



Rev. Dr. Elio Capra

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

Christ is risen! The Easter celebration is the most sacred and most challenging part of the catechumenal journey. Nathan Mitchell concludes his reflections on the Easter Triduum with a very confronting sentence: "Nobody leaves the Easter Vigil the same. If you do you haven't been there!"

What does he mean by this?

He means that the celebration of the Triduum, especially the Easter Vigil, is a time of hard work for body, mind, heart and spirit.

It is hard work because it is a feast that lasts for three days, beginning with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, followed by the Good Friday liturgy and concluding with the Easter Vigil. It is a feast celebrating the wonderful deeds that God has done in and through Jesus Christ. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus we can now proclaim with confidence that life is stronger than death, that light is stronger than darkness, that love is stronger than hatred, that forgiveness is stronger than revenge, that peace is stronger than war.

But the Easter Triduum, and especially the Easter Vigil, is not just about what God has done for Jesus. It is especially about what God does to the catechumens, candidates and each one of us through, with and in Jesus Christ. During the Easter Vigil we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus in four ways: through the Liturgy of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In the Liturgy of Light God proclaims that Christ is our one and only light. But as we light our candles from the Easter candle, we are told that we are now sent out to be the light in a world that often prefers darkness.

In the Liturgy of the Word, God proclaims that Jesus is the one and only true freedom. We proclaim that God liberated the Jewish people from the slavery of Pharaoh (see Exodus) and that Jesus has freed us from the slavery of sin (see Romans 6). The God of Jesus Christ wants to liberate us from all forms of slavery which make us less than what God has destined us to be. We are then sent out to become instruments of freedom to all those who are oppressed by any form of slavery.

Cont'd....

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The Australian Catechumenate Network (A.C.N.) seeks to support all those who share the vision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Australian Catechumenate Network

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR....

In the Liturgy of Baptism God proclaims that through Jesus' death and resurrection we are called to become sons and daughters of God; that as we enter into the waters of baptism we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus: dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:11). But then we are sent out to become living witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection to our society, to all humanity.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, God proclaims that we can already become one with Christ. As we share Jesus' Body and Blood we truly become what we eat. We become the body of Christ for the world. We become people who live their lives giving of themselves to others 'in memory of Him'.

The late Bishop Grech said: "Our Church does not need more teachers. The Church needs more witnesses." This is the hard work that has to take place during the Triduum and especially during the Easter Vigil. Because of the sacraments of initiation, the catechumens and the candidates will never be the same again; they are new; they are the Neophytes (*the newly planted*). They need witnesses showing them how to live in Christ, with Christ and for Christ. This is the task of every member of the parish community. What a privilege! What a responsibility!

My prayer and my hope is that your catechumens, candidates and every parishioner left the Triduum, especially the Easter Vigil, tired because of the hard work they have put in over the three days but also radically transformed, renewed and committed to be living witnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Elio Capra

What is the Initiating Community?

by Elizabeth Harrington

Several items which have appeared in the Catholic press in the last few months have caused me some consternation.

- ◆ The first reported the confirmation of 22 young people by the diocesan bishop at a Catholic School during Lent.
- ◆ The second story was about a young man who had become a Catholic at university while studying to be a teacher. The article explained that he had completed the RCIA process under the direction of the campus minister and university chaplain.
- ◆ The third told of the initiation of 24 secondary students at a weekday Mass on the school's patronal feast day.

To read of new members being initiated into the Church should be a source of joy. Why then did I find these stories rather disturbing?

Through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist we are incorporated into Christ, made sons and daughters of God, and initiated into the Church. The Catholic Church is manifested locally as the Sunday eucharistic community of the

local parish. Through this community God calls people to a life of faith. It is here that we participate in the Easter event of Jesus death and resurrection. It is in the midst of this community of the Church that catechumens are nurtured through the period of formation and welcomed into full membership.

The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful (RCIA 4). The entire community must help the candidates and the catechumens throughout the process of initiation (RCIA 9).

Initiating new members into the Church through schools or universities is not in keeping with this vision and understanding. Whatever else it may be, a Catholic school is not a Sunday eucharistic community because it does not gather on the Lord's Day to be nourished at the table of the Lord and to be sent out on mission to the world. The school is no doubt a Christian community which worships, witnesses and serves, but this does not have the same ecclesiological status as a parish which celebrates a 'weekly Easter' at Sunday Eucharist.

The school or university can play a significant role and will constitute a supportive peer group for the catechumen's journey of faith, but it needs a firm orientation to Sunday Eucharist in the parish. If the school usurps the role of the parish and becomes the initiating community of faith for young people, do they graduate from the Church when they finish school?

Gathering to celebrate Eucharist on Sunday has been the hallmark of the Church from the very beginning. The importance of Sunday was emphasised by Pope John Paul II in his 1998 Apostolic letter *Dies Domini*. It is envisaged that many of the rites of the catechumenate are held on a Sunday, for example, the Rite of Election and the Scrutinies on the Sundays of Lent. How can these be celebrated as intended in a community that does not gather for Sunday Eucharist? None of the three reported initiation rites took place on a Sunday.

Further the sacraments of Christian initiation are intimately linked with the Easter mystery of Jesus' death, resurrection and the Pentecost outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is why the RCIA sets the initiation sacraments during the Easter Vigil. Yet all the reported events were held outside the Easter season. This anomaly is another consequence of moving initiation away from the parish and its cycle of liturgical feasts.

Finally the Rite of Baptism for infants and adults clearly assumes that the liturgy uses a permanent font located in a baptistery. Schools and universities do not have such a baptistery, making them quite unsuitable places for celebrating this sacrament.

According to the Rite of Confirmation, *it is the responsibility of the people of God to prepare the baptised for confirmation... the initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents (RC 3)*. Sacramental preparation is family centred, parish based, and school supported. The school is thus an extension of the parish community. The one attraction that the school or university does offer is the company of peers for the young person throughout the conversion process. This role of faith support is crucial but is not the same as establishing the academic community as the initiating community. Rather the school is always oriented to the parish. The parish offers what the school or university cannot: Sunday Eucharist and belonging to an on-going community of witness to the gospel, a faith community of young and old which undertakes lifelong service in Christian love.



I was introduced to www.bustedhalo.com website which has excellent videos that are quite suitable for RCIA. Here are some suitable videos that I have checked out:

Sacraments 101 Baptism

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05YB2jdHLsY>

Sacraments 101 Confirmation

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qt32SyDWuW8>

Sacraments 101 Eucharist

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdGkTdv4Dt4>

How to go to Reconciliation part 1.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjVck3euhWY>

How to go to reconciliation Part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJg29UG6028>

Sacraments 101 – Anointing of the Sick

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEppjWNO2y4>

Sacraments 101 – Matrimony

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq2RDYIOLrs>

Sacraments 101 – Holy Orders

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q904xIwxnSc>

Advent in 2 minutes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=S02K0lw7dIA

Ash Wednesday and Lent in two minutes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=m3L3c23MfC0

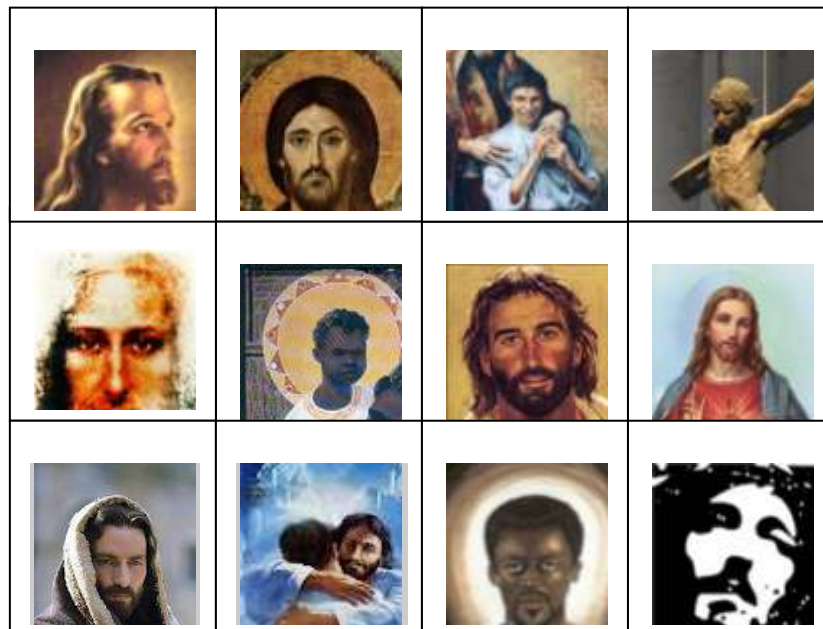
Pentecost in 2 minutes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=J5tr4pqWIo4

Kath Reimert



Pentecost 2012-Pentecost 2013



Contemplate the Face of Christ

'Our gaze is more than ever firmly set on the face of the Lord' NMI (16)

RATIONALE AND VISION from ACBC

(As presented by Archbishop Mark Coleridge at the July Meeting of Diocesan Coordinators)

- 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II
- Following on from WYD 08 and Canonisation of Mary MacKillop and to build on the energy and spirit with the Australian Church, Archbishop Philip Wilson had proposed to the Bishops Conference a Plenary Council as a major ecclesial event to gather Catholic across the nation to discuss future directions/priorities—this was not accepted by the Bishops but further deliberations proposed a Year of Grace which drew unanimous support. The Bishops felt there was a need to be open to a new and deep grace to forge the future.
- Year of Grace was born out of uncertainty in regard to direction & priorities of the Church in Australia amidst institutional diminishment, the devastating effect of sexual abuse and the increasing impact and influence of secularism and materialism in Australian society.
- Essentially the ‘Year of Grace’ is to be a summons to the whole Australian Church to undertake a spiritual journey for a year – something like a retreat which might lead to a future major ecclesial event
- Likened to an ‘Abrahamic’ call- to set out on a journey of faith not knowing the destination, result or outcome
- It was stressed that the ‘Year of Grace’ was not to be a purely head / theological programme, but rather a year -long retreat, a camino, a time of listening, a Sabbath time, going back to basics –to discover afresh new ways to encounter Jesus.
- The Year of Grace concept from the Bishops is inspired and based upon the Apostolic Letter ‘Novo Millennio Ineunte’ by the late Blessed Pope John Paul II—recalling the events in Rome during the Jubilee Year of 2000 and the Pope’s challenge to the whole Church to “contemplate the face of Christ” and to “start afresh” from Christ.
- An underlying question throughout the year in regard to the activities of the Church in all levels would be “What has this got to do with Jesus?”
- The Year of Grace is to have 3 major themes/rhythms:
 - 1) contemplating the face of Christ
 - 2) building a spirituality of communion
 - 3) undertaking mission for the new evangelisation
- It is expected that the Year of Grace would encourage and include the following:
 - 1) ‘Listening to the Word of God’ -becoming a more biblical Church
 - 2) ‘Experiences of Remembering’ – becoming more aware of God’s grace acting in our daily lives
 - 3) ‘Encountering and responding to Jesus’ in our daily life—

Comments from Diocesan Coordinators included:

The Year of Grace:

- is to stress God’s action in our lives/world
- is more about an experience of Jesus – than knowing more about Jesus
- is to have more a focus on being rather than doing
- is to be seen as an exercise in naming and claiming grace—need to speak into issues facing Australia using no new program other than the Gospel asking “Where is Jesus?”
- is one of relationships -encountering Jesus, the call to conversion and listening to the Spirit
- can provide an opportunity for the healing of relationships
- is an opportunity to teach Catholics to be more attentive to other graces, signs of Christ’s presence in events, places etc.
- is an opportunity to find new ways of being Catholic in a contemporary secularist society

Relationship between ‘Year of Faith’ and ‘Year of Grace’

Aspect	Year of Grace	Year of Faith
Source	Initiative of the Catholic Bishops of Australia	Initiative of Pope Benedict XVI
Timeframe	Pentecost 2012 –Pentecost 2013	11 October 2012 – 24 November 2013
Primary Document	Apostolic Letter “At the Beginning of the New Millennium” (Novo Millenion Ineunte)	Apostolic Letter “Door of Faith” (Portia Fidei)
Theme	‘Contemplate the Face of Christ’	‘The door of faith is always open for us’
Purpose	Seeking new grace/directions for the future in the face of three major forces at work in Australia: -institutional diminishment of church -impact of sexual abuse -effects of secularism	Seeking a renewed sense of faith in the face of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people
Methodology	Undertake a spiritual journey of encountering Christ through: -prayer -reflection on God’s Word -liturgies -listening to the Spirit	Renewal of faith is achieved through: -witness of faith -make a public credo -learn and pray the creed -study the Catholic Catechism -retrace the history of faith
Links to other graces/events	Recognise graces of: -World Youth Day in Sydney -Canonisation of Mary MacKillop -50 th anniversary of Vatican II	-50 th anniversary of opening of Vatican II -20 th anniversary of the Catechism -Theme of the Synod of Bishops in October 2012 “The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Faith’ -‘Year of Faith’ held in 1967 to mark 1900 years of the witness of Peter and Paul.

Some Points:

- It seems that both of these initiatives were developed independently of each other.
- The Year of Faith has already been formally announced by Pope Benedict
- Archbishop Philip Wilson handed the Pope a letter announcing the Year of Grace during the recent ad limina visit of the Australian Bishops
- The formal announcement of the Year of Grace took place on the Feast of Christ the King (20 November 2011)
- While both initiatives are seeking personal and communal renewal, the pathways are have differing emphases.
- There is clearly overlap and elements of both will be celebrated as determined by local bishops and the energies of local communities.

THE YEAR OF GRACE AND THE RCIA

The Year of Grace was announced as an opportunity of 'Starting afresh from Christ'. More recently one of the brochures clarified this short statement: 'The Year of Grace invites us on a spiritual journey of encountering Christ afresh in our lives through prayer, reflecting on the Scriptures, celebrating liturgies, repenting our failures and listening to the voice of the Spirit.'

My first reaction was: 'The Year of Grace is modelled on the RCIA, the process of initiation of adults who desire to become followers of Christ within the Catholic Church.' Some of them come to the Catholic Church asking for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (*Catechumens*). Others have already been baptised in the Catholic Church or in other Churches and now ask to become full members of the Catholic Church through Confirmation and Eucharist (*Candidates*).

Firstly, the presence of catechumens and candidates in our Catholic parishes is a visible sign of God's grace. In fact, the Church is often described as a mother who gives birth to new children through the waters of baptism:

"Mother Church (*Mater Ecclesia*) becomes a mother, since through preaching and baptism she brings forth children to a new and immortal life, who have been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God."¹ St Augustine compares the Church to Mary: "This holy and honoured mother is like Mary. She gives birth and she is a virgin, from her you were born - she generates Christ so that you will be members of Christ."² St Cyprian of Carthage states succinctly: "One cannot have God as a father who doesn't have the Church as a mother."³ St Ambrose of Milan speaks about the baptismal font as "the maternal womb"⁴. The following statement by St Paulinus of Nola is applicable to both the Year of Grace and the RCIA: "As a mother she receives the seed of the eternal Word, carries the

peoples in her womb and gives birth to them."⁵

The presence of catechumens and candidates in a parish is a visible sign of youth and vitality while the absence of people desiring to become members of the parish family through baptism could therefore be seen as a sign that this community has become rather old and tired.

Secondly, the process of the Year of Grace is also based on the RCIA. The catechetical formation of catechumens and candidates is a five-fold process (cf. RCIA 75):

- 1) Centred in Christ;
- 2) Based on the Holy Scripture;
- 3) Within the Church as the visible sign of Christ's Body in the world;
- 4) Through liturgical prayer and celebrations, culminating with the Eucharist;
- 5) Sent by Christ to live out our mission.

Every year more than one thousand catechumens and candidates (see the statistics on the ozcatechumenate website) become members of the Catholic Church through the RCIA. They are living witnesses of God's Grace. Very often we focus on those who leave the Church and forget the incredible witness of so many adults who choose to become member of the Catholic Church through the RCIA process. Their presence in our midst is a source of grace both for themselves and for the members of our Catholic parishes. Their choice of 'starting afresh from Christ' is an experience of conversion and transformation; their lives will never be the same again.

But the members of Catholic parishes are also transformed; time and time again I hear them say how they have grown closer to Christ because they were part of the team journeying with the catechumens and candidates. The whole parish is touched and transformed by participating in the RCIA rites, especially the celebration of the Rite of Election or the Sacraments of Christian

¹ Lumen Gentium 64

² St Augustine, Sermo 25,8; PL 46,938

³ St Cyprian, *De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, 6: CCL 3,253

⁴ St Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 1:65

⁵ St Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 25, 171-172, CSEL 30,243



NN HELPDESK

Initiation at the Easter Vigil. When you decide to make your parish an RCIA parish, then you will see catechumens and candidates knocking on your door. The RCIA is a beacon signalling to those who are searching for Christ that our door is open and that this is truly an evangelising parish.

The documents on catechesis give all of us the following reminder:

“The model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate when, by specific formation, an adult converted to belief is brought to explicit profession of baptismal faith during the Paschal Vigil.”⁶

“This catechumenal formation should inspire the other forms of catechesis in both their objectives and in their dynamism.”⁷

The Year of Grace calls us to ‘start afresh from Christ’. Journey with the catechumens and candidates who are preparing for the sacraments of Christian Initiation and I am sure that your celebration of the Year of Grace will be a transforming experience for you as well.

Rev Dr Elio Capra SDB

⁶ Synod of Bishops, *Message to the People of God*, (1977), 8.
⁷ *General Directory for Catechesis*, (1997), 59

Q.

In one of our parishes we have a young man of 14, a refugee from the Congo with very little English who is in the RCIA and because of his very poor English the RCIA is struggling to find ways of sharing the Gospel stories. Do you know of any DVD’s that depict Jesus, the Gospel stories etc. We have only been able to find kiddies DVD’s and are really looking for something aimed at an older person.

Our diocese has a growing Migrant and Refugee community as I am sure many other parishes across Australia are experiencing and so I would imagine we are not the first RCIA team to tackle this problem. Would you know of any visual resources that might be out there?

A. A few suggestions:

Contact the Resource Centre at your diocesan Catholic Education Office and get advice from one of the consultants about suitable resources they have available.

Find someone who speaks Congolese and has a good grasp of English who can interpret some more appropriate material for the young man.

The nearest Migrant Resource Centre might be able to offer you some advice.



DATES TO REMEMBER

“Dear Diary”

What is happening?
in your Diocese / Parish
for RCIA Please let us know

2012 ACN NATIONAL CONFERENCE IS IN BRISBANE

Thursday 11th October to Sunday 14th October.

Diocese of Parramatta

MASS FOR NEOPHYTES

25 MAY 7.30 pm

ST PATRICK’S CATHEDRAL
1 Marist Place, Parramatta

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

NSW State Conference

14-16 June 2013

Keynote Presenter: Rev Dr Elio Capra SDB

For more detailed information on what is happening check out the ACN web site
<http://www.ozcatechumenate.org>

News

New Diocesan Coordinator

After around 15 years in the role, Rosemarie Black resigned as Sale Diocese RCIA Co-ordinator to take up a full-time teaching position from the beginning of 2012.

Rita Elswyk has been appointed as the new Diocesan Co-ordinator to replace RoseMarie.

Letter to Diocesan Coordinators

Dear Diocesan RCIA Co-ordinators,

Happy Easter to all of you. I am writing to you at a special time of the RCIA journey. I pray and hope that, even though very demanding, the Easter celebrations have been very rewarding and inspiring for you and your neophytes across your diocese.

I am writing to you as the ACN executive chair to thank you for all the work that you do to promote the RCIA in your parishes and diocese. I am also writing to invite you to participate in a teleconference aimed at further supporting you in this work. The comments and suggestions you gave at last year's teleconference proved extremely valuable to the ACN Executive in planning actions for 2012. As preparations continue for the Brisbane Conference we would like to hear from you again.

We have scheduled the teleconference for RCIA Diocesan Coordinators for **Monday, 30 April at 4pm AEST** and invite you to participate.

THE AGENDA FOR THE TELECONFERENCE:

PRAYER Elio
DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES
What is happening in your diocese?
Challenges and difficulties in your Diocese
ACN BRISBANE CONFERENCE
Update
Aims and hopes
Promoting the Conference
ACN MATTERS
Network News
Website
Nominations for Executive
Identifying possible nominees
AREAS OF ASSISTANCE Open discussion
Identifying the needs
Identifying key people who may help
Projects and initiatives
NEXT TELECONFERENCE?

We need to hear your comments and suggestions in order for us to be able to respond to the concrete needs faced by people working at the RCIA 'coal face'.

HOW CAN YOU TAKE PART IN THE TELECONFERENCE?

It's very easy!

You first call the following Toll Free Number **1800 857 029**

Then follow the instruction as they tell you to add your Guest Access number: **24795510#**

And voila', you will be a part of the teleconference, at no cost to you.

WHEN WILL THE TELECONFERENCE BE HELD?

The Conference will be held on:

MONDAY, 30 APRIL 2012 AT 4.00-5.00 AEST

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO IMMEDIATELY?

We would love and hope to speak to Diocesan RCIA co-ordinators of all the Australian Dioceses. All you have to do at the moment is the following:

Put this date in your diary

Let Elio know by email, elio.capra@cam.org.au that you intend to take part ASAP.

It's so simple ... but it will be of immense value to the ACN Executive members in developing the mission of spreading the RCIA message to the whole of Australia and of responding to your needs and challenges.

Looking forward to hearing from you ASAP and then later on to talking to you during the teleconference.

Easter blessings to all of you,

Elio

Companions on the Journey

My Faith Journey

by Katie Lewis

(Editor's Note: If you read nothing else in this issue of 'Network News', I urge you to read Katie's moving, beautifully-written account of her long faith journey and pass it on to everyone you know who is involved in catechumenal ministry. The paragraph beginning "In 2004" is shocking. We need to do all that we can to ensure that no other seeker is ever treated so unjustly!)

My name is Katie Lewis and I am newly baptised Catholic. However, my faith journey began many years ago...

This journey began in 1997 in Brisbane. I had a new boyfriend called Tim and the time had come to go home to Victoria with him to meet his parents. As we planned our weekend, he mentioned to me that on Sunday morning we would go to Mass. My heart skipped a beat and all of a sudden I became nervous. I had never set foot in a church before, let alone had any understanding of why you went, what you believed or what you did when you were there.

Nevertheless, off I went, nerves and all, and took in as much as I could. There were people touching their heads and chests in strange ways, standing up and sitting down, up and down, speaking words I didn't understand in unison, and singing songs I had never heard. I felt so out of place.

Despite that awkward feeling, I continued to go to Mass whenever we were together as a family and I asked a question here and there, and began piece by piece to make sense of it all.

Then in 1998, my gorgeous Tim proposed to me, and we began planning our wedding, which was of course to be in a Catholic Church. More nerves! Then many thoughts began rushing through my head. *Do I belong in a Catholic Church? How can I get married in a Catholic Church when I don't fully understand what it means to be Catholic? Why is this so important to Tim?* I had many more conversations with other Catholics, other Christians, Tim's parents and finally with a

lovely man called Father Bill Fuller, a Catholic Chaplain from the RAAF. On our first meeting, I had never been so nervous in all my life, but this meeting became a real turning point in my faith journey. As Tim was in the RAAF and I was becoming a "RAAF Wife", Fr Fuller talked about Christianity as it pertained to our married life, our other relationships and to surviving the pressures of being an Australian Defence Force family. I made the conscious decision at this point that I wanted to keep learning more about being Catholic.

In 1999, we had our Catholic military wedding at the Royal Military College Duntroon in Canberra with Fr Fuller presiding, and it was absolutely beautiful. I was worried that a religious wedding would make my family feel left out or as if they were not able to relate, but Fr Fuller had an amazing way of reaching the hearts and minds of all people. Again, my knowledge and my faith grew.

Unfortunately, only nine months later, my father took his own life, and my world was turned upside down. The physical pain was excruciating but the psychological trauma was worse. Sadly my Christian faith wasn't deep enough to be of any strength to me at this time. I struggled in every way, and felt guilty and devastated.

In late 2000 in Darwin, my pain faded somewhat as we welcomed our precious Emily into the world. Again I found myself back at a Catholic RAAF Chaplain, Father Mick Taylor, this time talking about the meanings of Baptism and answering yet more questions.

The issue that he really clarified for me was that it was okay that Catholics aren't perfect.

I had been really struggling with the fact that people could call themselves Catholic and yet behave in a way that was clearly against the teachings from the Scriptures. He also helped me explore the concept of forgiveness. So Emily was baptised, as was our next child Harrison in 2002.

I then decided that if I was going to raise these children to the best of my ability in a Catholic home with Christian values, I had better get serious about learning more. Soon they would be asking me questions and I wouldn't know the answer.

So in 2003 I joined the RCIA group at East Maitland. For the first time in my life I began attending Mass regularly and went to weekly RCIA meetings. I learned so much from so many helpful people. I learned about the Bible, how to pray, and what different things meant in the Mass. I went home and discussed it all with Tim, who we could probably call a "lapsed Catholic", and his faith was reignited too.

In 2004 we moved to another State, but my attempts to continue RCIA were short-lived as my initial meeting was very negative. I was quizzed on many Catholic concepts which I answered inadequately, and it was suggested to me that it seemed I was doing RCIA just to get my children into Catholic schools.

I was shocked at the response and left in tears, realising that I wouldn't be welcomed into the Catholic community there. I didn't set foot in a Church for the next two years. We had another baby, Campbell, but didn't feel we could get him baptised at that point.

In 2006, we moved to Canberra where Emily started school, and yes, it was a Catholic school called Holy Spirit. We began attending the weekly "Focus Assembly" which was always moving, and taught the children (and me) about the Gospel and Christian living. We

became parishioners at Holy Spirit and for the next five years we were members of this wonderful Catholic community. We decided this was the place to get our bubby Campbell baptised. Again I learned from other parishioners, from my children, their teachers, and from two of my dearest friends who are committed Christians. My best friend had bought me a Bible for Christmas and I began reading from it when I could.

In 2010, I had a miscarriage and also lost Tim's Dad. It was very different for me to be able to

draw upon my faith and prayer in these difficult times.

In 2011 we moved back to Maitland. We quickly became part of the St Joseph's community, where the children began school and our fourth bubby Cooper was baptised. I rejoined the RCIA group that I had left all

those years before. Although I still had so much to learn, I then knew that I wanted to become a Catholic.

In January 2012 I received the Sacraments of Initiation at St Joseph's East Maitland. It was a moving experience and I became quite emotional. I somehow felt whole or full, like a part of me had been missing but now the whole puzzle was complete.

My faith gives me such strength; strength in my parenting, strength in my relationships, and strength to face the challenges of day-to-day life, because I know I am never alone, and that Jesus is with me no matter what I have to face.

Not only am I grateful that I was guided by so many different people in my faith journey, but that I am now able to guide my children, and that our shared faith as a family brings us even closer together. I am truly blessed!



The baptism of Katie Lewis
Presider is Fr Matthew Muller



Archdiocese of Brisbane

RITE OF ELECTION
26TH FEBRUARY 2012

ST Stephen's Cathedral welcomed around 500 catechumens, candidates, sponsors, godparents, clergy, catechists, family members and other supporters at the Rite of Election held on the first Sunday of Lent (February 26).

Bishop Brian Finnigan presided and was assisted by Deacon Justus Ezinwanne Igbo. Bishop Joseph Oudeman also was present.

The 100 catechumens from across the archdiocese publicly signed their parish's Book of the Elect to further formalise their commitment and then gathered around the foot of the sanctuary. The names of all catechumens in the archdiocese, whether able to be present or not, were read aloud as parish representatives brought forward the Books of the Elect and stood around the altar.



Bishop Brian Finnigan (centre) with Grovely and Mitchelton parish priest Fr Frank Lourigan (right), associate Pastor Fr Nigel Sequeira (back right) and parishioners at the cathedral on February 26 for the Rite of Election

The assembly prayed for the catechumens and for the candidates for admission into full communion who were also present in big numbers.

Bishop Finnigan told those entering the Church that their "Yes" to God had on-going benefits.

"We are blessed by your presence today," he said. "You each bring your own personal journeys ... and a richness."

He explained why the Rite of Election was celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent:

"The Rite of Election marks the beginning of

the final phase before Full Communion with the Catholic Church (at Easter), and for Catholics Lent is the beginning of our time of preparing for Easter."

Bishop Finnigan said the focus of Lent "should be the person of Jesus Christ" and our "desert experiences", like Jesus, were part of the journey.

He assured the catechumens and candidates of the prayerful support of the archdiocese.

Renee Shaw, a catechumen from Redcliffe City parish, said of her experience: "Standing up the front and being involved was really touching," she said. "Becoming a Catholic is something I have wanted to do for a long time and now is the right time to do it." Ms Shaw who will marry fiancé Ferran Vaga in Barcelona later in the year is sponsored in the RCIA by Redcliffe City parishioner Tony Pizzey. Ms Pizzey said the parish especially enjoyed the presence of Deacon Justus Igbo who had played a huge part in the RCIA during a pastoral placement.



Gathered in faith:
Bishop Joseph Oudeman (back right) with Manly candidates, catechumens and supporters outside the cathedral after the Rite of Election.

Diocese of Newcastle Rite of Election



Catechumen Barbara Buckley with Bishop Bill Wright, Fr Paul O'Neill, and her godparents Tess and Grahame



The entire group of Catechumens and Candidates from the Diocese

Diocese of Wollongong Rite of Election



The Diocese of Wollongong celebrated the Rite of Election on the 26th February with Bishop Peter Ingham presiding. Fifteen catechumens, now newly elect, came from all areas of the diocese including, Campbelltown, Macquarie Fields, Shellharbour, Wollongong and Varroville. Whilst a smaller number than in past years, the celebration was nonetheless a meaningful and joyous one for those travelling on the journey towards the Easter sacraments and life in the Church.



Diocese of Parramatta



Elect from St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith with Sponsors and Team Members after the Rite of Election St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta,



Candidates from St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith with Sponsors and Team Members after the Penitential Service, St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta,



Neophytes, Candidates from St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith with Sponsors and Team Members after the Easter Vigil 7th April

Rite of Election

77 Catechumens, accompanied by Sponsors, RCIA Teams and supporters from 23, parishes in The Diocese of Parramatta came together on Sunday 26th February to celebrate the Rite of Election at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta. Right Rev Monsignor Robert McGuckin VG EV presided over the ceremony.

Penitential Service

On Friday 16th March 55 Candidates with their Sponsors, RCIA Teams and supporters from 21 parishes in The Diocese of Parramatta came together to celebrate a Penitential Rite. The Principal Celebrant was Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Bishop of Parramatta. Bishop Anthony spent some time after the ceremony meeting with the Candidates.



Neophytes, Candidates from St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith with Fr. Chris de Souza after the Easter Vigil 7th April

Check out Your Website

The Executive of the ACN has developed a great website for you and your RCIA team. Come and see it at <http://www.ozcatechumenate.org>.

We are constantly reviewing and changing the website, so come back regularly to see the latest articles and resources for you and your teams. You will find material to help set up and run teams for RCIA groups and those working with children through the RCIC. You will also be able to review past conferences presentations and papers.

We will soon have full details and registration for the upcoming conference.

We rely on the contributions of all of our teams working in RCIA, so if you have any stories or tools you would like to share, or even an upcoming event in your diocese, please email the information to Stewart Bazzica at bazzicas@au1.ibm.com.



Australian Catechumenate Network

HOST DIOCESE NOMINATION FOR ACN 2014 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

To: All Arch/diocesan Coordinators,

As you are all aware the 2012 National RCIA conference has been planned and will be held in October in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

I would urge you to promote this biennial conference in your dioceses as important for all practitioners of RCIA because it is a valuable opportunity to share ideas and contacts within our community.

I would also ask you as coordinators in your diocese to consider whether you would be prepared to host the next conference in 2014. Planning would be undertaken collaboratively; the host diocese would be responsible for the planning and coordinating of logistics on the ground and assisting in venue selection and day to day running. The national committee would be responsible for the content of the conference agenda and engaging speakers.

We plan to announce the next conference location at a hand over ceremony at the conference in October. For that reason we need nominations to be finalised by the end of July. The National Committee will then choose the successful Diocese.

Elio Capra SDB

Chairman Australian Catechumenate Network

elio.capra@cam.org.au

0417 129 726

Embracing the Faith

AUSTRALIAN CATECHUMENATE NETWORK
2012 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



11-14 October 2012

(THURSDAY 7PM - SUNDAY 3PM)

Robertson Gardens Comfort Inn & Suites
281 Kessels Road, Nathan, Brisbane

**The Conference will address
the following topics:**

- RCIA Ministers and their Formation
(Rev Fr Tony Chiera)
- The Rites of the RCIA
(Rev Dr Tom Elich)
- An Ongoing Catechumenate
(Mrs Sue Thomas)

**Workshops will follow these addresses to
further explore each of the topics.**

For conference updates, visit the ACN website
www.ozcatechumenate.org



Australian Catechumenate Network

Executive

Nomination Form

The future of the Australian Catechumenate Network depends on you, the members.

Can you, please, nominate yourself

or someone else to be an executive member of the ACN

for the next two years?

I wish to nominate the following person to serve on the Executive Committee of the Australian Catechumenate Network for two (2) years, commencing at the National Conference on October 11-14, 2012

Name **Arch/diocese**

Address

.....Postcode

Phone **Email**

RESOURCES:

Web addresses for your "favourites":

Australian Catechumenate Network - www.ozcatechumenate.org

Team RCIA - teamrcia.com

North American Forum on the Catechumenate - www.naforum.org/wordpress

RCIA Network of England and Wales - www.rcia.org.uk



ON BEHALF OF THE NETWORK NEWS TEAM
THANK YOU TO ALL
WHO CONTRIBUTED
TO THIS ISSUE OF
NETWORK NEWS

We leave you with this short reflection:

John 16:13

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come".



Next Issue will be circulated in August 2012
so if you have any articles to contribute
please send them in by 31st July 2012
to the Editor:

Elizabeth Harrington at:

harringtone@litcom.net.au

**Also if you have any resources you would like to suggest
please let us know.**