



NETWORK NEWS

Summer 2020

Christian Initiation
Australia Network

Words from the Chair



Dear Friends

I'm writing these few words on Monday, 20 January, 2020. A lot has happened since our last edition. In fact, that would be an understatement. For many people I know, the changes have been immense.

The vicious drought accompanied by catastrophic fires has touched us all in some way. It is true that the loss of life is the hardest and saddest to deal with. People cannot be replaced. And whilst houses can be rebuilt, those who have lost loved ones will have to build upon their memories and the support that is offered, in order to find some comfort.

In acknowledging the tragic loss of life, I do not want to minimise the loss of homes, businesses, vegetation and wildlife. On New Year's Eve my mum, who lives on the South Coast of NSW rang with the heart-breaking news that my brother had lost his home and business. It was the home I had grown up in. 'Lake View' sat on a hill overlooking Lake Conjola to the east, Pigeon House Mountain and Morton National Park to the west. My youngest brother had been brought home from hospital nearly 50 years ago, and had never left this home. It is now a pile of rubble, much like the rest of the homes in his neighbourhood.

Many of you will have similar stories. And I wonder if you, like myself, have tried to fathom God's role in all of this. I found myself standing on our back deck pleading with God to send the rain and to stop the carnage. But the rain didn't come, and day after day the fire ravaged hectare after hectare, and hazardous smoke filled the air. Then, slowly but surely I started to see what I can only call the face of Christ popping up all over the place.

There was the lady we met in the supermarket, who witnessed to her faith in God as she told us how she and her grandson prayed and prayed until the boy's

mum made it safely out of the fire zone. There was the picture of the priest, together with the parish school community handing out water and putting on meals for people who couldn't get out of the town. There was the bishop sitting on the floor of Ulladulla Church listening to the children as they told him about their experiences. And then, there were the stories of people who said they hadn't prayed in years, yet in their



desperation called out to God in faith and trust that God would help them.

Such an event is not easy to get over. People who lost loved ones, homes and businesses in fires and floods many years ago, will say that it takes a very long time for the healing to begin and for a new sense of normality to kick in.

So what does this look like for those of us who want to share our faith in God and our love for the Catholic Church? Well, I think we are well and truly in the field hospital that Pope Francis speaks of. This is our opportunity to help heal the wounds, to live out our faith in practical ways. And then, we will need to be ready with our words. Because there may come a time

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Christian Initiation Australia Network seeks to support all those who share the vision of the RCIA

Presentations – Before or During Lent?

Max Norden

St. Augustine saw it as his duty to pass on four essential “sacraments” to the elect. These were

1. the Creed
2. the Lord’s Prayer
3. the font
4. the table

He would teach them about the table after their initiation; he would explore the meaning of the font with them on Holy Saturday, before the Vigil.

The Creed and the Lord’s Prayer would be handed over in Lent. Augustine’s motivation was the same as ours as expressed in RCIA #134:

“The church lovingly entrusts these ancient texts to the elect because they “have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer.”

My preference is to celebrate the Presentation of the Creed and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer during the catechumenate stage, before Lent. However, many parishes prefer to celebrate the presentations in Lent. In that case, the Presentation of the Creed is celebrated during the week following the first scrutiny and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer is celebrated after the third scrutiny (note #144 and 145 make it clear the presentation of the creed during Lent is at a weekday mass, not the second Sunday of Lent mass).

Presentations before Lent

The Presentation of the Creed and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer usually take place during Lent. However, because the Lenten season is filled with so many other rites and activities, the presentations can be moved into the period of the catechumenate (see RCIA #79, 103, 104).

You would only celebrate the presentations with catechumens who you were pretty sure would soon be celebrating the Rite of Election. Catechumens who are not yet ready to move on to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment would not be ready to celebrate the presentations.

Note that in the ritual outline for the presentations, the text refers to the “elect.” If you celebrate these rites before Lent, be sure to substitute the word “catechumens.”

The presentations are usually celebrated within Mass (either weekday or Sunday) and are presided over by a priest.

RCIA #103 & 104

The Rite makes several references to the option of doing the presentations before Lent. To avoid misunderstanding and confusion here are the relevant clauses from the Rite:

#103

The presentations normally take place during Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, after the first and third scrutinies. But for pastoral advantage and because the period of

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Words from the Chair

← (Continued from page 1)

when a non-believer or someone who has lost their faith in God and/or the Church will ask us why do we remain hopeful? Why do we keep trusting in God? And so, let us remember the words from 1 Peter 3:15:

Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

Something to pray and ponder over I think.

Other News

May I strongly encourage you to consider attending the Alive in the Spirit Conference to be held 9-11 July, in Wollongong NSW? Members of the CIAN Executive are part of the organising team and we are working to ensure that there will be plenty of workshops and keynotes that will assist you in your ministry. Whilst we are doing our best to keep costs as low as possible, we are conscious that travel and accommodation expenses can be significant. If appropriate, approach your parish team or Parish Pastoral Council soon for some financial assistance. This will be an enriching experience for anyone involved in pastoral ministry.

The first of our ‘conversations’ with Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal from TeamRCIA (USA) is now available. Thanks to Max Norden who has spent a significant amount of time editing and getting this material ready for viewing, and as a podcast. We’d love to get your feedback. The next video will only be available to financial members.

Finally, we are aware that a number of our involved and long-time members of the Network are unwell. Please remember them in your prayers and ask our loving God to heal them and give them strength.

So for now, happy reading and God bless.

Sharon



Augustine and Our Eucharistic Participation

Nick Wagner



After a 1,500 year gap, the church recovered its ancient method of joining believers to Christ

In this article Nick Wagner (TeamRCIA, USA) recalls how our return to 'full and active' participation in the liturgy reflects how the Eucharist was celebrated in the time of St Augustine.

Father Augustine was sluggish getting ready for Mass. The strain of last night's Easter Vigil—his 34th or 35th; he couldn't remember—had significantly weakened him. But he had to celebrate Easter morning with the neophytes.

After his brief homily, the catechumens were dismissed and the doors closed. Father Augustine moved slowly to the wooden altar in the centre of the basilica and prayed the ancient prayer of thanksgiving. Then he asked the neophytes to gather close to him.

He pointed at what lay on the altar—some bread and a cup of wine, now changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. He said to the neophytes:

The mystery that you are lies there on the table.
Be what you see, and receive what you are.
(Sermon 272)

The point is participation

For St. Augustine, the entire purpose of the catechumenate was to bring the seekers to this point. The point at which they would participate in the sacred mysteries and by doing so become, themselves, the Mystery of Christ.

For years, they had participated in the liturgy as catechumens. As their ancestors had done for centuries before them, they sang hymns, chants, and psalms

during the first part of the liturgy. After they were baptised, they remained with the faithful to pray fervently for themselves and for all who were in need. They prayed or sang the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, which had been handed on to them during their catechumenate. They responded to the dialogue that began the great prayer of thanksgiving and sang their hosannas with the angels.

It is by participating in the liturgy that we derive the true Christian spirit. Or to say it in Augustine's terms, it is through our participation in the liturgy that we become the Mystery we celebrate.

And most significantly, they approached the altar in faith and made a throne with their hands to receive the body of Christ. They bowed to the chalice and drank from the cup of salvation. Their amens rang out as a confession of belief in the mystery St. Augustine had taught them they now are.

That all changed shortly after Augustine died in 430. The world was changing, and in response, the church became more inward focused. The catechumenate died out, and the people became more and more passive in the celebration of the liturgy. In the years just before the Second Vatican Council, the participation of the faithful in the liturgy was almost completely suppressed.

How the catechumenate came back

The seeds of reform, however, began to be planted about 100 years before the council. The reform movement had grown to the point that every pope of the early twentieth century (Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI) made the restoration of the participation of the laity in the liturgy a central concern.

On December 4, 1963, Paul VI promulgated the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which solemnly declared:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.
(14)

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Augustine and Our Eucharistic Participation

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The reason the council made the participation of the people so central to the reform of Vatican II was the same reason Augustine taught his neophytes. It is by participating in the liturgy that we derive the true Christian spirit. Or to say it in Augustine's terms, it is through our participation in the liturgy that we become the Mystery we celebrate.

If this is true, then several important points follow:

- Bishops and priests—who preside over the liturgy—must be deeply trained in the proper celebration of the rites.
- Beyond just knowing how to celebrate the rites well, bishops and priests “must zealously strive to achieve [the full and active participation of the people], by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work” (CSL, 14).
- The people must understand that participation is not optional. “Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people,’ is their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (CSL, 14).
- It is by our participation in the liturgy that we participate in the life of the Divine Trinity.

Our call to participate

Most people agree that this central concern of the Second Vatican Council has been a great success. In most of our parishes, people are participating in the liturgy in the way our ancestors did for the first five centuries of the church.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to find parishes that have either not yet fully embraced the liturgical mandate of the council or who have grown lax in their zeal for the promotion of the full and active participation of all the people.

At the time of Augustine's death, it looked like the church was on solid ground and would continue to celebrate liturgy in a way that involved the full participation of the entire Body of Christ. And yet, it didn't take long at all for the participation of the people to fade away.

We have to be vigilant in continuing to carry out the reforms mandated by the church. Our full and active celebration of the liturgy is “the primary and indispensable source” of our life in Christ.

First published: Liturgy.Life, 15 January 2020. Reprinted with permission. Image credit: James Coleman, Unsplash .

Digital Platform Expands

Stewart Bazzica

Changes are coming to our CIAN website. As part of our commitment to the ongoing development of those involved in the RCIA ministry, we will be creating a specialised Members only area.

We are currently developing a range of new content that will provide high quality technical videos and podcasts featuring some of our keynote and workshop presenters from recent national conferences.

First Free Video for You

To launch this part of our digital platform, we introduce the first of our “In Conversation” series as freely available content and this will be available on the website [here](#) as either a [video](#) or [audio podcast](#) . You can also get and share it from our Facebook page [@CIANRCIA](#) and like our page to keep getting RCIA news, updates and conversations.

This initial video features CIAN chair Sharon Brewer in conversation with Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal from TeamRCIA. Nick and Diana share the story of their RCIA journey and give great insight into RCIA best methods and practices.

Financial members, we'll contact you soon to explain more about the launch of additional videos and podcasts you can access through the website. If you're not currently a financial member, you can join by downloading the membership renewal form from the website.



Powerful Scrutinies

Max Norden

I'm not sure why, but some places do stuff to the scrutinies that diminishes them and sends confusing catechesis to the elect and the community.

The primary symbol—the main event—in this rite is the exorcism, the prayer of healing. You can find the exorcism at RCIA #141, 155, and 162. There are three things that we need to do well to make the exorcisms as liturgically meaningful as possible.

Pay attention to the words

Use the exact words given in the text. RCIA leaders and presiders are used to adapting texts in the rite because we are so frequently encouraged to do so by the rite itself. However, this is not one of those times. Don't tinker.

Ideally the presider needs to rehearse the text out loud. Focus on the verbs. Practice the gestures as you say the words. Imagine you are brand new to the faith and hearing these words for the first time. What is it the elect most need from these prayers? Focus on that.

Laying on of hands

The rite seems to make this optional. I don't think it's optional if you want to communicate the power of this rite. The presider should solemnly and prayerfully lay hands on each of the elect. You can add to the solemnity by having the RCIA team leader also lay hands on each of the elect after the presider. And the godparents can lay hands on their own elect after the team leader. Solemnly. Prayerfully.

Silence is golden

If the laying on of hands is done in deep silence, the power of the exorcism is heightened. Do not underscore this action with music. Do not rush the silence. Let the silence seep into the bones of the elect.

Additionally, this is a catechetical moment for the community as they watch and absorb the power of this ritual.

What not to do

These are some elements I have heard that get added into the scrutinies in different places. These things detract from the primary symbolic action I just described. If you are not doing these, pat yourself on your ritual back. If you are doing them just because you've always done it that way, then it will be easy to simply stop doing them.

If you are doing one or more of these things because you love them, I'd suggest you take a hard second look at them. Try doing the ritual as given to us in the RCIA one year and then compare that with your adaptation of the rite. Here are some of the things that are added

onto the scrutiny that may not serve the rite well.

Don't change the exorcism prayer

Some communities rewrite the prayer or add additional words to the prayer. The three exorcism prayers, as given to us, are clear and powerful. There is no compelling reason to change them or add to them.

Don't anoint the elect

The children's adaptation of the scrutiny (starting at RCIA # 277) does include an optional anointing of the elect. However, I don't know why it is in there because it is not in the adult rite.

I think what usually happens in places where the anointing is done is there is both an anointing and a laying on of hands—of children and adults. This is too much stuff for this rite. The anointing seems to detract from the silent power of the hand laying.

Don't add in the presentations

The Presentation of the Creed is meant to be celebrated at a weekday Mass during the third week of Lent (see RCIA # 144). The Presentation of the Lord's Prayer is meant to take place at a weekday Mass during the fifth week of Lent (see RCIA # 165). Adding them into or after the scrutiny rites detracts from the centrality of the exorcism and makes the liturgy seem cluttered.

If you want to celebrate the presentations at a Sunday Mass, consider doing them in Ordinary Time, just before Lent, with those catechumens who will be celebrating the Rite of Election (see RCIA # 79, 103 and the earlier article on [Presentations in this issue of Network News](#)).

Don't scrutinise the baptised candidates

Fewer and fewer places seem to be doing this, which is good. This really is something that cannot be done. The scrutinies are only for the unbaptised.

Don't scrutinise the assembly

The scrutinies are not an examination of conscience or a penitential rite for Catholics. They are exorcism prayers, specific prayers of healing in preparation for baptism. By blurring the lines like this, we create a great confusion about the real difference between the unbaptised and the baptised. And that, in turn, diminishes what we teach about true salvation given freely to us in the sacraments of initiation.

The best way to make the scrutinies do what they are supposed to do is to follow the rite. I know that we get used to the rite allowing for various options, however, when it comes to the scrutinies, adhering closely to the official rite will best serve our communities and the elect.

Sunday of the Word of God—a renewed emphasis on scripture

Nick Wagner and Max Norden

The Bishops Commission for Liturgy is considering how the Church in Australia will mark the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God, established by Pope Francis in his letter [Aperuit Illis](#) and scheduled to occur on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

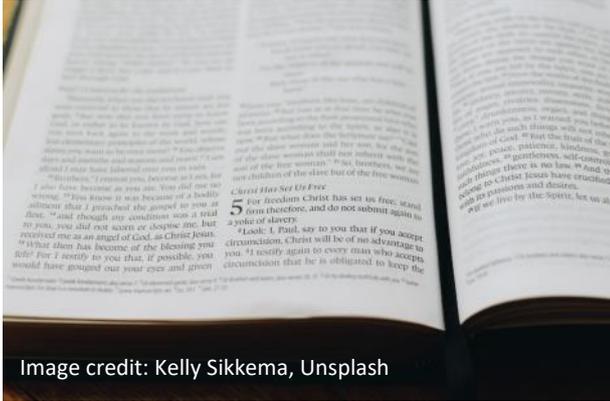


Image credit: Kelly Sikkema, Unsplash

In Rome, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time falls during Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is celebrated much later in the year in Australia. It also falls during the summer holiday period in Australia. The Commission proposed that another date be established for the Sunday of the Word of God in Australia. The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference has sought a common date with Australia for celebration of the same commemoration there. The Commission will provide recommendations to the Conference in May 2020.

In this article from Nick Wagner (TeamRCIA, USA) we read about Pope Francis' apostolic letter calling for the creation of Sunday for the Word of God and some tips on how we might prepare for this celebration.

On September 30, 2019, Pope Francis declared in an apostolic letter ([Aperuit illis, 3](#)) the establishment of a Sunday to focus on God's word. This has the potential to renew our parish communities.

To understand why this change is important, we have to recall two previous church teachings about the word of God.

At the Second Vatican Council, the bishops wanted to say something about who God is and how we know who God is. In its document on divine revelation, [Dei Verbum](#), the Second Vatican Council said that we know who God is because God enters into a relationship with us. Instead of learning facts about God, the council challenged us to know God. God takes the initiative to enter into a personal, loving relationship with us. It is through that encounter that we come to know who God is.

The way that God enters into that personal, loving relationship with us is through the gift of God's word.

What is the "Word" of God?

"Word" means a lot in this context. Pope Benedict XVI wrote about all the different ways we understand the

"symphony of the word" (see [Verbum Dei](#)):

- **Logos**—the cosmic dimension of God's word
- **Creation**—God's word as the enactment of the divine image
- **Reality**—"The word of God makes us change our concept of realism: the realist is the one who recognizes in the word of God the foundation of all things" ([Verbum Dei](#), 10).
- **Christ**—" [Jesus's] unique and singular history is the definitive word which God speaks to humanity" ([Verbum Dei](#), 11).
- **Ultimate destiny**—the culmination of revelation and the fulfilment of all God's promises in Jesus Christ.
- **Tradition and scripture**—"The word of God is given to us in sacred Scripture as an inspired testimony to revelation; together with the Church's living Tradition, it constitutes the supreme rule of faith" ([Verbum Dei](#), 18).

If you think about all the ways God shows up in our lives, it's a bit overwhelming. God, it seems, is seriously trying to get our attention.

Why take scripture so seriously?

Pope Francis, in his letter, is focusing on just one of the meanings of "word"—scripture: "The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians" (1). That doesn't mean he is leaving out all the other meanings. But it is impossible to ever fully realize or define God's word. Pope Francis quotes St. Ephrem:

Pope Francis wants us to have a deeper encounter with the living Christ, through scripture, so that we will become a church and a people committed to mercy.

Who is able to understand, Lord, all the richness of even one of your words? There is more that eludes us than what we can understand. We are like the thirsty drinking from a fountain. Your word has as many aspects as the perspectives of those who study it. The Lord has coloured his word with diverse beauties, so that those who study it can contemplate what stirs them. He has hidden in his word all treasures, so that each of us may find a richness in what he or she contemplates ([Commentary on the Diatessaron](#), 1, 18).

The reason we need to take this seriously is not so that we will become better scripture scholars. Pope Francis wants us to have a deeper encounter with the living Christ, through scripture, so that we will become a church and a people committed to mercy.

To listen to sacred Scripture and then to practice mercy:

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Sunday of the Word of God—a renewed emphasis on scripture

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this is the great challenge before us in life. God's word has the power to open our eyes and to enable us to renounce a stifling and barren individualism and instead to embark on a new path of sharing and solidarity. (13)

Renew community through scripture

In order to follow Pope Francis's decree and to renew our communities with an emphasis on scripture, here are some practical suggestions.

Pastors and pastoral leaders

- Read [Dei Verbum](#), the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on divine revelation
- Read [Verbum Dei](#), Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic exhortation that deals with how we should approach the Bible
- Read Pope Francis's letter, [Aperuit illis](#)

Homilists

- Reflect on Pope Francis's instruction to preachers in [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 142.
- Give your homilies "a quasi-sacramental character"

Lectors and gospel readers

- Practice, practice, practice. Find the one message

your reading is meant to communicate, and proclaim that message clearly

- Every Advent, read the complete gospel that is assigned for that year
- In Year B, which is Mark, the shortest gospel, also read John

Liturgy planners

- Read Pope Francis's letter, [Aperuit illis](#)
- On the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, enthrone the sacred text
- Bless or commission the lectors of the parish
- Provide training for the parish lectors
- Be sure that the responsorial psalm is always sung from the ambo
- Provide a Bible or a gospel book or a daily reading resource such as [Give Us This Day](#) to the members of the parish

Catechists

- Read Pope Francis's letter, [Aperuit illis](#)
- Teach parishioners the practice of lectio divina
- Lead small groups in [mystagogical reflection](#) on the Sunday readings.

Support Those Affected by Bushfires

Prayer for those affected by bushfire and drought

*Eternal God,
In wisdom and love
you created our earth
to sustain us and give us life.*

*We turn to you now
in faith, hope and love,
asking you to look with favour
on our fire-ravaged and drought-stricken land,
on our starving and displaced animals,
on our failing crops and burning
farms, towns and forests.*

*Strengthen, sustain and give new heart
to our farmers
and to all who are affected by drought;
be with those who support them.*

*Strengthen and comfort the victims of the fires,
those who have lost family, friends, property and
stock.*

*Protect our volunteer firefighters and all members
of essential services.*

*In your loving providence,
send abundant rain to quench the fires
and to restore our parched earth.*

*Father of all compassion,
hear our prayer
through Jesus Christ your Son,
in whom the promise of new life
has dawned, and
through the power
of the Holy Spirit,
the Lord the giver of life:*

*Renew your faithful people;
Renew the face of the earth.*

*Our Lady of the Southern Cross,
Mary, help of Christians – Pray for us.*

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop – Pray for us.

Visit catholic.org.au/bushfires to access the full statement outlining the Bishops Conference's national response, prayer resources, and statements from National Catholic Commissions and Institutions.

We continue praying for all those affected by the bushfires, and implore everyone to reach out and provide aid to those who need it.

Photo: St Mary Star of Sea Parish Milton, NSW
by Debbie Gates, Diocese of Wollongong

“It takes a Village...” Victorian 2019 State Conference for RCIA

Dr Susan Crowe



People from the four Victorian Dioceses gathered in Ballarat on 16th November for the RCIA State Conference. The theme for the conference was: “It takes a village...” This theme was chosen by the planning committee, as they wanted to highlight the importance that the Parish community has in the welcoming of catechumens into the life of the Church.

The day began with prayer, which set the overall feel of the day – one of community, enthusiasm and sharing. Bishop Paul welcomed all to the conference and gave a brief overview of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. The facilitator for the day, Ms Audrey Brown (Director of Catholic Education Ballarat) then introduced our first Key Note Speaker – Fr Kevin Lenehan who spoke to those gathered about the importance of community: Created for Community: Receiving the Grace of the Other. We cannot live as a Christian” by oneself – we all need others, as we have been created in and through relationship”. Our nature was “breathed into being” thus our relationship of love and friendship with God.

Fr Kevin emphasized the points that:

Human persons stand in relation -

- to everything, to the whole of reality, and to God
- to the natural world
- to their culture

- to their historical context
- in particular relationships with other persons
- to oneself, interior self-awareness
- to one’s body and other bodies
- every human person is unique, yet fundamentally equal in dignity.

(Lenehan, 16.11.2019)

Fr Kevin further reminded us that we are responsible for not only maintaining these relationships but for recreating them when they are broken. And for those who wish to join our community of faith through RCIA, then they are also needing to build relationships.

“If you wish to become his disciples and members of his Church...you must learn to make the mind of Christ Jesus your own. You must strive to pattern your life on the teachings of the Gospel and so to love the Lord your God and your neighbour.

Are you ready to accept the teachings of the Gospel?”

(Rite of Acceptance of Catechumens)



Following this keynote address, we were fortunate to have a number of breakout sessions facilitated by those

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“It takes a Village...” Victorian 2019 State Conference for RCIA

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involved in RCIA from the different Dioceses. Ms Mandy Robinson explored the importance of “**RCIA for children in your village**” beginning with the question “*What is the difference between a baptism program and the Rite of Christian Initiation (of Adults) adapted for children?*” From the sounds coming from this group, quite a lively and engaging discussion followed. Ms Mary Anne Payne explored the “*Who, what, when, where and how of Dismissals*” in her breakout session “**Don’t dismiss the Dismissals**”. She explained to her group that Dismissals afford the worshipping community the privilege of witnessing Catechumens being nourished by God’s Word in a special way”, as they are given the opportunity to relate the Gospel to their faith journeys. Mr Anthony Kilmartin, a Pastoral Associate from Shepparton, led his break out group in investigating the question “**How do we learn or come to faith?**” Group members were given the opportunity to reflect upon their own faith journeys and then reminded, that we need to share these journeys with those with whom we work in RCIA.

Our second keynote address was presented by Ms Sharon Brewer who works for the National Centre for Evangelisation. Sharon spoke to the conference attendees on the challenges and opportunities of

making our Church a joyful one in her address “**Will they find Joy?**” She used the themes put forward by the Plenary Council as a framework for her presentation. She firstly put the question to us – *why do we have people wanting to join our Church at this time?* – a question she (and we) often ponder during the RCIA journey. The response that we often receive is “They want what we’ve got”. They want the deep joy that can be found in our Liturgies, in our times of gathering together, in our times of prayer – they want to know ‘why do these people care for me?’

Our final breakout sessions were guided by Dr Julie Mitchell who took participants through an approach to spirituality “**Heart Wisdom**”, which seeks to be attentive and responsive to a person’s interior experience of opening mind, body and spirit to the enabling grace of God. Ms Jacqui Giuliano from the Archdiocese of Melbourne, presented a very practical workshop “**Come and See: Exploring the practicalities and possibilities of the RCIA for your context**”. Jacqui presented an overview of the rites, the roles and responsibilities of team members and particularly the role of the community during the RCIA journey.

The conference concluded with acknowledgements by Bishop Paul and a final prayer to send us forth to continue our work with RCIA with the hope of the community understanding that “It takes a Village...”

It Takes a Village... Ballarat 2019 Diocesan RCIA Conference

A small number of people from across the Diocese of Ballarat gathered at St Patrick’s Cathedral Hall on Friday evening 15th November, 2019 to discuss the RCIA process in our diocese. As participants arrived they were welcomed with a light meal and hospitality from the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

The evening began with prayer and a welcome by Bishop Paul Bird, who gave a short reflection on RCIA. The main event of the evening was an “armchair discussion” which was facilitated by Ms Audrey Brown (Director Catholic Education, Ballarat). Members of the Panel – Fr Andrew Hayes, Ms Judith O’Sullivan, Sr Manuela Cabigas cssjb and Dr Susan Crowe, were invited to reflect upon the question “What is RCIA in your experience?” Each member gave a short presentation from different aspects of their experience including RCIA in the Philippines, New Zealand, a prison and a local parish community. There was an invitation for those attending the conference to ask further questions which were ‘guided’ by Ms Brown, which led to a discussion on RCIA practices in the Diocese

The culmination of the evening was the launch by Bishop Paul of the revised “*Parish Handbook for the Rite of*



Christian Initiation of Adults”. Conference participants were invited to read the document and then ask questions of Bishop Paul and members of the Liturgical Commission present at the conference. Bishop Paul blessed all who attended, inviting them to return the following day for the state conference.

Save the Date for the National Pastoral Ministry Conference 2020.



Keynote Speaker: Leisa Anslinger from the United States of America and a National Leader in StrengthsFinder work and in Parish Engagement & Stewardship.

The Conference, coordinated by the NSW Association of Pastors, Pastoral Associates and Parish Workers (NAPPA) collaborating with the Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN), and the Oceania Mission Planners Network (OMPN) invites all people working in Pastoral Ministry to explore:

- What gives life in the Spirit and renewal in our Church
- Ways to invigorate the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults within our parishes
- Our engagement with Plenary 2020

The Conference will be held at St Mary, Star of the Sea College, Harbour St, Wollongong.

Spread the word and look out for more information in coming months. Registrations for the Alive in the Spirit Conference will open 28 February 2020.

More information contact: Lisa Bright lisa.bright@parracatholic.org or 0448 652 720

The National Biennial Liturgy Conference 12-14 March 2020 Novotel Parramatta

The National Biennial Liturgy Conference is an Australian gathering of liturgy representatives, pastoral ministers, catechists, musicians, educators and all who are interested in liturgy.

The keynote speaker is Fr Paul Turner, Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

The 2020 conference will be held at Novotel Sydney Parramatta and begins on Thursday 12 March at 2.30pm. It concludes with lunch on Saturday 14 March 2020.

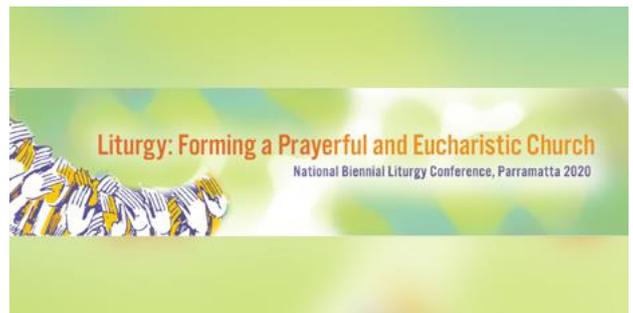
[Registration Here](#)

Early Bird Registration \$370 (Ex GST) before 10 February 2020

General Registration \$450 (Ex GST) after 10 February 2020.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Fr Paul Turner

The keynote speaker is internationally renowned Fr Paul Turner, a priest of the Diocese of Kansas City-St Joseph, USA. Fr Turner is pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Kansas City, Missouri. Known to Australian Catholics, he has been invited here on a number of occasions and has travelled to most states of Australia. In his two presentations, Fr Turner will take up some of the themes under development for the Australian Plenary Council 2020/2021, and also reflect on what Pope Francis has said about the liturgy.



[Click image for video message](#)

Keynote Address 1

Looking back: The liturgical renewal developed in anticipated and unanticipated ways. This talk will review the fruits of the Second Vatican Council as they continue to blossom under Pope Francis.

Keynote address 2

Looking ahead: What does the Catholic liturgy offer contemporary society? How can the Eucharist best reach a secularised people in search for the meaning of life?



Christian Initiation
Australia Network

NETWORK NEWS

Network News is the quarterly bulletin of the Christian Initiation Network Australia.

The Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN) is a support network of those who share the vision of the catechumenate. Its purpose is to promote the practice of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) through sharing ideas and challenges.

CIAN Membership is open to all who have a commitment to and/or work with the RCIA in Australia.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of *Network News*.

To send feedback or get further information about items in *Network News*, contact the editor:

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The next issue will be circulated in May 2020.

Please send stories to share, news or events to publicise, articles to contribute or resources to recommend by 17th April, 2020 to the editor, Max Norden, (contact details above) or to the CIAN chair:

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Christian Initiation Australia Network seeks to support all those who share the vision of the RCIA