



# vocations

'Come Follow Me'

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

2019





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## CATHOLIC VOCATIONS 2019

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# VOCATIONS

Vocations to priesthood and religious life need to be nurtured by the prayer and support of communities of faith: the family, the school and the parish. St John Paul II said that “all members of the Church, without exception, have the grace and responsibility to look after vocations” (*Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 41).

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More info:  
[vocationcentre.org.au](http://vocationcentre.org.au)



# Sisters of Life

The Sisters can give Christ because they have Christ. They have Christ because they love Christ, because they are consecrated to Christ and Christ is consecrated to them.



Sisters Jeanne Marie, Antoniana Maria, Zelig Maria and Mary Grace  
PHOTO: GIOVANNI PORTELLI

BY Catherine Sheehan

**T**he Sisters of Life came Down Under this past May to spread the word about the dignity, sanctity and worth of every human life.

Sisters Mary Grace, Antoniana Maria, Jeanne Marie and Zelig Maria travelled from the US, where the Sisters of Life are based, to visit Sydney which was hosted by the University of Notre Dame.

They gave a series of presentations including a "Feminine Genius Brunch" for women, a Theology on Tap talk aimed at young Catholics and a public forum on religious and priestly vocations.

The Sisters of Life are dedicated to promoting the dignity and sanctity

of every human life.

"As Sisters of Life, we're committed to the truth that every person is deeply good, unique, valuable and unrepeatable," Sr Mary Grace SV told The Catholic Weekly. "But, in our culture, that can be easy to forget and tough to believe. We can forget that we're made for greatness. That's the reason we speak on life and love, on freedom and mercy."

Sr Mary Grace who was born and raised in Sydney made her First Profession as a Sister of Life last year in Connecticut.

#### Sr Mary Grace

On returning to Australia she visited the university that had been pivotal in her life.

"Notre Dame was the launchpad

for my life and the place that prepared me to dream big and dare to trust in God's plans, even if it meant leaving the beach for the Bronx! It was a tremendous joy to return, as a Sister of Life, to my home turf and to the University that was my second home."

The Sisters of Life are a religious community of women dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of every human life. Their ministry includes offering support to pregnant women.

"As we've seen in our missions, in the lives of the women we serve, on the retreats we run and in the places we visit, that when we experience ourselves to be loved for who we are, when we receive Jesus' healing mercy, we remember to dream

again about our future, hope grows stronger and the impossible becomes possible," Sr Mary Grace said.

The Sisters' ministry includes offering support to pregnant mothers.

After their time in Sydney the Sisters visited Notre Dame's campus in Fremantle, WA.

"Our hope is that everyone we meet, whether it be on the plane, in the streets, or at the events, will be personally renewed and strengthened by the truth that they are good and deeply loved, that their lives matter, and that they are called to be witnesses to the living God in this great Southern Land," Sr Mary Grace said.

"We believe that God ultimately intended this trip to take place at this time on Aussie soil!"

## Called to preach the truth in the Dominican way

LIKE MOST of my friends I was agnostic and had given up on God by the time I completed Catholic high school. So I sought to find meaning through the things of the world but none of these things satisfied me. In university, I was introduced to a Catholic youth group. Even though I did not share their belief, the excitement of the youth group stirred me spiritually. I ended up leaving the youth group, hungry for even deeper meaning.

In my final year of university, I attended a silent retreat. It was through contemplation within the silence I realised that God is always with us and that he loves us. I also realised that I wanted to make God's love known to others who do not have the faith. I found myself open to even sacrificing my own life for the service of others, in order to make God known to them, as Jesus Christ has made God known. I felt called to pursue the vocation to the priesthood.

But the noisiness of our modern world

weakened and distracted my conviction. I grasped that I was dependent on God, sensing the need to balance spiritual nourishment through contemplation with the active service of ministry. From this need, I eventually found my vocation as a friar within the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) whose motto is: to contemplate and to hand to others the fruits of contemplation.

Having been ordained yesterday by Archbishop Fisher as a priest for the Dominican order and reflecting back on my life, I see how God has brought me to this vocation, and how it would not have been possible without Him. When we follow God's way to our vocation, we are truly given life to the full.

Br William Loh OP grew up in Sydney and found his calling on campus. He was ordained to the priesthood on August 3rd at St. Mary's Cathedral. If you would like more information about the Dominican vocation, email [vocations@op.org.au](mailto:vocations@op.org.au)



Br William Loh OP (centre) as a novice with other friars of St Dominic's Priory, Melbourne.

# DOMINICANS

PRAY  
STUDY  
COMMUNITY  
MISSION  
DISCOVER  
DISCERN

ARE YOU CALLED TO BE A DOMINICAN FRIAR?

COME AND SEE ...  
PLEASE CONTACT THE VOCATIONS PROMOTER:  
[VOCATIONS@OP.ORG.AU](mailto:vocations@op.org.au)  
[WWW.OP.ORG.AU](http://WWW.OP.ORG.AU)

DOMINICAN FRIARS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

## DOMINICAN SISTERS OF ST CECILIA

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN SYDNEY

10 August: Siena Night  
6-8 September: Vocation Discernment Retreat  
25-27 October: Encountering Christ Retreat  
23 November: End of Year Retreat Day

*To contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation*

**Founded in Nashville, TN in 1860**  
Established in the Archdiocese of Sydney in 2007 and the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 2018  
To learn more, visit [nashvilledominican.org](http://nashvilledominican.org), find us on facebook  
[@dominicansistersaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/dominicansistersaustralia), or contact the sisters at [sydney@op-tn.org](mailto:sydney@op-tn.org) or [melbourne@op-tn.org](mailto:melbourne@op-tn.org)



# Praying for people and the priesthood



**A** new online community is dedicated to praying for young people, faith and vocational discernment in Australia. Pledge To Pray aims to have 1,000 prayer pledges across Australia by December 2019, just in time for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Perth.

People can go online to submit their intention to pray for young people in Australia and for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

"I see it as an essential way of involving the whole Church in the most important things that we can do for vocations - pray," Fr David Cartwright, Vocations Director, told The Catholic Weekly.

"This is the first thing that Jesus asked us to do: 'Pray to the Lord of the Harvest.' Asking people to pledge a prayer helps them to feel they are actively engaging in the ministry of vocations, and praying for our young people and our Church at this time.

"Particularly in the lead up to ACYF in December, this initiative seeks to focus people in spiritual support of youth and help them spiritually to listen to the voice of the Lord."

BY Catherine Sheehan

**More info:**  
[www.pledgetoprayer.com.au](http://www.pledgetoprayer.com.au)  
or 03 9926 5738

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## Capuchins: Men of Prayer and Gospel Brotherhood



The Capuchin Franciscan Friars invite young men who are being inspired by God to commit themselves in a radical way to live the Gospel in our Capuchin brotherhood. God continues to call young men to follow in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi. Our Capuchin brotherhood rejoices that we've just had two young men accepted into our first year of formation, another who was invested in the habit of St Francis on 21st July as he entered our second year, and two others who, on 25th July, professed their first vows of poverty, obedience and chastity for the sake of the kingdom, thus beginning their third year of formation. Please keep them and our other young men in formation in your prayers!

The Capuchins are a worldwide brotherhood with more than 10,000 friars in over 100 countries. Inspired by St Francis, we strive to live the Gospel of

Our Lord Jesus Christ as a community of priests and brothers committed to a life of prayer, fraternity and ministry in simplicity, humility and joy. Through our vows we seek to follow as closely as possible - and give courageous witness to - Christ who was poor, chaste and always obedient to His Father in heaven. We have two friaries (houses) in Sydney, two in Brisbane, two in Melbourne and one in Adelaide; and we give expression to

our Gospel way of life through a wide variety of apostolic works that include: ministering to the poor through van ministries and a soup kitchen; preaching; confessions; chaplaincy work for universities, schools, youth, migrants, nursing homes, various prayer movements; the pastoral

care of parishes; and the ministries of prayer and fraternal life.

**We will host a Vocation Information afternoon Leichhardt on Saturday, 24th August (2-7pm). To register, or for more information about the Capuchins, contact Father Thomas: [vocations@capuchinfriars.org.au](mailto:vocations@capuchinfriars.org.au) <http://www.capuchin.org.au>**

## VOCATION ENQUIRY DAY

with the Capuchin Friars

**When:** Saturday, 24th August 2019, 2pm-7pm

**Where:** St Fiacre's Hall, 98 Catherine St, Leichhardt

**Cost:** Free

**Terrific opportunity to come and hear a few talks and have your questions answered. For young men (18-35 yrs).**

To register your interest, please contact  
Fr Thomas: 0432 362 052 or  
[vocations@capuchinfriars.org.au](mailto:vocations@capuchinfriars.org.au)  
[www.capuchin.org.au](http://www.capuchin.org.au)

## Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma



The Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan is founded on the spiritual patronage of Calvary where the greatest Mercy of God was revealed in the total self-gift of Jesus Christ. Our Institute was established in 1973, in response to the call for renewal from the Second Vatican Council, when seven Sisters trusted in the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In a spirit of joyous gratitude, the primary activity of our Institute is prayer, which anchors us deeply in the love of God and nurtures our apostolic work. Following the example of our Foundress, Venerable Catherine McAuley who sought to adapt the apostolate of the Institute to the specific needs of a local Church, we give ourselves

to fulfilling our fourth vow of service to the poor, sick and ignorant in addition to our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In Sydney, our apostolic service is currently in tertiary education.

In our convents in the USA, Italy, Germany and Scotland we also carry out spiritual and corporal works of mercy in education and health care, as well as through other forms of service to the Church. Our Motherhouse is in Alma, Michigan.

There, women who are drawn by the Holy Spirit to enter our Institute are formed in the religious heritage of Mercy before being sent out on mission to be a "convergence point between the Mercy of God and the misery of mankind." We have several Australian Sisters in our Community, and another young Australian woman entering Postulancy this year.

Our Sydney Foundation was established eleven years ago. We hold a monthly Holy Hour for vocations at our convent in Camperdown, preceded by dinner and a time of conversation together. If you would like to join us to pray for your vocation with others who are also discerning different states of life, please contact Sister Mary Julian Ekman at [pacific.rsmofalma.com](mailto:pacific.rsmofalma.com) For more information about our Community, please visit our website: [rsmofalma.org](http://rsmofalma.org) - or simply come along to a Holy hour!

*"Behold, your entire Community assembled together and joined in the bonds of unity; the example of one sustains another, the zeal of one communicates itself to another, the prayer of one seconds the supplications of another, all form a single heart. What cannot the assembly of so numerous and so pious a Community obtain from God! Approach, then, my dear Sisters, approach with confidence to the throne of grace. Behold, He is here present."* - Ven. Catherine McAuley

## RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF MERCY OF ALMA



### WHERE THE MERCY OF GOD MEETS THE MISERY OF MANKIND

A strong prayer and common life allows us to extend the Mercy of God through the Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy in professional disciplines that include the fields of education and health care and wherever we can be of service to the Church. "Those who have been given the priceless gift of following the Lord Jesus more closely consider it obvious that he can and must be loved with an undivided heart, that one can devote to him one's whole life and not merely certain actions or occasional moments or activities" *Vita consecrata*, 104. You are warmly invited to visit our convent in Camperdown (near the University of Sydney).

**Phone:** 02 9557 2398  
**Email:** [pacific.rsmofalma@gmail.com](mailto:pacific.rsmofalma@gmail.com)  
To learn more about us, please visit our website: [www.rsmofalma.org](http://www.rsmofalma.org)



# Religious literacy for today's world



The most fundamental vocation is the one that comes with baptism. Living the baptismal vocation today comes with increasing challenges. Society does not foster or support Christian faith in the way it did in previous generations. All the baptised need support in living their faith. Many people are looking for ways to deepen their faith and expand their religious and theological literacy. A theological education has the potential to give them confidence about what they believe and how to speak about it. It gives them confidence in the face of challenges to the faith. The Catholic Institute of Sydney (CIS) has been involved in theological education for around 130 years, first at St Patrick's College, Manly and since 1995 at

Strathfield. Since 1954 it has offered ecclesiastical awards approved by the Holy See (the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome); and since 1982 it has offered civilly accredited awards as a member institution of the Sydney College of Divinity. The ecclesiastical awards offered by the Institute include the five-year STB (Baccalaureate of Sacred Theology), the STL (Licentiate in Sacred Theology), and the STD (Doctorate in Sacred Theology).

Those looking to deepen their faith or to expand their theological literacy have a number of study options. They may choose a short course at graduate certificate level or a degree course. They can also choose to specialise by choosing course units in biblical studies, theology, philosophy, church history or pastoral theology.

CIS is the place of study for those with a vocation to priesthood who are at a diocesan seminary or in a religious order. Those with a vocation to the permanent diaconate also study there. Other students come from all walks of life and professions. Some are looking for professional qualifications, others are primarily taking the course for personal enrichment.

CIS cares for the vocation of all the baptised. Students study in a supportive environment where faith is nurtured and theological literacy is learnt alongside others.



## JOIN THOSE CHOOSING TO STUDY THEOLOGY

A course in Theology at the Catholic Institute of Sydney will allow you to delve deeply into the rich Catholic philosophical and theological tradition and equip you to live your vocation in today's world.



**CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF SYDNEY**  
99 Albert Road,  
Strathfield NSW 2135

For more information contact us: t: 9752 9500  
e: registrar@cis.catholic.edu.au  
or visit our website [www.cis.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cis.catholic.edu.au)

CIS is a member institution of the Sydney College of Divinity (CRICOS 02948J)

# "He is Enough"

by Majella O'Sullivan rsj



**My destiny was to be a Religious Sister! My destiny was to be a Josephite!**

My mother prayed to St Gerard Majella, patron of Religious, for one of her children to be a Religious!

Our house was a house of welcome to Josephite Sisters, Priests and Religious Brothers. I had two uncles who were Marist Brothers!

So, I became a Josephite Sister and have been for some years! My question now is "Why do I stay?"

I truly believe in my heart of hearts that I am called to be here in this place, in this time, I am 'home'. My relationship

with my God, who I call Jesus, sustains me through thick and thin in my life adventures. I try each day to do as Mary MacKillop encourages us all to do 'Listen to the Whisperings of God in your heart' (1868). This listening encourages me to know who God is for me, this then helps me to understand and know what life means for me. God is my wellspring, and I draw on this spring each day of my life. At times the 'spring' can be dry, but I go back to listening.

I am committed each day, as a Sister of Saint Joseph, to live wholeheartedly the Vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience that I proclaimed 'yes' to over 40 years ago. I am sometimes asked how can I be celibate in the world in which we live. It sounds odd, but I have engraved on my commitment ring 'He is Enough'.

My God to whom I committed myself all those years ago has indeed been 'enough' for me. My Josephite Community, my extended family, my many friends draw me closer to God by my interactions through their friendship.

My final words to anyone who is 'wondering' about their future life is to practise the art of 'LISTENING' to oneself, others and especially to God who may be calling you to live life to the full as a Religious Sister, Brother or Priest. I have, and I would not change my life for any reason!



Nurturing relationships of compassion, justice, mutuality and healing

## Women of Healing and Hope



**Sisters of Saint Joseph**  
*of the Sacred Heart*

For more information please visit  
[www.sosj.org.au](http://www.sosj.org.au)  
or email [katrina.brill@sosj.org.au](mailto:katrina.brill@sosj.org.au)

170165 NSW CM

# Tyburn Priory - School of the Lord's service



90 year-old Mother Cyril

**Ora! – Pray!** Pope Benedict XVI, writing of the Holy Mass, could have been describing our life: "The Eucharist, the open gateway to God, and from God to us, cannot be limited to a mere half-hour in the morning. It must find echoes in order to be alive, it must shed light throughout the day..."

The Holy Mass is the 'sun' at the centre of our life. The choral singing of the Divine Office, seven times a day, catches

up and sustains its radiance, sanctifying the course of the day, the whole of time. Our Eucharistic Adoration keeps us closely united to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Christ in His continuous intercession for all humanity. For as Pope Benedict has written: "Communion only reaches its true depths when it is supported and surrounded by adoration."

**Labora! – Work!** Monastic work includes Lectio Divina (savouring the Word of God) and monastic studies; and manual labour (e.g. household tasks, gardening and crafts).

It is a sharing in the unfolding of the Creator's work as we contribute to our own individual and community growth, cultivating our own resources, becoming what we are called to be, by the labour of our hands and minds.

Do you feel you have a calling? Our monastic vocation is a divine call to set out on a spiritual journey which leads away from self and takes us to the Heart of God. It is tested and proved by the fruit of our love for one another.

If you feel that God may be calling you we invite you to get in touch with us.

**Tyburn Priory**  
325 Garfield Road East  
Riverstone NSW 2765  
(02) 9627 5171



# Blessed Sacrament Congregation

The Blessed Sacrament Congregation was founded on 13 May 1856 in Paris by Fr Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868).

We are an apostolic group of priests, deacons and brothers drawn together by our common desire to live the mystery of the Eucharist to the full (in celebration, in prayer and in ministry). Our life and mission are based on the eucharistic charism of St Peter Julian Eymard, who was inspired to see the Eucharist as the sacrament of Christ's abiding love.

The Congregation now has just over 900 religious around the world. Our Australian foundation dates from 1929 when the first group of religious from Canada and the United States arrived at St Francis' Church in Melbourne.

Any reader attracted to living a life centred on the Eucharist and living a celibate life in community is invited to contact our Vocations Director, Fr Quoc Nguyen ([vocations@blessedsacrament.com.au](mailto:vocations@blessedsacrament.com.au)).



## Prayer for VOCATION

*The vines are ripe; people holding fire; so send us, Lord, to harvest the crops and tread the vintage, now ready, for divine baking and bottling, that grain and grape become bread and wine to feed human hearts hungry for love and liberty as your rich Word in Christ becomes true eucharist, the torch Saint Eymard flung to all four compass points afire with the Spirit and blazing bright for no end life times. - J Dirks, 2018*



## BECOME AN "APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST"

*Our Mission is to respond to the hungers of the human family with the riches of God's love manifested in the Eucharist.*

*(Rule of Life #3)*

As Blessed Sacrament Religious we proclaim the reality of God's love in the Eucharist by our 'gift of self' to God and to our brothers and sisters. This gift of ourselves is deepened through prayer in the presence of the abiding sacrament and is realised in an apostolic life of eucharistic evangelization.

## BLESSED SACRAMENT CONGREGATION

**Vocations Contact:** Fr Quoc Nguyen sss

[Vocations@blessedsacrament.com.au](mailto:Vocations@blessedsacrament.com.au)

(03) 9663 2495

326 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000



# Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth



*"The Kingdom of God's Love that is to grow within ourselves and others..."*

We, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (CSFN), are an international Roman Catholic congregation of religious women dedicated to spreading the Kingdom of God's love, particularly within families. We accomplish this through a wide variety of ministries: education, health care, social services and spiritual services, including evangelization, catechesis, re-

treat work, and pastoral ministry. We also spread the Kingdom through our daily living in a community of prayer and commitment to God, the Holy Family, and to one another.

Our Foundress is Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd, Frances Siedliska, who started the Congregation in Rome, the heart of the Church, in 1875. Though born into a family of privilege and wealth in middle 19th century Poland, Frances hungered for a deep spiritual life that expressed it-

self in the radical commitment of religious life.

Strong was her desire to bring the love of Christ to any and all. She transcended ethnic boundaries, welcoming women of many nationalities into the Congregation and serving God's People in many different countries.

Today, this vision of Nazareth is being lived by 1,147 sisters serving in 14 countries: Australia, Belarus, England, France, Ghana, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Poland, Russia,



Spain, Ukraine, and the United States. We are joined by 700 lay associates. Our motherhouse is located in Rome.

Our Congregation has seven provinces, including the Australian province. Our Sisters have been in Australia since 1954. We have five convents in two states – New South Wales and Western Australia. We love welcoming people into our homes, and into our hearts too!

You would always be welcome to visit our convents, to join us for our monthly Holy Hour for Vocations, to spend time on one of our retreats, or simply to join us for a cuppa!

**We invite you to check out our Facebook page - "Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth - Australia" - or our website - [www.csfm.org.au](http://www.csfm.org.au). Most of all, we want you to know that you and your family are in our prayers every day!**

# Priestly Fraternity of St Peter

**Traditional Latin Mass  
Vocations Day: 7 September  
Maternal Heart of Mary  
Parish, Lewisham  
Registrations: [ezechielfsspn.net](mailto:ezechielfsspn.net)**

**[fssp.net/vocations](http://fssp.net/vocations) | (02) 9572 9694**



# The Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary



munity or in the world, we seek to follow Mary's spirit of service and magnanimity, her free and total 'Yes' to God.

According to the needs of our work - in professional spheres appropriate for women or in the formation of girls, women and families - we wear our Marian dress or civilian clothes.

SCHOENSTATT means 'beautiful place' and re-

Our Mission: To imitate Mary who is the perfect feminine embodiment of Christ. As the masterpiece of God's creation, Mary is the response to the anthropological challenges of our times - especially for women.

Like her, we wish to help Christ in His redemptive mission and lead all people to the heart of the Eternal Father.

**OUR DAILY LIFE:** Our lifestyle encompasses a balance of prayer, work and community activities. Living and working either in com-

fers to our place of origin in Germany. It also challenges us to conquer true beauty and regain the likeness of God.

The International Schoenstatt Movement celebrated the Centenary of its founding in 2014. There are over 200 Schoenstatt shrines in 5 continents and around 2,000 sisters from 39 countries.

**For more information contact: Sr Luisa Maria Fabre | Tel: (02) 4773 8338 | [srluisamaria@yahoo.com](mailto:srluisamaria@yahoo.com) | [www.schoenstatt.org.au](http://www.schoenstatt.org.au) | [www.s-ms.org](http://www.s-ms.org)**



# Father Prakash 'blessed' by the faith of the people in Santa Teresa



It's a long way from Fr Prakash Menezes SVD's home in India to his parish of Santa Teresa in the Central Australian desert country, but it is exactly the kind of Christ-led and people-centred life he hoped for when he signed up to be a missionary priest.

Fr Prakash joined the Divine Word Missionaries in India and undertook his theological studies and formation in Melbourne, where he made his final vows and was ordained to the priesthood in 2014.

His first assignment was to Central Australia, and he has now been living and working as Parish Priest in Santa Teresa, about 80km from Alice Springs, for

about two years.

He says working in Central Australia isn't always easy, but it is deeply fulfilling.

"I think that in first coming here, one of the toughest things to get used to was the weather. I didn't know it gets down to the minus range in the winter and above 45C in the summer, so there are big extremes," he says.

"And of course, learning the culture in any new place is always challenging. I'm still learning what is appropriate and how to behave, so that I don't impose my own cultural belief system on the people.

"Also, the language is definitely tougher than I thought it would be."

But Fr Prakash says the challenges are balanced out by the many blessings of living in this Aboriginal community.

"The best thing is the faith of the people," he says.

"I really appreciate that and it is encouraging to me as a priest and as a Christian.

"The people here have a deep trust in God and that is visible, including in the children in the community here.

"I feel really blessed to be here."





# Hearing God's call: "Be my priest"

Fr Epeli has now been a priest for seven years and says the “inexplicable peace” he felt upon hearing that initial call to priesthood has never left him.

From the time he was a little boy, Fr Epeli Qimaqima would ask God on a regular basis what He wanted him to do with his life. He never received an answer but he kept asking anyway.

Then one day, when he had grown into a young man, God finally answered.

“Priesthood.”

Fr Epeli has now been a priest for seven years and says the “inexplicable peace” he felt upon hearing that initial call to priesthood has never left him.

“I never knew such happiness was possible this side of heaven,” he told *The Catholic Weekly*.

“I never knew it was possible to know so much love in one's life, from God and from his people.”

Fr Epeli is currently the Director of the Vocations Office for the Sydney Archdiocese.

He grew up in the semi rural village of Naibuluvatu, Kalabu, in Fiji. He is the eldest of four children in the only Catholic family in the village.

Even as a little boy he felt the desire for priesthood. Often, he “played” at being a priest, covering himself with a blanket—with a hole in the middle for his head—that served as a chasuble and using potato chips to represent the Holy Eucharist.

Fr Epeli grew up in a semi-rural area of Fiji.

But it was when he visited a remote mountain village for holidays with his family that the young Fr Epeli first realised the importance of the priesthood. Because there was no priest in the village, Catholics could only attend a Communion service led by a local catechist who was Fr Epeli's uncle.



“I can still see in my mind that little boy in that church looking at this relative of his and thinking, why is uncle doing that when he's not a priest? That was my first realisation of the unique role the priest has in the community and his connection with the Mass.”

“As I thought more about that I started asking the Lord to show me what he wanted me to do for Him and His people. That prayer became more prominent once I got to Year 6 and whenever I thought about being a priest, that's what I'd say to God.”

After completing his secondary schooling, Fr Epeli attended teacher's college in Suva, and that's where God finally answered his question.

He went for his usual “Rosary walk” after dinner one evening, praying as he walked around the college oval. He once again asked God the question he'd been asking since childhood,

“Lord, what do you want me to do for you and your people?”

“Being a romantic, I think God chose his moment, because the college is right on the water so there was this beautiful sunset and I heard this very, very quiet gentle

voice in the depths of my heart saying, ‘Priesthood. I want you to be a priest’.

I believe that was the voice of God because of the effect it had—an inexplicable peace that is still there.”

But how did he respond to God's will?

“Well, I said to God, ‘I'll do whatever you want, whenever you want it, and wherever you want it. But please give me 10 years. I want to finish teacher's college, I want to work for a while and I want to see my baby sister grow up’.

It was probably the most honest prayer I've ever said. And I didn't think anymore about it. I finished my Rosary and went back to the dormitory”.

God granted Fr Epeli most of his request, giving him nine years before he entered seminary.

“He was generous, he gave me nine. I don't know how to explain it but I knew God had given me nine years.” After finishing teacher's college Fr Epeli moved to Australia in 2002 and worked as a teacher until he entered the seminary. He was ordained in 2012.

He says one of the wonderful aspects of priesthood is the privilege of sharing in people's lives.

“At the heart of it is seeing that someone has been able to have an encounter with God, with Jesus, just by [the priest] being there. Visiting an elderly person in their home, someone who's lonely, or someone in their sick bed, children at their First Holy Communion.

“The excitement in the faces of children at their First Reconciliation, their fascination, that wow, Jesus really has forgiven them.

“That could only be possible if



the priest is there to give the sacrament ... I've seen God at work in ways that were just beyond me. I think we put God in a box but He's got the universe in His hands.”

After his ordination, Fr Epeli served in three parishes—Mosman, Bonnyrigg Heights and Broadway and says priesthood involves a special kind of friendship, with God – and with God's people.

“It's got to be one of the highlights of my priestly life so far, the friendship that Jesus offers you and the friendship that the people offer you.”

Being constantly on-call with parishioners, anytime of day or night, to visit death beds, sick beds and family situations, is the demand of children for the love of their spiritual father, he said.

Fr Epeli and Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP at the Blessing of the Vocations Centre in the Sydney Archdiocese in 2016.

“It's the demand of children for their father's love, a spiritual father's love and care... I could be so tired on a Sunday afternoon but then you get a phone call to say so

and so is in the hospital and you go and you return fulfilled, just in time to say the evening Mass again.”

Serving as Director of Vocations over the last three-and-a-half years has been an enormous encouragement for his own vocation, seeing young people coming forward, still wanting to answer God's call.

This year six priests and six deacons will be ordained for the Sydney Archdiocese.

“God really has not abandoned us. I still meet with young people responding to what is in their hearts.”

“Given the circumstances we find ourselves in especially in Australia and around the world, with the actions of a few people in the Church, I think this is a very good opportunity for us to stop and pause and reflect on what the gift of the priesthood is to the Church.

“This is an opportune time to not be too hasty to speak of married clergy or women priests or whatever. This is a time to appreciate and rediscover what the gift of the priesthood is for us to the Church and to the world. Then we will see

profound renewal I think in many ways in the life of the Church.

“The Church is a lamp on a hill-top. Thank God it's still burning. The light is still burning despite the storms of time. So I'm full of hope.”

**More info:**  
[www.vocationcentre.org.au](http://www.vocationcentre.org.au)





# Four young religious women vowed their perpetual commitment to the Lord

by Sr. Maria Josephine PHAN

**The Archbishop:** What do you ask of God and of the Church?

**Professed Sisters:** To serve God our whole life in the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres.

**All:** Thanks be to God!

On 2nd February 2019, together with the whole Church celebrating the Feast of Our Lord's Presentation, the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres in Australia were also rejoicing in the celebration of the Religious Perpetual Profession of Sr Marion Tran, Sr Maria Josephine Phan, Sr Anna Pham and Sr Marie Claude Vo. It was a great day for the Congregation, the Professed Sisters, their families, friends, and the whole Church in Australia!

The image of the four smiling young nuns holding a lit candle in their hands, walking confidently and with dignity into the Cathedral of Saint Stephen struck all those present with amazement and wonder. Just as our Lord was presented in the temple in Je-



rusalem on this day more than two thousand years ago, these Professed Sisters brought into the Cathedral the Light of Christ. They were determined from now on this Light will lead them to serve God in His people. They have professed to offer their lives forever to

God and to His Church in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres. From this moment onwards, their lives will be a continued sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving and selfless love, bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God to all those they serve.

The main Celebrant- the Most Reverent Archbishop Mark Coleridge expressed with great enthusiasm his joy and gratitude to God for calling and choosing workers for the harvest. He praised the Professed Sisters of their courage, generosity and con-

viction to give up everything for the most important – the Kingdom of God. With great humor, he said in his homily that these young women had just signed a “blank check” today like their Blessed Mother Virgin Mary who did long, long time ago, without knowing what would be scribbled on that check! The whole assembly burst out laughing and clapping their hands. Yet they all knew deep down in their hearts that God would certainly fill this “check” with overflowing blessings, abundant love and countless graces, surprising adventures - the best thing for them... but not without sufferings!

The celebration was held in a prayerful and solemn atmosphere. We all prayed for the fidelity and joyful commitment of the Professed, as well as for an increase in number of religious vocations in Australia. May many young women be touched by God's love and courageously respond to Him in giving their lives in His service.

*May Saint Mary Mackillop intercede for us.*

## Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres Australia

For more information, please contact  
Sr. Inede Pham SPC  
P: (07) 3809 9535  
E: srinede@gmail.com  
28 Fedrick St, Boronia Heights, QLD 4124  
www.srspcaustralia.org.au  
www.stpaulrome.com

All things to all people - (1Cor 9:22)

# To Discern or not to Discern



PHOTO: GIOVANNI PORTELLI

When one considers the way that freedom is viewed today as the choice between one thing or another, the process of discernment might well be interpreted – by the modern millennial – as something as simple as choosing between Earl Grey or Peppermint Tea.

I suspect that in many modern circles to *discern* is the new buzz word for ‘mind mapping’, brainstorming or ‘reflecting’ on what it is that you want – absent God's input. By this I mean that some may see discernment as a way of working out what “feels right” inside them – without reference to God's will for their lives. This modern manifestation of discernment is the religious garb of the Order of Relativism.

I hope to offer here some suggestions that may be useful to you. Right discernment is so necessary for all of us, but especially for our young people now, precisely because of the many alternatives to what is original (traditional) available to us today.

## How should one discern?

There are many wonderful paths of instruction you can follow to discern your vocation. The spiritual exercises St Ignatius of Loyola is one example that comes to mind. I will share with you a simple path that I hope might help you appreciate what the likes of St Ignatius offer.

Discernment is not merely a time of concentrating one's emotions and imagination about ‘what could be?’ and ‘what if?’ Rather, true Christian discernment is an act of faith in Jesus Christ. It is an interior path of humility that allows the heart to be transformed by and with love. This means that true Christian discernment is an exercise of a person whose work involves serious decision-making; of a person whose conscience is clothed with purity and truth; of a person whose soul is fixed on those Divine eyes that looks upon it with love; of a person who is ready to employ the full weight of his reason to

plough through the complexity of human emotions and desire in order to accept, love and do what God Wills. Placing these in the furnace of prayer a person will be able to **recognise** God's Will, **interpret** God's Will and **choose** God's Will.

## Recognise

The first and crucial step is to **recognise** that each of us exist *in the love of God and for his glory and honour*. In this deep and freeing realisation the discerning heart is loosened from the drags of the circumstances of our lives. This frees our hearts to ‘inhale’ the presence of God that fills the soul falling upon it like the morning dew. When the soul reaches this deep state of sheer nothingness before God's presence that soul is truly poor – truly lowly – and it is ready to be raised up just as God did for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This interior space gives us the freedom as children of God to then explore the question, ‘**as a man baptised in Christ, or as a woman baptised in**

## Christ, how can I glorify God?’

### Interpret

There are two parts to this stage of discernment. The first is that it is only natural that the first things that will surface in our hearts is a long list of things we think we can do to bring glory to God. At this stage, I would say that it is certain there is nothing you or I can do that can add to God's glory and majesty. But God can be glorified in us. And so our list should therefore re-orient to how God may be glorified in our actions.

Right interpretation will be exercised when you and I measure this personal list of “I wants” against a careful consideration of what is God doing in your life and my life. Discernment, at this stage, involves humbly trying to interpret God's hand in instances in our lives that might provide instruction. It is at this point it is right to pray through and with what God has revealed to us through his Son and the teachings of the Church.

Genuine discernment cannot contradict revealed truths or dissent from it.

Our desires, hopes and plans need to be scrutinized by divine truths. The same can also be said about God's actions in our souls and one's sense of what she or he believes God is calling them to. Right interpretation begins to crystallise when one's desire falls in line with God's actions in his or her life, tested against revealed truths.

### Choose

*How does one choose?* The choice becomes clear when the discerning heart sees the path or decision in front of him or her is *good, possible and better*. The Good Shepherd leads his flock to calm waters to give them drink (Ps 23:2).

When the commitment to discern is honest and practical, what is sought in faith, assured by hope and chosen with love is will give you life to the full, to the honour and glory of God in you.

**Vocation Centre** - Polding Centre, Level 6, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
**vocationcentre.org.au | vocations@sydneycatholic.org | (02) 9307 8433**



# MSC Vocations

## Fr Tru Nguyen's Story

Jesus said to his disciples: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest."

Recently, I reflected on this passage from the Gospel of Luke (10:2), I find that Jesus is still calling me, Tru Nguyen, to be his labourer, to be his worker, in the reign of God.

After ten years living and working as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart (msc), I find that the harvest of the Lord is still plentiful, and Jesus is still calling people to join him and to be co-workers in his harvest.

The question for me today is how am I to live and to labour in his harvest?

I remember that when Jesus sent out his disciples, he instructed them to carry no purse, no bag for the journey...and he said, "Whatever house you go into, let your first words be "Peace to this house. Stay there until you leave and heal those who are sick".

After five years of public ministry, I realise that as a missionary in the Lord's harvest, I am to be at peace within myself and to be a witness of peace wherever I go. Furthermore, on my mission journey I am to travel light, to carry no excess baggage so as not to burden myself nor the people I encounter on the way.

Now I am inviting anyone who is discerning about their vocation, and curious enough to read this short vocation story, to reflect on what Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest...Go and do likewise." (Luke 10).

## Missionaries of the Sacred Heart



Father Tru is at centre between two friends during his mission work in Vietnam



## VOCATION STORIES

### Fr Patrick Mara's Story

When I left school, I became a plumber and thoroughly enjoyed my work, gaining some awards and climbing the ranks early in my career towards becoming a foreman on major construction sites. But all that changed at the age of 24 when I felt God calling me to the priesthood. I was very resistant to the idea because I had invested a lot of time and energy into a career, was paying a mortgage, and was generally setting myself up for marriage and children, so God calling me to the priesthood was a huge spanner in the works.

The call steadily grew within me to the point where it became overpowering and I simply had to give it a go. My reasoning was 'if it works out, great. If it doesn't, I can go back to plumbing with a clear conscience knowing that I gave it a go.' I found the charism and spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to fit me like a glove and it just felt so natural to become a part of the congregation and I thank God for leading me to them.

I have had the opportunity to live and work in Kiribati, Fiji, PNG, and currently I am on the Tiwi Islands in the NT where I have been living for the last five years. I have met some of the most inspirational people who have dedicated their lives to spreading the Good News and have found a home with the Tiwi people. I minister to them and they treat me as a family member, it is really something very beautiful and unique.

As with any life it has its struggles and challenges, but I know that God truly does have the best plans for our lives and I experience so much fulfilment and joy having listened to the voice of God and making the decision to join religious life, knowing that God only wants the very best for me. So, if by some chance you feel the call to priesthood or religious life don't shut it out or be scared of it. You will find the treasure of great price.



Parish retreat 2019





## Somascans

# Somascan Father celebrates first Sydney Mass of Thanksgiving

### MY CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD

The Somascan Father's arrived at my parish of St Jerome's Munster while I was a law student at university, juggling the practice of my faith along with studies, part-time work, family and a pretty active social life.

These new missionary priests to Australia immediately inspired me by how quickly my parish community flourished into one big family under their joyful paternity, a paternity that helped me understand more and more the love of God Our Father.

Following an invitation from the Somascan Father's to help them in their ministry, on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in 2005 we established a Somascan Youth Group that continues today and has also expanded into a movement for both youth and adults. Having been led Providentially by hand through the blessings of seven years in youth ministry, over five years of work as a Perth and Sydney lawyer and international travel to nearly twenty countries around the world, I was guided to the greatest blessing of all: my vocation as a religious priest within the Order of Clerics Regular of Somasca.

D

If you would like to get to know us better or are interested in deepening your faith or discerning your vocation please feel free to contact us for guidance or spiritual direction.

**Website:**  
www.somascans.org.au  
www.stjeromesparish.org  
www.olol.kolbe.wa.edu.au



The Church may be going through difficult times but Catholics can trust that it is of God and guided by the Holy Spirit, a newly ordained priest urged during his first Mass in Sydney.

St Felix de Valois Bankstown hosted the first Mass celebrated in Sydney by Somascan Religious Fr Chris De Sousa CRS on 26 May.

Ordained only a fortnight earlier in Perth, Fr De Sousa travelled to Sydney to offer a Mass of thanksgiving for those who were unable to attend his 11 May Ordination.

Hundreds of friends, family and former colleagues packed the Bankstown parish to witness Fr Chris celebrating Mass alongside Fr Daniel McCaughan, administrator at Sutherland parish, and Resident Deacon Ronnie Maree.

During his homily, Fr Chris reflected on the four marks of the Church: being one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic, and spoke on the trust of the Apostles that the Church was being shaped under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"Brothers and sisters, we are

aware that Our Church is suffering greatly at present, as it has at other times throughout our history, which is why it is important for us to contemplate on these truths, these four marks of the Church," said Fr Chris.

"Just like in tonight's Gospel passage, Christ knows what is going to happen. He knew what would happen to Him, what will happen to his disciples, and He knows what will happen to His Church, to Our Church.

"And Christ not only knows what will happen, He is in charge of it. So when Our Lord consoles us by saying, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid,' we can trust Him. He is the Lord; He is in control."

At the conclusion of Mass, everyone retired to the parish hall to share in a meal and to receive a first blessing.

"It was a great privilege to offer a thanksgiving mass at St Felix where I have been received so well over the past five years," said Fr Chris.

"To have parishioners, former colleagues and fellow WYD 2011 pilgrims before me as I celebrated



Holy Mass in thanksgiving for their love, support and prayers was an overwhelming moment of grace."

Over 1000 people joined the Australian Somascan community at Perth's Spearwood Parish to witness Fr Chris being ordained by Bishop Donald Sproston.

Father De Sousa became the first Australian priestly vocation in the Order's 500-year history.

Left: Fr Chris De Sousa CRS, right, with Sutherland parish administrator Fr Daniel McCaughan at St Felix parish, Bankstown. Photo: Alison De Sousa  
Above: Guided by Fr Chris De Sousa, youth reflect upon the saints in Penrose Park on 17 May. Photo: Mathew De Sousa  
Below: Fr Chris is ordained by Perth Bishop Donald Sproston on 11 May. Photo: Jamie O'Brien/courtesy De Sousa family



# Areté



Founder of the Areté Centre,  
Fr Chris Ryan. PHOTO: Katherine Ng

A new centre to form missionary leaders for Catholic ministry in the 21st century has been founded in Sydney by Fr Chris Ryan, a priest of the Australian religious order, the Missionaries of God's Love.



**T**he Areté Centre for Missionary Leadership was launched at the Marist Senior Leadership Centre in Penshurst. The aim of the centre is to equip people to be lay leaders in today's secular world through courses that bring together sound theological knowledge and life-changing encounters with God. The word Areté is Greek for "excellence of any kind" or "moral virtue".

"A really crucial part of the MGL mission is that we really want lay people to be empowered for min-

istry. That's always been part of the MGL focus and something that we've always thought is important," said Fr Ryan, who recently completed his doctoral thesis in youth ministry.

A lack of proper training for those undertaking missionary work and a rapidly changing secular culture, were the main reasons that prompted the founding of the Areté Centre, Fr Ryan said.

"I found myself asking what might be helpful in that area and particularly recognising that with a lot of lay ministry in the Church, training is either pretty ad hoc or you've got to do a degree and really

there's a need for something in between those two things."

"They need solid formation and I think especially with the recognition that we're moving into a really new time in the Church where there are more people coming into those sorts of ministries."

"We're not just living in an era of change, we're living in a change of era, as the Pope has said. So we're talking about a massive cultural change and the Church has got to catch up to that and respond to it."

A course on Foundations of Missionary Leadership is planned to begin next year at the Areté Centre and will cover three key areas: en-

countering Christ through prayer and hearing the Gospel, formation in Catholic theology and doctrine, and Ministry Leadership, which will equip people with skills such as evangelisation and music ministry.

Fr Ryan said the course is geared towards those who are already working as ministry leaders or those who want to undertake such work.

The Foundations of Missionary Leadership course is set to begin in January next year.

More info: [www.aretecentre.org](http://www.aretecentre.org) or [administrator@aretecentre.org](mailto:administrator@aretecentre.org)

# A calling to a higher purpose

*For some people, the idea of choosing a religious life might seem old fashioned. They might ask why a "modern woman" would ever consider a religious vocation when there are so many choices in life. But for Josephite Sister Anne-Marie Gallagher rsj, it was clear that a life as a religious sister wasn't a choice – it chose her.*



**Why did you choose a religious vocation?**

I'm not sure if it's a case that I chose religious life, or it chose me! I knew I wanted to grow in my relationship with God and I was open to see where it would take me. I never would have dreamed my life's journey would bring me to where it has with many surprises and discoveries along the way. It was through prayer and growing in my relationship with God and also a mutual discernment with the Sisters of St Joseph that I could see I was at home in religious life.

**When was it that you were called to join the Sisters of St Joseph?**

I was 19 when I first began the journey of discernment of religious life with the Sisters of St Joseph. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher of religious education. It was while I was studying at ACU that to my own surprise I began to consider a vocation in religious life. It happened in the ordi-

nariness of my life and through prayer and discernment and, through the mutual discernment from the Sisters, I was able to pursue the possibility.

**Some people might argue that young women today have so many opportunities – why should they consider a religious life?**

Why not? Religious life is one of many vocations which gives expression to a relationship with God. If someone is interested in exploring this way of life I would encourage them to do so but most importantly to be in touch with the why in pursuing this way of life. For me it continues to be an incredible enriching journey which has seen me grow as a person, in community and in relationship with God. Like any other vocation, life doesn't come without its challenges but you learn to grow through them.

**You now work at the La Salle Academy at ACU. What do you do there?**

My ministry is within ACU La Salle's Academy working with pre-service and early career teachers in the implementation of the Signum Fidei Catholic Life and Mission Program. This is a faith formation initiative which is offered across three modules and encourages young people to be involved in church participation, to grow spiritually and to be involved in ministry experience which could be in a cross-cultural context.

**How do you integrate your religious life with working at ACU?**

As a Sister of St Joseph I live an apostolic life which means I am actively engaged in ministry. As a Sister of St Joseph, I also have congregational commitments such as prayer with the Sisters in my local community. Other commitments include being a member of and chairing a couple of committees to do with regional and congregational communications.

**Discover more about studying theology at ACU:** [acu.edu.au/study-at-acu/find-a-course/theology](http://acu.edu.au/study-at-acu/find-a-course/theology)



## Bring faith to life and life to faith.

Conceived in collaboration with industry, community, and church leaders, theology at ACU is accessible at any stage of your life or career journey and always responsive to emerging questions and contextual needs.

- Short courses in theology
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- International tours and learning abroad opportunities
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[acu.edu.au/school/theology](http://acu.edu.au/school/theology)



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## Sumner House

# A place for young men to hear the still small voice of God

Sumner House in Lidcombe, a residential home for young men discerning their vocation, is named after Fr Bede Sumner, the first Catholic priest ordained in Australia.



A hundred and eighty three years to the day after the first Catholic priest was ordained in Australia, a house of vocational discernment named in his honour was officially opened and blessed in Sydney.

Sumner House in Lidcombe, a residential home for young men discerning their vocation, is named after Fr Bede Sumner, the first Catholic priest ordained in Australia.

Fr Sumner, a professed Benedictine from England, was ordained by Archbishop Bede Polding in Sydney on 12 May 1836.

Young men in Sydney seeking to discern their vocation will now be able to live for around 12-18 months in the home named for the pioneering priest. Sumner House accommodates up to ten and is situated next door to St Joachim's Catholic Parish in Lidcombe.

Appropriately, the opening took place on World Day of Prayer for Vocations—12 May.

It was only discovered after the opening date had been set, and name of the house had been chosen, that 12 May was the exact date of Fr Sumner's ordination to the priesthood.

Bishop Tony Randazzo, who officially opened and blessed the house, said the coincidence was "a wonderful little sign of divine providence."

He said Fr Sumner was an example of someone who had struggles in life but still gave himself to the mission of the Church.

"He was quite a remarkable fellow in the pioneer period. He was held up by bushrangers, travelled quite extensively on horseback and was very close to the people."

The establishment of Sumner House reflects the priority given by Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP to encouraging and supporting vocations in the Sydney Archdiocese, he said.

"The novelty of this is that it's a new style of approach with regards to discernment," Bishop Randazzo told *The Catholic Weekly*.

"It's much more comprehensive. It begins with the call to holiness that comes through baptism and it helps young men to see who they are as men, who they are as men before God, who they are as men before others."

"This house gives us an opportunity to have some young men spend some serious time in discernment, in contemplation, while also being active in the world, and hopefully at the end of the day when they've engaged in the process of living there they'll be able to say, I have a clear sense that God is calling me to be a priest to serve the Church, or God is calling me to be a married man."

St Joseph has been named as the patron of Sumner House because he is patron of the universal Church and a great role model for men, Bishop Randazzo said.

The building, originally a Marist monastery, has undergone extensive renovations; it features private bed rooms, a chapel and communal kitchen, dining, study and lounge areas.

Residents will receive pastoral and spiritual support from two directors—a lay man and a priest.



Chris Lee from Sydney Catholic Youth told *The Catholic Weekly* a place of discernment like Sumner House is needed more than ever to help young men hear God's call.

"In this day and age it's hard for young people to be able to hear where God is calling them to. So a place like this house is needed which can help them develop as men and help answer those three important questions—who am I as a man? Who am I as a man before God? Who am I as a man before others?"

Mr Lee said the house was set up to allow a lifestyle conducive to growing in faith as well as learning life skills such as budgeting, cooking and regular physical exercise.

"It's more than just a share house. It's an

**For more information about Sumner House contact: Sydney Catholic Youth on 02 9307 8152 or the Vocations Centre on 02 9307 8433 or go to [www.sydneycatholic.org/sumnerhouse](http://www.sydneycatholic.org/sumnerhouse)**



investment in your personal and spiritual growth," he said.

Those staying at Sumner House will benefit from being next to St Joachim's Church which has perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Several young men who were present at the opening told *The Catholic Weekly* they were considering submitting an application to live in the house.

Twenty-three year-old Phil who works as a builder said he was excited by the opportunity the house would provide.

"It's going to be able to provide a place of community and also a place of brotherhood. But especially a solid place to check out discernment in life, whether it be priesthood, married or single life, whatever it may be."

University student Dan, said he was also impressed by the house.

"It looks like an amazing way to take action on that call to discernment and start the journey on the path to holiness, just taking that extra step."



Meanwhile, Andrew, who works as an engineer, said the house was "pretty cool" and would provide a good opportunity to pursue holiness.

"I think the brotherhood would be an awesome, to have a bunch of guys who can support one another in that call to holiness and also to keep each other accountable. Having perpetual adoration available is an awesome thing as well."



# Little Sisters of the Poor called to live a vocation of mercy

Our world today needs committed young people who dare to give their lives to GOD by serving him in the elderly who are needy

## WOULD THAT BE YOU?

Saint Jeanne Jugan surrendered her entire life to Christ. In a heroic gesture of compassion she discovered Christ in a dying old woman and she gave her a home, a bed, love and the deepest respect.

This one selfless act in 1839 blossomed into an international religious community, the Little Sisters of the Poor. Today 179 years later, the Little Sisters serve more than 13,000 elderly poor in 31 countries around the world.

Our home was opened in Melbourne in 1884, then here in Sydney in 1886 where the elderly are

cared for with love and dignity until God calls them home.

If you are discerning and feel that the Holy Spirit is moving in the depths of your heart, calling you to encounter Christ in prayer, to serve Him in the poor with love; why not come and see?

To discover more about our vocation and mission in the Church and the world, please feel free to contact:

**Sr. Velonika / Sr Maureen**  
**Ph: 02 93989166**  
**Email: [voc.oceania@lsp.org.au](mailto:voc.oceania@lsp.org.au)**  
**[www.littlesistersofthepoor.org.au](http://www.littlesistersofthepoor.org.au)**



# Communicating the Good News through media



The Society of St Paul is a congregation of priests and brothers founded in Italy in 1914 by Fr (now Blessed) James Alberione, with the specific mission of using the means of communication (press, radio, film, television, and now digital media) to proclaim the Gospel.

The first house of the congregation in Australia was opened in Sydney in 1953. A publishing house, now called St Pauls Publications, began shortly afterwards and since

then has published hundreds of titles in a wide range of fields: prayer, spirituality, biblical studies, liturgy, church documents, pastoral and family care, Mariology, history and biography, to name some. In recent years, St Pauls has moved into digital publishing with many new titles and some classic older titles being published in both print and eBook formats.

The congregation also operates a book centre in Brisbane QLD.

Pauline priests and brothers are involved in all aspects of the media ministry – in the creation, writing and editing of books and periodicals, in their production, and in their diffusion and promotion. Many skills and talents combine to produce every new work.

Their day follows a routine of prayer and work, beginning with the celebration of the Eucharist and meditation. Their workday ends with an hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Their Founder, Blessed Alberione, wanted Paulines to be both contemplatives and actives, in the spirit of their patron St Paul who spent his apostolic years striving forward for the sake of the Gospel (see Phil 3:13).

To learn more about the vocation of the Pauline priest and brother please phone Fr Michael Goonan on (02) 9394 3400, or email [vocations@stpauls.com.au](mailto:vocations@stpauls.com.au) or visit our website [www.stpauls.com.au](http://www.stpauls.com.au)

*Searching for What?*

Is Christ calling you to be his Apostle in the Mass Media?

Contact our Vocation Coordinator at:  
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Strathfield NSW 2135  
(02) 9394 3400 or (02) 9334 3420  
St Pauls Book Centre  
277 Elizabeth St (GPO Box 3101)  
Brisbane QLD 4001  
(07) 3336 0235

[vocation@stpauls.com.au](mailto:vocation@stpauls.com.au)

"To live and to give to the world Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life" Blessed James Alberione

# A short reflection of a Permanent Deacon

By John Ting

When I was thinking about becoming a deacon, I was interested in what more I can be in my own circumstances: married with children and working with university students.

I was also looking for deeper answers to my own existential question of the meaning of my life. Something I think not unusual for men of my age.

The first couple of years in formation was a struggle. I was unsettled, expecting the program to fit into my well-established life. I am sure it was due to all the prayers of my family and friends, in the second year, I felt an internal freedom to accept, to stop worrying and just did my best.

As a result, I enjoyed the friendship of my fellow aspirants and grew personally. Looking back, I realise that God was able to use my short-sighted desires for His purpose. He gave me a greater meaning and purpose but, in the process, took my gaze



away from myself to embrace more of Him.

Being a permanent deacon helps me understand better that marriage is directed towards the salvation of others

and that my salvation is only possible through service of others, starting with my family. My family life does not somehow magically transform for the better as a mat-

ter of course. The struggle remains, only that my service, including my struggle is more bound up with Him as a sign of His love for us.

The transformation is real

though. Now, whenever I cook dinner and set the table for the family, the actions take on a sacred feel and I am reminded of my connection to the Church.

At times, I feel it intensely that I am feeding the domestic church. In my opinion, the permanent diaconate done right is the perfect union of the Sacraments of Marriage and Orders.

I am now assigned to the beautiful St Benedict's Church at Broadway with Fr Epeli. What difference can a deacon make in a parish in the middle of the city?

Not much. Unless he is with a bunch of people who is nourished and energised by the love of God to love one another, 'living stones' that are willing and able to build a new civilisation of love in our homes and our cities. Pray that you and I can contribute to making that vision a reality.

**You are also welcome to contact the Directorate in person by calling (02) 9390 5941 or email: [diaconate@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:diaconate@sydneycatholic.org)**

# A humble servant of Christ

If you are a man of mature Catholic faith, actively involved in your parish and feel called to serve, consider becoming a Deacon.



DIRECTORATE OF THE Permanent Diaconate  
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney



# 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

By the time you read this, these Deacons will be priests. They all experienced the same calling, yet each found their way to the priesthood via different paths and experiences.

*Marilyn Rodrigues writes here about their individual journeys*



**Miguel Campos, 33**

**1** I come from Jalisco in northwest Mexico. I come from a large family of six brothers and two sisters. I came to Australia in 2010 for seminary formation in the Neocatechumenal Way. When I finished school I applied to study politics, I wanted to be a politician and do good for people in that way, and I wanted to be married and have children. But I was not accepted into that course and so began a philosophy degree at a Catholic university run by the Jesuits.

**2** I like to read theology, scripture, play chess and soccer, I enjoy watching rugby and go for runs. I also play the guitar.

**3** At university I did the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, I was going to Mass every Sunday and began to try and discover if God was leading me to something through my

consolations and desolations. There I met seminarians in formation to become Jesuits, and I discovered they were normal people, happy people, and I started to question whether my vocation was to marriage as I thought or whether I could be open maybe God had another possibility for me. While in this process of discernment there was a group of the Neocatechumenal Way in my parish doing some talks and I went to their retreat. During that retreat they called for vocations, if someone felt called to the priesthood or religious life. I felt strongly called, my heart was pumping very fast – and I stood up! After that I did a year of discernment back home, and then I went to Porto San Giorgio in Rome and from there I was assigned to go to Australia. This is the work of the Lord because I never expected this.



**Moises Carrasco, 31**

**1** I grew up in a poor area of Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic, in a house given to my family by the government. The social situation of my country was not great and we often suffered the lack of basic needs but my parents always managed to put food on the table and God was always present in one way or another. I was raised as a Seventh Day Adventist but when I was about 15 my grandmother took my sister and I with her to follow the Neocatechumenal Way and in this way we just fell in love with the Catholic Church.

**2** I can say that I'm a normal young man with some interests like baseball and who, in my spare time, likes to go fishing very much – although I'm not quite sure how they both relate to each other!

**3** During a retreat with my Neocatechumenal Community I felt that God was calling me to the priesthood. Then a short time later I was invited to commence formation at the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Santo Domingo. I entered in August 2009. For my father, my decision left him a bit shocked and initially he put up some resistance because he couldn't understand. Eventually, he became very happy to see me as a seminarian and, after

a few months, my parents got married in the Catholic Church.



**John Jang, 33**

**1** I was born in Korea and came to Sydney with my family when I was seven. I have an older brother and younger sister. I didn't become Catholic until I was in Year 5 – Dad became Catholic and the whole family converted with him and from then on we went to the Korean Catholic Church at Silverwater. I studied medicine at the University of NSW and worked as an intern at Mt Druitt, Blacktown and Westmead hospitals.

**2** Just hanging out with mates. I used to play a lot of soccer.

**3** After I went to World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011 I decided to take

a break from medicine to study philosophy and volunteer as a catechist. I went to the IWitness conference and after confession with my godfather Fr Peter Kwak, I prayed in the holy hour and the thought of priesthood came to me for the first time. It came out of nowhere. Within a month, I had applied for the seminary. I eventually joined in 2013.



**William Loh OP, 32**

**1** I was born in Westmead, grew up in Quakers Hill, and went to St Andrew's Primary School in Marayong, and Parramatta Marist High School. I did tertiary study at UNSW Kensington. I come from a family of four with one older sister and my parents migrated here from Malaysia.

**2** My current hobbies are photography and survival preparedness, also fitness and mental health.

## Path to the Priesthood

On the eve of their ordination we put the following three questions to each of the seven deacons who will become priests on **Saturday 3 August, 2019**

- 1 Tell us about yourself
- 2 What do you do in your free time?
- 3 How did you become aware of your call to the priesthood?



Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP embraces newly-ordained Fr Tom Stephens, welcoming him to the priesthood. PHOTOS: GIOVANNI PORTELLI AND ALPHONSUS FOK

**3** I first became aware of my calling during my university studies in mechanical engineering. I began to genuinely ask and seek for the first time about matters relating fundamentally to our existence: "Why am I here? What is the purpose to this? Why anything at all?" It was only during this state of reflection and contemplation wherein God revealed to me my purpose and vocation. It required a lot of effort and silent prayer, listening and responding to God's call.



**Joseph Murphy, 27**

**1** I was born in Brisbane and our family moved to Dural when I was 13. I attended Our Lady of the

Angels at Rouse Hill and Redfield College before doing an arts degree.

**2** I love travelling. My brother Nick and I have been everywhere from Cuba to skiing trips in Canada, France and Madrid.

**3** I always had an attraction to the priesthood ever since I can really remember. When I was very young my mum used to put on cassettes for my brother and I at bedtime with stories, especially about the Catholic faith. Some were about priests who did incredibly heroic things priests did to ensure people had the sacraments.

I kept it in the back of my mind throughout my childhood and through high school. And while I was attracted to other occupations and vocations, the more I prayed and thought about it I didn't think anything would fulfil me like the priesthood, or allow me to give a gift to the Church like the priesthood would, which is what I wanted to do with my life. In 2011 I had a very strong

sense that this was probably what God wanted of me so I thought I'd give it a crack and entered the seminary in 2012.



**Ronnie Maree, 27**

**1** I grew up in Campsie, where my family had lived for a very long time. We later moved to Strathfield South where they still live. I have two sisters and a brother as well as two nephews.

**2** Most of my free time is simply spent catching up with family and close friends, sharing meals with them and spending plenty of time watching sports.

If I am not doing this I am

usually locked away somewhere reading.

**3** I first became aware of God's call for my life through the continuing presence of a desire to live the life of a priest. This emerged at a very young age and has followed me my entire life. It was nourished by the faith of my family and particularly by the example of how my priest-uncle joyfully and generously lived out his vocation.



**William Chow, 34**

**1** I'm one of three children in my family. I grew up in Canada and studied history and political science at university before moving to Hong Kong where

I worked for a while and then entered the seminary. I came to Australia in 2014.

**2** I like to relax, go to the gym or for a walk or a run. I used to work in retail for a clothing store so I sometimes will go online to look at fashion magazines.

**3** I began thinking of priesthood from a young age, I was an altar boy growing up and once when I was 15 or 16 I had the thurible and I was incensing and the sunlight suddenly burst through when the priest lifted up the host. I felt at that moment something special was happening, although I didn't understand then what transubstantiation was. I discovered the priesthood was a very beautiful life, to bring people closer to God in this way. Later I thought I might work in government or be high school teacher. At 24 I made the decision to break up with my girlfriend and enter the seminary.



# 100-year-old Priest has four sons who are priests

Don Probo Vaccharini was ordained priest at the age of 69 after the death of his wife. He and his wife had 7 children and his four sons all became priests too.



**D**on Probo Vaccarini was ordained priest at the age of 69 after the death of his wife. He and his wife had 7 children and his four sons all became priests too.

The Catholic priest, Don Probo Vaccarini, celebrated his 100th birthday on Tuesday, May 28, 2019 in Rimini, Italy. As a widower and with the encouragement of his family he earned a second degree in theology and received at the age of 69 ordination to the priesthood. Since then he has worked as a pastor, in San Martino in Venti, a small rural community near the Adriatic Sea. The online portal "Newsrimini"

(Sunday) reported that he celebrated a solemn Mass with Bishop Francesco Lambiasi in the Cathedral of Rimini.

Born on June 4, 1919, Vaccarini had initially taken the profession of surveyor after his participation in the Russian campaign in the Second World War. From his marriage with his wife Anna Maria three daughters and four sons were born; all the male sons also entered the priesthood.

Following the death of his wife, Vaccarini, the devotee of the Italian popular saint, Padre Pio, became increasingly involved in the Church. Encouraged by his sons, he was ordained a priest himself in May 1988.

# On the awesomeness of priestly vocation

On Saturday 15 June, Kieran Gill SJ and Andy Nguyen SJ were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Gregory O'Kelly SJ at St Ignatius' Church in Richmond, Victoria.

In his homily at the Mass, Bishop O’Kelly reminded the two men of Pope Francis’ words to the priest of Rome in December 2018:

‘The priest who is close to his people walks amongst them with a closeness and tenderness of a good shepherd; in shepherding them he goes at times before them, at times remains in their midst and at other times walks behind them.

'Not only do people appreciate such a priest; even more, they feel there is something special about him, something they only feel in the presence of Jesus.'

This reminds us, said Bishop O'Kelly, 'how awesome is our vocation as priests'.

'It is a reminder and statement about the call to holiness that is integral to our vocation, to help others sense the presence of Jesus in their daily lives', he said.

## Called to work with young people

Fr Kieran Gill joined the Jesuits in 2008. He completed his noviceship at Canisius College in Sydney, and studied philosophy and theology at Jesuit Theological College in Melbourne and was a member of the Jesuit community at Newman College while studying secondary education.

After recently finishing his studies in Boston, he has returned to Australia to teach at St Ignatius' College in Adelaide. During his formation, he said he felt particularly blessed in working with students in secondary education.

'It's just so enjoyable and engaging and lively every day. Ignatian education ... is based on the example of Jesus Christ and it seeks to help people to experience the abundant life that he offers to us', he says.

For Kieran, the biggest gift priests have to offer the community is to help them experience God's presence in liturgy and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

‘This is a grace which  
priests are called to receive  
and to freely share.’

## Called to service

Fr Andy Nguyen SJ joined the Jesuits in 2009, after working for some ears as an architect. During his formation, among other roles, he has worked as a chaplain at Loyola Senior High School and Holy Family Parish in Mount Druitt, Sydney. He is currently completing a Licentiate in Sacred Theology in Boston.

Andy says that he's felt blessed to be able to bring all his passions to his life as a Jesuit, including opportunities to use his architectural knowledge in projects in Timor Leste. But he says that sacramental and pastoral ministry is a given for Jesuits, particularly for those who are priests.

'I am excited for my future as a priest, celebrating the liturgies and sacraments, caring for people in their times of joy, presiding at baptisms and weddings, as well as being there for people in times of sadness, the deaths of



Andy and Kieran at their ordination Mass at St Ignatius' Church in Richmond, Vic.

loved ones.'

Do you have a desire to use your gifts and talents in the service of God? Does the idea of living out your faith at the frontiers of

our world — both spiritual and physical — excite you? Perhaps you are being called to Jesuit life. To find out more go to [jesuit.org.au/vocations](http://jesuit.org.au/vocations)



**Jesuits** are called to follow God wherever the need is greatest. **Will you join us?**

For more visit: **vocations@sjasl.org.au** **www.jesuit.org.au/vocations**

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# Marital Spirituality

by Joann Heaney-Hunter, PhD

A spirituality of marriage is a way to help husbands and wives live out the vocation of marriage in light of faith.

“Spirituality” is a way to live out one’s religious beliefs. A spirituality of marriage, therefore, is a way to help husbands and wives live out the vocation of marriage in light of faith. Catholic marriage has a distinctive spirituality that is sacramental, communitarian, and missionary.

Marriage is sacramental because it is a sign of Christ’s unbreakable love for his people. It is communitarian because it creates and deepens a permanent partnership of life and love. It is missionary because in Catholic marriage couples are called to share with others the good news of their relationship in Christ. A spirituality of marriage helps couples shape their attitude toward life, and provides a framework for living one’s marriage in the light of faith.

In the Catholic tradition, a “sacrament” is a concrete expression of Christ in the world. The Eucharist, for example, is a sacrament. Within the Eucharistic liturgy, through the words and actions of the priest, the physical signs of bread and wine become Christ really present. Likewise, the Church believes that marriage is a sacrament. In marriage, the couple’s life, love, and witness can make Christ visible to others. All sacramentally married couples are invited to reveal Christ’s loving presence and generous action in the world.

Just as God is a Trinity of persons—a community—marriage also is communitarian. *Gaudium et Spes*, a document of the Second Vatican Council, states that couples form a permanent, life-giving community. We’ve already described this relationship as sacramental, a sign of Christ’s love in the world. Sacramental couples live as communities that reveal God’s blessings, reach out to heal the brokenness of the family and the world, and share their gifts with those around them.

Couples live as communities when they experience the blessings that come from making a total commitment to another person. Making permanent commitments is becoming rare; sacramental couples demonstrate that it is possible. Another blessing of marriage is children. A couple’s willingness to be open to the gift of children, and to demonstrate the generosity and sacrifice necessary to raise them according to Gospel values is a real blessing.

Couples also live as communities when they recognise and heal the brokenness in their individual lives and in their life together. Brokenness is a part of everyone’s life; a spouse is in a unique position to heal the pain that inevitably arises in relationship. Couples create sacramental communities when they build a life of sharing – with each other, with their

families, with local communities, with the church. As couples grow in their love for each other, their communities of life and love enrich the larger communities in their lives.

Finally, sacramental marriages are missionary. Part of the joy of a faith-filled marriage is showing others what it means to be in a loving, Christ-centered relationship, and making known to others the gift of faithful married life and love. Couples have the potential to show others what it means to embody the life of the Holy Spirit within them. Married couples, while never perfect, are missionary through the witness of their lives and love in the midst of the world. They are characterised by openness to the life of the Spirit within them, by loving service to their neighbours, and by sharing their talents and blessings with and for the local and global communities. As missionaries, married couples can witness Gospel values in their daily lives.

A spirituality of marriage shows how couples reveal Christ, build community, and reach out to others in love. It is a powerful way to describe how Catholic couples live out their vocation of married life.

**About the author**  
Joann Heaney-Hunter, Ph.D. is an associate professor of Theology at St. John’s University (NY).





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