A 2028 Congress was held in Canberra, 6-9 July to discuss the future of the Church after World Youth Day. The speakers included Archbishop Chaput, from Denver, Cardinal Cassidy, Bishop Fisher, Bishop Jarrett and numerous other distinguished speakers. Mary Carolan, FEO for the city area attended along with over 300 young people from places as far away as Perth, Rockhampton, Melbourne and Sydney.

Archbishop Chaput, a Capuchin friar, gave the keynote address: 'I am neither liberal nor conservative' he said, 'I am Catholic. I teach the life and message of Jesus Christ and His Church, full and entire.' He spoke about recognizing the trend to privatize religion. Religion is personal but never private. He encouraged those present to stand up for the Catholic Faith as containing the full Truth and avoid making the mistake of viewing “tolerance” as a virtue. The supposed virtue of “tolerance” has become an excuse for a lack of courage and conviction. Christians are called to love and to correct those who are in error. He encouraged us to do the following activity. Read the novel “On The Beach” written in 1957 by Neville Shute then view the movie made in 1960, starring Gregory Peck and contrast this to the year 2000 version. The subject is a bleak one, however the movie version made in the year 2000 reflects the total loss of hope and basic decency that the original characters had, in spite of their predicament. This, he said is a good reflection of the progression into darkness that has taken place in our culture. It shows the loss of respect for human dignity and the hope that comes from knowing God. God made each of us for a reason and needs us. A person makes the future, he does not submit to it, but fights for it.

Rev. Dr John Fleming, President of Campion College, continued this theme and spoke on the topic of RU486. He stated that Australians are not pro-choice. In fact most disapprove of abortion on moral grounds though at the same time believe abortion should be available in extreme cases. Australians believe it really is a child and most think the number of abortions should decrease. He recently conducted a survey to ascertain people’s real opinion of the drug RU486. The results, soon be published, demonstrate the huge impact education can have on people’s ideas. When first asked about RU486 being legalized in Australia, 52% of those surveyed, agreed it should be. This reflected the opinion polls and government opinion. However after receiving information about the arguments for and against, the number in favour of legalizing RU486 dropped to 17%. 60% of these also agreed that delaying the introduction of the drug while more tests and inquiries take place in the US, would be a good idea. This example underlines the importance of informed debate about these issues and the need for much better education of the public. It is interesting to note that no drug company in Australia, is prepared to make available RU486 despite it now being legal, because of concerns about its safety.

Fr Fleming concluded by saying in our post-modern society many Australians hold completely contradictory positions simultaneously. There is much confusion and a lack of certainty. We are also seeing a very crude anti-Catholicism which is going unchecked while Catholics remain silent and happy to blend in with the culture. Young people need to join political parties, defend the Truth and religion as a legitimate part of life and not underestimate the ignorance of people who are making important decisions.

Tracey Rowland, lecturer at the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne and Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett from Lismore spoke about Pope Benedict’s vision for the Liturgy & Evangelisation. Tracey began by stating the greatest antidote to moralism is 1 John1:9 God is love. Being Christian is not an ethical idea but a result of an encounter with Christ. A full frontal assault is necessary on Nietzsche’s ideology that religion is for the masses and that the elite do not need religion. Cont. p4

Do you have a faith question, a teaching suggestion, or an amusing or touching anecdote that you would like to share with other catechists? Contact Mary Carolan at mary.carolan@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au PO Box A286, Sydney South, NSW 1235

Contents

2028 Congress........................................1
From the Catechists..............................2
A Saint’s Day........................................2
A Moment with God..............................2
Questions and Answers.......................3
Around the Archdiocese.....................4
On my first day as a catechist in 1968 at Taren Point public school, I met a boy who made a big impression on me. In that first lesson he swore at me and I decided not to return to the class. However after speaking to a friend I thought I should give it a go for at least a term. That boy was such a handful, that his teachers gave me a book to record his negative behaviour. I never wrote in that book. One day he met me as I arrived and wanted to carry my pictures for me. We still had some difficult moments. I hoped and prayed that he might change. One day he came in with an infected hand and I arranged with the school to take him to hospital. That day he told me all about himself and his problems and I began to understand why he was the way he was. I went on to teach this boy right into his teenage years. Several years later he was getting into the wrong company and I warned him he might end up in jail but he just laughed at me. One night I got a call from the police. When I arrived I was upset to see it was my student that I knew so well. I explained about the boy’s life to the police. He was given a caution and allowed to go. I told him that once in jail no one could help him and he could be scarred for life.

Several years later I met a very nice young man with his girlfriend at a barbeque. He recognized me and said to my husband “It didn’t matter what I did wrong, I felt she always listened, cared and loved me” He also remembered how I told him often “Jesus still loves you even when you do wrong things”. This comment used to get under his skin and he wanted to cover his ears! I guess it did actually have some good effect! I was invited to his engagement party, his wedding and his children’s baptisms. He is now a very balanced and settled young man.

Van Bucek

A Saint’s Day

Oliver Plunkett was born in Ireland in 1625, ordained in Rome 1654, and appointed Primate of Ireland in 1669. Religious persecution was renewed in 1673, and he went into hiding, communicating with his flock by letter. In 1679 he was arrested, falsely charged with treason, transferred to London, and, with the help of perjured witnesses, sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. He publicly forgave his persecutors on July 1, 1681.

- St Benedict
- (memorial) St Oliver Plunkett
- Our Lady My Carmel
- St Bridget
- St Charbel Mahklouf
- St James, Apostle
- Ss Joachim and Anne

A Moment with God

The sign of “blood poured out”, as an expression of life given in bloodshed as a witness to supreme love, is an act of divine condescension to our human condition. God chose the sign of blood because no other sign suggests a person’s total involvement so eloquently.

This mystery of self-giving has its source in the heavenly Father’s salvific will and its fulfilment in the filial obedience of Jesus, true God and true Man, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus the history of our salvation bears the mark and indelible seal of Trinitarian love.

...the witness of life must be joined with the confession of the lips, as we are urged by the Letter to the Hebrews: “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus ... let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” (10:19,24).

-Pope John Paul II, July 1, 2000
Q. Could you tell me if the stories of ‘Noah’s Ark’ and ‘Jonah and the Whale’ are true stories? Their messages are important in any case, of course, but it would be good to be able to answer this question.

A. The stories are true, but must be distinguished from their cultural accretions, just as Santa Claus can be distinguished from Saint Nicholas. The latter was quite real, including his gift-giving — but we have taken the gift-giving and turned it into Santa Claus, to the neglect of the real point of the story, which was the holiness of the saint.

Noah and his family are real historical figures; if Noah wasn’t real, then neither was God’s covenant with man, made through Noah! The covenant with Noah prepared the human race for baptism: “...he [Christ] also went to speak to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God waited patiently in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now.” (1 Pet. 3:19-21). Likewise, if we consider Noah’s son Shem, often identified with Melchisedech, as only a legend, then we knock the foundation out of Christ’s priesthood, and the clean sacrifice of the Mass. We know that God did not bring the real, saving sacraments of the Church out of people and events that never happened.

Is there evidence of a flood?
It is interesting to note that the flood legend is repeated in myth–cycles around the world; there is clearly a universal cultural memory of a global catastrophe survived by a man and his family in a boat.

However, this story is not recorded in the same way as a modern Western writer records historical events, and we do not, therefore, infer with authority dates and ages from the Genesis record. Similarly, we carry many culturally developed images of the story which are not derived from Scripture itself. Our common image of giraffes sticking their smiling faces out of windows on the Ark is not derived from Scripture! Noah did not have to take aboard his ark two of every creature that exists today—only two each of the creatures that would later differentiate through natural processes. We do not know what these species were, and do not need to use the Bible to try to find out; the story is recorded to give us the fact of the covenant, not facts about the evolution of giraffes, or the ‘young earth theory’.

Was it a whale?
We do not actually know that the creature in the story of ‘Jonah and the whale,’ was a whale — this is just one translation used sometimes, instead of ‘the belly of the beast’, presumably because ‘Jonah and the Belly of the Beast’ sounds less palatable to young ears. Scripture does not identify the beast; if your student produces irrefutable evidence that it cannot have been a whale, there is no problem. The story remains intact — the beast’s identify does not change the fact that Jonah was called to prefigure Christ in many ways, and this is the point of the account.

For example, Our Lord calls his resurrection ‘the Sign of Jonah’ (Matt 12: 39–41, 16:4). One certainly may liken oneself to a powerful myth, but it would be odd for the greatest event of human and salvation history to be compared to something that never happened! Likewise, he calls himself ‘greater than Jonah,’ which would be a fairly poor achievement if Jonah never existed.

Matthew’s account of Jesus calming the waves parallels the account of Jonah.

Jesus, like Jonah, boards a boat (Matt. 8:23; Jonah 1:3). The boat is overwhelmed by a storm on the waters (Matt. 8:24; Jonah 1:4, 11). Like Jonah, Jesus is found sleeping through the storm (Matt. 8:24, Jonah 1:5) while the other passengers are scared to death (Matt. 8: 24-26; Jonah 1:5).

The disciples in the Gospel and the sailors in the Jonah story each call upon God for help (Matt. 8:25, Jonah 1:4). Jesus, like Jonah, is able to calm the waters - Jesus through His words, Jonah through being thrown overboard (Matt. 8:26; Jonah 1: 12, 15). Finally, both stories end with the passengers’ amazement at the outcome (Matt. 8:27, Jonah 1:16).

We do not find, and do not expect to find, such facts as irrefutable dates of birth, travels, and death in the Jonah account that would suit our scientific temperaments.

Visit the St Paul Center for Biblical Theology at www.salvationhistory.org to learn more about the covenant themes of the Old Testament.
Around the Archdiocese...

**Easter and Advent Workshop**

**Monday 13 August**  
*Brother Julian Quinlan*  
10am—12 noon  
Our Lady of Mt Carmel  
230 Humphries Road, Mt Pritchard

**Catechist Ministry Certificate courses**

Teaching and Learning Strategies  
**July 30, August 6, 13, 20, 27**  
*Denise Humphries*  
10am—1pm  
CCD Office  
50 Kiora Road, Miranda

**Paul (formerly known as “The Letters of Saint Paul”)**

**August 6, 13, 20, 27, September 23**  
*Ruth Sheridan*  
10am—1pm  
August 6, 13, 20, 27, September 3

**‘Christ Our Light and Life’ Inservices**

City Area  
*(Featuring Br Julian)*  
**Monday, July 30**  
10am - 1pm  
St Brigid’s Catholic Church  
392 Marrickville Rd, Marrickville

Western Area

**Friday, August 24**  
10am—1pm  
St Francis Xavier’s Catholic Church  
71 Webster Road, Lurnea

**Retreat Day**

City Area  
**Wednesday 15 August**  
10am—2pm  
St Michael’s Parish Daceyville

**Contraception: Why Not. A lecture by Professor Janet E. Smith.**

**Wednesday 25 July 4 – 5.30pm**  
Catholic Adult Education Centre 3 Keating St Lidcombe  
**OR**  
**Thursday, 26 July 2007, 7.30 pm**  
Gleeson Auditorium, ACU 25A Barker Rd, Strathfield  
| Supper follows | Enquiries (02) 9390 5283

**Co-ordinators’ Meetings**

10am—1pm

*(If unable to attend in your area please attend one of the following)*

**Monday 23 July**  
Sutherland Area  
CCD Miranda

**Friday 27 July**  
Concord Area  
Holy Spirit Parish  
North Ryde  
**Monday 30 July**  
Bankstown  
Polding Centre

---

**2028 Congress**

We live in a society that has fully embraced this idea. To counteract this, young people need an appreciation of history and tradition and a rediscovery of true beauty. Using the analogy of a chateaux that has been destroyed in war, Tracey spoke of Pope John Paul II rebuilding two wings of the building, Truth and Goodness, and now Pope Benedict is focusing on the third transcendental, Beauty.

Bishop Jarrett developed this theme with a discussion of the liturgy and the much anticipated Motu Proprio that was released on Saturday 7 July. The liturgy is a gift to us, not something we construct. The art of proper celebration bears fruit in the faithful celebration of the liturgy. This leads to full participation - a deep immersion and prayerfulness of all present.

Dennis Shanahan, writer for the secular press, encouraged us to get involved and make a difference. Engage those around you in discussions and do not remain silent when the Catholic Faith or its leaders are attacked. A single person can do a lot, especially by pursuing a career in the area of politics, education, or media. This was reinforced by Tony Burke, who mentioned his first introduction to politics was as an individual wanting to do something to stop euthanasia. When the Northern Territory became the first place in the world to legalise euthanasia, he launched the Euthanasia No lobby to inform people of what was at stake and ensure euthanasia was not legalized in other states. Cardinal Cassidy spoke on the aim of dialogue with other religions. We must see them as brothers, people of good will, not as others to be converted. Sharing and forgiveness, not tolerance, is the key to peace. Knowing a Muslim person is more important than knowing about Islam.

The great talent and enthusiasm, evident in the young people who attended the talks and participated and contributed to the solemn and beautiful Masses each day, was truly inspiring.