cross. The Holy Spirit was given, not merely through the resurrection of Jesus, but also through the death of Jesus on the Cross.

This was one of the many aha experiences of the day which included healings both spiritual and physical.

We are looking forward to welcoming Fr Mat and another MGL priest from Darwin, for a healing weekend in August.

Some of the comments from Steve Lawless of his first experience of Fr Matheus' ministry follows:

Fr. Mat Wuwu surprised us with his charisms. About twice the normal number attended, possibly drawn in by his faith and reverence. His faith ignited ours, we were electrified and then he shared a word of wisdom with Carmel, about her work situation. She had not told him about herself

beforehand, so the word was unexpected and delightful, an encouragement in tough times.

His ministry was very welcome and Our Lord blessed us so wonderfully.

Blessed be His Name as we embark on celebrating the Golden Jubilee of CCR in Rome at Pentecost.



The First Love: The Missing Element in the Church Life in Ephesus

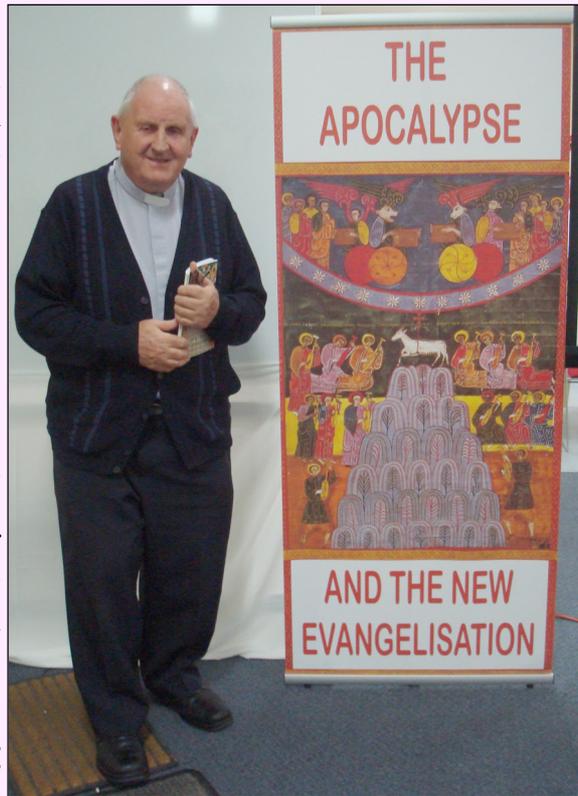
Rev Donal McLraith S.S.C.

Many people miss out on the fact that the Apocalypse is a love story. The beasts, the dragon and the four horsemen can distract us from the central axis of the book, namely that the Risen Christ loves us, his church, and has planned, echoing the OT covenant imagery, a marriage with his people.

The Apocalypse comes in two parts. In this study we want to focus just on the 'letter' to Ephesus which appears at the start of Chapter 2. Both parts of the Apocalypse begin with the idea of love. In the hymn of 1:5b-6 we discover that Christ is the "*one LOVING us*". He is later, in Part I, described as one "*like a Son of Man*" using the powerful heavenly figure of Dan 7 to describe him. Part I contains Chapters 1-3 and is divided in three, a liturgy, a vision of the Risen Christ, Son of Man the one loving us, and the seven letters. The Risen Christ speaks to John and part of this dialogue (chapters 2-3) is the so-called seven letters to the seven Churches of Asia Minor. Seven indicates universality so while Christ speaks to each Church he also speaks to the entire Church of all times and ages. This is possible because this is the Word of the Lord. But, back to love ...

The second part of the book (chapters 4-22) both opens and ends with love. It begins with the symbol of the Lamb, symbol of Christ as loving us and giving his life for us. It ends with the "*Marriage of the Lamb*", symbol of the union of love between Christ and his beloved bride, the Church. The Lamb, then represents Christ as bridegroom of the Church. He had explicitly claimed this title in Mk 2:19, "*how can they fast, when the bridegroom is with them?*"

The context in which we must read Jesus' words to the Church of Ephesus is that of a bridegroom who addresses his betrothed wife. A study of the letters shows that the response Jesus expects from Christians is described, strangely perhaps to our ears, as "*works*". But 2:19 alerts us to what Jesus means by "*works*": **love, faith, service and endurance**. Looked at more closely, we see that this is how the Apocalypse refers to the loving response of his people to Christ. He is the one "*loving us*". We respond to his love with love,



agape, faith, service (of others) *diakonia* and endurance.

With this understanding we can look at each of the 'letters' or messages to the Churches and, at the moment, specifically at the letter to Ephesus.

Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of the East and a very important center of Christianity in the early Church. The Church was finally founded by Paul, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles. He left Timothy as bishop there after him and at some stage, tradition assures us, St John made it his home and is buried there.

Each of the seven messages follows a similar, probably six-fold, pattern. I will briefly identify this and then examine what Christ says to the Church of Ephesus. This has obvious implications for the Churches of today.

1. Each letter identifies the addressee. In this case it is Ephesus.
2. Christ introduces Himself to each Church using some of his titles that are relevant to the current situation of the Church.
- 3.&4. He first analyses the situation of each Church and then He gives his nuptial advice to each community.
5. He calls the Church to hear what the Spirit says to them.
6. He makes a promise to those conquering in each Church. These are the individuals who persevere in their relationship of love with Christ, keeping His "*works*". Indeed, to those conquering in Philadelphia, in 3:12, He promises to make them His bride, the New Jerusalem. This final promise is "*eschatological*" in that it refers to the final state of the Church and is often expressed in the terms of "*paradise*" regained.

The Risen Christ presents Himself as both powerful and present. The double image of right hand and "holding the seven stars" (= bishops or guardian angels) indicates His power over the community. But, like God in the Garden of Eden, He walks with concern and mercy among the seven golden lamp stands, i.e., among the seven churches.

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LORD’S HANDS at WAITARA, BROKEN BAY DIOCESE

By Sandra Bishop

A big thank you to the four ladies who quickly replied to my blanket “can you help?” email sent to those who attended the July 2016 *God’s Presence, Our Present* course. I needed “on site” assistance in order to present a follow up course, *The Lord’s Hands* in February 2017 at the Waitara Cathedral Parish.

In just a few days I had all boxes ticked: venue, advertising, hospitality (tea and coffee), praise and worship, airport pick-up and drop-off and accommodation. The ladies took ‘hospitality’ to a new level by providing beautiful lunches.

The team worked closely with the Dean, Fr Robert Borg. Joy, a great communicator, was very efficient in keeping all of us “in the loop”. I understand at one of the meetings the term ‘Sandra’s Team’ began.

Joy, a gifted facilitator, also provided transport all weekend. The Bradshaw family bungalow was very comfortable and the Saturday night dinner party round the Bradshaw table was a great way to get to know each other.

Those who braved the weekend’s sweltering conditions entered into the course enthusiastically despite the heat and in fact, they were less affected by it than was the technology. Some had travelled

by public transport, and one even braved the elements on his bicycle.

The participants displayed great potential and so I came away feeling very positive about future prospects for the CSOE in the Broken Bay Diocese.

So, a big thank you, not only to ‘Sandra’s Team’ but also to all the participants who attended in spite of the oppressive conditions, and the praise and worship group who came out in the heat to minister on several occasions.



Pictured above: ‘Sandra’s Team’ - Ann Bradshaw, Margarita Broderick, Joy Louau and Louise Spencer.

The First Love: The Missing Element in the Church Life in Ephesus

Continued from p.4 . . .



Jesus begins with a litany of praise for the Ephesians. They have marvelous endurance and they work hard and endure hardships for Christ’s sake. They have a good gift of discernment and so can detect false apostles, those who pretend to have the correct faith but do not.

“But, I have this against you,” He complains, **“You have abandoned your first love”.** This problem is so serious that if they do not remedy it the very church itself will disappear. **“I will come and remove the lamp stand from its place.”**

Why is the absence of this **“first love”** so potentially fatal? In the relationship with Christ, which He desires (as found in 2:19) the first element in this relationship is love. The Church must respond to Christ’s loving us with love. This is both his gift to us and our task. The problem is

that the church of Ephesus is living a loveless marriage with Christ. Remember the love from which you have fallen, he advises them, and repent and do the **“first works”**, namely add love to your faith, service and endurance. If they listen to the Spirit, they will hear the Spirit who speaks with the bride saying, **“Come, Lord Jesus”** (22:17). Those who persevere in their relationship with Christ, those who thus **“conquer”**, will share in the new paradise and eat the bridal food, the fruit from the tree of life.

This message finds an echo in the Fatima message that calls the entire Church to its Bridal love for Christ and is ever relevant - indeed essential to Church life.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ **“God never tires of** ★
★ **forgiving us; we are** ★
★ **the ones who tire of** ★
★ **seeking His mercy.”** ★
★ **Pope Francis.** ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

'RESTING ON THE BREAST OF THE MASTER' . . . By Maria Benke

When I heard that the course called 'John the Beloved Disciple' was open for booking, I was very excited, as I have heard many very promising comments about it, and also because I have long been drawn to the young disciple myself. I had always wanted to have a passionate and intimate relationship with Jesus, as John had. I had always wanted to be the one with my head resting on the breast of the Master. Fortunately, through the love and sacrifice of Jesus, we can all have a deeply intimate relationship with Him.

The first talk was a revelation to me, and an instruction on God's divine order, and the personal order I need to aspire to if I am to help usher in the Kingdom of God.

It detailed Jesus' work on earth, His mission (Universal Salvation), His objective (to establish the Kingdom of God), and His method, which was to train disciples, thus multiplying His words, His actions, and His miracles, through the hands of others. The talk showed me that Jesus needs and wants disciples to go out and make other disciples, so that His works may be done.

All of the talks over the three day period of the course were excellent. They were vivid, vibrant, colorful, informative, challenging, and confirmed all those attending in our own individual roles of assisting the coming of the Kingdom on earth.

The pace of the course was intense, as so much was packed into three days, but it was so enriching and instructive, that we were all feeling privileged to be amongst the saints, and to stand together before God, listening to His teaching day after day, and joining together in praising Him.

I learnt many things about myself, about Jesus, and about discipleship, that is being useful to Jesus in my life. Also, there were many times I felt the power of Jesus' healing presence come over me. I know that I came away from those three days healed and different, and through the teachings, wiser and better informed about what Jesus is asking of me.

Everyone who did the 'John the Beloved Disciple' course came away changed, renewed,

uplifted and enlightened. Jesus certainly did mighty works in us.

I can only thank Sandra and her wonderful, faithful team, for bringing together and delivering such a mighty work for God's people. We are all indebted to you for your faithfulness and hard labor over the three very hot days as the course unfolded.

In conclusion, I can wholeheartedly recommend this course to anyone who is interested in taking a step up in their spiritual journey. If you have the opportunity, and I thank God that I had it, don't miss it!

PROPHESIES RECEIVED:

On Sunday morning, the word of the Lord came to us in prophesy, with the famous encouraging lines from Jeremiah, "*For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for your welfare and for peace, and not for evil to give you a future and a hope.*"

The prophecy continued as the Lord God told us that He was touching and changing every heart, every mind and every spirit. In a following image of Jesus upon the water, and a disciple in a boat, Jesus called us all; "*Come with Me.*" In our hearts, we all replied; "*Yes, Lord.*"

At midday, on the same day, the Lord announced that He is "*Love*" and "*Light*", the "*Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end*". He called us to awake and to arise, and promised to "*shine on us*". His words, through His Spirit, lifted and enlightened our hearts as we wondered at, and praised His graciousness, His generosity, His wonderful beauty, and His faithfulness.

On the third morning of the course, the Lord stated that He was making all things new, and reinforced His statement with an image of a caterpillar, breaking out of a chrysalis state and shedding its hard outer case. He called us the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, and emphasized that He was working in us, and healing us, at that very moment in which He was speaking.

Jesus stated that He stood before us with life and death in His hands, and invited us to choose life, so as to return to Him, the guardian and keeper of our souls. He asked us to die to sin and to live unto righteousness, as by His wounds, we have been healed.

We were all thrilled, at His faithful promises, and His powerful and personal words, and His extreme and kindly attentiveness.

Participants and team with Bishop Terry Curtin who joined us on two days and celebrated Mass for us.





EMMAUS COURSE

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And SUDDENLY from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind.”
Acts 2:1-2



SUDDENLY NO PLANNING JUST A DIVINE APPOINTMENT!

While members of the CSOE - Sydney Service Team were attending the NSW Catholic Charismatic Renewal Retreat on the last week-end of January 2017 in Sydney, an unexpected thing happened. It was “**SUDDENLY**”, just as the Pentecost Event with 120 disciples gathered in the Upper Room. It did come to us as a **surprise!**

We were privileged at the CCR Retreat to be joined by 20 Sisters of Mother Teresa, Missionaries of Charity. Two of the Sisters happened to recognise Eddie and I from when the Regional Director, Sr Lucy, MC, invited us to Darwin for a week in January 2012 to conduct 3 Formation Courses to 15 Junior professed Sisters. With great excitement we were introduced to Sr Johanne, MC, the present Regional Director. The Sisters related how they participated in the ‘New Life’, ‘Emmaus’ & ‘Jesus in the 4 Gospels’ Courses and how much they benefited from them. Sr Johanne took the opportunity to invite us back to conduct the ‘Emmaus’ Course at Surry Hills, Sydney, the following Wednesday and Thursday, 1st-2nd February, to the 15 postulants while in Sydney for formation before they return back to their Mission Houses overseas on the following Sunday. At such short notice of only two days to prepare, and with some Sydney Team members going to be away on holidays, we wondered how this could happen. Brad & Jane Wierdesehn from the CSOE Wollongong Service Team were attending the CCR Retreat and “**yes**” they were available to join the Grasso’s and Betty Koh to fulfill this invitation.

Eddie & I travelled by train to the City with the minimum essentials that were needed for the Course in two suitcases and a set of Course Posters we have used in the past. That’s all we could handle! This was a ‘Labour of Love’, with no strings attached, trusting in the Holy Spirit and believing that *‘with God all things are possible’* (Mt 19:26). After being picked up from the Train Station at Central and taken to the Sister’s Mission House, at Surry Hills, we were surprised with a ‘Welcoming Song’ by all the Sisters singing and showering us with garlands of flowers over our heads. It was a lovely surprise!

This Emmaus Course was conducted with the least available technology that we normally run courses nowadays. Our venue was a dining room that the poorest of the poor are normally served with food, shown great care and love by the Sisters. We did not have facilities for modern technology, so Power Points were to no avail, neither the use of a PA System, our voices extended quite well for the size of the room, nor a Screen to project things on. It was by the word of mouth, a heart on fire for

Jesus to conduct a Course on the ‘Appreciation of the Word of God’, and the burning felt in our hearts at such an unexpected invitation, that made us take on the opportunity offered to us. It was a **DIVINE APPOINTMENT!** Who would refuse it? We felt well prepared to deliver what was needed with no great organisation for a team to perform tasks, except to teach, as everything else was provided for and flowed well. The necessary dynamics we carried spoke for themselves to get the message across. We were in the right place at the right time, to receive an opportunity offered to us by God which was life-giving for both the Team and the participants, the Brides of Christ.

The Sisters of Mother Teresa work among the poorest of the poor. Their life-style also resembles the service they give to the poor yet they lavished us with love and cared for us in every way with radiant smiles. We were very much reminded and lived the spirituality of Mother Teresa in simplicity, humility and joy of the Spirit.

During a much challenging time for the CSOE - Sydney Service Team in the last few months of the end of 2016 and the beginning of a new year 2017, this was like a breath of fresh air that the Lord ordained to sooth the challenges facing us through commitments in our Mission of Evangelisation, family ties, and moving forward regardless of difficult issues. The most refreshing times we had during the Course were to join the Sisters in morning, noon-time and evening prayers during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, daily Mass, and the love shown to us through their hospitality and fellowship. We thank them heartily.

God moves in mysterious ways and has no boundaries to where he can lead us as we follow in his Divine Will. What he has prepared for us comes to us as a surprise at times for we do have a **GOD OF SURPRISES** who moves **SUDDENLY!**

Lucy Grasso - Co-ordinator, CSOE - Sydney



'ABRAHAM' - A Pilgrimage of Faith comes to Adelaide

By Carmen Sylvester

Three years after being presented in Spanish and Italian in Melbourne by Carlos Macias de Lara and a priest, the "Abraham" Course was presented by the Adelaide team for the first time in Australia in English.

We are humbly proud of this achievement as obstacles are always part and parcel of our ministry and we had some to overcome. We thank God for the hard work put into manuals that we can work with, but much prayer and discernment are needed to really enter into the Spirit of a teaching, and as most teachers will tell you, that takes time and dedication.

On the weekend of 4th & 5th of March 2017 was the big debut of 'Abraham' in English.

Apart from the sound of the Clipsal 500 car race roaring away only half a kilometre away as the crowd flies and then the bone-shaking thunder of the RAAF Fast Jets as they flew over our centre, plus a couple of other little hiccups, it was an amazingly Spirit filled and blessed weekend. One lesson learnt!! Check the dates of the car race next year.

Our God is such an amazing God that He worked through all of that chaos and made an impact on the hearts of the participants. They connected beautifully with the character of Abraham and how our own journey does at times mirror that of Abraham. God did not forget about the team either, He worked His miracles in our hearts as well.

Of course this was a first for all presenters but their commitment to prepare well and to present

well shone through.

Below is an excerpt from a thank you card sent to the team from Amanda Jesudason who although is not from the Catholic Tradition finds our courses inspiring. I quote:

Dear Carmen & team

I really appreciated your inspiring presentations last week. Your research, your depth of understanding and your ability to present Abraham in such an interesting way produced a memorable weekend. Abraham intrigues me and I plan to learn more. (End of quote)

A sad note for the weekend was that our newest team member lost her Dad between Saturday night and Sunday morning. May he rest in peace.

And may we continue to discover more about Abraham and our Pilgrimage of Faith.

Photo below: A heart representing the Word of God with different length strings through which we are all attached.



Our God Has A Sense Of Humour By Carmen Sylvester

The 'James' course, on discerning, was scheduled for 1st & 2nd of April and I began to think that our discernment was way off in planning our 3rd James Weekend in Adelaide to coincide with April's Fool day.

Monday 27th March we had 3 people registered and our registrations closing date had already passed. Wisely one of my team members suggested that we won't cancel until Thursday 30th March. Tuesday two more registered. On Wednesday I had a phone call from Helen Hayak to register herself and her friend Teresa. Then one of her friends rang and registered herself and another mutual friend. On Thursday I spoke with Helen on the phone to check the right spelling of the name of yet another friend whom she registered. Helen had an unusual story to tell about God's intervention.

One of our team members Hiacinta has got the vital ministry of advertising our events via emails to all our data base or SMS's. Helen tells the story that she received an SMS from Hiacinta for the first time,

reminding her of the James Weekend and she just went about her business not taking much notice. When trying to send an important SMS to her friend Teresa the MSG about James popped up and could not be budged from her screen. Intervention from her young technology minded son brought the verdict that the phone has had it's day and ready for the dump heap. The screen had frozen with the message, 'James Weekend'. Finally the penny dropped and Helen DISCERNED that God wanted her to attend. So she did manage to ring her friend Teresa and Toni and Jacqui and Jenny and they decided that it was a good idea for all of them to attend the James course. So it was a go ahead even with 10 people.

April 1st came and we realised we were no fools to go ahead because 15 people came to join us.

It was a wonderful easy going group of people who truly entered into the challenges that 'James' deals out especially when discerning the proper use of the tongue.

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ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY OF FAITH

By Josephine Balyout

On 4th and 5th of March the Adelaide team of the Catholic School of Evangelisation presented to us the Abraham Course at Dulwich Parish.

We went through the Pilgrimage of Faith with Abraham, who represented a man searching for God, whilst the Word of God became his guide.

Our study of Abraham's life was an exploration of how God might want to work in and through our own lives.

Accepting the call to be at the weekend may have caused a disruption in our daily lives, but the faithful participants allowed God's grace to be poured out into our hearts and be touched, so that we will no longer be the same. As we are transformed God will transform others through us, using Abraham and his transformation as a yardstick.

God told Abraham he was going on a journey that would require leaving his country, his people, and his father's household. Obedience meant saying goodbye to relationships and things dear to him, but he did not hesitate. His strong faith enabled him to say yes to what the Lord commanded.

We also learnt that moving ahead in the midst of uncertainty can be another aspect of following God.

Unwavering trust in his Heavenly Father enabled him to answer the divine call wholeheartedly, without knowing his destination.

Separation is often a part of our development before we can take on something new. The Lord may ask us to let go of our son of promise as he did to Abraham. Abraham was spiritually ready to answer affirmatively when God called him and it required living by faith. That means trusting the Holy Spirit to guide us when we don't see how all the pieces fit together and believing that God always works for our good and His glory.

The factor of Faith was that Abraham had developed a confidence that God would guide him. He permits God to show him the divine place and responds with confidence and compassion in prayer when interceding for a sinful city.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

Abraham's growth in Faith can be traced both by God's revelations to him, through his calling, his promises, his visions, as well as his own obedience in responding to God. We saw that when we persevere in our faith, God will do tremendous things for our lives and those around us. Abraham persevered through his hardest trials and so earned himself the name 'The Father of Faith'.

Ultimately waiting upon God protects us and deepens our trust in Him which forces us to seek His ways to bring Him the most Glory. I have learnt that waiting upon God is exercising confidence in His timing, instead of our own resources so that we're helped during difficult times.

At the end of a journey we were challenged with the desire to please God and be ready when He calls us.

Below: Some of the participants and team.



Our God Has A Sense Of Humour . . . continued from page 8

The participants had a great time interacting with each other and the teachers.

Evaluations returned really positive comments but I had to laugh when one comment about, 'How can we improve the course?' said rather candidly,

"Forget about the History of who 'James' is, "Rather more discussion about the scripture." Something to discern!!!

By the way Helen's mobile phone screen got back to normal after her and her friends registered

their names. And they were all smiles as you can see from the photo with the magical phone.

God does have a sense of humour and certainly not beyond interfering with our technology when He wants to get our attention.

Praise Be to God. 'James' was a wonderful way to refocus on our Lenten observances and prepare for our Easter Celebrations.

May Your Easter Season Be Especially Blessed.



Philippine Outreach Update

... By Sandra Bishop

Sr Nelia Llanto SJDB, a Pastorelle Sister, participated in the ‘7 Young People in the Gospel’ course at Box Hill North, in July 2016. She captured the CSOE vision. It was at the July course that she first mentioned the possibility of taking the course to the Philippines. I think my reply was a protracted “Oooh”.

Sr Nelia worked hard to promote a “7 YPIG” course at Watsonia in December and when we were setting up for it, she again mentioned how she would like to take the course to the Philippines. I said that we would need three people to go at a minimum and that we would need help with the air fares. I was thinking that Melbourne CSOE could fund one fare.



The update is that we are booked to leave 30th June, returning 19th July. Through the generosity of several people we have had the three fares donated, travel insurance is covered and we also have received donations enabling us to start to put together materials we can leave in the Philippines so that the courses can be duplicated.

Sr Nelia has been busy visiting Bishops in several dioceses and so far we have bookings in three dioceses. In one, we will give the ‘Eucharist’

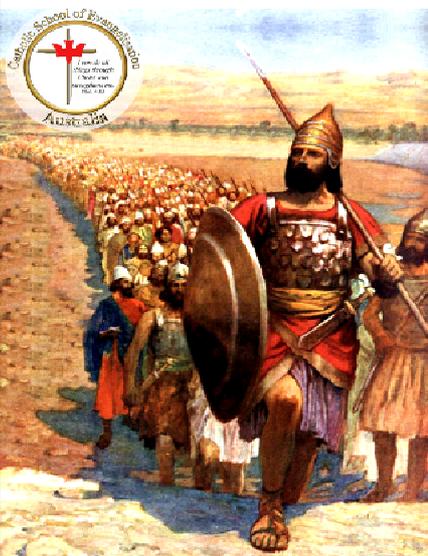
course to a group of RE teachers. In another we are to present the ‘John the Beloved’ course to the RE teachers of the diocese and later that week a ‘7YPIG’ course to the youth leaders and teachers. We also are to present ‘John the Beloved’ to 40-60 seminarians and a ‘7YPIG’ course for teachers and youth leaders in another diocese.

This year Sr Nelia will celebrate the 30th anniversary of her Religious Profession. She has spoken of what is possible if we respond to God’s grace. The way this mission is unfolding it is very evident that Sr Nelia is responding to God’s grace. God is granting her heart’s desire of CSOE courses in the Philippines and God is blessing the preparations.

It was 22 years ago that the Melbourne CSOE first went to the Philippines. There were three of us presenting the teachings and a back-up team of five others. Three of the group entered eternal life in the ensuing years – Bishop Joe Grech, Cathy Snjaric and Dan Bryce. Hopefully they will be interceding for this mission. I also ask that you keep us, Emilia Sacchetta, Daniel Ceccon, Sr Nelia and myself, in your prayers so that this mission will produce good and lasting fruits.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION PROGRAM 2017			
23 rd February —6 th April	‘Emmaus’	Eltham, Vic.	Rose Rendina 0411 650 339
1 st July 3 rd —5 th July 8 th —9 th July	‘Eucharist’ ‘John the Beloved’ ‘7 Young People in the Gospels’	Imus, Cavite, San Fernando La Union San Fernando La Union	Sr. Nelia 61 4359 0335
11 th —13 th July 15 th —16 th July	‘John the Beloved’ ‘7 Young People in the Gospels’	Lingayen Lingayen All above in the Philippines	
1 st —3 rd September	‘John the Beloved’	Mill Park, Vic.	Rose Rendina 0411 650 339
Courses subject to confirmation and may change. Please contact local co-ordinator for further			

2017 Extra Activity Program for S.A.		
Name of Event	Date(s)	Venue & Time
Lenten Weekend: Healing Seminar	8 th & 9 th April	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich 10.00am to 3.00p.m
Celebrate Emmanuel Fund Raising Dinner	27 th May	Slovenian Hall, Dudley Park, 6.30 start Contact Carmen for tickets
Pentecost Weekend	3 rd & 4 th June	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich 9am to 4.00p.m
Faith on Fire Seminar Power of the Eucharist	29 th July	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich 10.00am to 3.00p.m
Healing Weekend	30 th Sept & 1 st October	1A Stuart Road, Dulwich 10.00 am to 3.00p.m
Celebrate Emmanuel	26 th November	Rundle Mall, Adelaide 12pm—3pm
Contact details: Carmen 0883392573 or 0419144872		



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

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THE WITNESS

Attention! Attention!

Like our Face book 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>

Keep a look out for our updated Website: www.schoolofevangelisation.org.au

Thanks to Daniel Ceccon.

What I learned from Noah's Ark...

One: Don't miss the boat. **Two:** Remember that we are all in the same boat. **Three:** Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. **Four:** Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big. **Five:** Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done. **Six:** Build your future on high ground. **Seven:** For safety sake, travel in pairs. **Eight:** Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs. **Nine:** When you're stressed, float a while. **Ten:** Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals. **Eleven:** No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.