FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER (ACTING)

The year has seen a continued buildup to the new curriculum with the Christ Our Light And Life series coming to a climax in 2007 and fully operational by 2008 – just in time for World Youth Day. 2007 will see the release of Years 1, 4 and 6 which adds to the current release of Kindergarten and Years 3 and 5. The only year group to miss out next year is Year 2 but this will be compensated with Year 1 (or Stage 2A) for 2007.

The new curriculum has been very challenging and exciting for both the staff of CCD and the catechists in the Archdiocese of Sydney. The CCD has continued its support in assisting catechists to make the transition from the Joy For Living to the Christ Our Light And Life series. Having taught the new curriculum to a Kindergarten – Year 2 composite class at an inner west public school, it does present the values the curriculum aims to achieve, as follows:

- Providing an environment in which the young child may fall ‘in love’ with Jesus the Good Shepherd and develop a real relationship with Christ;
- Discover both personal union with God, and their membership of a Church established by God; and
- Learn how to become like Jesus – in the home, in school, in the parish.

These three aims of the curriculum have certainly been exemplified in the classroom I teach where students have expressed the following ‘I force my dad to read the Bible to me each night’ and another ‘I went with my grandmother to Church last Sunday’. A major feature of the new curriculum series is the perforated take-home activity sheet that complements each lesson. In offering incentives to children the class has increased from only one child out of 13 to up to six children now returning the completed home activity sheets with their parents taking an active role. This is an achievement in itself!

In a further development in the new curriculum the Christ Our Light And Life series is moving out west with the Parramatta Diocese implementing the new program in 2007. The Archdiocese of Sydney with the support of Brother Julian Quinlan, Marist Brother (who has developed a series of materials and resources which complement and in some cases supplement the lessons especially for Kindergarten and Years 1 and 2) has undertaken and completed a series of inservices in the Parramatta Diocese. The aim of these inservices is to provide catechists with the opportunity to experience and develop an understanding of the program and its teaching strategies and methodologies. This for myself has been enjoyable and I would like to thank Mr Paul Worthington, Director CCD Parramatta and his team for their organisation and hospitality during these inservices. I would personally like to thank Brother Julian for his continued support, dedication and commitment.

The inservices have also been extended to the Archdiocese of Sydney and Terms 3 and 4 have been focused entirely on providing support and guidance to all catechists within the Archdiocese of Sydney (see current issue for more details).

In looking back at 2006 it has been an exciting and innovative year with the production, release and official launch of the Christ Our Light And Life double CD / DVD at the University of Notre Dame by His Lordship Bishop Julian Porteous. This has been a success in adding a new dimension to the CCD’s mission of evagenisation.

We saw the organisation, implementation and success of a pilgrimage to Mary Mackillop Place with over 85 pilgrims in attendance. Many found the experience spiritually uplifting with the pilgrimage being a precursor to World Youth Day 2008 and to future pilgrimage programs.

2006 also saw the distribution of World Youth Day 2008 Catechist Resource Kits which are a set of modules that focus the attention of the students on the various themes leading up to the World Youth Day event in July 2008. These Resource Kits, as developed by the schools working committee in conjunction with the Activ8 DVD, have been inspiring and have certainly enhanced enthusiasm amongst the catechists, staff at CCD and all who have seen the DVD. The CCD has also commenced meeting on a monthly basis through the formation of a CCD WYD08 committee with its sole aim to develop strategies in reaching out to the
marginalized in our community on the theme, excitement and spirit of World Youth Day 2008. I would like to remind catechists to continue to encourage their children and those family, friends and parishioners around them in registering as an e-Pilgrim by visiting www.wyd2008.org and following the prompts.

The Annual Mass held at St Mary’s Cathedral on Sunday 17 September and celebrated by his Eminence George Cardinal Pell was another highlight of the CCD Calendar. The event brought together catechists and their families and friends from all parishes across the Archdiocese of Sydney.

A highlight of the event was the significant increase in the involvement of ethnic groups across the community. This year more than ever we witnessed the growing support of the various community groups across the Archdiocese of Sydney. Josephine Elias, Faith Education Officer, Bankstown Area has spent most of her Saturdays developing catechists from the Korean Catholic Church where sixteen graduated with the Archdiocesan Accreditation Certificate. Over the past year I have also recruited and encouraged the growth and involvement of the Maronite Catholic Church in the Catechetical ministry. Seven catechists of Maronite Catholic origin also received the Archdiocesan Accreditation Certificate this year.

The Annual Catechist Mass provided the Archdiocese of Sydney with the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the service of catechists who have changed the hearts, minds and lives of the children that they teach. Those that were acknowledged included:

- 19 catechists received the Cardinal Freeman Medal for 25 years of service;
- 15 catechists received an Apostolic Blessing for 20 years of service;
- 11 catechists received the Catechist Ministry Certificate for the successful completion of 10 modules of study and
- 82 catechists received the Certificate of Accreditation for the successful completion of the Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Accreditation courses.

This was a fitting tribute to many of the men and women who have helped steer and sustain the course of CCD during the last five decades.

With the 2006 year coming to an end we arrive at a time where we prepare for the coming of Jesus through Advent and the joyous celebration of Christmas. This year has been busy and many challenges were faced by all those committed to the catechetical ministry. In a time of change and with a new curriculum we are all called to make a transition and for some this will be an easy transition but others may face some challenges adapting. I encourage all catechists to persevere as the fruits of the new curriculum are many and as I have started to experience some of these so will you in due time. We must trust in the Holy Spirit to do His work through the children we teach. We must plant the seed and nurture it over the faith development of the child and the new curriculum recognises that faith is a life-long journey.

Change is never easy so in this time of Advent we are called to not only prepare for our King but also in this preparation be ready in mind, heart, soul and body to welcome Our Lord into this world and renewing our lives to partake in the spirit of Christmas.

Looking at the world around us we see turmoil, we see a culture of death, we see terrorism, we see the futility of life with the recent passing of Steve Irwin and Peter Brock both legends in their respective worlds, yet vulnerable to death. Let us this Christmas ask Jesus to lead us to what He wants us to do and this may at times not be our will but His Will. When we strive for perfection and when we are caught in the midst of tragedy, persecution, fear of what others may say, let us stand firm in our faith and never lose sight of our mission for we are strengthened in the words of Pope John Paul II, ‘Do not be afraid.’

I wish to leave you all with a prayer:

Lord Jesus,
You have called me and committed me to this ministry; I am responsible for planting the seed of faith in the hearts and minds of these young children you have entrusted to me. You have shown your love towards children and have asked me to be like these children through your words:

‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. In truth I tell you, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ Then he embraced them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

(Mark 10:14-16)

Help me to turn my heart, mind and soul towards that of a child which is that of innocence, purity and love.

Yours in Christ
Robert Milan
We’re approaching Christmas and I can’t help but think that we cannot be ready for the rush … the rush has been at least happening since the middle of the year – how much faster can it be?

The year has produced many great moments but now we look forward to the period of Advent and Christmas. I believe this is a time where we can really touch the hearts of our students with the love that emanates from the infant Jesus. How delightful the Christmas story is every year. I think about my own birth, and with every passing year I am less likely to stop and really focus on “me”, or life just may be getting busier, but the Christmas celebration is always new and a major highlight.

On my birthday this year, I realised something different, that is, it isn’t about me, that I should be thanking God and my parents for having me and those who had something to do with me being here… so I said to my mum “Thank you for having me” and she replied “It has been my pleasure, having a child like you makes it easy”. I am not mentioning this event because I may be a ‘good’ child (although all mothers are biased I’m sure), but because life is the greatest gift. The gift we receive when we remember the birth of our Lord is an infinitely greater gift. We don’t only have our Creator to thank for our life in general, but the same Creator, our God, took on human flesh and became man! God came on this earth to reach out to us, to save us, because without His help and grace we could not reach out to Him. This is the amazing aspect of the Incarnation; God in a sense, meets us at our own level so that we can reach His. Thank you Jesus!

While planning your lessons this term, be sure to find out what week of the school term your classes conclude. You will therefore be able to work out how many remaining lessons you have, and if necessary, feel free to start at the Advent lessons even if you have not completed the Term 3 lessons or do not have time for some Term 4 lessons. As many of you are aware that for various reasons, not under your control, your lessons may be significantly reduced.

This term the Bankstown Area will be holding two inservices on the new Christ Our Light and Life curriculum in the Bankstown Area. The first will be held at St Declan’s Parish Penshurst, on Friday 20 October from 10:00am – 1:00pm. The second will be held at St Mary’s Queen of Heaven Parish, Georges Hall on Wednesday 22 November from 10:00 – 1:00pm. An Intermediate Course will be held on Monday evenings at St Charbel’s Maronite Catholic Church in Punchbowl (See p17 for details). Note down in your diaries the Catechist Gathering to be held on Friday 13 October, from 10:30 – 1:30 at Dooley’s Lidcombe Catholic Club. See the details about the Life Members Mass and luncheon on page 17.

I would like to extend a big thank you to all the catechists from the Bankstown Area who volunteered to be ushers for the Annual Catechist Mass. It is our biggest event of the year and I congratulate the recipients of the various certificates and awards who were present; our congratulations and thoughts were also with those who were unable to attend. It is always a privilege and pleasure to have his Eminence George Cardinal Pell leading the celebration of the Mass. I thank the parish priests who attended in support of the catechists in their parish.

I will be away for part of this term as I will be attending the International Congress for the New Evangelisation in Brussels from October 29 – November 5. I will not be contactable from 17 October to 9 November. If you have any concerns, queries or needs during this period, please contact our Acting General Manager, Robert Milan ((02) 9390 5122).

May we remember the Holy Family with love at this time and thank our Mother Mary for giving birth to her Son, our Lord and Saviour. May she help us pay due homage this Christmas just as the wise men who visited the Holy Family over 2000 years ago; “…and going into the house they saw the child and His mother Mary, and falling on their knees they did Him homage.” (Matthew 1:11)

God bless you, your students and your families.

Josephine Elias
Faith Education Officer
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Email: josephine@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au

Congratulations from the CCD to Lydia Montez (formerly Lydia Siutz FEO Western Area), on her marriage to Sergio. They are pictured after their honeymoon (passing through Sydney on their way to Tasmania) with Maree Gereige and myself. Lydia sends her best to the catechists of the Western Area, and asks about them with keen interest.

Br Bede Denham teaching the Advanced Accreditation Course at Our Lady of Lourdes’ Parish, Earlwood.
Dear catechist, as we enter the final term for 2006, I would like to thank you for the great work that has taken place in the year to date. We have had many highlights during 2006, including the:

- pilgrimage
- introduction of the new SRE Curriculum
- honouring of Maureen Power (Marrickville Coordinator) with the Croce Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice (Papal Cross)
- release of catechetical materials in the lead-up to World Youth Day
- Rosary distribution
- Eucharistic Procession
- launch of the Christ Our Light and Life CD
- development of catechists from the Melkite Catholic Church.

Notwithstanding these obvious highlights we must never lose sight of the fact that each of us has our own highlight each and every week as we teach in our respective schools. Whilst the thirty minutes may never receive publicity or the acknowledgement of the events listed above, it is an invaluable time for the students, their families and for us as catechists. The thirty minutes allows us to share in the same mission as the first Apostles as we share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Can any event be more important? We should never underestimate or undervalue the importance of our work.

"I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain" (John15:16). It is here that the dynamic existence of the Christian, the Apostle, is expressed: "I chose you to go and bear fruit..." we must be inspired by a holy restlessness - a restless desire to bring everyone the gift of faith, of friendship with Christ. In truth, the love and friendship of God was given to us to be shared with others. In the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero, "This is what we are about. We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold the future promise ... we are prophets of a future not our own."

On September 17 I was very pleased to attend the Annual Catechists Mass which provided us with an opportunity to publicly recognise catechists from across the Archdiocese. In particular I would like to congratulate the recipients of the City Area:

**Certificate of Accreditation**
- Connie Degabriele: Maroubra Bay
- Luz Burgess, Kath McDonald: Rosebery
- Rosalie Forsyth-Grant: Watsons Bay

**Catechist Ministry Certificate**
- Dulcie M Said: Mascot
- Corry Setio: Mascot
- Sandra Truong: Waterloo

**Apostolic Blessings**
- Shirley Bond: Bondi
- Yvonne Yook: Rosebery

**Cardinal Freeman Medal**
- Gemile Mellick: Edgecliff
- Joe Castle, Kathleen Latham: Mascot

During Term 4 we are provided with an important opportunity to familiarise our students with the Liturgical calendar, specifically Advent, the start of the Liturgical year. This is a time not only awaiting and celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ but a time for personal renewal. We do not need to wait until the new year and its resolutions to change the pattern of our lives. We can do this at anytime and what better time to start than at the beginning of Advent?

I wish you all a blessed and holy Christmas and a fruitful new year. I hope families are able to spend quality time together during the holidays filled with memorable occasions. I thank you for your commitment and leave you with the inspirational words of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, "God is in love with us and keeps using you and me to light the light of love in the world. Let His light of truth be in your life so that God can continue loving the world through you and me. Put your heart into being a bright life."
Well another year is just about behind us and it sure has been a busy, busy time. With the *Christ Our Light And Life* curriculum in its final stages and due for release in 2007; the release of a new CD which enables the new curriculum to come to life with Natalie Konakov presenting a number of inspirational music pieces to complement an already enriching, enlightening and educational curriculum. The CD which is of the same title as the curriculum would make a fantastic gift for any child or family for an inexpensive retail cost of $21.95 including GST.

I have had the pleasure throughout Term 3 and going into Term 4 of conducting a number of inservices across the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Parramatta Diocese. The CCD has inserviced over 500 catechists across the two Dioceses and it has been a welcomed opportunity for catechists to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, gain new insights into teaching the materials and to be given the chance in having some of their questions answered. I would like to thank all coordinators, catechists and the Parramatta Diocese for encouraging their catechists to attend the inservices. The CCD hopes to make these a regular event each year. The CCD is grateful to Brother Julian Quinlan for his dedication in providing the A3 resources to both Dioceses, for being present at all the inservices, and for taking the time out to assist our dedicated catechist volunteers in providing new insights into bringing scripture to life.

The Concord Area would like to acknowledge all the recipients of awards at the Annual Mass held on Sunday 17 September 2006. The Concord Area witnessed the increase of involvement of the Maronite Church in the catechetical ministry with six Maronites from the Croydon Maronite Church ready to be incorporated into the Latin Rite Parishes. The Concord Area already has a further five catechists of Maronite origin teaching SRE in public schools. The Concord Area had a total of 19 Accreditation Awardees; one Apostolic Blessing recipient; three Cardinal Freeman Medalists and three Catechist Ministry Certificate graduates. Once again well done and continue the great work that has already occurred in the Archdiocese of Sydney. In terms of courses for the Concord Area I will be running an Intermediate and Advanced Course. The Intermediate course will be held at a St Mary’s Concord Parish, commencing Monday 16 October from 9:30-1:30pm and will continue for six weeks. The Advanced course will commence at Holy Spirit Parish, North Ryde from 9:30am-1:30pm and will also continue for six weeks. Also catechists should look out for the continued inservices for the Archdiocese of Sydney (see current Newsletter for more dates, times and venues) with the final inservice for the Concord Area to be held on Friday 27 October 2006 at Holy Spirit Parish, Cox’s Road North Ryde, from 10am-1pm.

Finally I would like to thank you all for your wonderful work, commitment and support throughout 2006 and a very merry and holy Christmas to all in this catechetical ministry and all your family and friends. I hope to see you all in 2007 when we will do it all again. A very fruitful and happy New Year as well.

The peace of Christ be with us all!

Robert Milan
Faith Education Officer
Tel: 9390 5122 Fax 9283 5146
Email: robert@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au
Sutherland -
St George Area

FAITH EDUCATION SERVICES

It was good to see so many of you at the Annual Mass last September. This is always a very special day. This term we will have two catechists receiving the 30 year life membership award—Robyn Barclay and Margaret Parsons—all ladies are from Engadine Parish. Congratulations and best wishes.

If you missed the catechist gathering during the school holidays and the curriculum inservice last term I would encourage you to attend one of the curriculum inservices that will be held in a parish near you this term (17 November at Miranda CCD Centre and Friday 20 October at Penshurst). Br Julian Quinlan will attend all curriculum inservices.

Basic accreditation classes continued at Miranda last term. Half of the catechists were in their first year of teaching and the other half had just been recruited. All the new recruits are now in SRE classes as helpers. During this term there will be an Advanced Course and an Intermediate Course held at Miranda. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Those of us who have been around schools for some decades have experienced many changes of names—3rd class and 5th form became Year 3 and Year 9—now we all have to master STAGES. You may have noticed that schools in NSW are now operating in stage levels—six in all.

Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten), Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4), Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6), Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8), Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) and Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12).

Christ our Light and Life curriculum also incorporates Stages—so which book will you use in 2007? Hopefully the following might be of some help.

Kindergarten—Kindergarten (as used in 2006)
Year 1—stage 1a (new in 2007)
Year 2—stage 1b (new in 2008) – in 2007 you will use Stage 1a
Year 3—stage 2a (as used in 2006)
Year 4—stage 2b (new in 2007)
Year 5—stage 3a (as used in 2006)
Year 6—stage 3b (new in 2007)

Do you know the date of the last lesson for your class this year? It may be closer than you think! Some classes may finish as early as the last week in November. So now is the time to plan your program to fit in Christmas and Advent lessons.

Term 4 is often the time parishes start recruiting for the next year. Please contact me if you need help in this area. I hope you all have an enjoyable term and a happy and holy Christmas. Thank you for all your support during 2006.

Denise Humphreys
Faith Education Officer
Tel / Fax 9548 2639
e-mail: denise@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au

First time catechists

CHRIST OUR LIGHT AND LIFE
Inservice
CCD Centre
50 Kiora Road Miranda
Friday 17 November 2006
10am-1pm

Christ our Light and Life
Inservice
CCD Centre
50 Kiora Road Miranda
Friday 17 November 2006
10am-1pm
Dear God

Emrita Manalad (Emmie) was born on January 22, 1953. She was the eldest child of her parents, with two younger brothers, one older sister, and one half-sister.Emmie joined the Parish Catechist team in 1998, and during the time she served as a catechist, she managed to find time to come to classes. Nancy recalls occasions after class when having some difficult children of her own would ask Emmie how to help them. Emmie’s response would always be the same, “Mine were a little bit cheeky today, but they’re only kids, they were okay.”

Emmie was not only a loving, caring and faithful catechist to her students, but she has touched the hearts of many of her fellow catechists and in turn made many treasured friendships. If I may share just two prayers that some of the children from St Johns Park have penned that express their appreciation of the time Emmie gave to them.

Dear God

She has the courage to help people. Thank you.

Dear God

Thank you God for the gift of Miss Emmie’s life as a good scripture teacher.

Emmie, you will always be remembered in the hearts of all the catechists. We will truly miss you and we will try to follow in your footsteps by your good example. May God grant your soul eternal rest in heaven until we see you again.

Western Area

I would like to begin by congratulating and honouring all 10 catechists from the Western area who completed the Advanced Accreditation in Term 3. Most of the catechists in the class completed all three accreditation courses in 2006. I am deeply humbled by your commitment to your ministry and faithful attendance over the past three terms. It has been a great joy and privilege to instruct you over the 24 weeks, and I have great confidence that all 10 catechists will produce great fruit for the Kingdom of God in their catechist ministry.

I would like to thank all parish coordinators who attended the meeting at Smithfield in August. I felt a great enthusiasm among you as you look towards the future, especially concerning World Youth Day in 2008. At the coordinators meeting we discussed the role of the CCD in the preparation for WYD 08. All agreed that as catechists our role is crucial to the formation and development of the catholic students who would otherwise hear very little concerning this great event which is coming to Sydney. Supplied to the coordinators was the first of a series of lesson plans on WYD which I encourage all catechists to take a look at and implement into their classes by the end of the year.

Most catechists by now would have viewed the promotional DVD produced by the WYD Office. This DVD, which is an excellent production, has been found to be very useful in the classroom in introducing and explaining the major themes of WYD to students. Recently I took a laptop and digital projector over to Westfield Sports High to show it to the year 10’s and 11’s. The reaction of the students to the DVD was extremely positive and one class even gave a big round of applause at the end. If catechists have access to this technology, I highly recommend showing this to your students as an introduction to the WYD lessons; I might add, that I have also shown it to years 6, 7, and 8 with similar outcomes. Please contact me if you would like me to visit your school to show the DVD in your classroom.

Also discussed at the coordinators meeting was the outreach we could make towards the parents of the students. At the meeting we talked about the idea of holding a Parent – Catechist evening in your parish. The idea behind such an evening would not only give the parents an opportunity to meet the catechists and parish priest, but also to attempt to “bridge the gap” for those parents who no longer practice the faith. As well as making the parents feel welcome and part of the parish community, this would also be an opportunity for them to see the WYD DVD and be inspired to involve their children by the strong visual images it contains. Provided to the Coordinators was a sample letter which could be sent home to the parents inviting them to such an evening, please speak to your Coordinator and offer your assistance in the organisation of this initiative.

This term, there will be a Basic Accreditation Course held at the Lurnea Parish, starting Friday 20 October and finishing 8 December, 10am-1pm. I really encourage all catechists who have the opportunity to attend and have not undertaken any accreditation courses to come along.

Also in Term 4 I am running a five week Catechist Ministry Certificate Course on Theology of the Body, which looks at the late John Paul II teaching on human sexuality and the meaning of life. This will be held at the Polding Centre from 10am-1pm starting 9 October and finishing 6 November. The class will break each day for Holy Mass in the Polding Centre at 12:30pm.

Lucas Hurley
Faith Education Officer
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Emmie, you will always be remembered in the hearts of all the catechists. We will truly miss you and we will try to follow in your footsteps by your good example. May God grant your soul eternal rest in heaven until we see you again.

Emmie’s Life

Emmie Manalad was born on January 22, 1953. She was the eldest child of her parents, with two younger brothers, one older sister, and one half-sister. Emmie joined the Parish Catechist team in 1998, and during the time she served as a catechist, she managed to find time to come to classes. Nancy recalls occasions after class when having some difficult children of her own would ask Emmie how to help them. Emmie’s response would always be the same, “Mine were a little bit cheeky today, but they’re only kids, they were okay.”

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Annual Catechist Mass
Margaret Parsons  
**St John Bosco Parish Engadine**

Margaret started as a catechist when her third child started school and another parishioner volunteered to look after the two youngest children still at home. This was the start of thirty years of ministry.

She particularly remembers Sr Mary Horan’s visits to the classroom and how rapt the children were by Sr Mary’s presence. Margaret feels that over the years she has gained more reward than she ever imagined possible and has also learnt more about her faith. Margaret worries about the children but firmly believes the best thing to do for them is to pray for them.

Elwin Kooyman  
**Holy Spirit Parish North Ryde**

One day at Mass Elwin “heard” the catechist appeal. She had heard the words before, but this time it meant something – love of faith and children and wanting to share it.

“I just want to impress on the children that Jesus loves them and they will always have him as a friend”, Elwin explained in enthusiasm to the calling. Elwin is a mother and grandmother of four children and six grandchildren respectively and over the years they have given her thoughts, suggestions and lots of support to take into the classroom.

What she really likes is when the children see her out of school years later on in life and they shout out hello and especially when she sees them in church! Elwin is not afraid to face any challenge in the classroom as she takes each day and what it brings and knows that we are not alone. “We have the Holy Spirit with us and wonderful help from the Catechists”, she explains humbly.

Gwen Kennedy  
**St Ambrose Parish Concord West**

Gwen’s education, both formal and religious, but particularly the latter, was gained under the instruction of the wonderful Sisters of Charity at Lewisham who still occupy a place of warm gratitude in Gwen’s mind and memory. Apart from her stalwart mother who was unyielding in her quiet faith, the matter of religion was at times a subject of rancour during her childhood. When Gwen became a mother herself she was determined to pass on as best she could what she had gained from the example and dedication of others.

Because of a particular temporary circumstance, Gwen’s son, her youngest, had his Year 2 schooling at Lakemba Public School where Gwen’s husband was principal. During that year Gwen discovered that there was no Catholic catechist attending to offer instruction. This spurred Gwen’s interest in becoming a catechist herself. She attended the training program which, for her, was most appropriately conducted at Lewisham. Following this, she began her catechist visits and teaching at Concord West Public School, where she has been attending weekly ever since.

At present Gwen teaches a class of 26 children. “I have found my experience during this time both enlightening and enriching” said Gwen.

Robyn Barclay  
**St John Bosco Parish Engadine**

Robyn was introduced to the catechist ministry by a neighbour who asked her to join the catechist group. She agreed to teach a class at Heathcote East Primary School, the local school her own children attended.

In the early days she took her preschooler with her and her first lessons were in a weather shed. Robyn completed the catechist accreditation course at Sutherland where she remembers a catechist tutor demonstrating a lesson on Jesus and the Children using ‘cut outs’ to enhance the lesson – perhaps an early version of Br Julian’s puppets. Thirty years later Robyn is still teaching at the same school and still loves the work.

Barbara Burns  
**Holy Spirit Parish North Ryde**

Barbara became a catechist in response to a simple, yet inspiring appeal from a catechist on Catechist Sunday, over thirty years ago. Over the years she has taught most primary classes, but Year Three is her favourite age group. “At times when we have been blessed with sufficient catechists, I have gone on the relief list and filled in for sick or holidaying catechists”, she explains humbly.

When Barbara looks back on the thirty years, she finds it hard to believe it has been so long. She is inspired by the beautiful altar frontal in the parish, made by one of her catechists, and inscribed with the words “I will bear your light to them”, which serves as a reminder to Barbara of the reason that she is still a catechist after all these years. She considers it a great privilege to have been able to bear the light of Jesus to these children for so long. Being involved with Sacramental programs in the parish is also a particular love of hers. Currently the catechist co-ordinator for the Holy Spirit Parish, Barbara enjoys working with such a committed, vibrant group of catechists.
Members

Feyona Van Stom
Sacred Heart Parish Mosman

Feyona was influenced by her father who was always a joyful Catholic. During his memorial service the priest said he heard the choir laughing one evening during practice and it was her father, completely relaxed in the church and having a great time with his friends in the choir. She wanted to pass on that joyful feeling of going to church and spending time with Jesus.

Feyona began teaching religion to the Chinese children in the parish school of St Anne’s Catholic Church, Stanley, Hong Kong in 1971. When the family transferred to America she continued teaching religion, this time in Rye, a suburb of New York, for six years.

Sydney was her next stop. She taught at Lindfield Parish for three years from 1979 to 1981. She went back to America where she taught in Connecticut for another nine years. Feyona arrived back in Lindfield in 1989 where she coordinated the Confirmation program for the Holy Family Parish and finally she moved to Neutral Bay Parish.

Feyona says “I can’t remember exactly how many years I have been teaching but as I’ve been married 35 years, I am guessing that the time I didn’t teach was maybe altogether two or three of those years while we were transferring.”

Feyona has come across wonderful teachers who give their time and their love of God to the children.

She believes that medals should be given out at one, two and three years, maybe up to five years - as these are the hardest times when one wonders if the message is getting across. “The longer one teaches, the more affirmations one receives from the children themselves that one does not require anymore medals.” She sees the children as the medal when they are seen growing up and in the Church.

Feyona admits it was lovely to receive an Apostolic Blessing and to be awarded the Cardinal Freeman Medal, but it is true that the children are also her medals.

Monica Fitch
St Mary’s Queen of Heaven Parish Georges Hall

Monica took on the mission of being a catechist after having her second child Michael. At a morning tea for mothers of the new kindergarten children, the parish priest at the time, Fr John O’Keefe, approached Monica and asked her whether she would teach a Year 4 class. This was at the beginning of 1977 and she has been teaching ever since.

Monica felt a particular responsibility in becoming a catechist. Her years of experience in education have contributed to her talents of being a catechist and parish catechist coordinator. Monica has taught at public schools for 20 years (1950-1970), at Herne Bay (now Riverwood), Cranebrook, St Mary’s Granville and established an Infants Department at Dubbo West Public School. She was also in charge at the Auburn North Infants Department, when she resigned in July 1970 after she had her first child. “I took the fourth and fifth class every Thursday”.

The Department of Education recognised her contribution to public education in 2002 when she was awarded an Award for Excellent Service to Public Education and Training. She believes she may have received this honour because of her “teaching of 20 years in the education department combined with the 26 years of catechist teaching”.

As the experienced teacher, headmistress and current catechist, Monica suggests that a serious approach to lesson preparation is necessary, “prepare your lessons well... be professional by being at the school ahead of time”.

At the core of being a catechist, Monica says catechist do their best to “help the children we teach to know and love God.” As our Lord said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me for such is the Kingdom of heaven.”

Mary Ann Weir
Christ The King Parish Bass Hill

Mary Ann has a lively passion for her faith and this is reflected when she responded to a catechist appeal during a Mass all those years ago. She recalls that they used to have such large classes; the typical size would be at least 40 students. She had four children at the time. Her mother would mind them while she went to class.

Mary Ann’s optimism and zeal for her mission is obvious, “You wouldn’t do the job unless you love it, and I love the children and it’s a privilege to be teaching them.” She finds that she often receives more than she gives, “I get more from teaching them (the children), you learn to be humble when you’re with them I don’t understand how people wouldn’t want to join us, because it’s so rewarding. Time goes quickly when you’re having fun, doesn’t it?”

The work of a catechist does not only have the potential to transform the lives of the children they teach, but it often transforms the catechists themselves! Mary Ann recalls how the work of a catechist can be rewarding in unexpected ways. Mary Ann jumped into a young man she taught when he was in Years 2 and 3. He had a very challenging home life at the time, although his non-Catholic parent, his mother, really desired him to be baptised. He was baptised, and after the Sacrament was over he approached Mary Ann and hugged her and said “I have waited all of my life for this day (which was eight years in total)! The same boy returned to Sydney as a young man for a fleeting visit at 22 years of age. He rode (on his push bike) and while passing the same church he noticed that Mary Ann was arranging the flowers. He called out “Is that you Mrs Weir?” He gave her “a kiss and a cuddle and said “hello godmother”. He said “I’ll always love you” and rode away.

Mary Ann has never felt “it’s a thankless job as a catechist as we never know when our students will turn to our Lord. Like the good thief on the cross, even at their last hour they would turn to our Lord and hear Him say “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

2006 Life Members continued over page
2006 Life Members

Patricia Cosgrove
St Joseph’s Parish Belmore

“Patricia was a catechist coordinator at Belmore Parish and one of the first parish coordinators that I met when I first became FEO for the Bankstown Area” stated Josephine Elias. If I could describe how dedicated and wonderful catechists from the Bankstown Area are I would not hesitate to say “Do you know Pat Cosgrove?” Her buoyancy and exuberance for her work as a catechist and coordinator certainly inspired and continues to inspire my work, as I’m sure it does the catechists of her parish.

Pat remembers that her desire to become a catechist was felt for some time before she could actually become one. “Father had been asking for help during mass but I thought that I needed a car first. So in 1976 I got my car and took up the catechist challenge in 1978. It never entered my mind to stop; I thought I’d at least go for thirty years.”

Catholics have so much to offer as catechists even if the rewards aren’t always obvious. Pat realises this clearly, “Do the best you can in the classroom and hope for the best. You’ve got your own faith and you share it as best as you can. You’re not in it for the rewards; you don’t actually see the results of your work. You just hope you’re doing something good.”

Pat is well known in her parish for her various artistic talents. She recommends the use of visuals materials as she feels “pictures are worth a thousand words.” Pat has made puppets and has a great selection of music.

Pat sees the work of the catechist as essential because often times she feels a lot of children are not receiving religious education at home. She is pleased that the CCD has implemented a new curriculum and was looking forward to teaching the new curriculum and will most definitely miss being a catechist. “It has sort of been a way of life – to do what I can.”

Kathleen Logue
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Sefton

Kathleen has been a dedicated catechist and sacramental assistant at Sefton Parish. Although she may view herself as an ordinary person her humility when asked about her years as a catechist was extraordinary.

Kathleen started being a catechist for Grade 3 at Chester Hill North Public School. The parish priest approached Kathleen to become a catechist and she accepted. She was also asked to assist (over 20 years ago) with the sacramental program, and she has been doing so ever since.

To be acknowledged as a Life Member is an exciting achievement which Kathleen “didn’t think would happen”. She finds being a catechist is a rewarding apostolate “because you feel you’re helping children … I just go out and do the best I can. It really is about drawing the children closer to God.”

Kathleen felt that lesson preparation is linked to successful teaching, “I know I always prepared my lessons, so I knew exactly what I was going to teach. I enjoyed gathering the extra material.” She felt a joy and connectedness with the students she taught “I really enjoyed it! The infant class really suited me. I loved the children and I felt privileged being at that school.”

“I used to say “I don’t know if they’re getting anything out of it”, but then I got a thrill when the librarian told me that after I leave the children discuss what they just did in my class.”

“Teaching infants is not only teaching them about God but also about teaching them how to live as Christians in a practical sense; so they realise how their actions affect other people.”

Georgina Kermode
St Christopher’s Parish Panania

Georgina is a catechist who brings her wealth of experience as a teacher and her many artistic and music talents to the fore as a catechist. She was initially a teacher by profession and was only the third lay teacher to go through the Catholic Teaching College. Because she was trained to teach Georgina “I thought I should become a catechist because Doreen Moore approached me to do it.” Doreen Moore is the very dedicated catechist coordinator of the Panania Parish.

Becoming a life member makes Georgina “feel special that I’ve done something good for God.” Georgina went through a life altering experience seven years ago when she was confined to a wheelchair because she suffered a spinal abscess. The doctors didn’t give her much hope of walking but with the power of prayer Georgina recovered and she believes “God helped my recovery so I could continue with teaching the children.” Often God’s plan for us supersedes human logic and gives us a reason to hope.

Georgina gets much enjoyment from teaching the children. She finds that “the children continually surprise you.” Georgina realises that “each catechist gives something to children that no one else gives them, and that is the gift of their faith. The fact that somebody goes every week, without getting paid, that itself is an important witness to the children we teach. Just keep going because every bit helps.” Georgina believes that if the children are not given direction in their faith there will be a void that they will not know how to fill. “If they grow up with no religious teaching, they grow up and they don’t realise that they are missing anything. We teach in order to give them a chance of learning their faith so that in later life they know where to turn.”

The most challenging class that Georgina had encountered was a combined Year 5 and 6 class. She felt that they “were terrible, the worst class that I had ever taught.” She approached the classroom teacher to only realise that she had taught the children’s teacher many years ago when he was in Year 1. She found “that knowledge made all the difference to the children; they even asked me whether he was a good boy!” Doesn’t God work in mysterious ways and I have heard it is even said that He has a great sense of humour.

Georgina has a special talent for reaching the children through her life experiences. At one time, after her daughter had passed away and one of the children asked her “when her daughter died did you pray to God more. It took me a while to think about it. I responded in an honest and sincere way and said that my prayer life had not necessarily increased, but it had changed. That I had developed an “actual running conversation with Him.””
What’s happening in High Schools?

In the Sutherland - St George Area there are a number of Catholic SRE classes operating in the high schools – the majority are held on a Thursday morning. These classes are staffed by a dedicated band of catechists who really enjoy their work.

In this newsletter we are highlighting Our Lady of Fatima Parish at Caringbah. There are two public high schools in this parish where catechists Nuha De Vries, Tom Klien, Barry Porter and Norm Wray teach nearly 300 Catholic students each year. In Term 3 the Year 8 classes at Caringbah High School explored what it means to be human and created by God – especially what we mean by a soul.

Samples of work done by students in high school.

and Primary Schools?

The word Creed comes from the Latin word Credo, which means “I believe …”

My Personal Creed

I believe

I believe God is a very kind and beautiful person. I believe He loves everyone equally and appreciates everyone moment with us.

I believe

I love God so much that I always wish to see Him. I love of God so much, may my love for God increase much.

I believe

God is very fond with everyone He meets. Very good

Fairfield West Primary 3r5 student
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

To fill in the blanks find the letter in the circle or circles with the same number that is under the blank. Example 5,6 = I

N A T G I U L M Y B X
R S H F D P C J E O
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

One day ___ ___ ___ sent the angel ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
4,5 10 5 4,5 2,3 10,11 1 5,6 9 7,8

to visit ___ ___ ___ ___ to ask her to be the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ of
8,9 2,3 1 9,10 8,9 10 3,4 3 9 1

Jesus. The angel said “Do not be ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___” and told Mary that she was
2,3 4 1 2,3 5,6 5

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ and that is why God chose her to be
2 6 9 7 5,6 2,3 7,8

’ mother. Although she was afraid, Mary said “ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___”
8 9 2 6,7 2 9,10 9 2

she would do whatever God wanted. She would be the mother of his

___ ___ ___ ___
See if you can find the missing word.
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Catechist Newsletter Term Four 2006

**Term Four**

**Fundamentalism (MI06)**
Dr Charles Hill
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
**Mondays:** 10am-1pm
October 30, November 6, 13, 20, 27

**Theology 1: Current Issues (MI04)**
John Mannah
Liverpool Catholic Club
Liverpool
**Thursdays:** 10am-1pm
October 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23

**Controversies in Church History (MI22)**
Robert Haddad
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
9am-2pm
**Tuesday and Wednesday** December 12, 13

**Theology of the Body (MI15)**
Lucas Hurley
Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney
10am-1pm
Mondays: October 9, 16, 23, 30, November 6

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**CHRIST OUR LIGHT AND LIFE**

**INSERVICE DAYS**

**SYDNEY ARCHDIOCESE**

Three hour inservice to provide insight into and practical use of the new curriculum i.e planning and implementing lessons.

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**Prerequisite:** Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Accreditation Program

Please telephone the CCD office on 9390 5122 to enrol for any of the units listed below.

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Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Catechist Newsletter Term Four 2006
WORKSHOPS & MEETINGS

Basic Accreditation Program
Term Four

Western Area
St Francis Xavier’s Parish
71 Webster Road, Lurnea
Fridays: 10am-1pm
Oct 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17, Dec 1, 8

Sutherland-St George Area
CCD Centre Miranda
50 Kiora Road
Mondays: 10am-2pm
Oct 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17, Dec 1

Advanced Accreditation Program
Term Four

Concord Area
Holy Spirit Parish
Cox’s Road, North Ryde
Fridays: 9:30am-1:30pm
Oct 20, Nov 3, 10, Dec 1

Sutherland-St George Area
CCD Centre Miranda
50 Kiora Road
Mondays: 10am-2pm
Oct 23, 30, Nov 6, 13, 20, 27

Intermediate Accreditation Program
Bankstown Area
St Charbel’s Maronite Church
142 Highclere Ave, Punchbowl
Mondays: 6–8pm
Oct 30, Nov 6, 13, 20, 27, Dec 4, 11, 18

Concord Area
St Mary’s Parish
56 Burton Street, Concord
Mondays: 9:30am-1:30pm
Oct 16, 23, 30, Nov 13, 20, 27

Sutherland-St George Area
CCD Centre
Kiora Road, Miranda
Fridays: 10am-1pm
Oct 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17, Dec 1

Archdiocesan Catechist Gathering

Friday October 13 2006
From 10:30am to 1:30pm
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
24 John Street, Lidcombe

Topics
• Teaching Resources: Big Books—Sue Moffat, CEO Sydney
• Understanding Children With Special Needs—Mary Moran, CEO Sydney
• Right To Life Association—Bruce Coleman
• World Youth Day—Josephine Elias, FEO

Catechist Coordinators are asked to phone the CCD
on (02) 9390 5122 by Friday 6 October
with the number of catechists attending from their parish.

Life Members’ Mass & Luncheon

Friday November 24 2006
Mass 10:30am
St Joachim’s Lidcombe
Luncheon 12 noon
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
24 John Street, Lidcombe
Cost $35 per person

Further details will be sent to all Life Member Award recipients and Parish Catechist Coordinators early in Term 4.
# DIARY DATES FOR 2007

## Orientation Meetings 2007

### Bankstown Area
- **Wednesday 7 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Christ The King Parish
  - 589 Hume Highway, Yagoona

### City Area
- **Tuesday 13 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - John Paul II Student Resource Centre
  - Level 1, 245 Broadway, Glebe
- **Wednesday 14 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - St Michael's Parish
  - 29 Banks Avenue, Daceyville

### Concord Area
- **Wednesday 14 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Holy Spirit Parish Hall
  - Cox’s Road, North Ryde
- **Thursday 15 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - St Ambrose’ Catholic Church
  - Cnr Stewart & Queen Streets, Concord West
    (opposite railway line)

### Sutherland - St George Area
- **Wednesday 7 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Venue pending
- **Friday 9 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - CCD Centre
  - Kiora Road, Miranda

### Western Area
- **Tuesday 6 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish
  - 230 Humphries Road, Mt Pritchard

## Parish Catechist Coordinators Meetings 2007

### Bankstown Area
- **Monday 5 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Polding Centre
  - 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney

### City Area
- **Monday 19 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Polding Centre
  - 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney

### Concord Area
- **Monday 12 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - Polding Centre
  - 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney

### Sutherland - St George Area
- **Friday 2 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - CCD Centre
  - Kiora Road, Miranda

### Western Area
- **Friday 9 February**
  - 10am - 12 noon
  - All Saints Parish
  - George Street, Liverpool

## Basic Accreditation Program 2007

### Bankstown Area
- **St Mary Queen of Heaven, Georges Hall**
  - Commencing last week in February
  - **Dates to be advised**

### City Area
- **St Michael's Parish, Daceyville**
  - Fridays: 10:30am - 2:30pm
  - Feb 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23

### Concord Area
- **Holy Spirit Parish, Cox’s Road, North Ryde**
  - Fridays: 9:30am - 1:30pm
  - Feb 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

### Sutherland - St George Area
- **CCD Centre, Kiora Road, Miranda**
  - Fridays: 10am - 1pm
  - Feb 16, 23, March 5, 12, 19, 26

### Western Area
- **CCD Good Shepherd Parish, Hoxton Park**
  - Mondays: 10am - 1pm
  - Feb 12, 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26
FROM THE BOOKSHOP

SYDNEY CATHOLIC BOOKS & RESOURCES
Polding Centre,
Level 6, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney

PO Box A286, SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235
www.ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au    Email: books@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au
Tel: (02) 9390 5130     Fax: (02) 9283 5146

Opening Hours 10:00am to 3:00pm Monday to Friday

Ever popular Arch Books
Still only $2.95

Christmas Holy Cards $ 0.50 each

The Gift of Christmas
$ 15.95

Francis and the Nativity
$ 9.95

Christmas Greeting Cards
Various Designs
$0.50 each

Christmas Colouring Books $3.00 each
**Prayer & Reflection**

**Week 1**
All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Week 2**
God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy, so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Week 3**
Father our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Saviour’s coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time.

Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever.

**Week 4**
Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of his resurrection, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.