Renewing Evangelisation for the New Millennium

Catechist Newsletter, Term Four 2004
As the new **Director** for the **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all those involved in the wonderful work of bringing the **Good News of Jesus Christ** to the wider Catholic community. This is a very significant apostolate in the evangelising mission of the Church, particularly in the early years of this new millennium.

At this point in time I would like to acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Mr Peter Ivers, who worked to guarantee that CCD grew from strength to strength. It is only fitting also to thank the staff of CCD, who worked tirelessly in Peter’s absence to ensure that ‘things ran as normal’ i.e. recruitment was conducted, JFL was distributed and catechist training was provided.

Throughout the last ten weeks I have enjoyed working closely with the staff of CCD and commend them on their sense of commitment and vision. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Miss Therese Newell on her appointment as Principal of St Joseph’s Primary School, Condobolin. Therese commenced working with CCD in 2000 when the Church celebrated the Great Jubilee and since that time she has taken responsibility for faith education services in the Concord region. Therese’s work has been characterised by the spirit of jubilee, a spirit of great enthusiasm, and joy.

At this time of new beginnings, both for myself and CCD as a whole, I feel that we are provided with an opportunity to reflect upon the charter and mission of CCD, an ecclesiastical organisation established in 1958, so that we can determine new directions in meeting the diverse needs of the wider catholic community. To ensure the success of this organisational renewal I will collaborate extensively and regularly with the staff of CCD, clergy, catechists, and the students themselves.

Australian society in this new millennium is changing significantly, with rapid technological advancement and progress, and the move towards a more multi-cultural multi-faith society. It is essential therefore that the CCD implements policies, provides opportunities and delivers a Special Religious Education curriculum that successfully prepares our students for the changing social paradigm. At a time which is described by Hargreaves as an ‘age of paradox’, as we experience “greater economic flexibility, more technological complexity…heightened moral uncertainty and crises of identity” (1995, p.14), our organisation must remain consistent with, treasure and preserve Gospel values and truths for they are the “guiding principles for the way we live our lives and the way in which we interact with others” (O’Neill, 1996, p.20).

According to Hughes (1995) modern theology, Church teaching, education and Christian living have all been affected by a number of western influences, including: consumerism, individualism, competitiveness, conformism, secularisation, alienation and materialism. Social norms are being redefined in these times, which we might describe as turbulent. Price (1999) alludes to the fact that although young people may be more skeptical and pragmatic, they are also seeking a greater depth of spirituality.

The CCD, as evangelisers and propagators of the faith, must continue to examine its structure and practices if it is to be effective in meeting the challenges of this complex and dynamically changing society. Spry & Sultmann (1994) identify that “renewal is described commonly as a new beginning and is labeled variously in terms of effectiveness, restoration, recovery, re-establishment and transformation” (p. 3). It is ostensible that renewal is a process of transformation through which the challenges of the new millennium are met. This renewal is revealed through the launch of our Strategic Management Plan titled *Duc in Altum. Duc in Altum* comes to us from the gospels and simply means to “put out into the deep” (Luke 5:4) in becoming fishers of men. In his Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Inuente* Pope John Paul II comments “Duc in Altum! These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence” (John Paul II, 1999, par 1).

In the renewal of CCD we recognise that we must bring vitality and zeal to our mission of evangelisation. Essentially, to evangelise is to share the Good News of Christ with other people. Evangelisation brings the power of transformation, transformation not only of our own individual lives, but of the lives of the people around us. Evangelisation “means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975, no.18). Evangelisation calls people to be disciples of Jesus Christ, both as individuals and as communities. It is imperative therefore that catechists show that Catholic evangelisation centres on life-long discipleship and mission. In our delivery of Special Religious Education we “must maintain fidelity to the Good News as proclaimed in the Gospels…for it will only be Catholic education to the extent that it is faithful to the Gospel of Christ…” (Laghi, 1996, p.66).

*(Continued on page 3)*
As a means of ensuring that the Special Religious Education curriculum is faithful to the Gospel of Christ the Joy for Living, Fourth Edition is being revised and redeveloped. Of particular significance to this revision of the Special Religious Education Curriculum is the publication of The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994 in English) and The General Directory for Catechesis (1997). The new program will recognise the unique individuality of each child, and this is revealed in the strategies that have been included to cater for students from a diversity of cultural, intellectual and socio-economic backgrounds. To ensure that the developmental needs of children are met, the Confraternity has a special interest in developing an approach to Special Religious Education that links CCD, family, school and parish. This approach to catechesis will be underpinned by the notion that catechesis within a community of faith is "a systemic religious instruction in the fundamental teachings and the living content of that faith, aimed at initiating the receiver into a deeper personal relationship with Christ, a fullness of Christian life, and therefore a mature faith. It is the whole of efforts within the Church to dialogue in faith and to make disciples." (Catechesi Tradendae, 1979, nos. 5,18; Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975, no.44)

We of course do not work alone in the great mission of evangelisation as "there is much to celebrate in the work and achievements of Catholic schools today, and many grounds for optimism about what these schools can achieve in the future" (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 84). It is clear that under the leadership of Br Kelvin Canavan the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney have become places where "the value of the human person is affirmed, where knowledge is integrated for the sake of ultimate truths and where the relationship of the human person is modelled, as well as taught" (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1998 pars 9,14). CCD is committed to working in partnership with the Catholic Education Office as being agents of transformation so that we adopt practices that make us beacons of hope in a society that is marked by growing secularism, alienation, discrimination and disillusionment.

In light of the many challenges that confront mainstream society we must continue to renew our organisation so that it is credible, authentic, distinctive, driven by dynamic and visionary leadership and underscored by Gospel values. This process of renewal, which is outlined within and underpinned by the Strategic Management Plan, "will demand courage of a faith people and the gift of discerning wisdom" (Treston, 1997, p.18) but "let us go forward in hope … if ours has been a genuine pilgrimage it will have stretched our legs for the journey still ahead" (John Paul II, 1999, pars 58,59).

The thoughts and prayers of CCD are with a number of catechists who are currently receiving treatment for Breast Cancer. Breast Cancer is a disease that affects 1 in every 11 Australian women and October has been designated internationally as being Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Throughout this month a number of fundraisers will be held as a means of helping to "find the cause, find the cure." One such event will be the Catholic Women’s League Pink Ribbon Breakfast to be held on Tuesday 12 October. Further details can be obtained by ringing 9390 5153.

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Mrs Connie O’Dowd RIP
Monday 30 August 2004

It was with great sadness that the CCD-Sydney learned of the death of Mrs Connie O’Dowd on Monday 30 August 2004. Connie, who was extremely active in St Patrick’s Parish, Kogarah was to be inducted soon as a life member of CCD. Now her life membership will be award post-humously on Friday 26 November and will be accepted by her children on her behalf.

Connie was a truly amazing lady, who, dispute battling cancer, very rarely missed her weekly classes at Carlton South Public School where she worked for many years. She had a zest and zeal which were incredible for a women of 87. And she was in the classroom right up to her death on Monday 30 August. Connie is survived by her four children, Christine, Brian, Patricia and Maureen. Our thoughts are prayers are with them.

In particular Connie is in the prayers of her fellow catechists at Kogarah. The following tribute was received from Ms Sue Roach, the Relieving Principal of Carlton South Public School. “The late Connie O’Dowd was a dear friend of the community of Carlton South Public School. Mrs O’Dowd touched many children’s lives in her weekly Scripture teachings and contributed to the spiritual development of so many. We are truly thankful for her years of commitment and dedication. Mrs O’Dowd will be missed by so many families their children and the staff of Carlton South Public School.”

Anthony Cleary
Director
Bankstown Area

It is fourth term, nearing the end of the year and I feel that the Bankstown Area is only beginning to warm-up. But this may be the case because I’m only beginning to settle into my new position as FEO, and times are exciting with a new Director who brings a new vibrancy and excitement to the CCD Sydney.

I take this opportunity to commend all Catechists and the devotion you show in your work. I know that I often do commend your work in my term comments, but you do not cease to inspire and amaze me as I’m sure the case is with your students (if this is not the case today hopefully it will be tomorrow!). I cannot go without acknowledging those who have served Christ for 30 years in their apostolate as catechist; Mrs Noeline Byron, Mrs Carmen Caruana, Mrs Margaret Duffy, Mrs Valarie Edwards, Mrs Lorraine Grace, Mrs Pat Hanrahan, Mrs Joan Klein, Mrs Anne Manenti, Mrs Catherine Richardson and Mrs June Smith. Would you believe that the years total 300 combined! Imagine all the hundreds and thousands of people that have been touched by their presence. The reality of the situation is that our catechists are teaching the children of students they had taught in the past. This reality brings to light the term “communion of saints” in a most concrete way, as the Catholic Encyclopedia states that the “communion of saints is the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth (the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices).” Isn’t it humbling to see the ‘bigger’ picture?

Many courses have been completed during the year, including the Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Accreditation. Well done to all participants, especially those that have been associated with the Belmore, Berala, Enfield and Penshurst Parishes. It is obvious that they have been rewarding. They are and should be in demand; it is beneficial not only to refresh the mind and body, but also the soul. So my encouragement is to continually refresh and renew your contact with our beautiful faith by various means and if you feel that a course will provide such an opportunity check out the dates and locations offered. That is one main and essential service your CCD offers you.

A major focus in the Bankstown parishes has been a push for recruitment. It has been a great success going out to various parishes and rallying for some other enthusiasts. I wonder how many of you were so enthusiastic when you began!! The challenge is to catch people into the net, and once they’re in, it may be the case that Christ calls them for thirty years. But do not worry, that is not part of my catch line so do not be afraid if I am visiting your parish soon. Don’t be shy to approach a friend or somebody you think will make a good catechist (even if they don’t know it yet), the people around us are often the most appropriate. God works in simple and fantastic ways. Think about Simon Peter after a long day’s work and all for nothing as he had caught no fish. But Jesus challenged him and his companions to “Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). We know what kind of catch that resulted in.

It is nearing the end of the year, and may the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus enkindle your heart with His love. May you all have a refreshing and reenergising break and be ready to face the New Year with an invigorated attitude and love of our faith.

May God grant you, your family and friends His many Blessings.

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City Area

Spring means a new season, a freshness and a new beginning. It seems different from our energy as SRE teachers at this time of year, where in the fourth term, we can feel as though we are winding down, thinking about the end of the year which seems so close. There are many aspects of life though, which are not winding down. It is time to celebrate and prepare!!!

Celebration is an important aspect of this term, both in parishes and in the CCD. Our City Area Mass, on Friday 29 October, is a special event, an opportunity to celebrate our work and catch up with each other. It is always good to see catechists at this great occasion and celebrate our work at our annual luncheon. It is a great City Area Community event and one of the highlights of the year for us. This year we thank Fr Jerzy and the catechists at St Michael’s Daceyville for hosting the Area Mass. Many catechist groups also celebrate their year together in their parishes. It is important to get together, to recognise the commitment you have and join together in fun.

Many catechists are celebrating because they have completed their level of accreditation – either Basic, Intermediate or Advanced. Certificates will be arriving in parishes soon for those who have completed Basic and Intermediate courses this year. Congratulations to all those who have completed workshops this year, or begun the journey. It has been fun and rewarding for me working with you, and hopefully beneficial for those who attended. We particularly look forward to being with everyone who completed their full accreditation and when they will be presented with their awards at the Annual Catechist Mass at the Cathedral next year.

Many thanks go to catechists who were with me to support a presentation I gave for the Catholic Education Office towards the end of last term. Because 30% of students enrolling in Catholic High schools have come from state schools, I had been invited to speak to Catholic school teachers about Special Religious Education. Evaluations from the day indicate they were impressed with what we do, and the quality of the program we provide. That was a source of celebration too.
As you read this article I have just returned from a few weeks in the highlands of Scotland and particularly two places which are very special to me, and after which I was named. One, Islay, is a rugged island in the Hebrides and another, the River Isla which flows north east of Perth (Scotland). This small trip was an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for my life. Who knows why I felt drawn there. Those of you who come from places outside Australia may understand better than I do why it was this far-off place that I chose, rather than somewhere inside Australia.

As well as celebrating, spring is also time to consider planning. Spring cleaning and getting ready comes with the energy that this season brings. That is why an increasing number of parishes are planning for next year by recruiting catechists now. Even for those lucky parishes where there are enough catechists, it is good to have new people coming into the group regularly so when someone is ready to leave, there is already someone else to take their place. If, like most parishes, catechist numbers are small and you feel stretched and hope to recruit people to help take up the load, then recruiting now allows you to know where you stand for next year. Armed with our Recruitment Package, I hope to be able to assist as many parishes as possible in their quest for catechists for next year.

I hope that you enjoy the spring of 2004, celebrating and preparing.

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Concord Area
Welcome to term 4! I hope that you found time during the school holidays to ‘retire’ temporarily from some of the hustle and bustle of everyday business so that you can be refreshed and prepared for the excitement and expectation of whatever this last quarter of the year brings. Important events for the Concord Area this term include the Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering, the Advent/Christmas Workshop, Concord Area Mass and the Life Membership Luncheon.

I am sure that the Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering on Monday 11 October will be of interest for all catechists as it will be an opportunity to meet the new Director, Anthony Cleary and hear about the future plans for the CCD. The Gathering has a new venue, it will be held in St Mary’s Cathedral School Hall. Morning tea will be available from 10.30am and the formal proceedings will commence at 11.00am. Please see page 12 for more details.

Want some new ideas and resources for Advent and Christmas lessons and activities? Come along to the Preparing for Advent and Christmas Workshop. This workshop will be held at Drummoyne in the parish/school hall on Friday 22 October. The Sydney Catholic Books & Resources bookshop will also be there, ready for business from about 10.30am. The workshop will commence at 11.00am and finish at 1.45pm. Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be available. There will be a ‘Show and Tell’ section so please come with resources and ideas that have worked well with you.

Our Area Mass is always one of celebration and thanks for ‘all that has been’ over the past twelve months. This year we will gather at St Ambrose’s Concord West on Friday 19 November. The Mass will commence at noon and as usual there will be a shared lunch following Mass. Remember to bring your Parish Candle!

At the Life Membership Luncheon on Friday 26 November four of the nineteen catechists who will receive life membership will be from the Concord Area. These wonderful ladies have each given thirty years to the Catechist Ministry and are great witnesses to the children they teach and their parish. Congratulations to them and the other fifteen catechists. Read more about them on pages 8 -11.

In many parishes Term 4 means recruiting. If I can assist in any way please let me know. Though personal invitation is very effective it is still important to have, if possible a parish recruitment drive. The annual statistical returns for the Concord Area indicate that there are 342 catechists/assistants which is an overall increase of 9 as there were 43 who began this year and 34 who withdrew from the catechist ministry. There are 4689 students receiving Special Religious Education in the Concord Area.

Finally this is the last Concord Area update from me. From the beginning of 2005 I will be Principal at St Joseph’s Primary School Condobolin. I have enjoyed my 5 years with CCD and supporting you in your ministry. My appreciation of your work has certainly deepened during this time and I hope to continue assisting catechists in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes.

My thanks for your continued faithfulness and enthusiasm throughout 2004. May Christmas bring peace and joy to you all.

God’s Blessings.

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Sutherland/St George Area

The end is near – we have reached Term 4 - time to get those Advent and Christmas lessons ready. If you feel you need a boost of enthusiasm for this task you may be able to attend one of the Christmas workshops advertised in this newsletter or you may like to ring me and organise one for your parish.

By now you should have heard that the Catechist Gathering will now be held on Monday 11 October (the first day of Term 4) in St Mary’s Cathedral School Hall at 11am. Our Area Mass will be held on Friday 22 October at St John Bosco Parish, Engadine at 12 noon. After Mass there is an opportunity to talk to catechists from other parishes and enjoy a shared lunch. Please set this date aside and come and celebrate with us.

Last term I was busy working on the new JFL curriculum. So far lessons for Kindergarten, Year 3 and Year 5 have been completed for trial. Towards the end of the term a group of catechists and coordinators met at Miranda to help evaluate these lessons. I would like to thank all the catechists who have trialed these lessons and sent in evaluation sheets.

We finally held an Advanced Accreditation Course near enough for the catechists of our area to attend. Well it was worth the wait. Twenty seven enthusiastic people – great discussions – and much laughter as we all learnt together. The presentations on day six were amazing. Some of the highlights were all the toy animals for the Kindergarten lesson, the fun we had with noises for the Year 1 lesson, the enthusiastic class responses for the Year 3 lesson, the beautiful pictures for the Year 5 lesson and the how you can utilise a shoe from the high school lesson. I hope the participants will encourage others in their parish to attend these courses next year.

Term 3 has been the usual cold and flu season with the usual worry about finding someone to take the class of a sick catechist. There was also the unexpected death of Connie O'Dowd as mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. We have also seen a number of catechists and coordinators undergoing major surgery. I ask you to keep all these people in your prayers. Thank you again for all the support you give to me.

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Western Area

The end of the year 2004 is fast approaching so there are a couple of events well worth mentioning.

Firstly we must congratulate two special ladies who have completed thirty years of service teaching Special Religious Education in the State Schools. From Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Fairfield, Stella Semeniuk has taught at Villawood North Primary School for all those years. Connie Bernard, from Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish, Mt Pritchard has taught at some of the local state primary schools during the same time. To mark the occasion for those catechists who have completed thirty years of service a special luncheon will be held at Lidcombe Catholic Workers’ Club on November 26, where they will receive Life Membership of CCD. ‘Well done good and faithful servants.’

As has been the custom for the last few years, the various areas of CCD will be gathering for their special Mass during the last term. The Western Area Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish, Mt Pritchard, on Friday November 5 at midday. All Catechists, helpers and prayer partners are invited from every parish in the area to come and give thanks and ask God’s blessing on the students, their families and ourselves. Please remember to bring your parish candle and a small contribution to wards a shared lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Several catechists have almost completed the Basic Accreditation Course held on a fortnightly basis at Mt Pritchard Parish. Two more workshops remain on Tuesdays October 12 and 26 at 9am in the parish meeting room. If any parish would like an individual workshop I am happy to work with your group. Please phone me to organise a suitable date and time.

It is that time of year again when we begin to plan for next year and consider how we will recruit new people for the special work of teaching Special Religious Education. CCD is very willing to assist with the planning and presentation of the recruitment process. Please let Carmel Duffy (9390 5122) or myself know if you would like any assistance.

It has been a great experience for me during the last term to be gradually introducing our new Director, Mr Anthony Cleary, to the Parish Priests of the Western Area. This has provided an opportunity for Anthony to identify with individual Parishes. It is hoped he will be able to meet with all the parish priests before the end of the year.

During the last few weeks of term I became very aware that a number of the catechists were either unwell themselves or had very sick family members. Please let us pray for one another and for any special needs we may have. It is important that we support each other in prayer. Thank you again for your efforts during the year and I personally thank God for the constant commitment you have to working with our Catholic children in the State Schools.

Judy Day
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It has been an exciting year for me at CCD Sydney. Earlier in the year, I enjoyed working in the Western Area while Judy was overseas. It was a great experience teaching the Basic and Intermediate Courses and meeting so many enthusiastic and dedicated catechists from the Western Area. Following Judy's return, my job has been predominantly working on the new JFL program. I would like to thank all those catechists who have given so much valuable feedback on the new JFL program and especially those who have contributed extensively in putting together some of the lessons. Those who I particularly would like to thank are Audrey English, Nicole Di Natale, Marie Nelson, Imogen Hitchings, Helen Blayney, Libby Peoples and Sr Bede Hintz. These ladies have all given up much of their time and effort by contributing valuable ideas for the lessons of the future program.

In the July school holidays, Josephine (FEO, Bankstown Area) and I, held a workshop on Classroom Management and Storytelling to a group of catechists from the Greek Orthodox Church. This was a very successful day for all the catechists who came from various parts of the Sydney Archdiocese. Many of these catechists contributed their excellent ideas on supplementary resources for use in the classroom. They made a very good point in saying that the lessons were extensively enhanced when children were able to see and touch things that were spoken about in the lessons. Whenever they read a passage from scripture, it was supported by pictures or objects. Although it takes time and effort, it is worthwhile putting together some resources that can be used in your lessons. It will always improve student motivation.

In August, I attended a meeting of the Sydney Archdiocesan Agencies about the Year of the Eucharist which commences in October this year. Everyone is welcome to attend the seminar on the Eucharist which will be held on Saturday 23 October 2004 at St Michael’s Parish, Belfield.

As part of my professional development, I am currently undertaking studies in Faith Education at the Catholic Adult Education Centre at Lidcombe. The courses offered at the CAEC are excellent and I highly recommend them to catechists who would like to deepen their knowledge and skills for the important role they play in teaching the faith to children in state schools. The courses “Opening the Bible” and “The Early Church” are a great supplement to those who are currently undertaking, or have completed, the Basic and Intermediate Courses. In Term 4, some of the courses offered are: Vatican II for Today, Catholic Social Teaching and Christian Prayer.

I would like to encourage all catechists to keep up the good work of bringing the teachings of Jesus Christ to the children in their classes and to recommend this very rewarding ministry to others so that more children will benefit from hearing and learning about the infinite love God has for each and every one of them. May God Bless you all!

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Enfield Parish  
L-R: Anthony Cleary (Director, CCD Sydney), Susan Vanderwall, Lola Daaboul & Angela Taylor who received their Basic Accreditation Certificates at the 10.30am Mass on Sunday 12 September.

Catechists who attended the Advanced Accreditation Workshops at Hoxton Park in Term 3.  
Back Row L-R: Lolita Abbott, Anna Calarco, Robert Hockings, Leo Selbi, Heather Watts, Lucy Papalia, Trudi Simpson, Tracey Pesego  
Front Row L-R: Veronica Tindall, Helen Micallef, Ria Boggian, Faye Hockings, Sue Kelly
Catechist Newsletter, Term Four 2004

Congratulations CCD

LIFE’S DESIGN
St Brendan’s Parish, Central Bankstown
Mrs Carmen Caruana commenced her years as a catechist at Christ the King Parish where a Sister made an appeal for catechists. Carmen approached the Sister and told her she was willing to give it a go. Sister remained with Carmen for three lessons and then Carmen ventured to take the class by herself and has never looked back. She has had experience in various schools including 20 years at Wattawa Heights, having taught all classes up to Year 4; five years at Condell Park Primary with St Brendan’s Parish (teaching various classes) and she is currently teaching Year 4 at Bankstown Primary. Her full commitment to her role as a catechist is evident throughout her years of employment where she worked afternoon shifts just so she could make that half hour she spent teaching the faith. Her desire to teach is so great that she does everything she is able to be there. She has also completed her Advanced Accreditation Course this year.

ALL OF GOD’S CHILDREN
St Joseph’s Parish, Enfield
Mrs Catherine Richardson is originally from Drummoyne and was asked to be a catechist there, but at the time she had five children. Instead it has been the Enfield parish that has been privileged to have her services. Twelve months after moving to the parish Fr McNamara asked her to become a catechist. After stating that he would assist Cath when she began, he placed her in a Kindergarten class and said “You’ll be fine” and walked out. Although this may have at the time felt like being placed in the deep end before she could swim properly, Cath said the main goal was to teach students at that age and level that “God loved them.” She has taught a variety of year groups during her 30 years all spent at Croydon Park. Cath feels very strongly for the state school children, and “sometimes feels that parishes need to be more accommodating”. She has a great concern in regards to the Church needing to reach all its children and has obviously shown her commitment to this mission. Close to her heart is the camaraderie that has developed and is present with her catechist group at Enfield. Her regard for her fellow catechists is very high, “they’ve always been supportive and over the years I’ve made some very good friends there.”

Mrs Anne Manenti started her first training to be a catechist with CCD at St Mary’s Star of the Sea Parish, Miranda. Anne wanted to be a trained teacher but she missed out on those studies. But of course she thought the next best thing was to be a catechist. Anne was motivated by “a great passion to be with children and share the gift of faith.” Coming from a migrant family she felt the necessity of teaching religion in public schools, as many migrants, especially of a European background could not afford to send their children to private schools. Now that Anne is a grandmother to six children she is “even enjoying it more.” To all people who are thinking of becoming a catechist she would like it be known that (as it is obvious to fellow catechists) “I have received much more than I’ve put in.”

FOUNDED ON TWO ROCKS
Ss John Vianney & Thomas More Parish, Greenacre
Mrs Pat Hanrahan was originally approached by Sr Frederick, a motor-mission nun. Sr Fredrick sat in the kitchen for two hours until Pat said yes to the request of being a catechist. Sr Fredrick did the same to a number of others! Thirty years ago Pat was a helper for a Year 2 class that had 50 pupils in it, the following week the catechist left and Pat has been teaching it ever since. Not long after this she was called into another school, a class in the morning and afternoon which also had 50 students. She found a helper, Noeline Bliss who died four years later aged 44 years. Margaret Hyde took over as helper for 26 years and died 15 May 2004. Twelve years ago Pat started to teach the mentally impaired with Margaret and continues to do so. She has been coordinator for the Greenacre parish for seventeen and a half years. Pat has been teaching the Sacramental Program at her parish for three years and it is impressive to note that she is the oldest serving member of Greenacre Public School.

Mrs Joan Klein has been a helper at Greenacre parish for 30 years. She has great dedication to what she does and is seen as a rock, extremely loyal and someone who can be relied on. Her role as a helper shows there are different means that can be used to express God’s love to children in State Schools. Many have felt and know God through her assuring presence.

CAN’T ESCAPE THEIR LOVE
St Christopher’s Parish, Panania
Mrs Noeline Byron had no intention of being a catechist when she started the first lot of CCD courses in 1963. She simply wanted to do it as a ‘refresher’. Before the course was over the parish priest approached her and said he needed her to teach a Year 2 class at Tower Public School until he got somebody else but (fortunately) she ended up being the permanent person. The course she was doing at the time took place over three years at St Brendan’s Bankstown in the evening. The evening course was more convenient because Noeline had three young children. During the course she had her fourth child, born in April and she had the presentation of certificates in May 1966 (St Mary’s Cathedral) which she attended. She continued her apostolate until 1975, when she went overseas and had some time off. She recommenced her apostolate in 1984 and has been a catechist for 30 years ever since. She was drawn back by a notice in the catechist bulletin. She has a great passion for being a catechist and admits the obvious, that of course she has had her challenges and disappointments, but she says with time it only gets better and the enjoyment she gains continues to increase. “You don’t look for rewards but you get satisfaction and a good feeling seeing these kids receive the sacraments.”
THREE CATECHISTS… THIRTY YEARS…UNFAILING TRINITARIAN FORMULA

St Patrick’s Parish, Revesby Heights

Mrs June Smith volunteered to be a catechist after the parish priest appealed. She started with a Year 3 and Year 4 class which had 30 or so children. Most of her contact has been with Year 3, which is the Sacramental class, with both Reconciliation and Holy Communion. June has always had an involvement with extra sacramental classes after school which consists of six classes on Tuesday afternoons. She does it because she loves it… “and secretly I hope God’s watching and just making note. My life is terribly blessed.” She finds that one positive bonus in being involved in the Sacramental Programs is the opportunity to meet the parents of the students.

It was Father Daniel Lyons who approached Valerie Edwards to be a catechist and she vehemently refused at the time, “Not in my life” she said. But he must have been somewhat convincing, and he especially pointed out that after all it is only half an hour each week. But of course “that is not right”, and being the dedicated catechist she is, that certainly would not be the case with Valerie. But the question Father puts to her today is “when are you going to put it in?” Valerie’s response is constantly the same “next year Father.” This supposed retirement has been going on for five years (to the benefit of the children she has taught). She gains much satisfaction from being around children and is touched by their innocence. That they can be told ‘everything’ and generally they do not make any judgment. On the contrary, they will most likely “love you back.” Valerie takes pride in the students she has taught and has much faith in the substantial impact God will have on the lives of the students she has taught. One of the students she taught, Ben Johnston, topped religion at the local De La Salle School. She is and has been heavily involved in the Sacramental Programs (Reconciliation and Holy Communion) year after year. Valerie is widowed and finds that her involvement in catechesis has contributed to a major part of her life fulfillment through both the students she has been in contact with and the friends she has made.

Mrs Margaret Duffy started her term as a catechist when her last child had commenced her schooling. Her mother had been a catechist when catechists used the ‘green catechisms’ as their main text, and passed it on to her. Margaret had fond memories of those times. At the time her family lived in a highly populated ethnic area, where her mother would communicate via the children to the parents in English (this took place in the 1940s; the war years). Margaret began teaching in the 1970s. She was not approached to be a catechist; she always had planned it in “back of her mind.” So with all this experience, desire and background combined, Margaret approached the Priest about becoming a catechist. Her first class contained about 14 students, and a highlight has been preparing Year 6 for confirmation. “To bring God closer into their lives… this development is a wonderful thing to see.”

TWO BECOME ONE

St Anne’s Parish, Strathfield South

Mrs Lorraine Grace was approached by Fr Paine who desperately needed catechists at the time. Her husband Tony wasn’t pleased because Lorraine had six little children, and naturally thought she would be over burdened. But Lorraine told Father she would try. She taught Kindergarten for a few years and was then asked to take on fourth grade. Lorraine gained more enjoyment in teaching Year 4 and has taught this grade ever since. Her husband retired from his employment 15 years ago and Lorraine asked Tony to assist her and he reluctantly agreed and has been assisting Lorraine for seven years. Lorraine marvels at the benefits of working as a team, “It’s been wonderful doing it together as a sacramental couple.” They currently teach Year 1 and Year 4 together. Tony is a convert to the faith and has a deep passion and knowledge of our Catholic beliefs. He has been a blessing and the children respond to and enjoy the husband and wife combination. Tony says “I thought I chose the Catholic Church, but some years later I discovered when reading the scriptures Jesus said ‘You did not choose me I chose you’. It wasn’t my power, knowledge or expertise; it was the Lord who enlightened me. It was quite the humbling experience to discover that later on.”
St Ambrose’s Parish, Concord West
In 1974 Mrs Cecilia Culligan volunteered, after continued persistence from a friend that she would teach Special Religious Education for ‘one year only’. Thirty years later Cecilia will be granted life membership to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine as recognition for her faithful teaching of the Catholic Religion in State Schools.

Cecilia, a parishioner of St Ambrose’s Catholic Church, Concord West has taught Years 5/6 at Concord West Primary School together for the past twenty-six years. Cecilia began her ministry as a Special Religious Education (SRE) teacher at Homebush Boys High and has also taught at North Strathfield Primary School and Concord High School.

Cecilia continues to teach because she still feels “compelled to go each week, something keeps me going”, and believes that as a catechist she is “planting the seed that the Lord will bring to fruition.” She credits her own deep faith to the Religious Sisters who taught her at school and therefore believes that every child has the right to learn about God at school.

One of the many highlights for Cecilia as an SRE teacher was when she arrived at the Church one Sunday to be greeted outside by the Parish Priest who asked would she be God-mother to four children. When she entered the Church she recognised the children - Anna, Albert, Alan and Andy - as she had successively taught them SRE at school.

Holy Innocent’s Parish, Croydon
“Absolutely privileged to be a catechist”, stated Mrs Noeline Moriarty when asked to summarise her thirty years as a catechist. “I am sure I have received many blessings from this ministry, perhaps more than the children I taught.” Noeline, like many others, became a catechist after being invited by a friend. Like many others, she agreed to ‘try for a year.’ Noeline has taught mainly at Croydon Public School but also at Croydon Park and Ashbury primary schools. Her preference was the younger grades though now as a relieving catechist in the Holy Innocents Croydon parish she has taught all grades including Year 10.

While working full-time and raising four children, Noeline still managed to complete the three levels of Catechist Accreditation, attend the Reflection Days and the Annual Catechist Mass. She learnt much from other catechists and over the years felt that the ‘Joy For Living’ program improved. Noeline’s family also supported and encouraged her; her own children loved learning the songs she taught and assisted her with planning the lessons. Her husband was very proud when she received the Papal Blessing and the Cardinal Freeman Medal.

Noeline, early in teaching, once complained that she was not succeeding as a catechist, she was told by another catechist, “As long as you make the effort God will do the rest.” This comment has remained with Noeline throughout the thirty years.

Sacred Heart Parish, Mosman
Mrs Hennriette Cahill, parishioner of Sacred Heart Mosman, presently teaches Year 1 at Mosman Primary but for many years she also taught children with severe disabilities at Special Needs Schools at Mosman, Allambie Heights and Lindfield. When first asked by a friend to become a catechist Hennriette said, “No, it was not for her.” Talking to her husband later he told her that “If you say no, you are saying no to God.” Hennriette continues to teach as she loves children and teaching Scripture has become “one of my highlights of my week.”

Mrs Mary Harrold has always taught at Middle Primary School, having been a parishioner of Mosman for 49 years. She has seen the young students become worldlier over the years but is delighted when her former students recognise her.

As well as being a catechist she and her husband have raised a family of nine children (now grandparents to 23 grandchildren) and she has been active in the Catholic Women’s League for 21 years, having held various executive positions in this organisation.

Mary believes it is important that children are taught at an early age how to pray and that Jesus loves them. After her many years as a dedicated catechist she “still enjoys it.”

St Patrick’s Parish, Kogarah
After Ursula Oeding-Erdel and her family migrated from Germany they settled in St Patrick’s Parish, Kogarah. Ursula became a catechist after hearing an appeal at Mass. Over the years Ursula has taught many primary classes and now acts as a valuable reserve catechist for her parish.

St Joseph’s Parish, Rockdale
Mrs Joyce Cahill and her husband settled in Rockdale not long after they married. Some years later Joyce converted to the Catholic faith and became an active member of the parish. Both she and her husband were on the church cleaning team when Joyce remembers asking the parish priest, Fr O’Neill, if there was anything more she could do. He suggested she could join the Legion of Mary or become a Catechist. Joyce chose to be a Catechist and then completed all the Catechist accreditation courses. In the 1980’s Joyce became the Parish Catechist Coordinator and has just kept on doing the work. Being a member of the Rockdale parish for so many years Joyce remembers her present parish priest when he was an altar boy at Rockdale.
St Finbar's Parish, Sans Souci
Over 30 years ago Christine Riley responded to an appeal in the Lewisham parish to help Sr Jude teach SRE lessons to children in after school classes. It must have been a good experience as Christine still keeps in touch with Sr Jude. Christine found she really enjoyed this work and she then completed the Catechist Accreditation Course – all this while working full time as a nurse. As Christine’s workplace changed she taught in many different parishes most recently in Bexley North, Kogarah, Ramsgate and Sans Souci. Christine has also managed to attend some of the current workshops offered by the CCD and found them to be very helpful and informative.

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Fairfield
Mrs Stella Semeniuk was born in Nazareth and married in Jerusalem in 1946 to her Polish husband, Tony. They moved to Lebanon, then, with their two young sons, came to Australia in 1950. After living for two years in various migrant camps around New South Wales Stella’s family settled in Carramar in 1952, and became part of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Fairfield. In 1974, when Stella’s sons had completed their schooling, she began her work as a Catechist at Villawood North Public School. For the last thirty years she has enjoyed teaching Special Religious Education to the students of that school.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Mount Pritchard
In 1973, in the Parish of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Mt Pritchard, Sister Geraldine McGowan appealed for help with Special Religious Education in the local state schools. Connie Bernard felt and responded to the need. There was no turning back as her husband and family encouraged and supported her all the way. Connie has taught Scripture in several schools, particularly at St John’s Park and King Park, and only took a couple of months off when she had her seventh child, Adrian. She has enjoyed being a catechist and is delighted to have had the contact with so many students over thirty years.

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Life Members Luncheon
Day/Date: Friday, 26 November 2004
Time: 12 noon
Venue: Lidcombe Catholic Workmen’s Club
Cost: $30 per person

Further details will be sent to all Life Member Award Recipients and Parish Catechist Coordinators early Term 4.

Dear Lord,
Give peace all around the earth.
Please try and stop all wars and give the sick and poor people food, water, clothes, shelter and love.

Help us to be kind to others and respect them.
We will also be a friend to all, black and white, short or tall.
Thank you for listening to us and the things you have done.
Amen.

Dear Lord,
You are an inspiration to everyone. As you know there is a war going on in Iraq and a lot of people are dying for us.
So please help those people who are risking their lives.

Please also help those children who have no homes, food, water or even parents because they live in very poor countries and help them from dying with lots of different diseases.
Amen.

Prayers from Year 5 students at Mortlake Primary School.
The students are writing a class prayer book. These are two of the prayers.

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So please help those people who are risking their lives.

Please also help those children who have no homes, food, water or even parents because they live in very poor countries and help them from dying with lots of different diseases.
Amen.
Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering
Renewing Evangelisation & Launch of CCD Strategic Management Plan

Guest speakers:
Most Reverend Julian Porteous
Episcopal Vicar for Renewal & Evangelisation

Mr Lyndon Cox
Director, Catholic Youth Services

Mrs Carolyn Whelan & Students
Hampden Park Public School, Lakemba

Mr Anthony Cleary
Director, CCD Sydney

Day/Date: Monday, 11 October 2004
Venue: St Mary’s Cathedral College Hall
Time: 11am - 1pm

Parish Catechist Coordinators are asked to contact Mrs Carmel Duffy on 9390 5122 by Wednesday 6 October to confirm number of catechists attending from their parishes. All catechists are invited to attend.

Area Masses

Sutherland/St George Area
Friday, 22 October at 12 noon
St John Bosco’s Parish
50 Waratah St, Engadine

Western Area
Friday, 5 November at 12 Noon
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish
230 Humphries Road, Bonnyrigg
(Mt Pritchard)

City Area
Friday, 29 October at 12 noon
St Michael’s Parish
29 Banks Ave, Daceyville

Bankstown Area
Friday, 12 November at 12 noon
St Declan’s Parish
92 Penshurst Street, Penshurst

Concord Area
Friday, 19 November at 12 Noon
St Ambrose’s Parish, 2 Burke Street, Concord

Please bring a plate for a shared lunch.
Parish Catechist Coordinators are asked to bring their CCD Parish Candle to the Area Masses.
Workshops at Mortlake

Topics To Be Confirmed.

When: Wednesday, 27 October & Wednesday, 10 November
Time: 10.45 am - 1.00pm
Venue: Mortlake Parish Hall

For further details, please contact Therese Newell Tel: 9579 5917
Preparing for Advent & Christmas

All Catechists are invited to attend this workshop

This will be an informative, hands-on and fun workshop. You will go home with lesson ideas to use in the classroom.

When: Friday, 22 October
Where: St Mark’s Parish Hall, Drummoyne (Within school grounds, entrance from South Street)
Topic: Preparing for Advent & Christmas (You are welcome to bring ideas and resources to “Show & Tell.”)
Facilitator: Therese Newell
Time: 10.30am (Sydney Catholic Books & Resources-Open for Business) 11.00am-1.45pm
Lunch: Please bring a packed lunch. Tea & Coffee will be available.

For further details, please contact Therese Newell Tel: 9579 5917

Catechist Sunday 2005 - Sunday 6 February (5th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Parish Catechist Coordinators Meetings Term 1, 2005

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<th>Sutherland/St George Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 7/2/05</td>
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<td>10am - 1pm</td>
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<td>CCD Office, 50 Kiora Rd, Miranda</td>
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<th>City Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 11/2/05</td>
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<td>10am - 1pm</td>
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<td>Polding Centre, Lvl 6, 133 Liverpool St, Sydney</td>
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<th>Western Area</th>
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<td>Monday 14/2/05</td>
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<td>10am - 1pm</td>
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<td>Liverpool Catholic Club, Hoxton Park Road, Hoxton Park</td>
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<td>Friday 18/2/05</td>
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<th>Concord Area</th>
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<td>Monday 21/2/05</td>
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<td>10am - 1pm</td>
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<td>Polding Centre, Lvl 6, 133 Liverpool St, Sydney</td>
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\textbf{Catechist Newsletter, Term Four 2004}

\textbf{Catholic Family Catechism - Disciples' Edition}

by Rev B J H Tierney

RRP $5.00

Reviewed by Fr John Walter PP, founding Editor of \textit{The Priest} for the ACCC.

\textbf{Catholic Family Catechism - Disciples’ Edition} is the latest effort by talented priest/catechist, Father James Tierney. In this edition Father’s natural empathy for the mind and heart of the child is revealed — an empathy that far transcends the efforts of those who attempt to write for children without listening to or talking with them.

While the four main catechetical areas of Creed, Sacraments, Commandments and Prayer are covered, Father Tierney has endowed his text with a simple economy of words enriched with pertinent information.

The timeless line illustrations of the truths of faith accompanying the text communicate with little ones as effectively today as when they were first drawn more than a century ago. The cover plate of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a treasure in itself.

This attractive little book is priced most reasonably at $5. Underwritten by Fr Brian Byron's \textit{Nihil Obstat} and bearing Cardinal George Pell’s \textit{Imprimatur} it communicates an abundance of factual information about the faith of the Catholic Church.

\textbf{Available from Sydney Catholic Books & Resources Tel: 9390 5130 Fax: 9283 5146}

\textbf{Christ the Teacher Series} is a new 4-volume catechetical work recently approved by the Archdiocese of Sydney. This Series is produced by Robert Haddad, who has been extensively involved in catechetical work since 1990. He holds qualifications in law and religious education, and is presently undertaking a M. Phil at the Australian Catholic University, researching the apologetics method of St. Justin Martyr.

The 4 volumes total 800 pages, and are written for adults who wish to better know and defend their faith. \textbf{Christ the Teacher Series} is also a resource for teachers, catechists, university students and parents who wish to educate their children in the Faith. The first volume is entitled \textit{The Apostles’ Creed}; part two is entitled \textit{Law and Life}, and is a commentary on the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments and the Lord’s Prayer; volume three is entitled \textit{The Family and Human Life}; volume four is entitled \textit{Defend the Faith!}, and deals with apologetics. So far, the series has sold over 3000 volumes.

Each chapter is designed to provide a Biblical basis for Catholic belief, as well as large numbers of extracts from the writings of the Church Fathers, and the two great catechisms, the \textit{Roman Catechism} and the \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}. The purpose of such a structure is to show both the antiquity of Catholic belief, as well as the authentic development of doctrine.

Recommendations in favour of \textbf{Christ the Teacher} Series have been received nationally and internationally, including from Archbishop Barry Hickey of Perth, and from the famous American convert and Biblical scholar, Dr Scott Hahn:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{“Thank you for sending me the four books. They will prove to be an excellent resource for those seeking to understand their faith better and for teachers and catechists, especially because they refer to the scriptural, dogmatic and philosophical sources of belief.”} Most Rev. B.J. Hickey, Archbishop of Perth.
  \item \textbf{“I have evaluated your book and found it to be a very valuable resource, and an excellent catechetical tool for training in the Faith...I strongly encourage you to continue producing similar study materials, as the need is great for sound, practical catechetical materials.”} Dr Scott Hahn, (Director of the Institute of Applied Biblical Studies).
\end{itemize}

Further to this wonderful series which is ideal for catechists, Robert, who is an organiser of Lumen Verum Apologetics, will be coordinating the \textit{Call to Holiness} conference, to be held at St. Michael's parish hall Belfield. This conference, which is to mark the Year of the Eucharist, will be held on Saturday 23 October. Guest speakers will include Fr Robert Slattery (PP St Michael’s Belfield), Fr Anthony Robbie (PP St Dominic’s Flemington), Fr Peter Joseph (Chancellor for the Diocese of St Maroun) and Mr Mark Shea. For further information regarding the \textbf{Christ the Teacher Series} or \textbf{Call to Holiness} conference contact Robert on 0402 250 727 or log on at \textit{www.lumenverum.org}. 

\textit{Confraternity of Christian Doctrine - Archdiocese of Sydney} 

PO Box A286, Sydney South NSW 1235 Tel: (02) 9390 5122 Fax: (02) 9283 5146
Our Class Creed
Catechist Ministry Certificate Students: Theology 1

WE BELIEVE IN GOD
The loving Father who calls us by name;
Who is always with us and whose unfathomable love surrounds us;
Who created the world and all its beauty for our enjoyment.

WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST
The son of Mary who was born as one of us
And who became the human face of God for us to show us the way to the Father;
Who, by his example shows us how to become the people he calls us to be;
Who calls us to love, forgive and serve others;
Who suffered, died and rose again;

WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
Who is Jesus’ presence with us today
Who sets our hearts on fire with love for God and others;
Who gives us wisdom and courage to live as disciples of Jesus.

WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH
Who, like a mother, guides and teaches us;
Who calls us in Baptism to be disciples of Jesus with and through the community of believers;
Who calls us to share in the life of Christ through Word and Sacraments.

WE BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS
Who are Christ’s body on earth and in heaven;
We believe that the Saints are those, living and dead, who are united by the love God has for us and that we have for God.

WE BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS
That God loves us unconditionally;
That the love of God is more powerful than we can ever imagine;
That God’s judgment is always just and he is always ready to forgive and heal;
That we are called to forgive as God forgives;
That forgiveness is essential to a good and holy life;
That in forgiving others we can grow and be strengthened;
That in the Sacrament of Reconciliation we experience God’s forgiveness.

WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND LIFE EVERLASTING
That God has prepared a better life for us and that one day we will be taken into the presence of God and share in his glory;
That Jesus died and rose so that we may come to know God face to face;
That we will then understand the mysteries on which we regularly ponder.