



Vianney Bulletin

A Publication of Vianney College, Wagga Wagga

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Vocations Weekend Retreat

On the weekend of 22/23rd of May, Vianney College hosted a retreat for men discerning the Priesthood. This annual event is now in its third year. Fr. Sean Byrnes (Vice-rector and First Year Formator) and Fr. Bradley Rafter (Administrator of St. Mel's, Narrandera) led the retreat.

The weekend started with Mass offered by Bishop Mark Edwards OMI.

The main focus of the retreat was centred on talks by Fr. Byrnes, Fr. Rafter and Dr. Matthew Tan, Vianney College Dean of Studies. The talks presented were tailored to the relevancy of the Priesthood and tips on discernment. The talks included: Mary's Fiat, Prayerful Discernment, Self Knowledge, The Priesthood of Jesus Christ and Is God Calling You?



Frs. Rafter and Byrnes hosting the Vocations Weekend Retreat

There was also time for a tour of the seminary, self reflection, prayer and sharing meals with the seminarians of Vianney College.

The weekend concluded with a Q and A session with Fathers Byrnes, Rafter and seminary Rector, Fr. Peter Thompson C.M.

There has been interest for another retreat later in the year from other men unable to attend this weekend.

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John Vianney let us continue to pray for vocations to the Priesthood.

– Fr. Bradley Rafter

Exam Time:

From the 14th to the 25th of June, the seminarians will be sitting their mid-year exams. In your charity, please pray for us at this time.

Prayer for Vocations:

*O Holy Spirit, enlighten me,
so that I shall understand and know my divine call,
who I am, what I should be, and what I must do,
as well as the means by which these ends may be
accomplished.*

– Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger

St. John Vianney, pray for us.

Recent News

Between the 18th and the 24th of April and after returning from holidays, the seminarians travelled to the Redemptorist St Clement's Retreat Centre in Galong for their annual retreat led by Bishop Edwards.



Galong Retreat Centre
(Image: Bishop Edwards)



Brothers Marvin Coonghe, Hoat Nguyen and Valentine Nicholas with Bishop Edwards

On May 22nd, the seminary held its annual Vocations Weekend Retreat. This was hosted by Frs. Sean Byrnes and Bradley Rafter. During the morning Mass celebrated by Bishop Edwards, three of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest (CCS) Brothers, Hoat Nguyen, Valentine Nicholas and Marvin Coonghe, were admitted to Candidacy.

On Sunday June 6th, the seminary celebrated the Solemnity of Corpus Christi (The Body and Blood of Christ). Mass was celebrated as usual in the morning and in the afternoon there was a short procession with hymns and the Rosary followed by a period of Adoration. This was concluded with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.



Fr. Justin Darlow recently departed for Rome where he will be starting his doctoral studies at the Pontificia Universita della Santa Croce specialising in history.

On Friday June 11th, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, Mr. Peterpaul Ikenna Chikezie (Armidale Diocese), in preparation for his Diaconal ordination, made his Profession of Faith, Oath of Fidelity and Promise of Celibacy. Peterpaul will be ordained to the Diaconate in Armidale on Monday, July 12th.



Seminary Faculty 2021:**Rector:**

Rev. Peter Thompson C.M.

Vice Rector:

Rev. Sean Byrnes

Spiritual Director:

Rev. Steven Ledinich

Dean of Studies:

Dr. Matthew Tan

* * *

Recent Events:

12/4/2021:

Term 2 commenced

18-24/4/2021:

Annual Seminary Retreat

22/5/2021:

Admission to Candidacy

22-23/5/2021:

Vocations Weekend

Retreat

goal consisted of a number of conferences given by Bishop Edwards, daily praying of the Divine Office and Mass, small group reflections, and adoration and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. There was

Soon after returning from their Easter break the seminarians went on their annual retreat. Usually taking place after Easter each year, the retreat is a time for the seminarians to deepen their spiritual life, to grow deeper in prayer, and to continue to discern their vocation.

The retreat was held at St Clement's Retreat Centre, Galong. The retreat centre is run by the Redemptorists, who at the time of writing have been at Galong for 105 years.

Bishop Mark Edwards OMI of Wagga Wagga ran the retreat, taking time out of his busy schedule to spiritually guide the students of Vianney College. One of the charisms of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Bishop Edwards' religious congregation) is to run retreats.

Running over five days, the main aim of the retreat was to further deepen their personal relationship with Jesus, particularly through meditation of Sacred Scripture.

The structure to help facilitate this goal consisted of a number of conferences given by Bishop Edwards, daily praying of the Divine Office and Mass, small group reflections, and adoration and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. There was also ample time for personal prayer and reflection, both in the chapel and on the many bushwalks in the area, as well as opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

While each person's experience was different, the general feedback after the retreat was very positive. Some highlights that the seminarians

mentioned included the opportunities for long periods of silent prayer, a chance to get away from their studies and focus more on their spiritual life, and the opportunity to continue to get to know Bishop Edwards better.

Once the retreat concluded, the seminarians headed back to Vianney College to continue their journey towards the priesthood, which St John Vianney described simply yet succinctly as the love of the Heart of Jesus.

– Saxon Onions

Third Year

Wagga Wagga Diocese

Annual Seminary Retreat, 2021

(Image: Bishop Edwards)



(Image: Bishop Edwards)

Upcoming Events:

14-25/6/2021:

Exams

27/6/2021:

Mid-year break begins

12/7/2021:

Diaconal ordination of
Peterpaul Ikenna

Chikezie

(Armidale Diocese)

21/8/2021:

Priestly ordination of
Rev. Michael Boudaher
(Maronite Eparchy)

11/9/2021:

Priestly ordination of
Rev. Connell Perry
(Wagga Diocese)

25/7/2021:

Term 3 commences

August/September (TBA):

Vocations Weekend

Retreat

Sowing Seeds in Griffith

Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19

Like the apostles, commissioned by our Lord to follow him, I was asked to go to Griffith to promote vocations for the priesthood and to invite the young men to attend the Vocations Weekend Retreat. I attended and prayed at five masses that weekend in the hope that some young men may hear that divine call that resonates in Matthew 4:19.

Like the sower in the parable sowing the seeds in the field, I tried my best to sow the seeds of vocation in the hearts of young men. I encouraged the parishioners to pray and nurture their children in the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. After the mass, I was able to talk to some of the families and some young men to invite them to the vocation weekend.

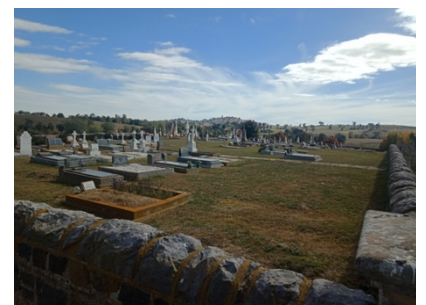
I noticed during some Masses that more than half of the congregation were either middle-aged parents or elderly couples. Because of this I reminded them of the message of Pope St. John Paul II, who said that family is the first seminary. This is where the seed of vocation are first sown. God can call a young man for the priesthood through the loving witness to the faith, encouragement and prayers of their family members. Also, I believe one of the great examples that priests can leave for their spiritual children are the

footprints of their life that they will want to follow. God can call any person and we have to respond to Him generously with loving obedience.

Of course, most young men, when they think about priestly vocation, might say to themselves, "I am not worthy! God is holy, and I am not. There are men far more deserving than I of being called to become a priest." But, according to Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen, God can do something with those who see what they are and who know their need of cleansing. But Our Lord often chooses weak instruments to manifest his power. We see this in the call of the twelve apostles. Yes, we need many young men to respond to God's call to be His holy priests. We need priests to bring among us Jesus, in the Eucharist. We need priests to preach the good news of Christ Jesus and to administer the Sacraments.



The surrounds of St. Clement's Retreat Centre, Galong



I asked for prayers for the seminary community. God needs good-hearted and courageous young men to respond generously to Jesus' call to follow Him. Our seminary motto is 'Cordis Jesu Amor' which means 'the love of the heart of Jesus'. This motto, taken from St. John Marie Vianney sums up what the spirit of the priest should be. To become a priest is to act as another Jesus Christ who is the high priest and the victim. To be called to live a life as a priest is a special privilege with great power and great responsibility. When I was a child, I thought priests and nuns fell from Heaven, but I soon realised that they came from families. God calls them out from a family and joins them to the big family that exists in this world: His Church.

Discernment also involves lots of personal prayer and listening to God's voice through the Scriptures and meditation. It will not happen in a single day. For the most part, the vocation to the priesthood or religious life is a silent but insistent whisper, yet one that demands a response. I asked the young men to pray and listen to whether God is calling them to the vocation of priesthood. I also asked the parents and grandparents to pray that God may choose one of their sons or grandsons to respond to the priestly call. Also, I encouraged them to pray to encounter

I hope that God will work through me to plant some seeds of the priestly vocation and nurture them in the hearts of the boys and young men. In concluding my time at Griffith, I thanked the parishioners for the continual witness to the Catholic Faith, the encouragement and prayers for the priests and religious sisters.

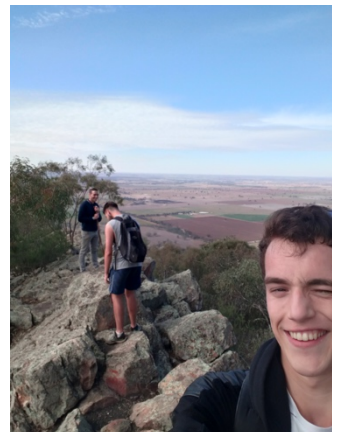
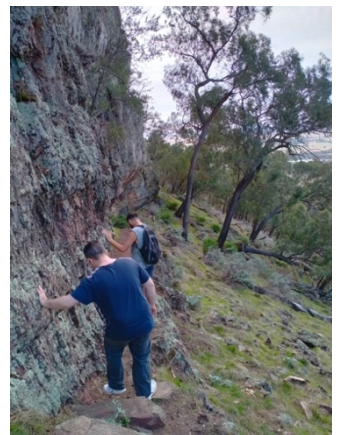
*O Lord, grant us many holy priests!
O Mary and St. Joseph, please pray for us!
St. John Marie Vianney, pray for us.*

– Br. Valentine Nicholas CCS
Fourth Year
Confraternity of Christ the Priest



Images from the First Years climb up The Rock

(images: Christopher Gillespie)



The Four Dimensions of Formation

Throughout a young man's time in the seminary, particularly in the first year, the four dimensions of priestly formation will be constantly reiterated and emphasised. To be a truly missionary priest in today's contemporary culture, developing a strong foundation built upon these four pillars of formation is vitally important. This means that in order to be a disciple of Jesus who can be configured to Christ before beginning an active apostolate and pastoral ministry, a man must be open to human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation. Working with the seminarian himself and the Holy Spirit, who is the chief formator, seminary staff and other men and women play a key role in ensuring that this can take place through careful encouragement and gentle guidance in the different stages of vocational discernment. This also continues beyond the seminary with ongoing formation that supports growth in each of the four components.



Human formation is the basis of all priestly formation and is the fundamental grounding upon which all development as a priest begins. This calls for the cultivation of human qualities and an ever growing maturity as a human person in the daily pursuit of virtue. Especially important is living out life with authenticity. As St John Paul II clearly explains in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* the human personality needs to become a bridge and not an obstacle to others having an encounter with Jesus.

Intellectual formation includes the study of philosophy, theology and a range of subjects so that the future priest has the tools to be able to transmit the fullness of the Catholic Faith. It also provides new reasons to love God and is something to be shared with others. When it comes to intellectual formation though, it is good to remember that even though it is extremely important and necessary to study all one can about Jesus, the Church, the Faith and theology, this can never be at the expense of spiritual, pastoral and human formation. A man does not enter the seminary to become an academic. He enters the seminary to become a priest. This calls for a supernatural outlook when it comes to intellectual formation and as St Josemaria Escriva said it is always good to remember that an hour of study for a modern apostle is an hour of prayer.



This leads us to spiritual formation, and the importance of this area is obvious. To be another Christ in the world today, the priest needs to be holy and striving for sanctity. This means that a seminarian is called to be a man of prayer with a strong plan of life that incorporates acts of piety and mortification with the prudent help of a spiritual director. It is crucial that spiritual activities are not simply something done out of mere habit but rather that they be lived out as acts of love in a growing relationship with Jesus. Pope Francis recently mentioned that prayer "should not be simply ritualistic, but an opportunity for personal encounter with

God, for dialogue and trust in Him."

Pastoral formation is an area that has developed extensively since Vatican II and helps a seminarian to really begin to live out their vocation. Enthusiastically meeting people and being at the service of the People of God are sure signs the initial yes to God at the beginning of formation is total and true. This means learning to be available for others and giving of oneself with sacrificial love. Regular placements in a parish with experienced pastors are a great way for a seminarian to be able to learn from the practical wisdom of those who have gone before them and to meet parishioners that they will hopefully be able to minister to in the future.



Each of these dimensions of formation are necessary and important. No one pillar should be overemphasised to the detriment of the other areas, rather all four form a cohesive whole that must each receive due attention. All of us are invited to pray for our seminarians and priests, that they grow humanly, intellectually, spiritually and pastorally as they carry out the work of God always and everywhere as ordained missionary disciples configured to Christ.

– Rev. Connell Perry
Diaconal Pastoral Placement (St. Michael's Cathedral)
Wagga Wagga Diocese

First-year's trip to The Rock



As part of their formation, Fr Sean Byrnes (first-year formator) takes the first-year seminarians on various trips around the diocese to familiarise the seminarians with their new surroundings. On the 8th of May this was taken to a new level culminating in facing down Wagga's most formidable monument; The Rock. Some said it wasn't possible. Others doubted. Many didn't even give consideration to the notion. Yet, armed

with Gatorade and trail mix muesli bars, these men dragged themselves step by step to the summit. Victorious, they embarked safely on the journey home, thankful to God for the majestic landscapes they beheld and the fraternal bonding brought about by near-death experiences, all making the trip a great day out with the lads.

– Christopher Gillespie & Gerard Letchford
First Years
Wagga Wagga Diocese



Christopher
Gillespie



Gerard Letchford

Upcoming Ordinations:

Deaconal Ordination



Mr. Peterpaul Ikenna Chikezie
Saints Mary & Joseph Cathedral
Armidale Diocese
July 12, 2021

Priestly Ordinations



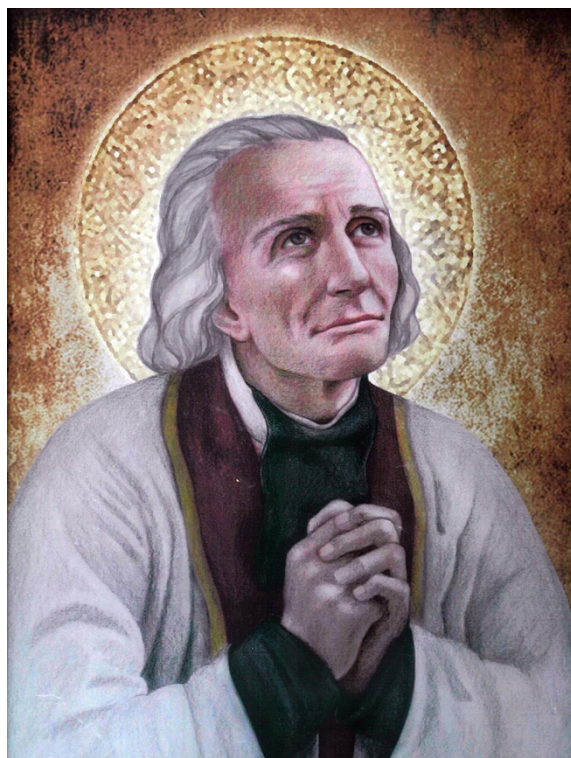
Rev. Michael Boudaher
Our Lady of Lebanon Church
Maronite Eparchy
August 21, 2021
Vianney College: 2015-16



Rev. Connell Perry
St. Michael's Cathedral
Wagga Wagga Diocese
September 11, 2021

Course Completion:

Congratulations to
Mr. Rosan Vettikombil and
Rev. Connell Perry
on successfully completing their Bachelor in Theology.



*St. John Vianney,
Pray for us!*

Vianney College

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