



# CrossCurrents

Quarterly Newsletter of the Parish Support Unit



DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY

Volume 1 Issue 2 December 2008

## Reaching out to Visitors at Christmas: Ideas for Parishes



hearts. Maybe some personal search or difficulty known only to God has brought them to Church this Christmas. Maybe some hurt inflicted by the Church in the past has been temporarily overcome by the warmth of the season.

And maybe some gesture or words on our part could make all the difference. Here are some ideas.

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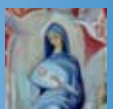
Over Christmas and the New Year a parish can expect to see considerable numbers of people who do not normally attend Church. Many of them will be “lapsed” or “resting” Catholics who are perhaps visiting relatives over Christmas, while others will have little or no connection with the Church.

How do we feel about such visitors? We might ask why they only come at Christmas. They clearly don't know how to behave in Church.... One or two may even be the worse for wear at Midnight Mass!

On the other hand we could try to ask how God sees them. Maybe the spark of faith is just alive in their

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## Message *from the Director*

During the past six months the Parish Support Unit (PSU) has been reviewing the structure of its service and support of the parish communities of the diocese. As a result of this review the roles of the original three Parish Support Officers (PSOs) and the six CCD coordinators have been combined. With the addition of the appointment of two new PSOs, there are now eleven PSOs working with local clusters of Parishes. At the beginning of 2009 all PSOs will be working in these clusters spending approximately half their time on the support of the CCD ministry and half on other Parish ministry support.

In many ways the Parish Support Unit and, in fact, parish based ministry is in continual 'advent mode'. As we work in the provision and support of many initiatives, projects and programs aimed at assisting parishes with Pastoral Care for Evangelisation we reflect on the words of the prophet Isaiah in the message of John the Baptist - Prepare the way of the Lord (Mt 3:3).

As you read the articles in this edition of CrossCurrents I would ask you to reflect upon this advent message. In the ministries of Hospitality, Stewardship, Liturgy, catechesis, Social outreach we are called to be in continual 'advent mode'.

Thank you for the work you have done in your Parishes in 2008, particularly the significant time and effort that many communities devoted to WYD08. We, in the PSU, look forward to working with you in 2009.

Wishing you and your families the blessings of the Christmas Season.

*Ann Maree Whenman*  
Director



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## Reaching out to Visitors at Christmas: Ideas for Parishes

- 1: Have parishioners give out hymn books / newsletters at the entrances to the Church, and brief them on giving a special welcome to newcomers.
- 2: Make a special point at the beginning and end of the liturgy of saying how pleased we are to see new faces among us.
- 3: Include a short paragraph in the newsletter welcoming those visiting for the first time or after a long gap.
- 4: Put on display some simple cards placed near the Crib, Christmas tree, Jesse tree, font, statues, etc., giving explanations as to the purpose and place of these objects in Catholic worship.
- 5: Make one of these objects a special focus for “seekers” or “returning Catholics” and write a simple prayer geared specially for them on a sheet nearby. Refer to this in the welcome and newsletter article.
- 6: Prepare a sheet to hand out with the newsletter laying stress on what the Church can offer to “seekers”: e.g., times the Church may be open for prayer, RCIA group, other services open to all such as a mother and baby group.
- 7: Advertise and draw special attention to the Catholic Enquiry Office materials, i.e. About the Catholic Faith, Reconnect and Rewired.
- 8: Make a colourful display for the Church porch or even outside the Church specifically welcoming those who visit Church infrequently but may be with you this Christmas.
- 9: Have a sheet of thought-provoking and inspirational quotes about the Christmas season or the New Year that people can take home and mull over.
- 10: Consider Parish Newsletter Inserts – Welcome message for visitors, The Meaning of Christmas and further contact details for “seekers.

By Janette Davidson - Senior PSO

## Claim the Date – Australian Stewardship Conference & Institute 2009

The Diocesan Stewardship Advisory Group is pleased to announce the Australian Stewardship Institute and Inaugural Stewardship Conference for 2009.

**When: Thursday and Friday, July 2 and 3, 2009**

**Where: Campbelltown Catholic Club**

The Stewardship Institute offers formation sessions which provide a comprehensive introduction to the basic principles and practices of stewardship as well as the biblical basis and theological understanding of stewardship.

The Inaugural Australian National Conference on Stewardship will offer advanced workshop sessions on key aspects of stewardship for those already on the stewardship journey. Australian presenters, clergy and laity, with experience in stewardship practices will conduct these conference workshops.

Here's what some of the people had to say after the 2008 Stewardship Institute hosted by the Diocese of Broken Bay.

“The 2008 Institute gave me new insights and affirmation of my parish life” – Elizabeth

“The real life experiences shared by the presenters are great – these things I will remember long after I have forgotten everything else” – Anon

“A sign of hope emerged from all this. I have been practicing stewardship for 12 months now and I have recognised the differences it has made to my life”. – Anon

**Both events will be highly worthwhile for all of us.** More information can be obtained from [www.australianstewardship.catholic.net.au](http://www.australianstewardship.catholic.net.au) . If you want to be placed on a list to receive information about the Institute email [chris.field@dbb.org.au](mailto:chris.field@dbb.org.au) or phone Chris on 9847 0748.

# STEWARDSHIP

A WAY OF LIFE

“The promotion of the practice of stewardship is important for the mission of the Church and for the spiritual well-being of each individual Christian. Everyone benefits from the sacrificial gift one makes of his time, talent and treasure” – *His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI*

## Stewardship: A Way of Life

Living a life of stewardship is about living life **God-centred**, rather than **self-centred**. A steward doesn't put him/her self first. A steward puts priority on prayer, on faith, on family, and uses their time, talent and treasure for God's work. This doesn't mean working in your ministry areas for the church 24/7! What Christians need to do is evaluate regularly how we spend our time, how we use our abilities (talents) and how we spend our money (treasure). Since everything we have is on loan from God, we are accountable to God because we are the caretakers, or stewards of these things. This is what Jesus' parable about the talents is all about. It's not necessarily about how we invest our money, but something deeper - how we invest everything we have been given and being productive (*cf* Matt: 25).

The rewards for living as a steward are everlasting. Parishes that are stewardship parishes become welcoming to new members, people grow in holiness, vocations to the priesthood and religious life result, and all needs of the parish are met. Becoming a stewardship parish takes time.

Before a parish undertakes stewardship it's a good idea to first reflect on the spirituality of stewardship. Getting an understanding of the theology and spirituality of stewardship is

*'Everything we have is a gift from God.'*



the best place to start. Those already in ministry areas in parishes or are members of a parish pastoral council, need to have a sound understanding of the biblical and theological basis for stewardship. This applies to those already in your parish who are active in ministry. If they understand the theological basis for stewardship then they will be able to lead others in the parish into ministry and be *effective* stewards.

A good starting point is the DVD of a talk by the late Archbishop Thomas J Murphy who reflects on the US Bishop's Pastoral Letter

- *Stewardship - A Disciple's Response*. In this DVD Archbishop Murphy speaks personally about stewardship in his life. Having studied and discussed this presentation you or your group could reflect and pray the US Bishop's Pastoral Letter. The letter has been produced into a study guide with reflections and questions so that individuals or groups can reflect and discuss the material covered in a stepwise process over a number of weeks.. If your parish is already underway with stewardship, then these are great ways to grow in a deeper understanding of stewardship.

Since the Stewardship Institute held in the Dioceses of Broken Bay in September, the Diocesan Parish Support Unit has been producing a training video consisting of excerpts of the Institute. We will be delivering these to parishes in 2009 and assisting



you on the journey of stewardship in your parishes. We are already working with parishes to help them on the stewardship journey.

**For more information contact the Diocesan Stewardship co-ordinator, Chris Field on 9847 0748.**

By Chris Field  
*Stewardship Co-ordinator*



Photos above from the recent Stewardship Institute

## For the Presider and Ministers: of Liturgy, of Word, of Music, of Hospitality.

If you are preparing for the parish's celebration of Christmas it may not seem the "season to be jolly". Rather it can be the "season to juggle" as summer holidays, masses of visitors, noise from commercial culture and a general spirit of trying to please everyone builds pressure on Ministers of Liturgy.

Get priorities right and keep it simple. Let's have a quick look at the Christmas Day Mass. Remember, they have partied the night before, opened presents this morning, and are going off for the big lunch. Careful planning is called for.

### Number one fact

The Christian church is celebrating the coming of Christ among us. The Word is taking flesh to share our human days and draw us into a knowledge and relationship with our loving, loving God. Christmas Day is soon over, but we have then the Christmas season, of feasts celebrating an unfolding, a showing of this Jesus to the world, a revealing of how he is to live, to die and be raised so that we too will find union with God.

### Plan your church environment

Link Advent through to the Baptism:

Of longing and waiting - Advent. *Four weeks*  
Of the coming - Christmas *One day*  
Of the showing to the world -  
Holy Family, Epiphany, the Baptism  
of the Lord. *Three/four weeks*

If candles are your focus, use a range of candles from mauves in Advent to white, then water -green for the Baptism feast. If Australian colours are your focus, use drapes with the colours of advent merging into the summer colours of the Christmas time Sundays. ; everyday colours of the Holy Family, the desert colours of the Magi, the green-blue of the water of the Baptism

### Plan your readings

In spite of all temptations, on Christmas day use the reading from John. Christ is born and now, on this day, we reflect on what the "Word among us" really means. Presiders, let this reading "get under your skin" and proclaim it slowly and with emphasis. Try to make this brilliant Gospel passage, enliven our faith, and drown us in awe, wonder and gratitude. If people come only once a year, they need to hear



this good news. Have a solemn Gospel procession. Sing the Alleluia, hold up the book, proclaim the Word, wait in silence, then hold up the book as the Alleluia is sung again to complete the moment.

### Hospitality

**Have a team to welcome and to usher as space is always tight.**

- ◆ Welcome cards handed out. With a message and some exciting details about the parish. Target young adults, who have come home for Christmas and join their family at Mass.
- ◆ Have cool drinks and a slice of cake.
- ◆ A Jesse tree with shapes of bells and candles giving website details of Catholic/ecumenical agencies, programs, events and mission. Encourage people to take these "presents" home.

Happy ministering

Eileen Luthi  
*Diocesan Liturgy Coordinator*

# Sharing the Christmas Message

## **Religious Christmas Cards**

Only send Christmas cards which have a nativity scene or religious image and message on them.

## **Invite**

Invite a neighbour or friend, who is not a Catholic, to come with you to Mass on Christmas Day or to attend a church carol service.

## **The Workplace**

Take a crib into work and ask if it can be put on display alongside the other Christmas decorations.

## **Faith in Action: The Elderly**

Visit an elderly person who lives on your road or street during the Christmas season. If they live on their own and do not have family of their own, invite them for Christmas dinner.

## **Faith in Action: The Homeless**

Consider giving a few hours of your time at a local soup kitchen during Christmas week.

## **Children and Grandchildren**

Read to your children and grandchildren the Christmas story. There are some beautiful nativity books on sale, likewise DVDs.

## **Charity Giving**

Clear out your wardrobe of unwanted clothes and send them to a local charity shop. Send with the clothes a religious Christmas card wishing those at the shop a happy holiday season.

## **Alternative Gifts**

Consider buying some of your Christmas cards and gifts from a charitable organisation such as the Cancer Council.

## **Ecumenical Public Witness**

Often Churches together in a locality organise a public carol singing event. Consider supporting them in a very real way by taking your faith to the market place.

*Adapted from CASE Resources UK*

Janette Davidson

Senior Parish Support Officer

Manly Warringah Peninsula

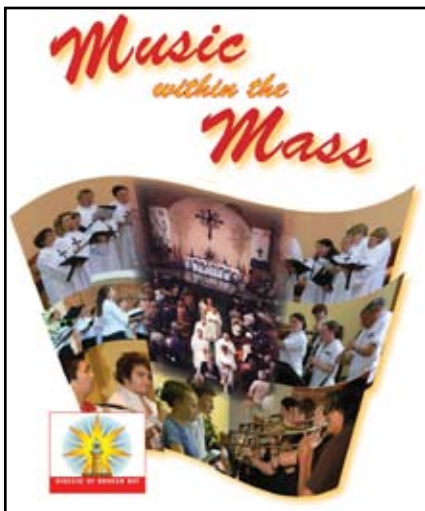




## Music within the Mass

**Qui cantat, bis orat – St. Augustine of Hippo**  
**“To sing is to pray twice”**

If St Augustine were to visit your church this weekend, what do you think he might say about music at your mass? Or, for that matter, if you brought a friend to church this weekend, what would they say about music and singing at your celebration? Would they (or you) honestly be able to say that the music and singing enhanced the celebration of the liturgy? How would their comments differ if they were an Eastern-Catholic or Pentecostal or African or hearing-impaired or an atheist or 17 years old?



You may recall the government's current healthy-eating campaign which asks "How do you measure up?" and gives the guidelines of 5 servings of vegies and 2 fruit. The campaign also suggests a waist measurement as a guideline. These guidelines are not prescriptive, but certainly a wise benchmark, and hopefully raise awareness and discussion of health issues.

When we talk about ministry, we too have useful guidelines. There are a number of resources available that provide useful

guidelines for how we celebrate the liturgy. After the document *Youth, Liturgy & Music* (www, there was a perceived need for a generalised, updated, document on helping the parish musician understand about, and prepare, music for use within the celebration of the mass. Hence we would like you to know about an exciting new resource from the Diocesan Liturgical Commission entitled ***Music within the Mass***.

This eight page booklet explores the role of music within our liturgy, the role of the music minister, and three long-held liturgical

principles by which to choose appropriate music (as outlined in the *Chirograph*). *Music within the Mass* has a comprehensive table which lists the parts of the mass, a priority "star" rating, an indication of the form of liturgical song, and a summary of the purpose and timing for each ritual element of the mass. The document contains suggestions on language, styles, lyrics, copyright and a resources page which includes a cross section of Australian Liturgical Music and planning resources.

Like all resources, *Music within the Mass* will be useful to our worshipping communities if the document's contents were 'unpacked.' The publication of this document could be an impetus for parish liturgy coordinators, music groups, choir directors and individual parish musicians to open up discussion on, and facilitation of, music that enhances and serves good liturgy. Your parish music ministers may even use this opportunity to meet each other and plan a coordinated approach for the Lent/Easter season fast approaching.

The Parish Support Unit will be working with the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, Broken Bay Music Ministry Forum, Lay Ministers of Music and Parish Support Officers to provide workshops and formation days for parishes using resources such as *Powerful Points* and *Music within the Mass* in 2009. It is our prayer that these resources will serve to form and support music ministers with the ultimate goal of enhancing our communal worship of God through Jesus in the Spirit.

Francis Voon  
*Parish Support Officer*

# LabOra Worship

## Liturgical Ministry support at your fingertips

***“Saturday afternoon Father calls you. He’s bedridden and can you lead the Sunday Celebration tomorrow without him?”***

***“You are asked to make a booklet for tomorrow’s funeral, between your other many tasks.”***

***“Your liturgy team needs to plan the next six months’ liturgical celebrations.”***

***“It’s your responsibility to guide the parish music team in choosing music for Advent.”***

If you’ve ever been in such a situation, you’d know what a challenge these could be. Those working in parish or school liturgy almost always struggle to fit such tasks into a busy schedule and would welcome a way to do them quickly, easily and well.

In 2007, Broken Bay Diocese funded and introduced software that literally allows you to do these and other tasks with a mouse click. *LabOra Worship*, produced by the Brisbane Liturgical Commission, is a library of liturgical texts and resources, which you can load onto your own computer, allowing you to prepare the various **Rites for RCIA**, quickly find a blessing for “that special occasion” or just prepare a prayer for your next meeting.

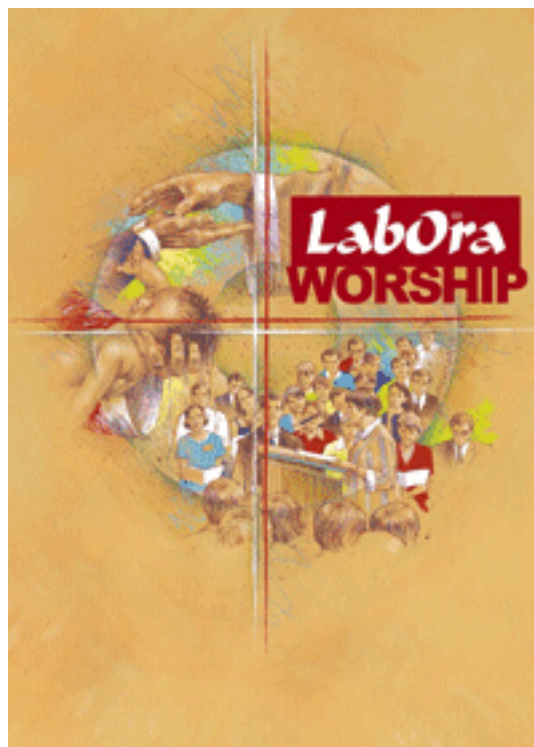
Leaders of **Children’s Liturgy of the Word** will find child-friendly texts and activities for each Sunday to help children actively respond to the Word. **Teachers, catechists and sacramental programme coordinators** will find readings for beginning the school year, celebrating the sacraments and particular saints, as well as particular themes such as “Gifts Received from God”,

“God Loves Us” and “Jesus Blessed the Children”.

A unique feature, *Living Liturgy Notes*, helps **music ministers, homilists and proclaimers of the Word** to identify key words and phrases, and connections between God’s Word and contemporary life and the other readings. From here, music ministers can locate from their computer suitable hymns from the twelve most popular hymnals in Australia and New Zealand, using *LabOra’s* alphabetical, topical, seasonal and liturgical index systems.

*LabOra* can assist those helping couples to put together their **Marriage Celebration. Wedding, funeral, school Mass and parish liturgical celebration** booklets can be assembled in minutes, without ever typing a word. *LabOra* contains the entire Sacramentary, Lectionary (Jerusalem Bible and NRSV translations), the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the entire Book of Blessings, Morning and Evening Prayer and much more. It also features an interactive liturgical calendar, planning tables, clip art and it comes with a free bible explorer.

If you minister in any liturgical role, *LabOra* can probably make your life easier. It doesn’t require the internet and caters for Australian needs. Your parish has a copy, waiting for you to borrow and load onto your own computer. Just ask the parish secretary or administrator.



***“I’m no computer guru, but LabOra has changed the way I prepare my liturgical ministry. I now have access to liturgical texts, which are not in books on my shelf and I can prepare Mass booklets for Christian Brothers’ liturgies in a fraction of the time it took me before.”***

The diocese regularly provides free *LabOra* training sessions, suitable for all levels of computer literacy. *LabOra* also comes with its own instructive, step-by-step video, *LabOra Made Easy*.

**For more information contact your Parish Secretary or your Parish Support Officer (see back page for details)**

Donrita Reefman  
*Cathedral Life Coordinator*



## Small Groups in Ministry – How are YOU fairing?

It is almost inevitable that you will encounter small groups some time in your ministry. You might use small groups to debrief an activity, to discuss issues raised in a presentation or you can also use small groups to help people “get to know each other”. Many ministries will use small groups as a regular part of their gatherings to enable people to feel included and develop the relationships within the community.

Some of us have participated in small groups that just don't

work. Perhaps we didn't get enough time to have our turn, perhaps the discussion was superficial or perhaps there was bitter disagreement, either way you left say “that didn't work”. There are a number of factors that make the difference between small groups that just don't work and those that really leave you feeling good about the experience.

- 1. Trust** – can each of the members trust each other? Small groups are not therapy sessions, but people should be able to trust they will be heard. Try to encourage everyone to share their opinion steering clear of general statements. Ask each participant to share how they feel about the topic or what their thoughts are. Encourage people to respect the opinions of others in the group.
- 2. Equality** – does each of the members have a chance to speak? Each small group will have the shy quiet types and the chatterbox types in them. Encourage each person to have their turn of speaking. Try to be aware of who is avoiding talking so you can draw them into the discussion. Gently remind those who dominate the conversation that others need their turn to share.
- 3. Silence** – awkward silence can make people feel uneasy. However, if people feel they have to fill the silence, the discussion can become superficial or go off topic. As the facilitator encourage people to reflect on their thoughts and feelings in silence before they speak. You can help keep the conversation flowing by using reflective silence to reframe the topic or draw out another perspective.
- 4. Enjoyment** – do all the members feel they are enjoying the small group? People have to feel that the group is enjoyable and worth their time. The conversation should remain on topic, but it doesn't always have to be serious. A good start and clear finish to a small group can help the members enjoy the group. How are you going to entice members into conversation from the start? How will you finish the group so that members will leave knowing what the small group was about?

This is only the beginning of what makes small groups great. Over time, you will become more confident about handling groups that go “off the rails” and you will become more familiar about your own style of facilitation. I encourage you to use small groups in your ministry, everyone wants to have their say and small groups are a great way for them to be heard.

Mark McDonald  
*Coordinator of Broken Bay Youth Ministry*

# The Breath of God on the Lakes

## Some ideas for Social Justice



The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council notes **solidarity** as one of the key themes of Catholic Social teaching. In this world we are all responsible for each other. The Lakes Parish of Narrabeen and Collaroy Plateau takes this very seriously. When we are sent forth "to love and serve the Lord" each Sunday, so many of us spend the week doing just that.

Our parish is under the care of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, a missionary order who is challenging us to respond to the promptings of the Spirit in our own lives.

### And it starts as we exit the church door...

In the gathering space of both our churches is the stamp box where we collect stamps to go to the Mary MacKillop Institute in East Timor. Fair Trade tea, coffee and hot chocolate supplies are for sale outside the churches. Farmers need a fair go too. Gold coins are being collected for Project Compassion. Parishioner's cars come and go as we ferry the elderly and unwell back to their homes after Mass.

Our Social Justice team recognizes that education is our key starting point. Four times a year we organise a guest speaker for the parish on various social justice issues. We're building up a parish social justice library.

But it's not just our Social Justice team that feels the Spirit moving within. Every member of our parish is encouraged to vigorously invest the talents God had entrusted to them.

Two parishioners have recently run fund raising concerts, another organised a grand final fundraising footy day. We fund raise for the Aboriginal communities in South Hedland, WA. We've bundled up clothing for the people of Cobar and raised money to buy physiotherapy equipment for an orphanage in India. We support the Sisters of Mercy Mission in the shanty town of Candela in Lima, Peru and we helped fund the building of a church toilet for Wilcannia parish.

It's not only the adult members of our community either. Our primary schools also got into the act with their "walk for water" fundraiser which helped build a well in the Spiritan mission in Kenya. One primary school aged child single-

handedly organised a car boot sale, the proceeds of which also went to Kenya.

During World Youth Day this year we helped sponsor eleven students from Mary MacKillop Institute, East Timor as well as young people from Port Hedland.

The Cana Community, who looks after the homeless in the inner city, is another of our favourites. One parishioner volunteers her services there. Others of us support them monetarily.

Each Advent we swing into preparation mode. Preparing ourselves and preparing our Christmas hampers. Each year the list of needy recipients grows. Each year our list of willing hamper helpers also grows.

Daily we reach out in solidarity to the poor, the lonely and the forgotten, past the fringes of our parish to the many people whose lives are not as comfortable as ours. Jesus is there.

Deacon David and Trish McKenzie  
*Lakes Parish*

# Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue

This time of the year is a busy one for interchurch and interfaith activities. The Two Bishops' Dialogue between Anglican Bishop Glenn Davies and Bishop David Walker attracted a record crowd of around 200 people this year at St John's Anglican Church Gordon with the topic "Is the Pope a means to or a hindrance to Christian unity?"

Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches in Dee Why organized a forum with the Muslim Affinity Intercultural Foundation on the topic "Muslims and Christians Living in Peace". It was held in the Cromer Hall and attracted a diverse audience of about 200 people.

In September Bishop David and other diocesan representatives were guests of the Muslim community at the fifth annual Affinity Friendship Dinner. In his welcoming address Mehmet Ozalp, CEO of Affinity, thanked those present saying that 'when we took a step to you, you took 10 to us'. It was also an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to share a sacred and beautiful experience – the breaking of the fast in the holy month of Ramadan.



By Sr Trish Madigan op

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