

Don't underestimate how important your voice is to someone sitting alone at home.

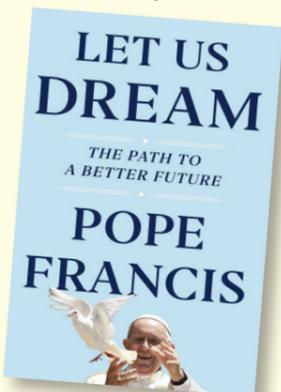
You know that phone call to a friend you thought you might make last week? Today's the day.



Archbishop's Message
Archbishop Christopher Prowse

Walking together in hope - Synodality

PART 2



Pope Francis summarises the meaning of synodality wonderfully in a recent book called, *Let us Dream – The path to a better future* (Simon and Schuster, 2020). May I summarise a few pages of the book for you?

Definition:

(Greek “syn-odos”), “walking together” (p.81)

Its goal:

“Not so much to forge agreement as to recognise, honour and reconcile differences on a higher plane where the best of each can be retained.” (p. 81)

Its beauty:

“The harmony that results can be complex, rich, unexpected. In the Church the one that brings about that harmony is the Holy Spirit.” (p.81)

“Seeking the truth and taking on the richness of the polar tensions at stake.” (p.82)

“This synodal approach is something our world now needs badly. Rather than seeking confrontation, declaring war, with each side hoping to defeat the other, we need processes that allow differences to be expressed, heard, and left to mature in such a way that we can walk together without needing to destroy anyone. This is hard work.” (p.82)

Next week: Archbishop Christopher continues summarising the meaning of synodality with particular focus on its approach and its dangers and temptations.

CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN
www.catholicvoice.org.au

Parenting in a digital tsunami

BY DON SMITH

Almost all Australian teenagers (94%) and two thirds of primary school-aged children have their own mobile screen-based device, according to a 2017 survey by Australia's Online Research Unit.

Cathy Madsen is one Canberra parent who knows this only too well.

As a wife and mother of five in primary and secondary schools, she has to cope with the plethora of devices and platforms that are part of her family's world.

“It feels like I'm facing a tsunami of information and responsibilities, and all I've got to deal with it is one little bucket to try and bale out one bucket of chaos at a time,” Cathy said.

Aside from cyber bullying, stalking and other threats, her children face pressures from



Mother of five, Cathy Madsen with two of her younger children

social media, online gaming and messaging, and the platforms used by the schools.

“When the technology comes home with the children you've got to deal with it the other 18 hours of the day,” she said.

Catholic Education's Patrick Ellis said they recognise the challenges parents face navigat-

ing the digital maze.

“Schools provide education and support material for families on responsible use of technology, limiting screen time and educating students on the impact of their digital footprint,” he said.

“Most schools also run workshops and information

sessions and these sessions would also provide advice on responsible use limiting screen time.”

With remote learning under way, Patrick said all schools are providing options for both online and offline learning opportunities to support families.

He underlined, however, that online devices were important to maintain connections during difficult times.

“It's a matter of finding a sensible balance,” he said.

For parents such as Cathy Madsen finding that balance clearly comes with its challenges. But there's one lesson she takes from it all.

“The most important thing is you stay engaged with your kids in other ways, outside of the technology times,” Cathy said.

“This helps on every level.”

Five Minutes with...

The Catholic Voice recently spent five minutes with Fr Warrick Tonkin who retired from full-time ministry in December 2018.

What do you miss about full-time ministry?

Firstly, I would distinguish between full-time and active ministry. I have retired from full-time ministry but I am still active, especially sacramentally. I particularly miss the day-to-day interchange with people within the context of a parish community - both the ups and the downs. Within this context I especially miss the Liturgy prayed with a stable community of faith.

When and where were you ordained?

I was ordained as a deacon in Ss Peter & Paul's Old Cathedral, Goulburn, on 24 November, 1984. I was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Francis Carroll, in St Christopher's

Cathedral, Canberra, on 21 November, 1985.

What do you do in retirement?

My retirement was sudden and unplanned back in late 2018. At the time I was anticipating at least a further ten years in full-time ministry. However, health issues intervened, and I found myself retired. It has taken me almost three years to finally settle into the reality of who I am, a retired priest within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, sometimes lost and at times feeling invisible.

But I have settled into a relatively stable routine. The foundation of this routine is prayer, centred on the celebration of the Eucharist and the Divine Office. I have broadened my scope of reading beyond Scripture and Theology, to explore biography and historical settings. I also hope to extend my routine to engage in some writing - but let's wait and see.



Attending the Retired Priests lunch at Archbishop's house November 2018 BACK: Fr Peter Doai, Fr Frank Fuchs, Bishop Emeritus Pat Power, Fr Bernie Hennessy, Fr Hilton Roberts, Fr Kevin Flynn, Fr Warrick Tonkin, Fr Michael Mullen. FRONT: Fr Allen Crowe, Fr William Kennedy, Archbishop Christopher Prowse and Fr Henry Byrne.

Any advice for those considering the priesthood?

Advice - do not rush! God's call involves “kairos,” the Greek word for ‘God's time.’ We normally live our lives in the fast-lane, the land of “chronos” - clock time. Secondly, find a priest mentor. This person is someone who will walk the journey with you. He will encourage. He will challenge. He will be alert to what God's call actually is for you.

What makes you laugh? What makes you sad?

I laugh at good British comedy. The mistreatment of others makes me sad. Any time another human being is dismissed and treated as an object, as a something, and not respected as a person, as a “someone”, then my heart sinks.

Give to the 2021 Archdiocesan Father's Day Appeal
www.cgatholic.org.au/donate

They're so much more than just patients

BY FIONA VAN DER PLAAT

In more than 18 months of volunteering for a weekly dinner shift at Clare Holland House, Maria Crowley has learnt more than she could have imagined about subjects ranging from Egyptian history and Islam to the habits of politicians and the inspiring stories of immigrants who have built successful lives in Australia from nothing.

These shared stories and knowledge give Maria an insight into the “real people” with whom she has the privilege of spending some of the precious time they have left.

“You realise just how individual everyone is and how real their experience is,” Maria says. “They are so much more than just patients in a hospice.”

The volunteers at Clare Holland House, who in non-Covid times fill more than 50 shifts of about four hours a week, perform what Palliative Care ACT CEO Tracy Gillard describes as “simple and straightforward non-clinical duties”, such as helping with food, organising belongings, reading and chatting. But neither Tracy nor the volunteers underestimate the value of what they do.

Apart from relieving the pressure on busy clinical staff, Tracy says, “they enable contact time with our clients, which is really important”.



Volunteer Maria Crowley with her grandchildren

Maria loves the shared stories, which she says can spring from any source or stimulation. “It’s quite miraculous really,” she says of the conversations that might start from something as mundane as noticing a book on the bedside table.

She also appreciates the value of her caring duties. “You might have someone who has lived a very ordered life and you can help by doing something as simple as folding their bed down in a way that pleases them,” she says. “It’s like a little gift they are grateful for.”

Maria, who volunteers around her full-time job in the public service, says she learnt even the smallest gestures go

a long way during the time her own mother spent in a hospice in 1997. “It was about dignity and making her feel safe ... a little bit of attention, a kind ear, some companionship.”

She says laughter features heavily in her interactions with people at Clare Holland House but she also admits to moments of sadness, especially when she has spent a lot of time with a long-term client. And, as a mother of seven and grandmother of three (with three on the way), it is heart-wrenching to witness the “grace and warmth” of the young mothers who have spent their last days in the hospice.

“I tend to deal with it by

praying for them ... I basically debrief with God on the drive home,” she says.

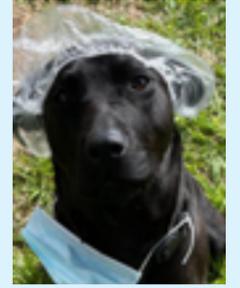
Most of the clients are grateful for the volunteers’ help and company and Maria is grateful for the contribution she can make during the most vulnerable moments of their lives. But she is also “very mindful of never intruding”.

Tracy, whose organisation coordinates about 150 volunteers covering the hospice, home-based palliative care, aged care facilities and Leo’s Place (a non-clinical respite home), says such boundaries are also important for the volunteers. “There needs to be a little bit of arm’s distance so our volunteers can protect themselves and sustain their role.”

The volunteers are a “mixed bag” of ages and motivations, she says. While up to 70 per cent are over 60 and retired, a greater number of younger people are becoming involved. While she is happy with this trend, “I find it fascinating because death and dying is something we are not necessarily culturally comfortable with”.

For information on volunteering with Palliative Care ACT, including at Clare Holland House (run by Calvary Health Care), go to <https://www.pall-careact.org.au/become-a-volunteer/>

Local Life



“Trust me – I’m a Dogtor” was the motto for Dolly’s dress up this week at Hennessy College, Young



Fr Mark & Fr Thonn are in the news again at Holy Spirit Parish Amaroo where they

report a mouse had learned the dark arts of escape and evasion by avoiding their clutches and leaving the trap in pieces.



According to a Carroll College Broulee Facebook post, students have been hard at work understanding the complex geometric properties of toilet paper pyramids.

Smuggling Christ into popular culture: Q&A with Greg Sheridan

Greg Sheridan is one of Australia’s most influential journalists and commentators. The Catholic Voice recently spoke to him about his recent books on Christianity and its place in Australia today. The following is an edited extract of the conversation.

Why write *God is Good for You and Christians: the urgent case for Jesus in our world*?

Three books ago I wrote a memoir... [and] I attended a lot of writer’s festivals. I was struck by the fact that, amongst the hundreds of books that I saw promoted and discussed, there was not a single book which argued anything from a pro-Christian or pro Jewish point of view. That’s extraordinary because the Judeo-Christian tradition has completely shaped our civilization. And I thought really if you’ve got a public microphone

by accident or circumstance or whatever, then maybe you should say something about this.

Your response to the new atheists?

They [the new atheists] would say the universe is 14 billion years old and therefore God obviously didn’t create it because he wouldn’t waste his time doing that. You think, how would you know what God would do? It’s absolutely characteristic of God that he would spend 14 billion years creating a garden for us.

What did you mean in *Christians that Jesus is ‘history, living and true’*?

I was struck by the belief that’s very common in our culture that the New Testament is all a fiction and was written hundreds of years later by canny church officials to retrospectively fit up a whole lot of doctrine. I thought the people ought to know in fact that everything we

know from secular scholarship, archaeology and history confirms the broad historicity of the New Testament.

The gospels and the writings of St Paul are just full of humanity and vigour. Paul was such a cross-grained, irascible, brilliant, magnificent figure of humanity and I thought, gosh, our culture has forgotten all this even if it ever knew it.

Do you find it difficult being a person of faith in our country?

Well, not really. In the West the culture is against Christianity and Christians aren’t used to that. But [that] doesn’t significantly impede our freedoms. We need to take advantage of those freedoms and claim a proper space for truth in our culture. There are two chapters on Chinese Christians [in *Christians*]. They really are persecuted. Christians in the Middle East



Foreign Editor of *The Australian*, Greg Sheridan. PHOTO: Catholic Weekly

really are persecuted. Christians are suffering terrible persecution in large parts of Africa.

Your views on controversies such as euthanasia?

To turn doctors into killers is extraordinarily dangerous and to create a situation where older people, frail people, people who are unwell, will in effect - not by

design - but in effect, be pressured to end their lives is really a terrible wrong road for society to go down.

The Catholic Voice recently reviewed Sheridan’s latest book, *Christians: the urgent case for Jesus in our world*. Go to www.catholicvoice.org.au to read the review.