

The Life of a Chaplain

One of the vital roles of the Sydney Archdiocese is chaplaincy. Here are two different insights into this vocation.

Fr Michael Walsh

Chaplain for corrective services in the Sydney Archdiocese

"It's just like a big parish," says Fr Michael of his role as Chaplain at Long Bay and Silverwater goals. "I am in charge of the pastoral care of the inmates. I share in their joys and struggles - mostly their struggles."



Fr Michael Walsh

Fr Michael came from a prison chaplaincy role in South Australia to Sydney early last year. He spends his days between Long Bay men's goal and the three complexes at Silverwater - Reception and Remand, Mulawa (maximum security for women) and Silverwater Works Release for those with short sentences or who have nearly completed their sentence.

The role of Chaplain is to provide a service to inmates with particular reference to Catholics, although Fr Michael says he does not discriminate at all. He provides mass or prayer times where anyone is welcome to attend. Fr Michael follows the Church year, as he says "it is good to follow the liturgical year of the Church as it links them to the world outside." Of course spending his week between a number of places, this doesn't always work out. "We recently celebrated Ash Wednesday, but it wasn't only Ash Wednesday, it was Ash Thursday and Ash Friday and Ash Tuesday too."

While these times are for community prayer, Fr Michael said that the majority of his ministry is one on one. Here, he feels, he is meeting very different needs. "There is a big difference between not only men and women, but those with short sentences and those with longer ones. Most have been doing crime since they were juveniles, they come and go and come back again. Then there are those who are there because of a once in a lifetime experience."

Fr Michael is very clear that his role is not about a "conversion experience". These are very few and far between. His role is to be around, to listen and sometimes, to pray with. "It is important for them to have a presence of Church and

let them know that as far as Church and God goes, he has not abandoned them, as many have."

"Ones who are only in for a few months have visitors every week. But being there for two, three, five years, friends tend to drift away. It's a matter of being there for them when that happens."

"If someone is coming up for parole I might pop in to court to see them. Sometimes it's just the legal people and you. You and I are constantly surrounded by people who care for us, but these people have no one."

Fr Michael sees his role as important as a basic Christian duty. "Care of the despised was at the forefront of Jesus' message. These are the people he would be interested in. We are all sinners and do stuff that we regret, it's just that their particular sin incurs punishment."

Fr Michael believes that faith is important to the prison inmates, but not in the formal religious sense. "It's more a faith in themselves and their worth, knowing that God thinks they're alright."

Jacinta Sinclair

Campus Minister - University of Sydney

Eight years ago, Jacinta Sinclair became the first lay chaplain in Australia. Well, not technically. Only ordained person can be classified as a chaplain, thus she takes the title of campus minister.

Currently at Sydney University sharing this role with husband, Jacinta Sinclair Brad, they represent this relatively new form of chaplaincy. They are also raising their 18 month old son.

Jacinta's role revolves around her weekly priority list of things to do. This week she is finding accommodation for a Sister from Sri Lanka, having dinner with a student who is finding it hard moving away from home and creating an e-mail network for "Cathsoc", the Catholic Student Group on campus.

The group takes up the majority of Jacinta's involvement with students. They have 50 affiliated members with at least 30 committed members, actively involved in the group's activities. They are a very contemporary and accepting, bringing a positive Christian



Jacinta Sinclair

Installation of Archbishop Pell

THIS Thursday, 10th May, the Most Reverend Archbishop George Pell will officially become the Archbishop of Sydney. This will take place in a Solemn Mass and Liturgical Reception at St Mary's Cathedral. The ceremony will begin in the Cathedral Square where the Archbishop will be greeted by representatives of the local Aboriginal community as well as groups representing the various immigrant communities in the Archdiocese. A choir of primary school students will sing a song of welcome for the Archbishop. During the ceremony, the Archbishop will be greeted by representatives from the various organisations of the Archdiocese. Admission into the Cathedral is by ticket only, these have already been distributed. Admittance into the Crypt is open. The ceremony can be viewed there on two large screens.

Coming Soon

THE official Catholic Youth Services website will soon be launched. This site will include information about the archdiocesan youth services, suggestions to liven up parish youth ministry and a calendar of upcoming events. Look out for a full profile in the next edition of Sydney Snapshots.

Does your agency have anything coming soon?
Put it in snapshots!

email_director@cathcomm.media.syd.catholic.org.au

Welcome

On the 10th May Archbishop George Pell will become the eighth Archbishop of Sydney. We welcome him to this role and farewell Cardinal Clancy after 18 years.

May 2001 Snapshots profiles two chaplains. Also inside is a look at a new Centacare Foster Kids Program and various programs and workshops for young adults.

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message to the campus environment. "Many of the messages about Christianity on campus contain a negative, exclusive message."

Jacinta's aim is to turn this around by reinforcing a God that loves and a community that accepts people for who they are.

"Young people have the need for community, one where they can feel free to be themselves. This is when they can start to ask the questions - what do I really want to do with my life?"

Often the people who come to see Jacinta at the chaplaincy office are those who feel marginalised within the Church and their home parishes, and so they look for something at uni. Jacinta says she wonders if perhaps they are doing the students a disservice by providing a home they will have to leave when they finish their

degrees, however, this is not the aim.

"We are not only building an experience of community but teaching them how to build it, and this is something they can take with them when they go."

The sense of community is something Jacinta knows how to give. Before becoming a campus minister she had lived in a Missionaries of Sacred Heart Community for two years. She says that in her role she aims to live out the MSC spirituality.

"Working as chaplain is an extraordinary privilege. I've been doing this for seven years and in this time I've seen students come to the university as teenagers and leave as adults. There are just so many changes they go through and life choices they have to make. They start to see who they want to become and whether living Gospel values takes priority in that choice."

Foster Care Program Launched

THERE are many reasons why children are unable to live with their own families, but it is often in these circumstances, says Jan McGregor from Centacare, that it becomes crucial to protect the bond between brothers and sisters.

In a response to what they see as a "sibling care crisis," Centacare has launched a new Foster Care Program funded by the Department of Community Services, that aims to provide one home for brothers and sisters who otherwise would be fostered apart.

The initiative for the program came when Centacare's Community Service Centre saw that brothers and sisters were being separated because of the considerable demands of having up to five children in a family.

The program responds to this need by recruiting carers for siblings and providing them with a specialist support package. This means an extra financial allowance, full training and preparation, ongoing education and professional support.

Members from Centacare maintain this support by making regular visits to the family. They also help in organising school placements for the children as well as doctor check ups.

Although the program is now underway and has been successful with current resources, Centacare are still in need of carers to join the new program.

The Sibling Placement Program is just one of the ways that Centacare looks after foster children. They also have short term care programs that may involve caring for kids one weekend a month, as well as crisis programs for when parents are ill, or when children are at risk of abuse.

Foster Care enquiries can be directed to Centcare ph.9552 6355

Vocations Update

WORLD Day of Prayer for Vocations is on the 6th May. All throughout the Archdiocese are asked to pray for priests and religious and the work that they do, and for those men and women seeking to join them.

A day of prayer will be held at the Seminary of the Good Shepherd on 19th May for those men thinking about priesthood. For further details please contact Fr Greg Foley at the seminary on 9752 9600

Encounter

HAVE you heard of Encounter? This seven piece Christian band formed three years ago. Paul Elarde, a member of the band, said the idea of Encounter came after they saw a band called Gospel Experience. Quality music with a strong message was something that they wanted to see in Catholic circles and this began their ministry. Having been in their current format for two years, Encounter run Café nights on the last Friday of every month. Dinner is shared and is followed by the band's performance with up to 80 or 90 big screen visuals accompanying the music. The night also features a guest speaker and is followed by a discussion and reflection time where the band serve everyone tea and coffee. Paul describes their music as "dynamic". They play a combination of Christian songs, Hillsong music, original pieces, as well as secular music with slightly altered lyrics. Originally targeted towards the 20-30's age group the band find all ages enjoy their nights.

Café nights are held in Keller Hall of Our Lady of Fatima Caringbah, 389 Port Hacking Rd South, Caringbah.

Encounter is also open to being a part of other functions or gatherings. For enquiries call Paul Elarde on 0418 248 367.

You can visit the website on www.come.to/encounter

Talking Tables Continues

THIS new initiative began when a group of eight young adults met for a meal, and in a casual setting came together to talk about the issues that hold meaning for them. The program's popularity has meant that now multiple groups of eight are meeting on a monthly basis. Talking Tables is a fantas-

tic opportunity for young people in their 20s and 30s to meet others, have a meal together and find out more information about what's on for young adults. Groups meet together in different restaurants around Sydney. For more information phone Kate on 0408 160 409 or email caec@ozemail.com

The Halifax - Portal Lectures A Series of Four Ecumenical Lectures

Sponsored by the Catholic and Anglican Bishops of NSW

- MAY 8** Reading the Bible
— the Catholic 'Two step' way
Speaker: Rev John McSweeney, Parish Priest, St Finbar's Glenbrook, part time Lecturer, St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Redfern
- MAY 15** How Anglicans understand and read the Bible
Speaker: Rev Dr Mark Thompson, Lecturer, Moore Theological College, Sydney
- MAY 22** Prayer and the spirit, Anglicanism and the devotional life
Speaker: Rev Dr Ivan Head, Master, St Paul's Anglican College, University of Sydney
- MAY 29** Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary... where do we go with Mary in Catholic devotional life?
Speaker: Sr Marie Farrell rsm, Lecturer, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Free Entry

Tuesday nights at 7.30pm, Lidcombe Catholic Club, 24 John Street, Lidcombe.

Close to Station. Free parking.
Meals and snacks available in the Coffee Lounge.

For further information contact Sr Patricia Madigan OP, Liaison Officer for Ecumenism, Polding House (02) 9390 5168