West Wagga Wagga Catholic Parish Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, San Isidore **The West Wagga Wag**

Issue 154

Coming Events

Come to Bethlehem Postponed till Dec 2016 Monthly Cuppa, after 9am Mass on last Sunday of the month Adoration - 6 to 7am daily, all night Fridays starting 9pm **Immaculate Conception** Tues 8 **Parish Pizza Pastoral Council Meeting 7pm** Parish Hall, all invited Tues 8 **Confraternity of Christ the Priest Christmas Party** 8 Benedict Av San Isidore bring a salad or desert, sausages and drinks provided 6.30pm Fri 18 **Parish Christmas Party Holy Trinity Primary** bring a salad or desert, sausages n drinks provided **Christmas Carols and Christmas Movie after** Sun 20 5.30 pm Mass St Stephen Sat 26 Sun 27 **Holy Family Holy Innocents** Mon 28 2016 Life & Family National **Conference Albury** Jan 21 – 24

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Wag Contacts

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The date for submissions for the next Wag is: Wednesday Dec 30th.

Happy Christmas, and Happy Year of Mercy!



December 2015

pastor's page

Year of Consecrated Life ends, **Consecrated Life continues** strong in West Wagga Parish

Over the past year, at the request of Pope Francis, the Catholic Church around the world has been commemorating the "Year of Consecrated Life". It was a time to come to more understanding of people like St Francis, founder of the Franciscans, St Benedict, founder of the Benedictines; and St Teresa of Avila, foundress of the Discalced Carmelites. We already know a bit about St Mary of the Cross McKillop. What do all of these saints have in common?

All of them, whether they were busy among the poor, teaching, or giving their lives in the service of prayer, bringing graces into the lives of all people in the world; all of these lived the "consecrated life". They all gave themselves to God by "religious profession", taking vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They lived as a community, possessing no personal property, sharing a special understanding of Jesus, and dedicated to a special apostolate for the good of the Church, the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Today, hundreds of thousands of Catholic men and women around the world have done the same. It is easy to overlook how amazing this is; it is unmatched by any other church or religion. We give special Australia day awards to people who gave up most of their time to help the community. These good men and women have given everything, including the joy of having their own husband or wife and their own

children, so as to become brothers and sisters to all the Faithful and in fact to the whole world!

Our West Wagga parish has a special connection with the Religious Life, because our parish is home to the Carmelites, to Presentation Sisters, to the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion, and it is in our parish, at 8 Benedict Avenue San Isidore, that we have the headquarters of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest. Fr Ryan, Fr Donoghue and I are professed members of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest. Br Vincent is our superior, and carries on our work and witness in Melbourne, visiting us here from time to time. We also have five novices and one aspirant who pray and study and prepare to take their vows, and, God willing, to become priests one day.

Our Confraternity is an Australian founded order. We are small but growing. On December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 2 new members will arrive in Australia, Paul and Danistan. They have been preparing to come for more than two years. We welcome them with great joy, thanking God for their generosity in answering Jesus' call to love and follow Him in this unique way. We also have others who have been preparing to come, going to Mass daily, studying, doing pastoral work, all in preparation for when they will join us too.

Our Confraternity spirituality centres on Jesus as the Eternal high Priest, our compassionate Priest and Victim who is "ever living to intercede" for us. We strive to offer everything we are and have and all we do united to Jesus as Priest and Victim of our daily Mass. His is our inspiration: as the Bible says,

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who

is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Our special apostolates include firstly the "Intensive Apostolate", running parishes with a team, aiming to evangelize the parish by a person-to-person approach, so that those who have drifted away from the practice of the faith may be helped back home and those who have never known the teaching of Jesus may hear His call to become part of His family in the Church. We aim to have the parish excited about evangelizing, to spread the "joy of the Gospel" with us. Our other main apostolates are supporting priests and media.

Pope Francis prayed that this year would lead Religious to "wake up the world", often asleep to the values that really matter, helping religious themselves to value their vocation and to live it joyfully in witness to Christ. May God bless all the religious in our parish, and inspire more young men and women to follow in the steps of so many religious saints, to help make a difference that will last forever.

And the Jubilee Year of Mercy!

From December 8, we will be celebrating the Year of Mercy, a new initiative of Pope Francis. This will be a special time to open our hearts to be forgiven by God and also to share mercy with our neighbour.

Mercy is God's greatest attribute; God longs to be merciful to us more than we long for it. We will be celebrating this year in many ways, which will be introduced over the coming months. Please pray that this year will be fruitful for us and the whole world.

Pope Francis in Africa last week: "please, don't exclude this possibility of becoming missionaries, to bring love, humanity and faith to other countries."



November Jokes



Nine Fun Facts

1. You can't wash your eyes with soap.

2. You can't count your hair;

3. You cant breathe through your nose, with your tongue out;

4. You just tried no. 3;

6. When you did no.3 you realised it's possible, only when you look like a dog;

7. You're smiling right now, because you were fooled;

8. You skipped no. 5;

9. You just checked to see if there is a no. 5

One day a Pirate and a bartender were talking to each other in a bar. The Bartender asked the pirate "Where did ya get that peg leg from?"

The Pirate responded " We were sailing the seas when a big ol' shark came up to me while I was swimmin' and bit off me leg." Later the Bartender asked "Where did you get that hook then?" The pirate responded "Well, me crew and I were in a battle and it got cut through the bone." The bartender then asked " Then where did ya get the eye patch from?"

The pirate said " In a harbor a bit of dust from land got in me eye." The bartender was puzzled and asked the pirate, "How would that make you get an eye patch?" The pirate responded, "First day with the hook."

A guy joins a monastery and takes a vow of silence. he's allowed to say two words every 7 years. After the first 7 years, the elders bring him in and ask him for his 2 words. "Cold floors," he says. They nod and send him away. 7 more years pass and they bring him in for his 2 words.

He clears his throat and say, "Bad food." they nod and send him away. 7 more years pass and they bring him in for his 2 words. "I quit," he says.

"That's not surprising," the elders say. "you've done nothing but complain since you got here."

Patient: Doctor, I feel like a pack of cards.

Psychiatrist: I'll deal with you later. Patient: Everyone keeps ignoring me.

Psychiatrist: Next please!

Sailor: I was shipwrecked, and lived on a can of sardines for a week. Captain: My, weren't you afraid that you'd fall off?

Student: Could I get in trouble if I didn't do something? Teacher: Well, I don't suppose so. Student: In that case, I didn't do my homework.

Jim: What's white, steep, and has ears?

Tara: I don't know. Jim: A snow-covered mountain. Tara: What about the ears? Jim: Haven't you ever heard of mountaineers?

Camp Counsellor: How did you get that horrible swelling on your nose? Camper: I bent down to smell a brose.

Camp Counsellor: There isn't a B in rose.

Camper: There was in this one!

The pastor stood before his congregation and announced, "I have bad news, I have good news, and I have bad news.: "The bad news is, the church needs

a new roof!" The congregation groaned. "The good news is, we have enough

"The good news is, we have enough money for the new roof." A cheer went up from the congregation. "The bad news is, it's still in your pockets."

Three men were deep in a discussion of the best positions for praying while a telephone repairman

worked nearby. "Kneeling is definitely best", claimed one. "No," another contended, "I get the best results standing with my arms outstreached to heaven." "You're both wrong," the third argued. "The most effective prayer position is lying on the floor face down." The telephone repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, guys," he interrupted, "the best praying I ever did was hanging upside down from a telephone pole."

When church secretary Mrs Daisy answered the phone, a man's voice asked, "Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?" The secretary thought she heard what he said, but asked, "I'm sorry, who?" The caller repeated, "Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?" Daisy thought a moment and then answered, "If you mean the preacher, then you may refer to him as 'Pastor' or 'Brother', but I'd prefer that you not refer to him as the 'head hog at the trough!" To this the man replied, "Well, I was wanting to give one hundred thousand dollars to the building fund." Quick as a wink, Daisy responded, "Hang on, sir, I believe I just heard his 'oink."

Teacher: Joey, please use the word "wagon" in a sentence. Joey: Ok, "If I told my dog to stop wagon his tail, he would still wag on."

Teacher: Charles, please use "discount" in a sentence. Charles: Yes, ma'am. "Does discount as a sentence?"

Teacher: Duff, please use the word "window" in a sentence. Duff: Yes, sir, here goes: "I entered a contest but didn't window."



One has claws at the end of its paws, and one is a pause at the end of a clause.

The Miracle that Led "Obi-Wan Kenobi" to Convert to Catholicism



Sir Alec Guinness is one of the most recognizable actors of the 20th century. While he appeared in lots of films over the years and won many awards, he best known as having played Obi-Wan Kenobi in Star Wars.

What many people don't know about him, though, is that at the age of 42 he converted to Catholicism – in part because of a miracle.

Guinness was born in 1914 in London to a broken family. He never knew his father and grew up in poverty. Though he was confirmed in the Anglican faith at 16, he was unsure of what he really believed about religion. Over the next few years he bounced around Presbyterianism, atheism, Marxism, Buddhism, and even attended a few Quaker meetings. Like a good Englishman of the early 20th century, though, he had no interest in Catholicism.

While rehearsing for the play Hamlet, an Anglican priest approached him and explained that he was blessing himself wrong and showed him the correct way. Something about the encounter had a spiritual impact on him, and he regained some interest in Anglicanism.

He was drawn further into the Anglican faith in the turmoil of World War II, but it wasn't until 1954 when he was 40 years old that he had another experience that would open him to considering Catholicism.

He was in France working on the film Father Brown, based on G. K. Chesterton's well known fictional crime-solving priest. He was playing the title role and so was dressed up as a Catholic priest. While walking down the street in priestly attire, a local child spotted him and mistook him to be a genuine Catholic priest. The child ran up, grabbed his hand trustingly, and walked with him down the road.

The trust and affection the child had

for Catholic priests had a deep impact on him and made him start to seriously consider Catholicism. He later explained:

Continuing my walk, I reflected that a Church that could inspire such confidence in a child, making priests, even when unknown, so easily approachable, could not be as scheming or as creepy as so often made out. I began to shake off my long-taught, long-absorbed prejudices.

Soon after, his son Matthew contracted polio and appeared to be close to death. Desperate and seeking divine help, Guinness started dropping by a local Catholic church to pray.

He made a deal with God: if God healed Matthew, he would allow his son to become Catholic if he wanted.

Against all expectations (miraculously?), his son recovered! So Guinness and his wife enrolled him in a Jesuit school. A few years later, Guinness, his wife, and his son all converted to Catholicism.

Guinness remained a faithful Catholic the rest of his life until he died in 2000. May he rest in peace!

The Holy Door - Year of Mercy

The beginning of the Jubilee Year is always solemnly marked by the opening of a Holy Door by the Pope in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. However, for this Jubilee of Mercy Pope Francis also wanted a Door of Mercy **in each diocese** so that everyone throughout the world may be able to celebrate the Jubilee.

History

The tradition of a holy door during a jubilee dates back to the fifteenth century: according to the description given in 1450 by a certain Giovanni Rucellai of Viterbo, it was Pope Martin V who in 1423, at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, opened the Holy Door for the first time in the history of the Jubilee.

Symbolism

A door in everyday life has several functions, all repeated by the symbol of the Holy Door:

* it marks the separation between inside and outside, between sin and the order of grace (Mi 7:18-19);

* it permits entry, to mercy and not condemnation (Mt 9:13);

* it provides protection, it provides salvation (Jn 10:7).

Jesus said: "I am the gate" (Jn 10:7). There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To Him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: "This is the Lord's own gate: where the just may enter" (Ps 117:20).

The Holy Door reminds the faithful of their responsibility when crossing the threshold: it is a decision which implies the freedom to choose, and at the same time the courage to abandon something, to leave something behind (cf. Mt 13, 44-46).



How This Carmelite Escaped Muslim Soldiers by Singing About Jesus

As a tall, lanky redhead born and raised in Colorado, 34 year-old Brother David Johnson definitely sticks out in Syria, the Middle Eastern country where he serves with the St. James the Persian Carmelite Monastery in Qara.

He originally came as a student to study the language, but decided to stay after he fell in love with the country and felt God's call to the religious life there.

That love for language and for God would one day save Brother Johnson's life. At a recent prayer breakfast in Denver, Brother Johnson recalled the story of Easter Monday, three years ago. He was up in the monastery tower, and, in typical, friendly Colorado fashion, waved hello to some Syrian military men he saw in the hills in the distance.

"I didn't even know there were Christians in the Middle East when I moved there – but there's two million of them." – Brother David Johnson in an interview to CNA

Immediately the army became suspicious and turned their convoy toward the monastery. When they arrived, they demanded to know who waved at them, and kidnapped Brother Johnson when they found out he was American, thinking him a spy.

"They said what is he doing here, he's probably just playing like he's a monk," Brother Johnson told CNA.

His brothers immediately started praying.

"My community, instead of panicking, they immediately went to the church, began the liturgy, began praying, began Mass," he said, "and I was in God's hands, I felt no fear."

Strangely at peace, joyful even, Brother Johnson began to sing songs of Jesus' resurrection to his captors in their native language. At first they were taken aback, but then Brother Johnson realized their hearts were softening.

"They said 'I've never heard that before, why don't you sing that again," Brother Johnson recalled one of the soldiers saying. "So I sang again, 'Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life."

The soldiers started laughing and clapping along, and decided they

would take him back to the monastery unharmed. But first, they had to show their friends the singing American brother.

"They opened the doors (to their camp) and had me sing these songs of the resurrection to a crowd of soldiers, and they all were clapping! I thought I was dreaming! I thought I had entered into an alternate reality!" Brother Johnson said.

While Brother Johnson is sure that his ability to speak in the soldier's native language helped in his immediate release, he said he is convinced that the prayers of his Brothers and the name of Jesus in the songs he sang is what saved his life that day. That's why his advice to all who are concerned about the Islamic terrorists in the Middle East is to pray.

"Pray, pray, pray," he said, "And





"In failing to confess, Lord, I would only hide You from myself, not myself from You." -- Saint Augustine

Don't wait for the hearse to take you to church.

It's hard to stumble when you're down on your knees.

What part of "Thou Shalt Not" don't you understand?

A clear conscience makes a soft pillow.

The wages of sin is death. Repent before payday.

Forbidden fruit creates many jams.

Never give the devil a ride. He will always want to drive.

Christians, keep the faith...but not from others!

Satan subtracts and divides. God adds and multiplies.

To belittle is to be little.

Don't let the littleness in others bring out the littleness in you.

God answers knee-mail.

THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS SHOW YOU HOW TO BUILD A SPIRITUAL CRIB IN YOUR HEART FOR CHRIST. USE IT TO PUT CHRIST INTO YOUR CHRISTMAS IN A REAL, LIVING WAY.

Read the thought indicated about Christ's first crib. Practice it during the day. Do this daily during December and make your heart a worthy crib for Christ on Christmas Day.

DEC.1 - THE STABLE



THE ROOM

Frequently during the day offer your heart to

the little Infant Jesus. Ask Him to make it His home.- Sweet Jesus, take my heart and make it meek and pure.

DEC.2 - THE ROOF

See that the roof of the stable is in good condition, so that the

Infant Jesus is protected from rain and snow. This you will do by carefully avoiding every uncharitable remark.-Jesus, teach me to love my neighbour as myself.

DEC.3 - CREVICES Carefully stop every

crevice in the walls of the stable, so that the

wind and cold may not enter there. Guard your senses against temptations. Guard especially your ears against sinful conversations.-Jesus, help me to keep temptations

out of my heart.

DEC.4 - COBWEBS

Clean the cobwebs from your spiritual crib. Diligently remove from

your heart every inordinate desire of being praised. Renew this intention at least three times today. – My Jesus, I want to please You in all I do today.

DEC.5 - FENCE

Build a fence about the crib of your heart by keeping a strict watch



over your eyes, especially at prayer. -Sweet Jesus, I long to see You.

DEC.6 - MANGER

Fix the best and warmest corner of your heart for the manger of Jesus. You will do so

by abstaining from what you like most in the line of comfort and amusement.— Mary, use these sacrifices to prepare my heart for Jesus in Holy Communion.

DEC.7 - HAY

Supply the manger of your heart with hay, by overcoming all feelings of pride, anger or envy.

— Jesus, teach me to know and correct my greatest sins.

DEC.8 - SOFT STRAW

Also provide your manger with soft straw by performing little

acts of mortification; for instance, bear the cold without complaints; or sit and stand erect.- Dear Jesus, Who suffered so much for me, let me suffer for love of You.

DEC.9 - SWADDLING CLOTHES

Prepare these for the Divine Infant by folding your hands when you pray, and praying slowly and thoughtfully.— Jesus let me love you more and more.

DEC.10 - BLANKETS

Provide the manger of vour with soft warm BLANKETS blankets. Avoid harsh and angry words; be kind and gentle to all.—Jesus, help me to be meek and humble like You.

DEC.11 - FUEL

Bring fuel to the crib of Jesus. Give up your own will; obey your superiors cheerfully and promptly. — Jesus, let me do Your will in all

things

DEC.12-WATER

Bring fresh clean water to the crib. Avoid every untruthful word and every deceitful act.-

Dearest Mary, obtain for me true contrition for my sins.



DEC.13 -PROVISIONS

Bring a supply of food to the crib. Deprive yourself of some food at



mealtime or candy as a treat. — Jesus, be my strength and nourishment.

DEC.14 - LIGHT

See that the crib has sufficient light. Be neat and orderly about your person; keep everything in its place in your room. — Jesus, be the life and light of my soul.

DEC.15 - FIRE

Take care to have the crib of your heart warmed by a cozy fire. Be grateful to God for the love He has shown us in becoming man; behave with grateful respect towards your parents and relatives. — Jesus, how can I return Your love; how can I show my

DEC.16 - THE OX

gratitude to You?

Lead the ox to the crib. Obey cheerfully without making excuses and without asking "why." -- I will obey for love of You, Jesus.

DEC.17 - THE DONKEY

Bring the donkey to the crib. Offer to the Divine Infant your bodily

THE DONKEY

strength; use it in the service of others .--- Jesus, accept my service of love; I offer it for those who do not love You.

DEC.18 - GIFTS

Gather some presents for the Divine Infant and His Blessed Mother.

Give alms for the poor and say an extra decade of the rosary.— Come, Jesus, to accept my gifts and to take possession of my heart.

DEC.19 - LAMBS

Strive to bring some little lambs, meek and patient. Do not murmur or complain.— Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like Yours.





















Get your hearts ready for Jesus!

DEC.20 - SHEPHERDS

Invite the shepherds to pay homage to our



newborn King. Imitate their watchfulness; stress in your speech and thoughts the idea that Christmas is important because Jesus will be born again in you. – Jesus, teach me to love You above all things.

DEC.21 - THE KEY Provide the stable with

a key to keep out thieves. Exclude from your heart every sinful

thought, every rash judgment — Dear Jesus, close my heart to all that hurts you.

DEC.22 - ANGELS Invite the angels to adore God with you.



Cheerfully obey the inspirations of your guardian angel and of your conscience. — Holy Guardian Angel, never let me forget that You are with me always.

DEC.23 - ST. **JOSEPH**

Accompany Saint



Joseph from door to door. Learn from him silently and patiently to bear refusals and disappointments. Open wide your heart and beg Him to enter with the Blessed Virgin Mary.- Saint Joseph, help me to prepare for a worthy Christmas Communion.

DEC.24 - THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Go meet your Blessed Mother. Lead her to the manger of your heart and beg her to lay the Divine Infant in

it. Shorten your chats and telephone conversations and spend more time today thinking of Jesus and Mary and Joseph. --Come. dear Jesus, Come; my heart belongs to You.



the very first King size bed

Pope urges German Bishops to Guard against resigning Themselves to Problems

Rome, November 20, 2015 ZENIT.org

Pope Francis received in audience the prelates of the Episcopal Conference of Germany at the end of their "ad Limina" visit.

At the end of the audience the Holy Father handed them a written discourse in which he thanks the German Church for the support given in the form of many works of charity.

Francis writes that while during the 1960s almost all the faithful participated in Holy Mass every Sunday, now there is attendance of often less than ten per cent, and

The Lord never tires of forgiving, it is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.

Pope Francis



In this situation, the Pope Francis emphasises that first it is necessary to overcome a "paralysing resignation. ... we can be inspired by the life of the first Christians", such as Priscilla and Aquila, St. Paul's faithful collaborators, who bore witness "with convincing words, but above all with their life, that the truth based on Christ's love for His Church, is truly worthy of faith. They opened up their house for the proclamation of the Gospel".

"Sacramental life must be one of the bishop's fundamental concerns".

> In this regard the Pope highlights two points: Confession and Eucharist. "Confession is the place where the gift of God's forgiveness and mercy is given. In Confession, there begins the transformation of

each Christian and the reform of the Church. I trust that greater attention will be given to this Sacrament, which is so important for spiritual renewal, in diocesan and parochial pastoral planning during the Holy Year, and also afterwards. It is also necessary always to emphasise the close relationship between the Eucharist and the priesthood. Pastoral plans that do not accord sufficient importance to priests in their ministry of governing, teaching and sanctifying with regard to the structure and the sacramental life of the Church, experience teaches us, are destined to fail".

Finally, "a task of the Bishops that is never sufficiently appreciated is commitment to life. The Church must never tire of being an advocate for life and must not take steps back in her announcement that human life is to be protected unconditionally from the moment of conception until natural death. Here we must never make compromises, as otherwise we too become accomplices to the unfortunately widespread throwaway culture".

by Rev. Frederic Nelson



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West Wagga Parish																	
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