Mary, woman of truth, with wide open vision you perceived God’s action, visible and invisible, drawing all into the reign of justice, truth and love. Pray for me that I, too, may perceive where God is at work in the world today and may have the will and courage to enter into this action. God’s kingdom come! God’s will be done!

Amen

Catechist Newsletter, Term Three 2005
2005 has been a wonderfully exciting year to date, a time of significant change, development and progress for the CCD. Not only has there been an increase in the number of students undertaking Catholic SRE but we have become a teaching presence in a number of schools for the very first time. In light of these emerging circumstances recruitment has become a major issue as we try to ensure the widespread proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Pleasingly, many have responded to our appeals, with unprecedented numbers enrolled in the new Basic Accreditation Course. With initial teething problems overcome, this course has proven to be very popular, “maintaining 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” (Laghi, 1996, p.66). Building upon the success of the new Basic Accreditation Course has been the revised Intermediate and Advanced Courses.

The newly revised Advanced Course will commence in term three and I encourage all catechists with a desire of deepening their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition to make this course a priority. In a sense this revised course acts as a prelude to the Catechist Ministry Certificate, as it touches upon many of the topics covered in the CMC, but at the same time it integrates theological and educational topics with lessons from the new SRE curriculum.

As we move quickly into 2005 many people are worthy of heartfelt and sincere congratulations. Congratulations to:

The catechists who prepared the 2,000 plus children from government schools who were candidates at Confirmation 2005;

The catechists who involved their classes in the Year of the Eucharist Prayer Card competition. With over 6,000 entries this was an outstanding success;

The catechists who coordinated Project Compassion in their schools during Lent. Amazingly, this involved over 100 schools;

The catechists who organized their classes to enter the Poster Competition for the 10th Anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Mary MacKillop;

The catechists who will receive the various awards at our Annual Catechist Mass.

Notwithstanding these successes and many others, congratulations must go to the catechists who go about their work humbly, diligently and tirelessly. Your efforts do not go unnoticed, particularly not by the children. We are reminded by the late Holy Father that “through you as through a clear window on a sunny day, students come to see and know the joy of a life lived in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. To teach means not only to impart what we know but to reveal who we are by what we are living.”

In Redemptor Missio Pope John Paul II highlighted that true evangelisation is not just the spoken word of the Good News, but it must be where our whole lives bear witness to the mission of Christ by our service to others. “Today young people put more trust in witnesses than in teachers...in life and actions than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of Mission.”

During term three we will celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary. This feast day is the most important feast day that the Church has dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God, defined as a dogma of faith by Pope Pius XII in 1950. This Holy day of obligation not only reveals Mary’s glory, but also offers us hope for our own new and eternal life.

Mary's Assumption into Heaven is the result of her great faith in God’s salvation. His Holiness Pope Paul VI commented “Mary can be held up as an example to faithful for the way in which in her own life she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God because she heard the word of God and did it.”

If we consider the three great virtues, “Faith, Hope and Love”, these were expressed fully in, and through, Mary’s actions and life. As a believer, Mary had a steadfast and enduring faith in God and His promises, remaining confident of God's love even in the most difficult or incredible of circumstances. The depth of Mary’s faith is given testimony in her acceptance of the Mystery of the Incarnation, an event which is beyond human comprehension. Mary is so open, so free, so trusting. Mary, by saying “Yes” is completely willing to follow words that go far beyond her comprehension. Mary responds with a complete surrender, and so not only becomes the Mother of Jesus, but of all who believe in Him.
Mary is the mother of humanity because she gave birth to the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. On the cross, Jesus asked His Mother to take up a new role, a new motherhood, when he said to His disciple John, "Disciple this is your mother", and then to His mother, "This is your son". With this new motherhood, Mary further earned the merits of going to heaven in a unique way, that is, through her Assumption.

Mary is important to us today, and worthy of imitation because she was the first and most perfect believer in her son, Jesus Christ. As ‘disciples’ we must be ever-mindful of Mary’s example, and know that we can grow close to Christ through her.

The expression ‘To Jesus, through Mary’ is used by Catholic saints and scholars to summarise the goal and the path of our spiritual lives. Our souls are made to seek union with Christ, who redeemed us and who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created us and keeps us in being. Thus, we aim to go ‘To Jesus, through Mary.’

Mary is not the ultimate aim of our spiritual journey, but as the daughter of the Father, the Mother of Christ, and the spouse of the Holy Spirit, she is the perfect companion and model for us. Just as Mary brought the Saviour to Elizabeth, so too she brings Him to us, and therefore we, like Elizabeth, welcome Mary and Jesus into our lives. This way, we go to Jesus, ‘...through Mary.’ Mary stood with St John at the foot of the Cross, and so too will she stand beside us when we follow Christ all the way to Calvary.

The Feast of the Assumption provides each of us with a wonderful source of meditation. The new and eternal life of Mary, body and soul, foreshadows the promise of the resurrection, first fulfilled in the risen Christ. Like Mary, those who have received the spirit of Christ now rejoice in the hope of eternal life.

The Feast of the Assumption provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our lives. Devotion to Our Lady is an integral part of Christian tradition, for who can lead us to God, better than can the Mother of God? We should never forget that all those who hold the teaching of Christ are the children of the Woman clothed with the sun (Apoc. 12). Therefore, devotion to Our Lady is not simply a matter of personal interest. Rather, devotion to the Virgin Mary should be a part of all cultures, including our own.

Let us pray that this comes about, in the words of the famous prayer of St Bernard, the Memorare: Remember, Oh most loving Virgin Mary, that never was it known in any age, that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, was left abandoned. Inspired by this confidence, therefore, I fly to you, Oh Virgin of Virgins, my mother. To you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. Oh mother of the Word incarnate, do not despise my prayers, but graciously hear and grant them. Amen.

Anthony Cleary
Director

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**Annual Catechist Mass**

**Sunday 18 September 2005**

2pm

**St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney**

**His Eminence George Cardinal Pell**

Principal Celebrant

The celebration will include the presentation of:

- Apostolic Blessings
- Cardinal Freeman Medals
- Certificates of Accreditation
- Catechist Ministry Certificates

All catechists, their families and friends, are invited to attend the Annual Catechist Mass, followed by light refreshments in St Mary’s Cathedral School Hall.
Everyone was touched by the hospitality of the Riverwood catechists and coordinator Norina Fincato, and with many of their regular parishioners who also assisted. On behalf of the Bankstown Area thank you to all the helpers from Riverwood. I also extend my gratitude to the parish priests who were able to attend. The parish priest and main celebrant of the Mass at St Joseph’s Riverwood, Fr John Walter, touched us with his homily about his previous experiences as a young parish priest catechising in state schools. I would like to remind those who attended and make aware those who weren’t able to attend, part of the edifying message mentioned in his homily. Father stated how he discovered over years that “the personal witness of catechists like you can carry such great weight even when you might think you are getting nowhere. If we gain one important lesson from experiences like this it is never underestimate your power to witness to Christ as a catechist, especially when you find it hard going in the classroom. Because you are doing His work God will manage to use you in ways you may never suspect. Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta put it simply and succinctly when asked the secret of her success: “We are not here to be successful, but to be faithful.” Her interviewer like many others in today’s secularised world was intrigued enough to report her words but perhaps unable fully to comprehend her reply. Our faith provides the key as long as we remember that where “Man proposes; God disposes.” All too often we are tempted to stop trying and give up.”

A big feature for the year so far has been the accreditation courses. They have undergone a revision and are in many ways, very different. The response of catechists to these courses has been very positive. An (anonymous) comment received from a catechist who completed a course in term two stated that the basic course “…fulfilled all my expectations. My knowledge of the basics of the Catholic religion has increased by leaps and bounds.” Many felt that it has helped them in their catechist role, as another catechist wrote, “...it has given me more confidence in the class.” I will be offering a Basic Accreditation Course on Monday evenings at St Charbel’s Maronite Church Punchbowl and an Intermediate Accreditation Course on Thursday mornings at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Peakhurst. (See page 12 for further details).

Please contact me if assistance is required with inserviceing parishes on any relevant topic. I would be pleased to attend parish meetings and visit catechists in the classroom.

May God Bless you and keep you.

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Bankstown Area

Welcome to term three. It has been a busy Bankstown area and a busy Archdiocese generally. God’s work does not get less demanding, but the question I ask myself is whether I am meeting these demands with the same vigour and enthusiasm as in the beginning of the year? Have I developed in my personal faith? It often feels that when I make one step forward I make more than double that back!! But may our dear Lord provide us with the strength to persevere in the good fight (as I know He does) and help us realise that He is always willing to offer us His grace whenever we seek it. May our Blessed Mother Mary continue to teach us to respond to her Son’s grace as only she is able to do so intimately and abundantly.

The magnitude of your work is reflected in the responses to the prayer competition for the Year of the Eucharist. Three entries from the Bankstown area were selected as winners by His Lordship Bishop Julian Porteous. They include Claudia Lee from Strathfield South Public in Year 4, Jenat Sakayanathan from Auburn North Public in the combined Year 5 and 6 class and Monica Nguyen from Bankstown Girls High in Year 7. Congratulations must be extended to these students and the catechists Amanda Eibayeh and Tony and Lorraine Grace who teach two of the selected students.

Amanda is a catechist from the Auburn parish; a university student of 19 years, obviously loves being a catechist. She is studying to be a primary teacher (majoring in Theology). Amanda feels that being a catechist not only has had an impact on her students, but in a big and unexpected way on herself. “I feel that not only am I changing them, but they change me. Words can’t explain how rewarding it is.”

Lorraine has been a catechist for over 30 years, receiving her life membership in 2004. Tony, Lorraine’s husband reluctantly agreed to assist her catechising Years 1 and 4 approximately eight years ago. He considers his contribution to be an essential one, giving himself the honorary role of disciplinary enforcer! Tony and Lorraine had the following message:

“We congratulate Claudia and the other winners in this prayer competition. We are very happy that a girl in our class has been chosen for her prayer expressing her love of Jesus truly present in the Blessed Eucharist. Our pupils were asked to write a prayer on the spot without much notice as time was very short, so it wasn’t easy for them. We asked them to pray to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to help them.

The Area Mass was a joyous occasion which was well attended with beautifully sung hymns thanks to the choir, pianist Betty Lynch and catechists who joined in.
During this Year of the Eucharist we should be making a special effort to teach the children about the real and wonderful presence of Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist. Thank you to all the Catechists that were able to get their students to compete in the prayer Competition. There were so many beautiful entries that if it had been my choice I would have given all the children prizes! However, I am sure our Lord will shower them with blessings for these little acts of faith that are worth more than any prize in the world. I have heard of some inspiring stories about the effects of the prayers that the children have written and how they have managed to inspire not only their catechists but their parents. One catechist was so pleased with the prayer one of her students wrote, that she informed his mother who was so impressed that she has decided to have her son baptised! God is truly marvellous indeed. Never give up hope, even though sometimes it may feel you are making no progress, the Holy Spirit is still working and doing the unseen work for you, the results of which you may never find out about until you reach heaven!

In August I will be travelling to Cologne, Germany to attend the World Youth Day celebrations with our new Pope Benedict XVI. I will certainly miss all of you during this time, however, I am very excited about taking part in this great event of our faith with a million or so other young Catholics from around the world. I will definitely be telling His Holiness how great all my Catechists are and ask him for his blessings on our work! I will be spending three weeks in Cologne doing missionary work and helping the World Youth Day Committee organise tasks for this celebration. Hopefully we will see the same thing happening here in Sydney 2007 if it is God’s will that we host the next World Youth Day. Pray that this eventuates!

As a result, I will not be running the Advanced course personally. For this term our course and curriculum writer, Maree Nelson, will be your teacher. Maree will be running the Advanced Accreditation Course in the Polding Centre on Tuesdays commencing July 26 from 10am-1pm. There will also be an Intermediate Accreditation Course at St Joseph’s Parish Hall, Rosebery starting at the end of the term on Tuesday 14 September from 10am-1pm, after I have returned from Germany. (See page 12 for further details.)

As always, I am available to come and speak at your parish if you require some assistance with recruiting, or I am happy to come and visit you in the schools and to answer any questions you may have or to help you with any difficulties or concerns. If you would like me to be involved with anything else in your parish, or to come and talk about any particular topic, then I am also happy to assist and give you my time. It’s always a pleasure for me to come out and meet you in an informal setting within your parishes.

On Thursday 23 June I attended a class held at the Mascot Parish, run by one of the catechists, Oswald Aguis, on “How to make Rosary Beads”. The class was a great deal of fun as we learnt the techniques for bending metal links and joining the beads together in various design patterns. The technique is quite simple to learn, mostly because we had an excellent teacher with Oswald, but it does require a little bit of practice, so I am still yet to master the art! If anyone would like to learn the art of rosary bead making then Oswald is happy to run more classes, so if you are interested please contact me and we can arrange some suitable times.

Thank you to all the catechists that braved the rain and took part in our City Area Mass! It was a wonderful occasion attended by around seventy catechists. A big thank you to the Marrickville catechists and especially coordinator Maureen Power for all her organising and for making the gathering such a beautiful and warm occasion. Thank you also to Fr Tom McDonough, parish priest of Marrickville, for his encouraging words to the catechists.

Lastly, I’d like to thank two of our retiring Catechists from the area, Jenny Brooks from Surry Hills parish and Carmen Dacron from Mascot Parish. Jenny has been a catechist for twenty-five years and coordinator for fourteen years. Carmen has been a catechist for seventeen years. We also farewell Sr Maximilian from the Missionaries of Charity, the coordinator of Darlinghurst parish, as she has moved to Canberra and welcome Sr Mary Lucy, who will be taking on her role.

May Our Blessed Mother protect and guide each one of you, and may God smile upon you and be gracious to you.

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Concord Area

Like a game of sport, it is half-time and we have a chance to assess our calling and re-energise ourselves towards the next two final terms of the school calendar. As dedicated catechists it is our responsibility to take a step back and assess our achievements thus far. We together are required to ask ourselves a number of self-assessment questions: Have we achieved our set targets for the year so far? Have I been an effective catechist? Are their any short-falls that I need to address i.e. resources; additional catechists; accreditation courses or personal development; or anything else relevant towards this catechetical ministry. What am I doing well in which I can share with my fellow catechist? Have I reached out to others in need? The commitment, dedication and high standard of work is next to none, but the greatest undoer of all this is ‘complacency’.

We have achieved a substantial amount of work so far this year, a new curriculum which is well underway (years K, 3 & 5); a new SRE Accreditation program (Basic, Intermediate and Advanced); Confirmation 2005; a new website (to be released soon); church visits; area masses; orientations; lesson preparations and many other parish initiatives; increase in the number of catechist; excellent recruitment at parish level; student numbers generally up on previous years. Keep up the solid work and never let your guard down!

What has been extremely encouraging is the feedback on the new SRE Accreditation Program in which results from a recent survey completed by catechists in attendance at the Basic Accreditation program in term one (results will be discussed in the coming Coordinators meeting on 18 July, hope you all can attend). The results have indicated that the CCD in developing its’ catechists is definitely heading in the right direction. An overwhelming amount of catechists indicated in the course survey that the course is very useful for their catechist purposes in terms of content and that they found the course to be challenging to adequate in terms of degree of difficulty. The new course meets and fulfills the necessary accreditation towards teaching the new curriculum which is due for release, in part, in 2006 and in full, in 2007.

I will be offering an Advanced Accreditation Course at St Mary’s Concord on Monday’s commencing 8 August. (See page 12 for further details.) I had set down two Advanced Courses in the last newsletter, but due to my impending marriage I have had to cancel one course and re-schedule the other as I will be away from 15 August until 11 September, so I ask you all for your prayers during this most sacred and challenging transition in a man and a woman’s life: the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

An Intermediate Accreditation Program will be held at St Joseph’s, Maronite Catholic Church, 7 Acton Street Croydon, every Saturday from 10am-1pm. commencing 9 July and running for eight successive Saturdays until completion on August 27.

Throughout term two I have visited a number of parishes with several having write-ups in the Catholic Weekly. I hope to attend to more parishes in the coming weeks and would love to be invited to any of the parish catechist meetings, please feel free to extend an invitation.

I look forward to seeing all coordinators at the next Parish Catechist Coordinators meeting on 18 July at Polding Centre from 10am-1pm. Please make an effort as the last meeting early this year turned up an attendance of only 50%, let us try to beat that, I’m sure we can!

Yours in partnership with Christ!

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Sutherland-St George Area

Welcome to term three. The Area Mass is always a time for celebration and sharing and this year was no exception. Thank you to Margaret and the ‘choir’ for the music, and to Kim and the Caringbah catechists for overall organisation, and to the wonderful catechists and priests who attended. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

Terms two and three always seem to be a time when it is difficult to staff classes due to illness and holidays. Thank you to the many volunteers who have doubled up.

This term I will be running the Advanced Accreditation Course commencing Monday 18 July, 10am-1pm, but please feel free do this as a refresher course if you have the time available. (See page 12 for further details.)

Last term we again saw some seminarians teaching SRE at Wooloware High School. Hopefully they will be available again next year as this is something that is very valuable to the catechists and the students. During this term each high school class should receive a class set of the Catholic Weekly. These can be taken home by the students at the end of the lesson. I taught some relief lessons at Endeavour High School High at the beginning of the term and I was pleasantly
surprised at the amount of knowledge the students were able to recall about the death and funeral of Pope John Paul II, they were most impressed by the simplicity of the wooden casket and the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

Blessed Mary MacKillop is often quoted as saying, “If the children cannot come to the Church then we must take the Church to the children”. This is what you do each week as catechists. What more important task can we do especially during this Year of the Eucharist.

I would strongly recommend that catechists also read the Year of the Eucharist reflections written by Sr Carmel Pilcher RSJ. These appear each week in the Catholic Weekly.

The K-6 lessons for the new curriculum, being trialed during term three, have a Eucharistic theme. The Second Vatican Council teaches that during the Eucharistic Celebration Jesus is present in four ways.

In the gathered people worshiping; in the Word being proclaimed; in the person of the priest leading; and in a very special way in the elements of bread and the wine that become the body and blood of Jesus. We are then sent forth to love and serve the Lord. These new SRE lessons explore these understandings of Eucharist at an age appropriate level, keeping in mind some of our students do not have an opportunity to attend a Eucharistic celebration.

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Western Area

Early in term two, we recalled the important and inspiring work of the catechist ministry at a Mass and luncheon held at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish. Fairfield. It was wonderful to see over a hundred catechists attending and I enjoyed meeting so many of you there!

A warm welcome to the new catechists from Moorebank and Mt Pritchard Parishes who enthusiastically attended the Basic Accreditation Course held during the term. Thank you for joining the catechist ministry and may the Holy Spirit continue to guide you and all catechists in sowing the good seed – the Word of God – among all the children you teach.

If there are any catechists who have not yet attended the Basic Course and would like to complete it this year, please contact me by telephone on 9724 9024 (CCD Fairfield Office). If there are enough applicants I will be happy to run a Basic Course in term four.

There were thirteen catechists, who successfully completed the Intermediate Accreditation Course held at Fairfield during term two. Many of these catechists commented on how much they learned from the course and how useful the booklets were to them, since they could consolidate what they learned at home and use the booklets as a valuable resource for teaching the children.

This term, there will be an Advanced Accreditation Course held at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish at 18 Vine Street, Fairfield (in the demountable) starting on 20 July from 10.30am-1:30pm. The course will cover a range of topics such as Church History, the Catholic Church in Australia, Vatican II, the Liturgical Year, Christian Ethics and the Human Person. Any catechist who has completed the Intermediate Accreditation Course is welcome to attend the course.

I will be teaching an exciting new course – The Theology of the Body – as part of the Catechist Ministry Course at Hoxton Park (21 Twentieth St) commencing Thursday 4 August, 10am-1pm over five weeks. ‘Theology of the Body’ is the name given to a series of reflections, given by John Paul II, on the human person. This is a fantastic course where we will learn about human love in the Divine plan.

In June I was privileged to coordinate the Year of the Eucharist Prayer Card competition. Over 6000 prayers were received from children in State Schools in the Sydney Archdiocese, from Kindergarten to Year 10. Many of these prayers were truly inspirational. I congratulate the winners of the competition and all the children who took part. I encourage all catechists to continue praying with the children in your classes each week. Prayer is so essential in their spiritual development. They need to grow in awareness of the constant and loving presence of God in their lives, who is very interested in listening to them and guiding them along the way of love and joy towards their true and everlasting home in heaven.

Finally, I hope to see many of you at our Annual Catechist Mass on Sunday 18 September at 2pm in St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney. This year, the Western Area has been appointed to coordinate the Mass. I know many of you live a fair distance from the city but it would be great to see many of you there.

May God Bless you all!

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CHILD PROTECTION
WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT

Misconceptions about the recent child protection legislation abound. Probably the main one is that the legislation deals only with the sexual abuse of children. This misconception is not surprising given that the legislation was drafted as a response to the Wood Royal Commission that uncovered an alarming level of paedophile activity, as well as police protection of such activity.

However, the child protection legislation enacted in 1998 went beyond targeting behaviours that society would ordinarily consider to be child abuse. A broad range of inappropriate behaviours in dealing with children is covered, from incidents of unintended physical contact through to serious sexual and physical assault.

Given the broad range of behaviours that is now targeted by the legislation, anyone who is engaged (whether paid or voluntary) to work with children needs to be fully informed of the legislation. Note that a child is defined as someone under 18 years.

HOW CAN THE LEGISLATION AFFECT SRE TEACHERS?

There are numerous ways in which the child protection legislation may potentially impact upon you as an SRE teacher:

- a child, parent or colleague might come to you to report some inappropriate behaviour involving a child or young person – this matter would need to be reported to the appropriate authority
- you may witness, or otherwise become aware of, some inappropriate behaviour involving a child or young person – again, this matter needs to be reported
- as someone who works with children, there is the possibility that an allegation of inappropriate conduct could be made against you; by being fully aware of the legislation, you can minimise this risk.

WHAT CONDUCT IS COVERED BY THE LEGISLATION?

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act describes a range of inappropriate conduct involving a child or young person that must be reported to the Ombudsman’s Office and appropriately investigated. Such conduct is called reportable conduct, and includes:

- physical assault: physical contact that is hostile or reckless, or if a child imminently fears being harmed by physical contact; no actual harm or injury need occur and the intent of the employee/volunteer is irrelevant;
- ill-treatment: exceeding reasonable or appropriate discipline taking account of the child’s age (again, no harm needs to have occurred as a result);
- neglect: failure to provide basic or emotional necessities – food, medication, etc;
- conduct that causes psychological harm: inappropriate behaviour resulting in some significant harm, where there is a casual link between the behaviour and the harm caused;
- sexual offence: sexual acts involving a child, as set out in the Crimes Act;

WHAT CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION IS THIS?

Ombudsman Act 1974 (Part 3A)
Part 3A (inserted in 1998) provides for allegations of inappropriate conduct to be reported and investigated; this legislation covers only those engaged to work in schools, hospitals, child care centres and substitute residential care centres.

The Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
deals with employment screening processes for those working with children as paid employees, clergy, religious or contractors (note: it does not include volunteers).

prohibits certain persons, whether paid or voluntary, from working with children.
• sexual misconduct: inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child, such as inappropriate conversations or correspondence of a sexual nature, pornography offences, exceeding appropriate boundaries, etc;
• misconduct that might involve reportable conduct: conduct that does not readily fall within the above categories, but that is still inappropriate; eg giving a child alcohol.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ALLEGATION?
The legislation has specific requirements about notifying allegations of reportable conduct. But what is an allegation? An allegation does not need to be preceded by the words “I want to make an allegation” or “I have a complaint”. A general discussion or the passing of information from one person to another about some inappropriate behaviour can form an allegation, even if this is not the person’s intention. As long as the behaviour falls within the scope of reportable conduct, as set out above, the conduct must be reported.

It is irrelevant that the disclosure may be accompanied by a plea for confidentiality. Often, sensitive information will be disclosed in confidence (“I have something to tell you, but I don’t want you to tell ANYONE else about it…”). Regardless that this may be said, on being made aware of some inappropriate conduct, an SRE teacher is obliged to report such information to the appropriate authority.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS?
In the interests of ensuring that all allegations are brought forward, it is not necessary for the person making the allegation to be identified. This means that an anonymous letter or phone-call can form the basis for a reportable conduct allegation, provided sufficient information is given. This is to ensure that anyone with relevant information is not discouraged from coming forward.

WHO IS THE “APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY” TO NOTIFY?
An allegation concerning a student or school personnel must be notified to the School Principal as soon as possible. Even if you are unsure of the information’s relevance (eg from a child), discuss this with your School Principal. If an allegation involves an SRE teacher, either the CCD Director or School Principal can be notified.

Where information is passed to you about a non-school matter, eg from a fellow parishioner, the appropriate contact is the Archdiocesan Chancery. (Refer to the contact details at the end of this article). Once the appropriate authority has been informed, they must decide if the matter is notifiable to the Ombudsman’s Office.

WHO UNDERTAKES THE INVESTIGATION?
It is the responsibility of the employer to instigate a child protection investigation. In the case of a matter within a parish, the Archdiocesan Chancery would appoint an investigator. For an SRE teacher, the investigation may be undertaken by either the Department of Education and Training (DET) or the CCD. External independent investigators may be appointed to undertake the investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS PARAMOUNT
Much has been said about the potentially devastating effect of an untrue allegation. And it is for this very reason that all information regarding child protection matters is treated in the strictest confidence. Those who become privy to any relevant information must maintain the highest degree of confidentiality.

Even once a matter has been referred to the appropriate authority, that information must not be disclosed to any other person – not a spouse, best friend or colleague. The reputations, and even livelihoods, of others are at stake, which is why there is an imperative for absolute confidentiality at all times. A good guideline on how to treat such sensitive information is: if someone made an allegation against me, what degree of confidentiality would I expect?
WHAT DOES AN INVESTIGATION INVOLVE?

Once the employer is informed of an allegation, the Ombudsman’s Office must be notified. An appropriate investigation is then planned and carried out. The more serious the allegation, the more formal and thorough the investigation will be. Each investigation is different, but the steps will generally be:

- the employee/volunteer is informed verbally and in writing of the allegation and the process to be followed
- a contact person is allocated to ensure appropriate advice and support
- the employee/volunteer and witnesses are interviewed (which may include persons suggested by the employee/volunteer)
- the identity of those providing information is kept confidential
- once the investigation is completed, a finding is made – either sustained or not sustained, on the balance of probabilities
- the employee/volunteer is informed in writing of the finding.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION?

The finding, or outcome, of the investigation will determine what happens next. If the finding is unsustained on grounds that the allegation was either:

- false (ie the conduct did not occur) or
- vexatious (ie was untrue, and was intended to cause harm or distress) or
- misconceived (the allegation was made in good faith, but was misconstrued)
then the matter does not proceed further. The file is still retained by the employer, but no further action is taken. The only exception is where a serious matter may be unsustained due, for example, to insufficient evidence. Such matters of concern are reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

If the finding is sustained, the matter is always reported to the CCYP. The more serious matters are then included on the CCYP employment screening database. This is the database that is checked when an employee is screened to determine their suitability for working with children. Having a matter listed on this database does not automatically preclude employment; the employer does a risk assessment to determine the person’s suitability for employment in that particular position.

WHAT ABOUT EXEMPTIONS?

There are some allegations that are exempt from notification to the Ombudsman’s Office. It is up to the employer, on receiving details of the allegation, to decide whether it falls within one of three available exemptions. These exemptions are:

- Conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of discipline, management or care of a child, and in line with a code of conduct etc (in which case, a complaint only is recorded)
- Physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible (however, an investigation must still be carried out and the finding recorded)
- Conduct covered by a Class or Kind determination (originally, this was the only exemption available, but is less relied upon now, given the two new exemptions above that were introduced in April 2004).

Matters that are subject to an exemption are not reported to the Ombudsman’s Office nor notified to the CCYP.

DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC QUERY? WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION?

Please contact your Faith Education Officer for further information.

CONTACTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION ALLEGATIONS/COMPLAINTS

Director of Sydney CCD - Anthony Cleary: Phone: 9390 5122
Vicar General, Sydney Archdiocese: Phone: 9390 5100

Anne Byrne, CCER
June 2005
O God, I already have had my first Eucharist. I know this is Jesus and I am very happy to receive him. I know the wine was Jesus’ Blood and I know that the bread is your Body. O God, I am really happy to receive him. Amen.

Claudia Lee
Class 4F Strathfield South Public School

Dear Lord,
Thank you for coming into us by the Eucharist. Lord you gave yourself to us, we don’t know how we are going to repay you but I am going to repay you by coming to the Mass on Sunday and I am going to pray to you every night and God please help me become like you. Lord thank you for giving us all the gifts. THANK YOU LORD! Please forgive me God. Amen.

Jenat Sakayanathan
Class 6/5P Auburn North Public School

"When receiving the Eucharist I did not realise that I was receiving God. Instead I thought it was just bread. But by really thinking hard of what other people/teachers have told me, I realise that I’m receiving God … He is with me."

Thank you Jesus for giving up your unique life for us. You are the shepherd who leads the people to the light and the man who is the Son of God. You are everywhere, in my heart beat, in my soul, in my life and you follow me for the rest of my life. Thank you God for everything that you sacrificed.

Monica Nguyen
Class 7.0 Bankstown Girls High School

I pray that I will have my first communion. When I receive the Body and Blood of God I will have him every step of my life and I hope the poor will have happiness and joy in their life.

Taylah McCormick
Class 2/3d
Brighton-Le-Sands Public School
**BASIC ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (TERM 3)**

Please contact your Faith Education Officer to enroll for the Intermediate Accreditation Program

**Bankstown Area**

St Charbel’s Maronite Church, 142 Highclere Ave, Punchbowl

*Monday Evenings, 6pm - 9pm*

August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12, 19

**INTERMEDIATE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (TERM 3)**

Please contact your Faith Education Officer or Mrs Carmel Duffy (9390 5122) to enroll for the Intermediate Accreditation Program

**Concord Area**

St Joseph’s Maronite Catholic Church, 7 Acton St, Croydon

* Saturdays, 10am - 1pm*

July 9, 16, 23, 30 August 6, 13, 20, 27

**City Area**

St Joseph’s Parish Hall, 1A Morley Avenue, Rosebery

*Wednesdays 10am - 1pm*

September 14, 21, October 12, 19, 26, Nov 2, 9, 16

**Bankstown Area**

Our Lady of Fatima Parish, 825 Forest Rd, Peakhurst

*Thursdays, 10am - 1pm*

September 8, 15, 22, October 13, 20, 27 November 3, 10

**ADVANCED ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (TERM 3)**

Please contact your Faith Education Officer or Mrs Carmel Duffy (9390 5122) to enroll for the Advanced Accreditation Program

**Sutherland-St George Area**

CCD Miranda, 50 Kiora Rd, Miranda

*Mondays, 10am - 1pm*

July 18, 25, August 8, 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12

*Note: Mobile bookshop will visit on August 22.*

**City Area**

Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney

*Wednesdays, 10am - 1pm*

July 26, August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, September 6, 13

**Western Area**

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, 18 Vine Street, Fairfield

*(in the demountable)*

*Wednesdays, 10.30am - 1.30pm*

July 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, September 7

**Concord Area**

St Mary’s Parish, Burton Street, Concord

*Mondays, 10am - 1pm*

August 8, September 5, 12, 19, October 10, 17, 24, 31

**PLEASE NOTE**

1. DATE CHANGES FOR THE ADVANCED ACCREDITATION IN THE CONCORD AREA.

2. THE ADVANCED ACCREDITATION COURSE ORIGINALLY ADVERTISED IN THE TERM 2 NEWSLETTER AT HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, NORTH RYDE HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

**ADVANCED ACCREDITATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This Course is covered in 8 weeks. There is a 3 hour session each week. Two units are covered each week.

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<th>WEEK</th>
<th>UNIT A</th>
<th>UNIT B</th>
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<td>1A. The Early Church</td>
<td>1B. The Eastern Church</td>
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<td>2A. The Medieval Church</td>
<td>2B. The Reformation</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3A. The Second Vatican Council</td>
<td>3B. The Modern Church</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4A. The Liturgical Year</td>
<td>4B. The Liturgical Year</td>
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<td>5A. The Call to Holiness</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6A. Christian Ethics</td>
<td>6B. Christian Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7A. The Human Person</td>
<td>7B. Family Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8A. Christian Education</td>
<td>8B. The SRE Curriculum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Catechist Ministry Certificate
Prerequisite: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Accreditation Program
Please contact Mrs Carmel Duffy Tel. 9390 5122 to enroll for any of the units listed below.

**Term Three**

The Call to Holiness (MC04)
Dr Charles Hill
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
Mondays, 10am - 1pm
August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Theology of the Body (MI15)
Lydia Siutz
CCD Office, 21 Twentieth Street, Hoxton Park
Thursdays, 10am - 1pm
August 4, 11, 18, 25, September 1

The Sacraments of Initiation (MI07)
Joanne Zwaans
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, 24 John Street, Lidcombe
Thursdays, 10am - 1pm
August 4, 11, 18, 25, September 1

Christology (MI11)
Robert Haddad
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
10am - 2pm
October: Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5, Thursday 6

**Term Four**

The Mission of the Catechist (MI16)
Lydia Siutz
CCD Office, 21 Twentieth Street, Hoxton Park
Thursdays, 10am - 1pm
October 27, November 3, 10, 17, 24

Theology 1 (MC03)
Dr Charles Hill
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
Mondays, 10am - 1pm
October 31, November 7, 14, 21, 28

The Old Testament (MI01)
Lucy O’Connell
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
10am - 2pm
December: Thursday 15, Friday 16

**PARISH CATECHIST COORDINATORS MEETINGS TERM 3**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, 18 July</td>
<td>Concord Area Coordinators Meeting Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney 10am - 1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 22 July</td>
<td>Bankstown Area Coordinators Meeting Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney 10am - 1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, 25 July</td>
<td>Western Area Coordinators Meeting Liverpool Catholic Club, cnr Hoxton Park &amp; Joadjia Rds Liverpool West 10am - 1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 29 July</td>
<td>City Area Coordinators Meeting Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney 10am - 1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, 1 August</td>
<td>Sutherland-St George Area Coordinators Meeting CCD Miranda, Unit 2, 50 Kiora Road, Miranda 10am - 1pm</td>
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**Date Claimers**

- Friday, 14 October Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering (Venue TBA)
- Friday, 25 November Life Members Mass & Luncheon
A Reflection on the Assumption

The bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was defined as a dogma of faith by Pius XII in 1950. The definition states:

“By the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by our own, we proclaim and define it to be a dogma revealed by God, that the immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven.”

A Liveable Spirit

It’s basically a very liveable and ordinary spirit. We are called to live our Christian lives as Mary lived her Christian life. This cannot be threatening to anyone, as Mary could not have threatened anyone. It is a spirituality which accepts the ordinary realities of any life but quietly seeks to make God the centre of that life just as Mary the “perfect disciple” did. Its simplicity is that of Mary. All this will mean a radical but simple following: as Mary did at Nazareth without fuss or show; brave and suffering as Mary was at Calvary; joyful, generous and loving as Mary was in the infant Church after Pentecost.

**PRAYER:**
Mary, Mother of Mercy, for generations you have come to the aid of those who invoked you.
Watch over me and all those I love.

Mother of those who suffer the violence of war, pray for us.
Mother of refugees and exiles, pray for us.
Mother of those who fear, pray for us.
Mother of Jesus, pray for us.

**BLESSING:**
May the blessing of Mary’s prayerful spirit be on us.
Amen
May the blessing of Mary’s loving service be on us.
Amen
May the blessing of Mary’s spirit of joy and praise be on our lips and in our hearts.
Amen
May the blessing of Mary’s union with Jesus be ours.
Amen
May the blessing of Mary’s courage, faith and hope be on us.
Amen
Mary: The Imagination of Her Heart
By Penelope Duckworth
$34.95

Reviewed by
Br Christian Moe, fsc

The back cover of Mary: The Imagination of Her Heart tells us that Penelope Duckworth is an Episcopalian priest and has served as chaplain in various USA Universities.

Cowley Productions is a ministry of the Brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, a monastic order in the Episcopalian Church.

It is encouraging to learn how churches of this tradition are moving towards acceptance and belief in the role of Mary, the Blessed Virgin, in Christian belief and devotion.

Given these antecedents, one may safely conclude that this book will offer much more that is congenial to Catholic thought and sentiment.

On the other hand, one will be disappointed if, as a Catholic, one is looking for a consistently sound exposé of Marian belief.

On the purely humanside of the portrait drawn of Mary in the chapters that look at her as maiden, mother; even “matriarch” (!) are sympathetic and insightful.

Further chapters bear the encouraging titles of Mary as theologian, disciple and intercessor; and the final chapter presents Mary as Paradigm, that is as model for Christians in all walks of life.

Where a Catholic reader will register reservation are the pages in which Mary’s virginal conception of Christ and her continuing, perpetual virginity are considered.

In the first case, it is hardly re-assuring to the Catholic reader to read the claim that the much-publicised Bishop Spong (American Episcopalian) has refuted (sic!) the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, and that “Hans Kung, a Roman Catholic theologian” is cited to much the same effect. (p14)

In passing, one might be forgiven for thinking that the scriptural expertise is not this author’s strongest point.

Admittedly, the author herself seems to accept the virginal conception. (pp50, 60) However, she clearly rejects any likelihood in the doctrine of the continuing virginity of Mary (chapter on Mary as Matriarch, passim).

In passing, one might be forgiven for thinking that the scriptural expertise is not this author’s strongest point.

On the positive side, Penelope Duckworth explains well the term Mother of God.

The readership she would primarily have in mind, probably needs such an explanation: “It is important to recognise that the title Mother of God means not that Mary was the source of Jesus’ divinity, but that she gave Jesus life.” (p109)

And I am sure that many would find this citation congenial and helpful: “Once we have moved beyond the maleness or femaleness of God we will discover that service, not gender, is the primary characteristic of God … people often turn to Mary then they seek the feminine face of God.” (p109)

The author is quite positive in identifying herself as an Anglican and with no thought of changing her allegiance: this is made quite explicit on several occasions (e.g. p143)

But when this is recognised as clearly as is frankly stated, a Catholic reading these pages will find nothing completely unacceptable, other than the rather cavalier treatment of Our Lady’s continuing (Perpetual) Virginity, already referred to; little to reject, and much, especially in the imaginatively warm exposé of aspects of Mary’s life and vocation, which we Catholics might sometimes fail to advert to ….

I have no doubt that many readers would find much that is sympathetic and engaging in the writer’s feminine sensitivity to issues and aspects of the mystery of Mary, Virgin and Mother, which would sometimes be hard to find in standard Catholic books on Mariology. (Of course, Catholics always have access to that unsurpassed repository of Marian belief and devotion in the Litany of Loreto…)

In my view, provided a Catholic reader is committed to his/her faith in its fullness, this book would come across as refreshing and would doubtless serve to help one’s devotional life.
Term Two Events

Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering
Br Julian Quinlan
Friday 29 April 2005

Mascot Parish Meeting
Thursday 19 May 2005
L-R Carmen Dacron, Mary Nappa and Denise Barbara

“How to Make Rosary Beads” class
Mr Oswald Aguis
Mascot Parish - Thurs 23 June 2005

Concord Area Mass
St Michael’s Catholic Church, Meadowbank
Friday 17 June 2005

Western Area Mass
Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, Fairfield
Friday 6 May 2005

Sutherland St George Area
Miranda Catechist Meeting
Tuesday 22 June 2005

Intermediate Accreditation Group
Belmore Parish

Catechist Ministry Certificate
Foundations of Religious Education