



Archbishop's Message
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

Emmaus backflip

The Emmaus scene from Luke's Gospel (24/13-35) is well known and loved.

There seems to be three parts to this Easter encounter.

In the first part we find two of the disciples on their way to Emmaus. They are travelling "from Jerusalem." In other words, they are travelling away FROM the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

They are talking with "their faces downcast" and are bitterly disappointed that Jesus has not met their expectations.

Now let us turn to the third segment of this encounter. They have done an Emmaus backflip!

They are now returning "that instant to Jerusalem" to meet the other apostles. Their hearts are "burning within them".

What has happened? We now turn to the middle part.

Without recognising Him, the Risen Lord walks alongside them. He describes them as "foolish." He explains the Scriptures to them and they are intrigued.

They mention "the day is almost over." This is surely a reference not simply to the time of the day but their relationship with the Risen Lord. Their friendship with Jesus is almost over.

During this pandemic, many of us feel fragile, lost and fearful.

We have the Scriptures explained in the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word.

The disciples move towards repentance and find room for something unexpected and the greatest surprise of their life – He is Risen! In biblical language this is called "Metanoia." It is a return to the Lord with their hearts in repentance and faith. Inviting their fellow traveller for a meal, they go to the equivalent of the Emmaus inn/pub. The key words here are significant. With the bread, the Risen Lord "took...blessed...broke...and handed it to them." These are key words used in the Eucharist. In other words, Jesus is celebrating Mass with them!

The Mass is the meeting point for us with the Risen Lord. Absenting ourselves from the Mass is missing out on the gift Jesus wants to give us. With the pandemic we are not physically at Mass but we are trying our best through online Mass and spiritual communion.

We are at the Emmaus pub for a counter tea! There are only two items on the menu during this pandemic; the "couch potato" and the "Emmaus backflip." Let's all choose the "Emmaus backflip" and return to the Lord with all our hearts.

Amen!

CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



How wonderful to see students heading back to school. I salute Catholic teachers for their hard work and the leadership of our principals. Such a confusing and challenging time for everyone, but our optimistic kids show us the way.

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Agencies gear up to support families in crisis

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

A distressing trifecta of mental health issues, domestic violence and child abuse will confront Catholic welfare agencies in the fallout from the coronavirus.

Marymead Child and Family Services is seeking increased federal government funding to meet an expected spike in demand from families in crisis.

"Our biggest concern is the impact social isolation will have on vulnerable families," Marymead CEO Camilla Rowland said.

"Families will go from being at-risk to more critical and the numbers will grow. We know the numbers will grow, with mental health issues, domestic violence and child abuse.

"We haven't had growth funding for our family relationships counselling services but this pandemic will see an increased need for months, if not years.

"We anticipate a big increase in referrals and demand and are gearing up for that."

The Kids Helpline free counselling service has reported a 40 per



Marymead CEO Camilla Rowland

cent increase in children seeking support while Parentline has experienced 30 per cent more demand.

Camilla said domestic violence services were reporting a huge increase in women escaping violent homes which indicates child abuse is prevalent.

"Child abuse is very hard to detect," Camilla said.

"If you are doing online and phone counselling it is hard to detect how a family is functioning.

up with their children in a supervised setting.

"At the beginning the directions were that all face-to-face contact should cease but fortunately the NSW and ACT governments have relaxed the rules for these very vulnerable families," Camilla said.

"Without these supervised visits the pressure builds on parents and families and makes it very difficult for them to function well.

"It has been a moving feast trying to keep up with the different directions from the NSW and ACT governments often for the same groups of clients."

Social distancing rules have forced Marymead to reduce its short-term accommodation and respite for children with disabilities.

"We are restricting accommodation to four to five children," Camilla said.

"A number of families rely on regular short-term accommodation and my concern is we cannot give them the support they need."

- Marymead – 02 6162 5800
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800
- Parentline ACT – 02 6287 3833

From India to Temora, via quarantine

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

TEMORA priest Fr Sijo Jose never expected his trip home to India to end with two weeks of quarantine in an Adelaide hotel room.

But the Indian priest is grateful to be back in Australia and counting the days to May 4 when he can return to his parishioners.

"I miss my parish community so much," Fr Sijo said. "I have been away a long time and Temora is my home.

"I understand why quarantine is necessary. It is okay. I am saying my prayers and watching some news and joining in the daily Mass from the Archdiocese.

"All the meals are delivered to your door but there is no human contact. The parishioners call and I am talking to my family too."

Fr Sijo, who has been at the Temora Mission more than a year, flew out of Australia on long-service leave on February 10 and expected to return on April 1.

En route to his family in Kerala he visited the village of La Salette in the French Alps, not far from Grenoble.

The village is the site of a Marian apparition and the shrine is



Fr Sijo near the statue in La Salette

the birthplace of the order Fr Sijo belongs to, the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette.

In India, Fr Sijo was enjoying staying with his parents, who live with Fr Sijo's brother, sister-in-law and their five year old son and

three year old daughter, when the coronavirus hit.

The Indian government imposed a 21-day lockdown in late March so Fr Sijo was unable to leave until April 19.

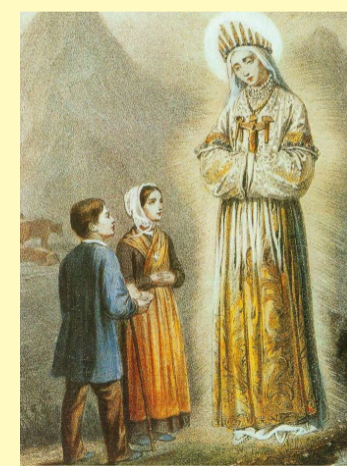
"Celebrating Easter with my family was lovely because for so many years I have been in a parish away from home," he said.

"Having more time with my family and in my hometown was beautiful."

The Australian Embassy organized two buses to take Indian-born Australians from Kerala to Chennai and, after the 12-hour trip, Fr Sijo boarded a special flight to Adelaide with 360 others.

Ordained in 2009, Fr Sijo came to Australia in 2012. He was assistant priest at Page and Gungahlin before moving to Goulburn for two years. From there he moved to Tumut and then on to the Temora Mission.

"The Temora Mission is a big area to look after but the people are so caring and good," Fr Sijo said. "I will be happy to be back with them."



La Salette apparition

"Do you say your prayers well, my children?"

That was a question Our Lady asked a shepherd boy and girl on September 19, 1846, in a village in the French Alps named La Salette.

"Not very well, Madam," 11yo Maximim Giraud and 14yo Melanie Calvat replied frankly.

The Bishop of Grenoble, 82-year-old Philibert de Bruillard, investigated the children's report and announced in 1851 that it was likely to be a true revelation.

He then founded an order to continue the work begun by Mary at La Salette.

A welcome from the principal

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

IT was the welcome that parents needed.

After weeks of mixed messages from governments about whether kids should be at school, parents at Holy Trinity in Curtin were delighted to receive a note from principal Philippa Brearley this week saying children were welcome.

"To see our principal standing stoically in the rain welcoming families on Wednesday morning was so reassuring for all of us," Mum-of-two Andrea said.

"Hugo and Olivia were jumping out of their seats when they saw her."

Curtin Mum-of-four Jane said she felt relief after weeks of confusion.

"It was a very emotional morn-

ing," Jane said. "I feel relief that the school is happy to have us back and very lucky to be on the path back to normal life."

Mum-of-three Colleen Norton said Year Six daughter Jess and Year Three son Dominic were keen to resume their school routine.

"The whole situation has been a bit anxiety-inducing for everyone," Colleen said.

"It has been a grey area as parents had to decide whether to send their kids but it's great that Catholic schools are open."

Almost 100 of the school's 362 students returned on Wednesday and Philippa expects that to grow.

"Some parents are feeling more confident about the statistics in Canberra, they see their kids are missing the social connections and

believe it's more beneficial for them to be at school," she said.

The former St Clare's student stressed that she did not want families or staff to feel judged for their decisions.

"Some parents sent me letters justifying they were essential workers but I have never made that a requirement," Philippa said.

"There are many different reasons why kids are at school and I would never make any judgements about that.

"It has been confusing for everyone. And so difficult for staff. As Catholic educators we feel a great commitment to our students so it becomes a really difficult choice for staff.

"Some are working from home as they are caring for sick parents

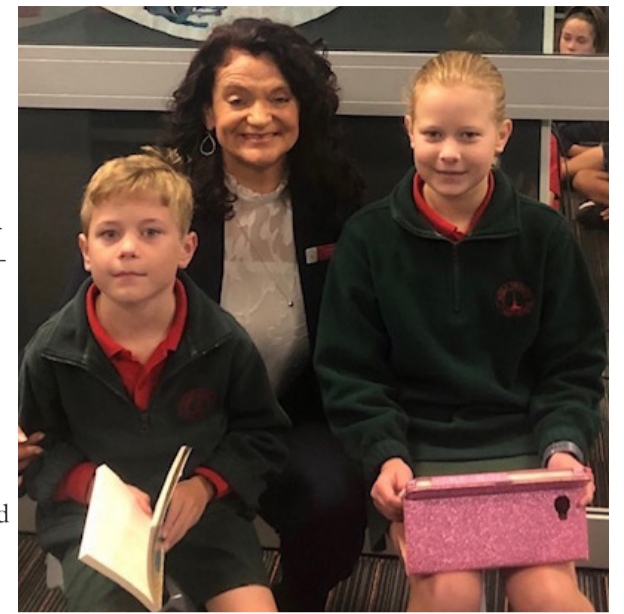
and of course that is understandable."

Philippa took charge of the kinder class on Wednesday morning to release the teacher for other jobs.

"I am so proud of how hard the teachers have worked," she said.

"We have flipped our teaching and the teachers have been amazing in how they have responded.

"All the executive team are taking classes to release teachers because their days are so full with face-to-face teaching, videoing



Holy Trinity principal Philippa Brearley with Tess and Dominic

themselves taking lessons and checking in with students at home.

"You can imagine the timetabling challenges."

Baking treats to connect with grandkids

Retirees Kevin and Margaret Croker share how COVID-19 has seen them embrace technology and remember a long-lost grandfather.

AS a retired couple, we are very much aware of the impact of the Coronavirus and self-isolation, and that it is quite a different situation for families with children.

If it wasn't already a balancing act for working parents and children requiring care and schooling, it certainly is now.

The pandemic brings lovingly to mind for Margaret, thoughts of her grandfather, who she never knew. Margaret hasn't thought of him in many years. He died in 1919, aged 39 from the Spanish Flu. Margaret's grandmother was 35 at the time and raised three children on her own. One of them was Margaret's father. She lived to 102!

While coping well with isolation, we are missing not being able to be physically with our family, especially grandchildren. We stay in touch by phone and FaceTime and that is working well. Both our children and their spouses are keeping a close eye on us and we use Zoom to keep in touch with the Croker siblings.

It is fair to say that prior to COVID-19 we were somewhat reluctant to embrace modern communication technology but that has changed somewhat, much to our children's astonishment! We miss not being able to visit friends but keep in touch by phone and text.



Kevin and Margaret Croker with absent family on Easter Sunday

Reflecting on his former role with the Clergy Retirement Foundation and care of archdiocesan priests, Kevin often reflects on how they are coping, especially those in aged care homes where, for most, visits are not allowed. Kevin knows the priests are struggling but equally their families and friends.

Kevin is never lost for something to do around the house and there isn't a weed to be seen in the garden. It is one of his busiest times mulching, hedge trimming, planting bulbs and nurturing his beloved Sweet Pea bed which is now approaching a plantation!

The odd painting jobs that have been staring us in the face for some time are also on his radar. With the weather cooling, it's time to get out the paint brush. If only it was that easy, Kevin quips.

We try to walk each day and that

has been a nice part of our "new" routine and to also gain a greater appreciation of the beautiful lakes, waterways and rural vista that make up so much of our bush capital.

Margaret can always lose herself in a book and her Book Club members are meeting regularly by Zoom. The grandchildren have also benefited as she has been baking treats which are collected at a social distance. There is never a batch of biscuits despatched that Kevin has not first sampled.

We have appreciated being able to 'attend' daily Mass via the Catholic Voice website, especially during the Easter Triduum. It is a time we can put aside the troubles of the world and pray in confidence that the Lord will protect us.

We have been touched by offers of assistance from neighbours, which we have found comforting.

Daily Mass thriving in Goulburn

BY FELICITY DE FOMBELLE

THE churches may be shut but one group of Catholics is still attending daily Mass, at Tension Aged Care in Goulburn.

Retired priest Fr Laurie Bent, 85, is one of 30 residents at the Southern Cross Care home and says Mass every morning in the chapel.

On Sundays he is usually joined by friend and fellow priest Fr Dermid McDermott who retired last September.

"The Archbishop closed the churches but he didn't close here," Fr Laurie chuckled.

"We're the only place in the Archdiocese still saying Mass."

Up to 20 residents attend Mass. With some hard of hearing, Fr Laurie prints and distributes his short homilies (or fervorinos as he calls them). Fervorino is an Italian word meaning a quick exhortation.

"I give a short fervorino of about one minute and distribute it at the beginning of Mass each day," Fr Laurie said. "It's important to keep busy particularly in a place like this.

"It's a joy for me to say the Mass each day. It's great. I'm ordained for it and I love the Mass."

Fr Laurie recently celebrated an Anzac Mass. It was followed by a short service in the common room and residents then watched a DVD about the Australian War Memorial.

A Christian Brother for 50 years, Fr Laurie was ordained an archdiocesan priest in 1999 and retired in

2008, after six years as parish priest at Yass.

He has been at the aged care home two and a half years and says it is marvellous.

"They look after us so well," Fr Laurie said. "I've put on weight since I've arrived. We're in lockdown now but we can still play Scrabble

at a distance.

"Once a week I go to Fr Dermid McDermott's place for dinner but that's on hold now because of the lockdown.

"We can't have visitors so you've got to keep people's mental state up. I think it's well done here, I don't see anyone suffering from it but I know some of them would like visitors."

Fr Laurie has spoken about the pandemic in his fervorinos.

"People are missing one another and it's probably made us more thoughtful and compassionate," he reflected.

"It's not God who is doing these things. This is the state of our humanity and pain is part of that. We've got to live with that.

"Pain can be an elevating thing in the way we face up to it, and suffering of all sorts, physical or mental. It's not easy but it helps to build character."

A defeat that defined a nation

BY FR LAURIE BENT

When we hear the word ANZAC, our minds go to steep slopes and dug-outs on a foreign peninsula where so many of our youth died in a senseless campaign. Not too many countries celebrate a defeat in battle, but that was what ANZAC Cove was. We were defeated and had to retreat. But it defined the Australian psyche and spirit.

So mateship, loyalty, courage, endurance and exuberance (even larrikinism) are now very much our lot, whether in war or sport or everyday life. They are

characteristics that tell others we can be relied upon; we can be trusted to do our duty.

ANZAC is a word now in the Turkish language for bravery while we have a saying, He fought like a Turk. There existed between the two armies on the Gallipoli Peninsula a great respect. A respect continuing to the present day.

We were a young nation when our soldiers went to war. We returned able to hold our heads high because we did not flinch in the face of insuperable odds. We saw ourselves as a nation

and it had been forged in a cauldron of death and destruction. We knew what sacrifice was. And the sacrifices we made together led to a strong sense of oneness.

May this oneness continue to shape our psyche so that we may always be a nation on whom others can depend. May we be known, not just for bravery and courage, but for devotion to duty and our loyalty and dependability.

May God bless all who have sacrificed their lives and help us to honor their memory with upright lives.



Residents at Tenison Aged Care during the Anzac Day service.