

## Welcome

From Father Tony's account of his recent mission trip to India, to the Communications Team's advocacy for social media as a tool for parish development, it seems that the themes of growth and change underpin much of this September issue of *The Bark*.

Both Father Josh and John Dowd focus on Pope Francis' vision of pastoral accompaniment while Emma Williams shows what happens when creativity and generosity combine. The ladies of the CWL are 'going with the flow' of change and Paul and Robyn Napier have gone 'west' to observe the impact of the floods in some of our country towns.

You will read of some new leadership of our local Vinnie's conference and some useful tips to follow when travelling in our changing world. All this and more. Thank you to all those who have contributed so generously to this issue.



*Fr Tony with Fr Ken Barker, celebrating a private Mass at the tomb in Goa, of St Francis Xavier, Patron of missionaries. Fr Tony says that this "was a very profound moment".*

# Heading west!

*Parishioners and Lending a Hand team members, Paul and Robyn Napier, enjoyed a road trip to western New South Wales at the end of July. They 'reported in' to the Lending a Hand Team on their return.*

We have just returned from five days out west. We were interested to see some of those places the parish has supported financially during the last floods. We were able to see first hand how Eugowra had been devastated. Temporary homes, called 'pods', were everywhere to be seen plus lots of caravans and containers. In the centre of town in a park was a van serving meals with a huge open fire pit handy. It was obvious that good spirits were prevailing amongst all the locals who were catching up. We enjoyed bacon and egg rolls and had a good chat with some real characters.

Ray, a local farmer, filled us in on the terrible experience of the floods. Many tradies and helpers just showed up to assist in their recovery. He was very complimentary about Prime Minister Albanese who went there within days of the floods and got all the people together to see how best to help them. Within days mobile homes started arriving. There were many stories about challenging experiences with insurance companies. Ray said his energy bill was usually in credit due to solar. However, while his property was unoccupied and unable to use any power, he received a bill of \$700. It was a massive challenge to get this refunded.

We moved onto Forbes, arriving on a Saturday afternoon; the town was very quiet. We went down to the local football oval to see the Forbes Rugby Union side play the Orange City side and found a lot of people at the game. There were good signs to show that Forbes was recovering from their horrific flooding. However, there is still a lot of fencing around buildings being restored.

We went to Mass on Sunday morning and we were hoping to make contact with Fr Don Gunn (Vicar General for the Diocese). Fr Don had been my contact for the donation to the Bishop's Discretionary fund to help Eugowra residents, plus other projects we are considering. Unfortunately his health continues to deteriorate so there was no catch up but I did leave a message on his answering service wishing him all the best. We had a good chat with Fr Arthur Givney, the Parish Priest of Forbes, who is now the Vicar General for the Diocese.

Fr Arthur said a few Masses at our parish after Father John Crother's leaving and before the arrival of the MGLs. He will be a good contact for us for the future when there might be other projects in need of our help.

We had a great time away also visiting Parkes, Blayney, Canowindra and had a few nights stay in Cowra. If you ever get to visit Cowra we recommend a visit to the Japanese gardens plus the site used for Japanese prisoners of war during the Second World War. There is much interesting history there including the story of the prison break out.

It was good to travel around the country which is looking good despite very cold weather conditions. We are grateful we were able to support many local businesses during our travels, including motels, petrol stations, restaurants and so on. They certainly need all the help they can get to recover from one of the worst floods on record.

## ***Paul and Robyn Napier***

*Photos below: left—of one of the pods being used for housing; right— the Central Hotel where the flood water had reached the first level .*



# Come Holy Spirit - Confirmation 2023

Thirty-six young parishioners were confirmed at OLF on Sunday 20 August by The Very Reverend Fr Roland Maurer at a Mass concelebrated by Fr Tony Alex. The candidates participated in the Mass through readings, prayers and the offertory procession, with the church filled to overflowing with family members and friends.

The preparation of these young people was undertaken by our hard-working and committed Sacramental Team who ensured that each and every one presented for Confirmation is fully aware of the importance of the sacrament and the blessings it brings.

Uplifting music was provided by Ben and Noah Taylor finishing with a spectacular rendition of "Shine Jesus Shine" as the Recessional Hymn.

We are truly blessed to have these 36 young people now as adult members of our parish, confirmed in our faith.



# Refreshed and renewed

From June 28 to July 11 Father Tony was away from OLF, travelling to India and Thailand to conduct his mission work and undertake his annual spiritual retreat.

He accompanied Fr Ken Barker, founder of the Missionaries of God's Love, to India at the invitation of a number of parishes and ecclesial movements. Visiting four cities – Mumbai, Pune, Goa and Bangalore—they met with many different groups and associations over a very busy few weeks. Some of these were youth groups and ministries stemming from Father Tony's early years of youth ministry. Others were members of covenant communities, while some were city-based and parish-based prayer groups.

"Mission" takes many forms these days including talks, retreats and recording for Catholic Television. Sessions ranged from two hours to half a day. Fathers Ken and Tony were also involved in consultancy meetings with a number of bishops during their time in India. They celebrated a few Masses for physical and spiritual healing. Father Tony pointed out that all these types of outreach stem from the calling of the Missionaries to serve the wider church in the work of evangelisation, bringing the grace of the new Pentecost to the people.

Understandably, there had been a long lead time to plan and schedule all their work.

When asked what challenges were experienced during this time, Fr Tony was clear in his response, describing the ongoing persecution of Christians in India which is politically driven. Many Christians are still being arrested, imprisoned and, in some instances, massacred for their beliefs, particularly in Manipur, a north-eastern state of India. More than 300 churches have been burnt or destroyed and hundreds of people have experienced enormous pain and trauma after being forced to flee their homes and state. Extensive media blackouts often prevent the 'outside' world from hearing about these atrocities and responding to them.

There were, however, many outstanding moments that Father Tony experienced, especially seeing the number of young people growing in their faith. He found it deeply gratifying to reconnect with people he knew 15 years ago; seeing the great work they are doing and living good lives as a result of programs they had undertaken with him.

Towards the end of his trip, he returned to the church in Bangalore where he was ordained and celebrated the 11:15 am Youth Mass. He was filled with joy to see a packed church for a regular Sunday Mass, with people having to stand outside because there was no room inside

The mission trip filled him with energy and joy and was reinvigorating, providing an opportunity to reconnect with and embrace the richness of the universal Catholic Church.

On a personal note, this trip to India made it possible for Father Tony to spend a precious three days with his mother, siblings and close friends.

On his way back from India, Fr Tony travelled to Thailand to do his annual retreat; a silent, Ignatian retreat. The retreat offered time to deeply meditate on the scriptures and to spend hours daily in prayer. He said that being able to make this retreat after the busy weeks of mission allowed him to return to Australia physically rested and with new zeal and direction from the Lord.



***Above: Fr Tony and Fr Ken Barker meeting Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the Archbishop of Mumbai. He is one of the Pope's close council of nine cardinals. He was very welcoming and appreciative of their work.***



*Above: On 3 July, the feast of St Thomas, Patron of the Church in India, Fr Tony and Fr Ken Barker celebrated a special Mass for a growing congregation of nuns in their mother house chapel.*



## **IT'S THE SIMPLE THINGS...**

**O**ur parish, through Lending a Hand, has provided support over some years, to St John the Apostle Parish in Wilcannia. One of the needs identified by Sr Elizabeth Young, their Parish Life Co-ordinator, was for some outdoor seating. We were very happy to help out with this and glad to receive this message from Sr Elizabeth recently.

*Hi! I thought you would like an update on our outside seating project. On Saturday, we worked together to build the seating, with our parishioner Bill as co-ordinator and overseer. It looks great! Just needs a final coat of paint to be complete. Here is the item we put in the local Wilcannia newspaper with some photos . Thanks again! In Peace, Elizabeth.*



We have also just installed new timber seating along the fence on the outside of the church. This was made possible by a grant from the Peakhurst Our Lady of Fatima parish, the co-ordination of Bill Elliot, and the hard work of parishioners on Saturday 29 July. The seating will allow those attending events such as large funerals to participate in more comfort, especially in the summer months. Another very big blessing of appreciation to all involved!

# Pastoral Accompaniment explained

From the time of his election as Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis has emphasised the notion of pastoral accompaniment. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis states that “The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.” How are we to understand what Pope Francis does (and doesn’t!) mean by accompaniment? There’s a number of key elements to Francis’ understanding of pastoral accompaniment.

The first key element is one of Francis’ central themes: that accompaniment is rooted in, and emerges from, the experience of encounter with Christ. Francis speaks of this encounter specifically as an encounter with the gaze of Christ. Encounter and accompaniment do not stand in isolation from each other, but are connected. In one sense we can understand accompaniment is the response to the initial encounter. “The very nature of Christianity therefore consists in recognising the presence of Jesus Christ and following him.” At the same time, however, we can also identify and understand that this accompaniment often precedes this; it is in recognising Jesus’ presence, often in the shape of either the minister, the missionary, the Church, or all of the above, that the individual can then respond in faith.

Accompaniment has a particular ecclesiological reality. For Francis, accompaniment always occurs within the Church. “There can be no disciples without communion.” Accompaniment itself has an evangelical quality to it; “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). It is the environment of communion and the ecclesial community which helps provide and protect something of the impetus and direction of accompaniment; without the community, accompaniment becomes self-centred, aimlessly adrift from any anchor point. An accompaniment without God reduces people from pilgrims to aimless drifters.

Of particular importance are the Word of God and the Sacraments. The path of formation and discipleship is one of accompaniment grounded in Word and Sacrament, which mediate the presence of Jesus, who is the Way. Through Word and Sacrament, within the ecclesial community, the one being accompanied is not only brought into the ecclesial community in a social way, but they are brought closer into the mystical body of Christ that is the Church.

Francis also addresses the end to which accompaniment is ordered; of course, this end is God. As mentioned above, without God, who is the end point of all accompaniment and discipleship, accompaniment is destined for failure. Francis highlights that attempts to achieve freedom without God or against him are likewise destined to failure; it is only in God that we can attain true freedom. This freedom must be rooted in the universal call to holiness. Francis’ emphasis on accompaniment as ecclesial, formative and vocational is important here.

The defining characteristic of accompaniment is mercy. This is central in the work of Francis. If our encounter is rooted in being touched by the merciful gaze of Christ, in spite of our failures and sinfulness, so too must accompaniment mirror this mercy. Francis sees in Jesus and his mercy a paradigm of how the Church is called to accompany; in doing so, the Church can live out the true meaning of mercy that Jesus exemplified during his earthly ministry. Mercy is not for the privileged few, but rather “it is a matter of reaching out to everyone.”

As we seek to take up the invitation of Pope Francis to be initiated into this art of accompaniment, we should seek to engage in an accompaniment which is rooted in the encounter with Jesus in the midst of His mystical body, the Church.

We should gather together around Word and Sacrament, remembering that in both Scripture and the Sacramental Life of the Church we are drawn to and ordered towards God and eternal life with him. Finally, we can accompany one another with great confidence in God's love and mercy for us as we become ministers of mercy to those whom we meet. If we seek to accompany one another in this way, we will truly make Jesus present to those whom we meet.

***Fr Josh Whicker. MGL***

*Fr Josh is 32 years old and hails from Campbelltown. He is a Consecrated Brother and Priest with the Missionaries of God's Love. He has a passion for bringing young people into an encounter with Jesus and His merciful Love. He is also passionate about history, sport, culture, and both Australian and International Politics. Having been ordained in April this year, Josh is currently appointed as an assistant priest in the parishes of Peakhurst and Penshurst*



# Listening as loving and healing

Recently I came across an article adapted from Margaret Wheatley's book: ***Turning to one another: simple conversations to restore hope to the future.*** (Berrett Koehler, 2018)

In it, Margaret explains what, to her, is true listening.

*"Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present and that takes practice but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise or coach or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen. If we can do that we create moments in which real healing is available. Whatever life we have experienced, if we can tell our story to someone who listens, we find it easier to deal with our circumstances."*

Recently in our parish we have had three opportunities through **The Search** programs to be able to develop relationships. It is through relationships that we become fully human. Jesus came on earth to show us how to be truly human.

Now we are starting the **Connect** groups. I wonder whether, through the friendships we develop in these groups, will we be able to tell our stories and be listened to? Everybody has a story and everybody wants to tell his/her story in order to connect. I often wonder, looking around at our Masses, how many of our parishioners would love to have someone listen to their stories?

Pope Francis, in encouraging synodality, wants us to be true listeners. He wants us to accompany others not convert. The Francis way of accompaniment is:

- + You meet people where they are.
- + You presume the good in them and hope they will presume the good in you.
- + You have a conversation.
- + You open your mind and heart.
- + You prepare to learn something from them.
- + You go where they are going, if only for a little while, trusting something good will come of it.
- + You keep your wits about you but don't let scruples rule you.

Could we be encouraged to play our part in the great healing process? Who could we approach: someone you don't know, don't like or whose manner of living is a mystery to you? What would it take to begin a conversation with that person? Would you be able to ask them for their opinion or explanation and then sit quietly and listen to their answer? Could you keep yourself from arguing, defending or saying anything for a while? Could you just encourage them to keep telling you their version of things, their side of the story?

I came across a young teenager recently who said her father is not interested in listening to her and just talks over her. How sad. As they say we have two ears and one mouth and we should listen twice as much as speak!

**John Dowd**



# Vinnie's news!



Recently Mike Flanagan stepped down after eight years as President of the Peakhurst Conference of St Vincent de Paul. Many thanks Mike, from all the members (and from the entire parish), for your wonderful leadership. Mike and Toni Flanagan are long-serving, valued members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and will continue assisting people of Peakhurst and Riverwood Parishes.

The Conference would also like to pay tribute to Paul Witts who is stepping down this month as Treasurer after 12 years of diligent commitment. Many thanks Paul for your support and help.

As a result of these changes Frances Greene has volunteered to be our new Treasurer and I am taking on the President's role. Camille Philips is continuing as Vice-President.

Since last year's video appeal at weekend Masses, the Conference has welcomed six new members. If anyone else would like to make enquiries or join our happy group, just talk to any members you know directly or leave your contact details with Clarissa in the parish office.

All the Peakhurst Vinnies members would like to thank our fellow parishioners for their continued prayers, generosity and help with Christmas hampers. The people we assist always express their gratitude to us.

***Cathy Dalby, St Vincent de Paul***



## ***Maintenance update!***

As we all know, 'things' just don't happen. Maintenance of the church, parish house and grounds is constant. At present the Maintenance Team is busy working on:

- reducing bins due to increase in council rates,
- looking for more volunteers,
- reviewing our electricity usage and looking at solar options for the church,
- repairing the damaged etching (glass panel) at the front and of the church,
- organising a ground cleanup and bush fire prevention ready for summer, and
- reviewing our yearly budgets

As a parish, we are blessed by the work of many volunteers. The recent Father's Day bacon-and-egg breakfast was provided by the Maintenance Team, showing their versatility and generosity.

If you can help with keeping our parish safe, functional and looking good, please contact Clarissa at the parish office and she will pass your details on to the Maintenance Team.

***Anthony Rehayem, Maintenance***

# Hello? Hello?

We felt so special when we moved from rotary dial telephones to the flat white ones from Telecom with the grey rubber buttons. How amazing it was that we could dial a number with the press of a few buttons. The “old” phones were so cumbersome and time consuming. Imagine selecting the wrong digit towards the end of the dial and having to start all over again: 5, (turn), 7 (turn), 9 (turn).... you get the picture.

Then came the phone with the long cord so you could move around and later, true freedom with the cordless phone.

Most of the people who experienced this era will look back on this period with true fondness as life was simple and comfortable. The pace was manageable, and we were protected from overexposure to information that is mostly not relevant to us and protected from being over-stimulated and over-available to the world through the invention of the **mobile phone!**

The mobile phone is our Encyclopaedia Britannica, family photo album, wall calendar, appointment diary, Gregory’s street directory, stereo, Australia Post, Canon and Nikon camera, VCR player, DVD player, family video recorder, newspaper, newscaster, computer, graphic designer, weather channel, boardroom/meeting room, Westfield, grocery store, bank, RTA, Centrelink, voice memo recorder.. *should we keep going?*

Wait. Where *are* we going with this?

Well, we live in a country and an era of plenty. As life has taught us, plenty can be a blessing or a weakness.

As followers of Christ, we need to remain mindful of our ever-changing world so that we can ensure that the lifesaving message of John 3:16 “ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” is heard beyond our parish walls.

To achieve this, we need to go where the attention is: the mobile phone or rather, the Social Media apps on our mobile phones.

Our parish Facebook and Instagram audience are in building stages, and we are relying on our community to help us grow our online presence. This will help us to achieve several of our objectives:

- ◆ Communicate the Good News outside our parish family.
- ◆ Help people find OLF, establish a connection and find support they may be seeking.
- ◆ Continue to build our community and therefore, God’s family.

In a nutshell, we should not overlook the power of potential reach offered by social media. It is crucial that we take this opportunity **to carve out an online presence for our faith and those who seek it.** Having said that, the digital world is a crowded space, and we need your help to manoeuvre our way in!

So, if you have an active social media account, it will mean so much to us to have you ‘Like & Follow’ our parish pages as well as share them with your friends and family.

We are available to assist you with this and to answer any questions you may have so please feel welcome to reach out. You can send us an email at [florence.bonanno@ourladyoffatima.com.au](mailto:florence.bonanno@ourladyoffatima.com.au) or call Florence Bonanno on 0414 807 359.

**OLF Communications Team**



# Miles of smiles at Eurella

Our **Lending a Hand** Team is always happy to help out our friends at Eurella Community Services at Burwood. This amazing centre provides a broad range of support to many people who live with many types of physical and intellectual disabilities.

Visiting the Centre is a positive and uplifting experience – and even more so when a special event is happening. On Friday 22 September a small group from **Lending a Hand** provided a sausage sizzle lunch for clients and staff at Eurella as they completed a number of fun activities including wheelchair racing!

Participants and their carers were full of smiles as they were served their sausages in a roll and their choice of donut for dessert. To top it all off, each participant was awarded a gold medal in recognition of their achievements in the day's activities.

Emma William's suggestion that Eurella hold their own "Olympics" in 2024 was met with loud cheers of enthusiasm – and **Lending a Hand** will be there to make sure that lunch is served!

**Right: Sharran Horan holding the certificate of appreciation from the Eurella Centre. Below: A very happy participant in the day's events wearing his medal with pride.**



**Right: Sharran Horan, Julia Goff, Emma Williams and Tony Thorpe getting ready to dish up some delicious sausage sandwiches. John Horan was taking the photograph!**



# Peakhurst Catholic Women's League

Our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month. This year our numbers have been down at times due to illness, catching up with interstate families and holidays. New members are always welcome; why not come along and try us out?

Our members are involved in the work of the Welcoming Committee and running the Piety Stall. Sales for our Silver Circle Tickets were slower this year but we managed to sell two series. Thank you to all who purchased tickets and those who donated back their winnings. Congratulations to all the winners. All proceeds will go to our City Branch's Project of the Year – "The Farm" at Galong. The Farm is a post-rehabilitation facility for women leaving drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. Residents are given vocational and training opportunities to prepare for independent living. [thefarmingalong.com.au](http://thefarmingalong.com.au)

Six of our members attended the first City Meeting at our new premises at 141 Harrington St, Church Hill. Mass at St Patrick's Church will be held before each meeting (on the second Tuesday of each month). It's a little further for us to travel and quite a hilly walk to the meeting room and church.

Our Summer Fashion Parade will be held on Saturday, 14 October. We are really looking forward to an afternoon of summer modes supplied by Stafford Fashions and modelled by the ladies of our parish. Please note this date in your diary.

Marlene Wallace, a long-term member, turns 90 in October. Marlene has commenced her celebrations with her family gathering in August. We will offer Mass for her on 11 October, followed with morning tea, our meeting and lunch.

**Pat Pfoeffler, Catholic Women's League**

## On happiness

Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other. *Romans 12:10*

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was at the way you welcomed him and set his mind at ease. *2 Corinthians 7:13*

When others are happy, be happy with them. *Romans 12:15*

*While we cannot make another person totally happy, we can bring a bit of delight into their day. By taking a few moments to write a note of encouragement, call to check on them, run an errand, or do a favour, we can brighten someone's life by showing that we care. Whether we are sharing an amusing moment, celebrating a happy event, shouldering a burden, or shedding tears of mutual sorrow, people know we care when we spend time with them. Time spent in serving and loving others is never wasted, and it brings much happiness to both the receiver and the giver.*

### God's Promise

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is born of God and knows God. *1 John 4: 7*

*(Thanks to Anne-Marie Uzcilias for this meditation from One Year Mini for Women – a devotional).*

# A 'grand' time at Playtime!

I'm one of the grandparents helping at our parish play group. As soon as I arrive at the church on Tuesday mornings, the toys go outside; these include tricycles, strollers, a push-along trolley for sand and super hero toys.

When the weather permits, we head outside for morning tea – under the cover of the eaves as we now attract some friendly magpies. One child gets to ring the bell and we gather for a snack to which all contribute: fruit, crackers, tomatoes, cucumber sticks and so on. The kids love this time. The carers take turns in providing our morning tea too. Maria has set up a roster for craft and story time.

It is a full two hours of fun, music and a great get-together for all. If you are a parent, grandparent or carer for a pre-school child, come and join the fun. Granddads are most welcome too!

**Angela Brady**

*Pictured right: Lots of smiling faces at OLF's Tuesday Playtime. Angela Brady is third from right.*



## More than One Meal

Following a bit of a frantic phone call from one of our team leaders one Monday morning, we realised we had a few wires mixed and no meals for the One Meal service at 5pm that afternoon!

Amazingly, this is the first time this has happened in six years of service. I made a quick call to the incredible Mark at Marks@Oatley and asked if he could quickly make us up 80 meals which we would buy from him. Without hesitation he obliged AND would not take a single cent for his trouble. He told me he was just pleased to be able to help out. Please support Mark's restaurant in Mulga Road next time you are planning a night out.

While we are at it, don't forget to thank the beautiful Pham at Lugarno Bakery next time you are in there buying one of her amazing Bahn Mi rolls or delicious lamingtons. Every Monday Pham donates a huge bag of bread rolls and many other delicious bakery treats for us to hand out at our Riverwood Monday night service.

We currently have three students from the Australian Catholic University who are completing their community engagement with us. Students are generally asked to participate in community service for around 30 hours. Our lovely volunteers turn up for many weeks with delicious home-baked desserts to serve to our patrons. We are particularly proud of Katia, a former St Ursula's student, who has continued on with us many months after her mandatory community service finished. Katia is a very welcome, smiling face at service every week.

On top of this we have a number of our younger parishioners completing their Pope Francis Award by participating in One Meal each week.

We were lucky enough to be awarded a federal grant in June from our local member David Coleman. The \$2500 was used to buy new storage cupboards for our grocery supply and our take-away containers. As well as these great new cupboards, we purchased some new service tables, fantastic trolleys to move all our meals from the van to the service area and plenty of plastic tubs for emergency clothes and other storage.

Most of this gear is in the van which you'll see parked in the church carpark. The van has recently had its pink slip and regular service and continues to keep us on the road.

We are fortunate to enjoy the support of many local schools and parishes who have teams that serve at One Meal on Monday nights. Teams come from Marist Penshurst, St Therese Padstow, St Joseph's Riverwood, SDN Childcare Riverwood, Regina Coeli Beverly Hills and St Declan's at Penshurst. Of course we also have volunteers from our own OLF Peakhurst — what a wonderful example of living the Word.

As the co-ordinators of One Meal Riverwood, the Lending a Hand team and the parish should be very proud of this incredible outreach program at which we help those in need and provide an opportunity for others to share their gifts.

***Emma Williams, One Meal/Lending a Hand***



# Travel Tips for Barcelona

Barcelona is one of the most exciting cities in the world!

The photo below is of the Sagrada Familia (Sacred/Holy Family), one of the most famous landmarks in Barcelona.

This cathedral, which is the tallest religious building in Europe, began construction in 1882 and it is scheduled for completion in 2036. It is a masterpiece of design by Gaudi, one of my favourite architects. This is because Gaudi, and other architects like Renzo Piano, actually designed how to construct their buildings, unlike Jorn Utzon, of Sydney Opera House fame, who left it to engineers to determine how to build it. If visiting the Sagrada Familia, I recommend that you do it as part of a tour. This will save you hours queuing for tickets and also provide much information on this spectacular building. There are numerous other examples of Gaudi architecture in Barcelona and surrounds.



*Left: Barcelona is also known for its wide street corners that allow more light and better sight distances for vehicles and pedestrians.*

## **Wine and Dine**

Food and wine in Barcelona is varied and plentiful. Some Tapas (small share plates) and a jug of Sangria (a mixture of red wine, fruit, water or soda, and sometimes brandy) make for a very enjoyable meal. Local wines like Cava (sparkling white wine) and Tempranillo (red wine) are worth trying.

“Las Ramblas” is a tourist hot spot. This wide boulevard is home to numerous cafes and other tourist attractions and also, unfortunately, thieves. When walking down this street you can see the “spotters” looking for an unsuspecting tourist to rob.

Barcelona has three million residents and over 30 million tourists a year, making it the pickpocket capital of the world.

Look at my other article in this issue of ***The Bark*** for tips on how to travel safely, keeping your valuables safe and enjoy visiting Barcelona and many other cities

***Mike Hickey***

# TRAVEL SECURITY

Tap to pay! You must have heard that before. If you have a little sideways wave logo on your credit card as shown below, you can simply tap your card on the merchant terminal to pay.

This payment method allows you to make contactless transactions using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology. The technology consists of:

- ✎ **A microchip** inside the card. It contains information such as the card number. This is different from the EMV chip visible on the outside of the card.
- ✎ An **antenna inside the card** which sends information to the sales terminal. This is made up of several wires.
- ✎ An **antenna in the terminal** device to transfer and read information located on the chip.

These contactless credit cards make our lives easier, but how safe are they to use?

## What Does “RFID-Blocking Wallet” Mean?

Thieves can use a card skimmer to obtain your credit card or passport details. One common method is to have the portable card reader in a small bag or attaché case and then “accidentally” bump into the victim. The card reader then reads the credit card details .

An RFID-blocking wallet uses a layer of carbon fibre or aluminium to block the electromagnetic signal emitted from your card. The wallet acts like a Faraday Cage. It creates a barrier and cancels out electromagnetic signals. Whether you own a contactless payment card or not, the market for these wallets has grown rapidly.



**RFID wallets can be purchased from** luggage shops like Strand Bags and online from Amazon



## Travel Guard Cards ( block RFID readers)

These fit in a normal wallet, or passport holder and can be purchased from luggage stores, eBay, or online <https://www.thetravelguard.com.au/>

The small, belt-fitting credit card holder shown in the photograph is a safe way to carry credit cards to deter pickpockets You can also place a travel guard card in this little wallet to deter RFID copying.



## Other Precautions

Thieves like backpacks or bags over shoulders. I have travelled with security “savvy” people who were unfortunate victims. In one case, pickpockets undid two separate zippers on a backpack while the victim was busy taking photos with her iPad. She did not feel anything, but her wallet and passports were stolen.

In another instance, a woman had her shoulder bag stolen, while crossing the road. The thief, riding on the back of a motor scooter, slashed the bag strap and drove away with the bag.

PacSafe (<https://pacsafe.com/>) manufacture a variety of bags that have anti-theft features including:

- RFID pockets for valuables
- Lockable zippers
- Slash proof fabric
- A strap to place around your leg or furniture so it cannot be stolen while it is on the ground as you sit at a table.

**Mike Hickey**

## The icing on the cake!

Readers will recall that the **Lending a Hand Team** held a fund-raising cake stall and raffle on the weekend before Mother’s Day which was an amazing success thanks to the incredible support of our parishioners in both baking and purchasing! This year we were raising funds for RizeUp, a wonderful charity which supports people coming out of domestic violence situations. Lending a Hand received this message of thanks from the charity:

*What an outstanding outcome from your Cake Stall. I have to admit I hold “bakers” in the highest esteem as my grandchildren actually think cake baking involves a box, mostly Greens but not brand specific! Granted they do add the eggs, oil and milk so not all that bad!*

*RizeUp will continue to use these funds to purchase necessary supplies when we establish homes for our survivors of domestic and family violence. If you log into our Instagram account you will see the amazing work and outcomes achieved by our merry band of volunteers. It really is a very humbling experience so if your supporters would like to be involved, please encourage them to sign up as a volunteer.*

*Please let me know if you would like further information. We really do enjoy our partnership with each and every organisation who raises their hands for RizeUp.*

*My sincere best wishes*

*Yours in service, reason and justice,*

*Meryl”*



# Friendship group

**W**e have an enthusiastic group of elderly people attending our fortnightly meetings. Since the June issue of *The Bark* we have enjoyed two new experiences – a hot finger food lunch and a movie morning.

While watching the film *Brooklyn*, our guests were served popcorn, and after their lunch enjoyed their chocolate ice cream – a classic movie experience.

Bingo is always a hit as you can see in the photographs!

Congratulations to our dear friends Helen and Peter Cozzi who have recently celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary.

We wished our two men, Russell and Roy, a very happy Father's Day.

**Pat Pfoefffer**



*Below right:*

*Congratulations to much-loved and appreciated parishioners, Helen and Peter Cozzi, who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.*



## Catechists' Art Workshop at OLF

Our parish was fortunate to host a hands-on Art Workshop for catechists from the Sydney Archdiocese in early July. Particularly focussing on the Year 5 and 6 teachers, the day was designed to encourage catechists to get their students involved in the annual Christmas Story Art Exhibition and Competition. This is an initiative of the Catholic Education Office, designed to celebrate and explore children's creative and artistic ability in illustrating the Christmas story.

This exhibition and competition provides the opportunity for Years 5 and 6 students to share with the wider community a greater awareness of the role of the arts in Religious Education. Children can develop deeper appreciation for their talents and recognise the value of the arts in expressing understandings of the Catholic faith.

Enabling and guiding students to participate in this program is especially challenging for catechists who only have a 30 minute class each week and also a full teaching curriculum to complete.

The workshop showcased works from previous years and, with catechists becoming the students, gave them the experience and confidence to give it a go with their classes.

Many thanks to Maria Jeffries from the Peakhurst Catechist Team who organised refreshments for everyone and also to Clarissa for her assistance with the organisation.



This September 2023 issue of **The Bark** is brought to you by:

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## How to contribute to the Bark

**Articles:** please submit your articles as a Word document (not as a pdf.) or as hand-written copy. Articles may be edited for reasons of space; you will be given an opportunity to review your work before publication if this occurs.

**Photographs:** please submit medium /high resolution photos with captions provided.

Please send your articles or suggestions via email to Julia Goff at

[goffam1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:goffam1@optusnet.com.au) or call 0412 809 313.

### Bark 2023

**Summer: Deadline: 1 December**

**Publication date: 22 December**

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE PEAKHURST

## Spring Fashion Parade

by Stafford Fashions

Join us for an afternoon of fun, fashion and friendship

**14 October 2023**

commencing with Afternoon Tea at 1pm

Our Lady of Fatima Peakhurst Parish Centre Hall

All proceeds go to the CWL Project of the Year  
**The Farm in Galong** ([www.thefarmingalong.com.au](http://www.thefarmingalong.com.au))

Cost: \$15 (cash only please)

EFTPOS available for purchases

For more information, contact:  
Maureen Burgess 9533 7075  
Pat Pfoeffler 0439 999 552



## Fatima FUN DAY

**SUNDAY, 15 OCT**  
10:30AM ~ 1PM

OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH  
PEAKHURST

825 Forest Rd, Peakhurst

T: 9533 2594  
[www.ourladyoffatima.com.au](http://www.ourladyoffatima.com.au)

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE:**

- Jumping Castle
- Face Painting
- Balloon Sculpting
- BBQ & Drinks
- Popcorn
- Devonshire Tea
- Lolly Jar Guessing
- Live Music



OLFPeakhurst



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