
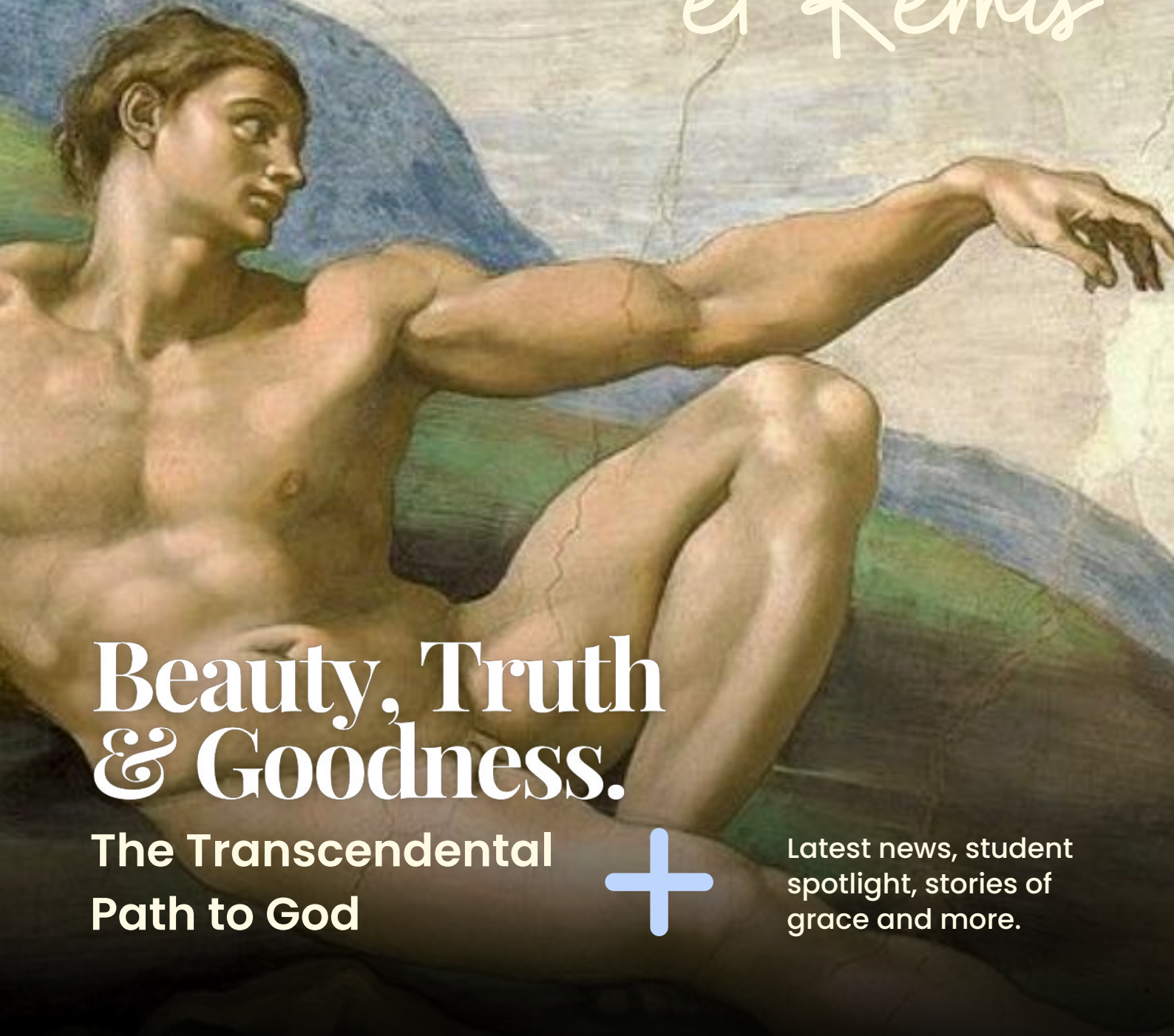


Areté 

Issue 6 | Spring edition

VELLS

et Remis

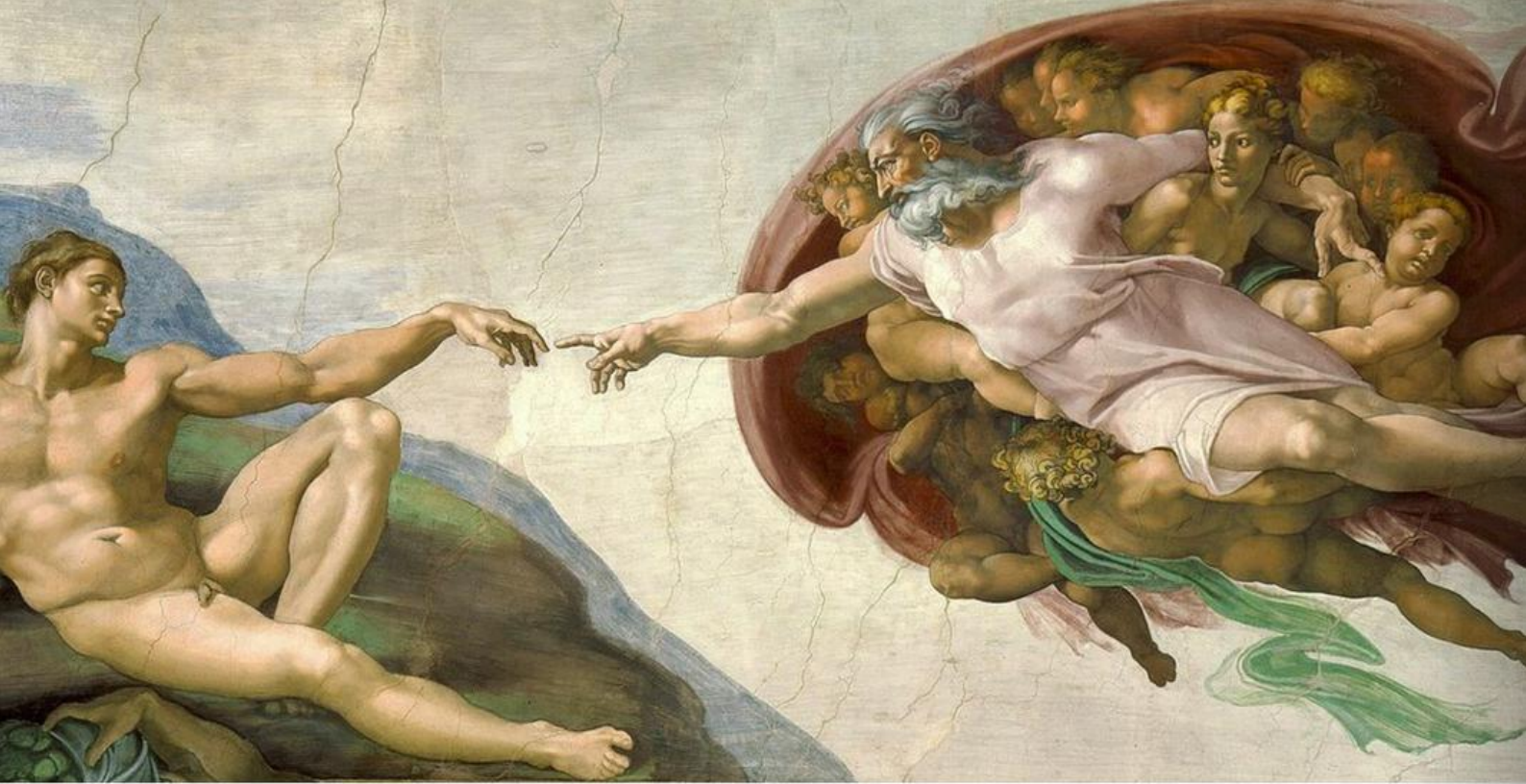


**Beauty, Truth
& Goodness.**

**The Transcendental
Path to God**



Latest news, student
spotlight, stories of
grace and more.



'The Creation of Adam' (Creazione di Adamo)- Michelangelo c. 1512

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The Basilica of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain, is often considered one of the most beautiful Catholic churches in the world. Designed by renowned architect Antoni Gaudí, this masterpiece combines Gothic and Art Nouveau styles and is famous for its stunning façades, intricate sculptures, and vibrant stained-glass windows. Though still under construction, it has captivated visitors with its unique architecture and profound symbolism rooted in the Christian faith.

HELLO FROM

Chris

Welcome to this special edition of VER magazine.

In this issue we wanted to focus upon the transcendentals - beauty, goodness, truth, and unity and how our experience of these lead us into the mystery of God.

In fact, our experience of the transcendentals is actually a participation in the Source of all beauty, goodness, truth and unity- the Triune God.

This has many implications for the evangelising mission of the Church. How do people experience beauty, goodness, truth and unity in our world? How do we help them to discover them in the Church? How do they experience beauty, truth, goodness, and unity in us?

This issue features a moving testimony from Leanna Langlands, who shares how the transcendentals played a pivotal role in her conversion journey.

Areté Centre graduate Tania Rimac shares her reflections on the recent Parish Renewal Conference she convened, offering insights into the power of renewal within our Church communities.



Professor Renée Kohler-Ryan provides a beautiful and thought-provoking reflection on how beauty specifically reveals God in the world around us.

As I write, we are about to enter into the last intensive for the 2024 cohort in the Foundations of Missionary Leadership Program. It's been an experience of beauty, goodness, and truth, to accompany the 53 students in the program this year. We wish them well as they continue to grow as missionary leaders in our Church today.

We hope you are inspired by this issue.

Fr Chris Ryan MGL
Director
Arété Centre for Missionary Leadership

My *Unorthodox* Journey Home

“You will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free”

*John 8:32-33

By Leanna Langlands

These words capture my journey to becoming a Catholic, which was not a quick or easy decision. As a baby I was baptised into the Greek Orthodox faith by my beautiful mother and with her guidance and care I led a very active faith-filled Orthodox childhood.

However, my path took an unexpected turn when I commenced Year 7 at St. Clare’s College in Waverley.

At the tender age of 13, I attended my first inaugural Whole School Mass at Mary Immaculate Church and was awestruck by its grandeur and magnificence.



Leanna Langlands on her first day of school with her brother

“for the first time I felt that I had truly heard the Gospel of Jesus. It was as if I had found the truth and was indeed set free.”



Leanna, 13 –St Clare’s College Waverley

As the Mass began, I was shocked that I understood every word. It was all in English! It was so different to what I had experienced in the Orthodox tradition and it struck my heart in a powerful way. In the Mass I was offered peace through a warm handshake, and for the first time I felt that I had truly heard the Gospel of Jesus. It was as if I had found the truth and was indeed set free.

In a perfect world, I would have converted within weeks and the rest would be history – but the reality was that my mother would never surrender her daughter to Catholicism and she refused to allow me to convert. The Orthodox tradition was deeply ingrained in our Greek culture. My father in his wisdom explained that life was a journey and I must choose to either embark on a lifelong quest or accept what I could not change.



Mary Immaculate Church Waverley

The Franciscan Friars ran Mary Immaculate Church at St Clare's during my time there, and they taught me a great deal about the Catholic faith and traditions, which I treasured. Unfortunately, I changed schools in Years 11 and 12, leaving a piece of my heart behind. After that, I attended university, travelled, worked, got married, had children, and often prayed with Rosary Beads given to me by a kind friar - never telling a soul!

What was it about the Catholic Faith that kept calling to me?

Years passed, and I began teaching at St Charles' Primary School in Waverley - and yes, I walked back into Mary Immaculate Church. Even though I was now an adult, I still felt that same sense of awe I had felt as a teen. I felt like I was home.



I studied to ensure I could teach Religious Education at St Charles', deepening my understanding and devotion to my faith. The decision to become Catholic had been made in my heart. It was my destiny.

After a long period I finally became a Catholic, renewing my baptismal promise - I was free! My faith journey deepened in 2023 as I completed the Areté Centre for Missionary Leadership Course. Thanks to that course I found the courage to see my faith journey as a gift that inspires others to keep searching for the truth in the Catholic faith that He established.



Leanna on retreat with her 2023 cohort

"What is faith? It is that which gives substance to our hopes, which convinces us of things we cannot see." (Hebrews 11:1-2). My whole life I had faith that I would one day follow the call that God placed in my heart, and now I celebrate my Catholic identity as a blessing and gift.



Thanks to the Maximus Men’s Network for having us!

Fr Chris Ryan was joined by graduate Andrew Condeleon at the Areté stand at this year’s Maximus Men’s Conference ‘Be Not Afraid’. The event was sold out as almost 500 men came together for a series of enriching talks, Mass, Reconciliation and fellowship. We’d like to offer a big thank you to organiser Ivica Kovac for having us again at such an inspiring event, and to Andrew Condeolon for generously helping ‘man’ our stand! We look forward to next year’s event which we are sure will be even bigger!



Did you miss our Open Night? Watch it now!

Did you miss the Open Night? Watch "Witness in the Workplace" Now!

If you couldn't join us for the Areté Centre's Open Night, don't worry—we've got you covered! Our inspiring conversation with Fr Chris Ryan and Fr Ken Barker on being a witness in the workplace is now available to watch at your convenience.

[\[Click here to watch the video\]](#)

In this engaging session, they explore practical ways to live out your faith in everyday work settings. Whether you attended the event or are catching up, we know you'll find this discussion insightful and motivating!

Final call for our 2025 Program!

This is your last chance to apply for the Foundations of Missionary Leadership program for 2025!

With only a few spots remaining, don't miss the opportunity to be part of this transformative journey. If you're feeling called to deepen your faith and develop your leadership skills to serve the Church's mission, now is the time to act. Apply today before the final spots are filled!

[Download our prospectus here.](#)



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Discover your God-given gifts & how you can use them in service to the Lord.

Areté
CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP
FOUNDATIONS OF MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM PROSPECTUS

CWN Emmaus Info Session

Emmaus is a spiritual accompaniment program for women, brought to you by Catholic Women's Network.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor or applying to be a mentee, they will be hosting a free online session on Thursday 26th September at 7:30pm, where you can find out more.

Come along to hear from the CWN team about the program being offered to women across Sydney.

Registrations now open.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Online Information Session

THURSDAY SEPT 26
7:30PM - 8:30PM

- Find out more information about the Emmaus program
- A chance for to have any of your questions answered

REGISTER NOW

Free registration \$
<https://bit.ly/3ZbeORO>
Zoom



EMMAUS
Spiritual Accompaniment for Women
CATHOLIC WOMEN'S NETWORK

Beauty will
save the world

By Fr Chris Ryan MGL

Beauty will save the world”, says Prince Myshkin, the protagonist of the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*. People may have heard the quote, but they do not always realise that Myshkin was not speaking of the beauty to be found in music, architecture, or the visual arts, but of the beauty of Jesus Christ when he said this.

There is a profound paradox to this truth, for while the Church acclaims Christ as “the fairest of the children of men and grace is poured upon [his] lips” (Psalm 44), he is also the crucified and disfigured one, who “had neither beauty nor majesty, nothing to attract our eyes, no grace to make us delight in him (Isaiah 53:2).

As Cardinal Ratzinger put it some years before he became pope, “it is not merely the external beauty of the Redeemer’s appearance that is glorified: rather, the beauty of Truth appears in him, the beauty of God himself who draws us to himself and, at the same time captures us with the wound of Love” (2002 Address to the Rimini Meeting of Communion and Liberation).

We see here in the future pope’s words the complete coincidence of truth and beauty in Christ. In Jesus, beauty and truth are one; the truth is beautiful, and the beauty of Christ’s love, which is both revealed and hidden in the wounds of his passion and death, is manifest as the deepest truth.

Christ’s beauty draws us to the Truth, which in turn convinces us of the goodness of God. In Jesus, not only do truth and beauty coincide, but so too does goodness. What does the goodness of God consist of? Love. Perfect and pure love.

The implications for evangelisation here are manifold, but I want to highlight two foundational points here. First, this is the deepest meaning of the *via pulchritudinis*, or the ‘way of beauty’. There’s an important place for recovering the great tradition of sacred art and music in our Church, and for the creation of new works of art that beautifully reflect the goodness of God. But at its deepest level the way of beauty takes us into the mystery of love poured out upon the Cross. Jesus is the true *via pulchritudinis*.

Second (and this follows on from the first point), the beauty of Jesus is reflected in the holiness of the saints. This is not so much about an encouragement for evangelisers to be inspired by the lives of the saints (although this would be wonderful), but for evangelisers to respond generously to the call to holiness themselves.

The more deeply we are united to Jesus, the more his beauty, his truth, and his goodness are reflected in us. Saints make saints.

Cheryl Surrey Class of 2024

Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, Cheryl Surrey now resides in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she is an active member of St. Peter Chanel, Catholic Parish of Waimakariri. In her professional role as the New Zealand Relationship Guide for Divine Renovation, Cheryl combines her extensive experience with a deep commitment to fostering transformative relationships within the Church community.

We sat down with Cheryl to learn more about her life. Here's what she shared:

Tell us about your role at Divine Renovation and a standout moment or achievement during your time with Divine Renovation.

I'm very blessed to work for a ministry that intentionally focusses on parish renewal. I find great joy in being able to support, encourage and accompany priests and lay leaders all across New Zealand, and one of the greatest gifts is experiencing first hand the incredible and exciting stories of conversions and fruitfulness. My role at Divine Renovation as NZ Relationship Guide covers a variety of responsibilities, from strategy development and implementation, to story gathering and event planning. We have 6 Dioceses in New Zealand, and we're seeing a real desire from parishes all across the country, to be on mission. A recent standout moment was travelling to Harrogate, England for the DR Catholic Parish Summit Conference where we had 15 Kiwis in attendance. It was an incredibly catalysing experience to travel to the other side of the world and celebrate, pray, and worship with over 850 leaders, priests, and bishops from across the world - all on fire for parish renewal!



Tell us about the highlight of your Areté journey and how your studies have impacted you in our ministry.

The very first intensive at the beginning of the year was a very profound time for me. There's something incredibly exciting about beginning a new year with a strong sense of anticipation and expectation that the Lord is going to do something new in your heart, and in your life. I recall with a strong sense the notion of 'becoming fire', and the quote from St Catherine of Siena: "Be who you are called to be and you will set the world on fire!" Areté is giving me a very unique experience to channel my love and devotion to Christ through the lens of Missionary Discipleship.

It's giving my work in ministry a clarity and focus that I didn't have before. So often I am being reminded, through the lectures and content, that to love people as Christ does, we need to meet them where they are at, and this is radical! For me, it's an exercise in the virtue of magnanimity - the call to greatness! It's not always easy to do, but it's giving me a zeal and a passion to orient all my gifts and strengths for the building up of the Church in an incredibly life-giving way. I'm so grateful!

“

It's giving my work in ministry a clarity and focus that I didn't have before. So often I am being reminded, through the lectures and content, that to love people as Christ does, we need to meet them where they are at, and this is radical!

”





Tell us about your passion for photography and what inspires you as a creative.

From a very young age, perhaps 15 or 16, I've had a love for photography. I remember going to youth events to watch my friends play in their bands, with a camera in hand, eager to capture the fun, moments, and memories. It's stayed with me all my life. For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by people's journeys - I love hearing about the twists and turns, the providential moments and encounters that have contributed to someone's 'story'. Photographs are powerful. They can bring all your senses together instantly - how you felt, what you heard, the warmth of the sun, the smell in the air.. They're tangible and precious and I think, they also help us to be grateful for our blessings. I've photographed newborns to 80th birthday parties, weddings to ordinations. I love being a fly on the wall, candidly capturing all the beautiful 'in-between' moments of one's life.

I don't get to do it as much these days for clients, but I try to keep it up by snapping my three young kids as we adventure on the weekends, whether at home on the farm, or out and about.

What is your favourite book?

I love reading books, and I'm a keen learner! It's hard to choose just one, but I'm currently reading: Unreasonable Hospitality by Will Guidara, Virtuous Leadership by Alexandre Havard, The 80/20 Principle by Richard Koch

Who is your favourite saint?

My confirmation saint is St Francis Xavier. I was always fascinated by his life as a missionary, leaving home and going to the other side of the world for the Gospel. Little did I realise he'd have a part to play in my own journey in a very tangible way. I have no doubt his intercession for me has helped me on my own path, as I left my home in Scotland and now live on the other side of the world!

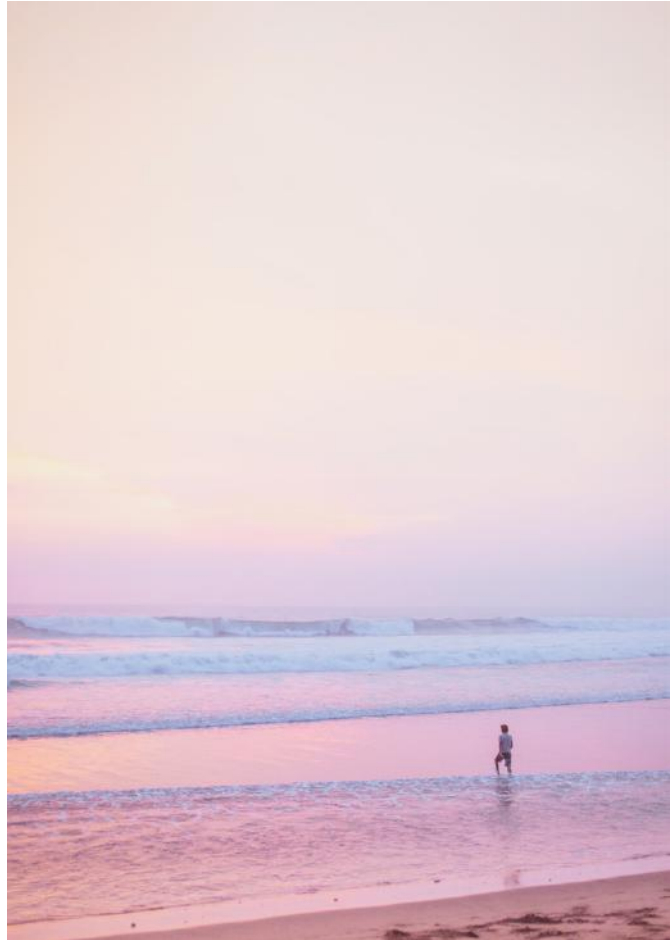


What's your favourite Bible Verse?

Matthew 6:25-34

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Photograph: Cheryl Surrey



BEARERS OF GOD'S BEAUTY.

By Professor Renee Kohler-Ryan

When St Augustine in his Confessions described his joy at realising the reality of God in his life, he declared "How late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new!" The best way he could find to express both his joy and his sense of fulfillment at finding what he had sought for so long was in terms of Beauty.

How and why did he choose to call God "Beauty", rather than "Truth", "Goodness", or even "Way", "Life"? And what can we learn from his emphasis on Beauty?

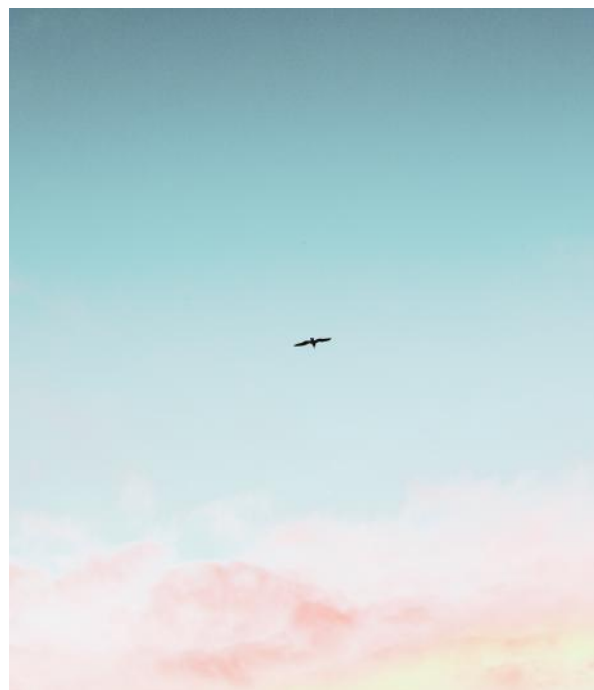
The idea of beauty can be very difficult to capture. Philosophers in the wisdom tradition have traditionally thought of beauty as one of the ways to think about being - what we call the "transcendentals" of truth, goodness, unity, and beauty.

Unlike the others in this list, beauty seems more prone to relativism and subjectivity. If one of my friends does not respond in the same way to something I find beautiful, it's usually not going to end the friendship!

Instead, we tell ourselves that everyone has their own particular tastes. Beauty, we are so often told, is “just subjective” or “only in the eye of the beholder”. But Augustine found otherwise. The reality of God in his life was indisputably beautiful – which is to say, it completed all his desires, all his longings.

Something beautiful is ordered toward its purpose, thriving so fully that the human senses and mind respond the desire to spread their joy.

He had found what – or better, Who – he was looking for. Augustine’s quest for beauty was deeply personal and this gives us another clue as to why he calls God “Beauty” to emphasise just how deeply his conversion has affected him.



Up until this point of his life, he tells us, he sought what was desirable outside himself. He even made the mistake of thinking that Creation was God. But then Christ speaks to him, through Scripture and the Church. Augustine finds that the beauty of God is best encountered through the most intimate and purposeful relationship: between Creator and creature, in communities of believers.

He re-orientes himself, seeing that the beauty of the exterior world must be known in light of the love of our Creator and Redeemer. More importantly, the great sign of God’s existence in Creation is in the human longing to be in communion with God, which is fulfilled through the life of the Church.

Something beautiful is ordered toward its purpose, thriving so fully that the human senses and mind respond the desire to spread their joy.

“The prophet Isaiah tells us: “How beautiful are the feet of the ...messenger of good news”. (Isaiah 52: 7)

This is where Augustine has something to teach us about what it means to be missionary leaders. The prophet Isaiah tells us: “How beautiful are the feet of the ...messenger of good news”. (Isaiah 52: 7) Those who spread the Gospel are bringing beauty into the world, and everything they are becomes more beautiful – which is to say, more integrated and more fully alive – down to their very feet. The feet of a missionary bring beauty with them wherever they go. This beauty is the message that Christ asked all his disciples to spread.



Professor Renée Köhler-Ryan, PhD, has been with The University of Notre Dame Australia since 2011 and is the Deputy Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Philosophy and Theology. She teaches Aesthetics, Philosophy of the Human Person, and Political Philosophy, as well as courses that emphasise the importance of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. She is a published author, wife and mother of 5 and sits on various catholic committees and boards.

P R A Y E R O F
S T A U G U S T I N E

Too late have I loved you,
O Beauty so ancient, O Beauty so new.
Too late have I loved you!

You were within me but I was
outside myself, and there I sought you!
In my weakness, I ran after the beauty
of the things you have made.

You were with me, and I was not with you.

The things you have made kept me
from you - the things which would have
no being unless they existed in you!

You have called, you have cried,
and you have pierced my deafness.

You have radiated forth,
you have shined out brightly,
and you have dispelled my blindness.

You have sent forth your fragrance,
and I have breathed it in,
and I long for you.

I have tasted you,
and I hunger and thirst for you.

You have touched me,
and I ardently desire your peace.



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You are called for such a time as this.

By Tania Rimac

God is not surprised by our circumstances or the state of our world and calls us to love and serve Him where we find ourselves, and according to our state in life. It is by God's grace and through His strength that we can, with confidence and boldness, go forward and be His witness "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

"For such a time as this" was the premise and title for the second Parish Renewal Conference held in Sydney, on Saturday 3 August. Close to 500 of God's faithful across Sydney and other diocese, including Wollongong and Broken Bay, and as far as Armidale and New Zealand, gathered for the conference hosted by the Parish Renewal Team from the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation.

The conference consisted of plenary talks, workshops, an Expo, time for prayer and Mass, presided by Bishop Umbers.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher opened the conference with his talk "For Such a Time as This: You are Called".

Addressing the faithful, the Archbishop acknowledged the challenges faced by people of faith and encouraged everyone to stay vigilant for opportunities to share the Good News. He urged them to be joyful witnesses of the Gospel, reaching out to family, friends, and colleagues who may be disconnected from the Church or do not yet know Christ.



Despite challenges, the Archbishop highlighted the gifts and opportunities found in the Church of Sydney - including a renewed focus on mission across the archdiocese, with many of the lay faithful actively living and proclaiming their faith; generous service of laity in parishes alongside parish priests using Spiritual Gifts; a more youthful average than elsewhere across Australia; vibrant ethnic communities that add to the rich tapestry of the Church in Sydney and new ecclesial communities.



Special guest speaker Bishop John Adams from the Diocese of Palmerston North, New Zealand, shared practical strategies for community renewal. He shared a success story from his previous parish, which, despite losing its church in the 2011 earthquake, underwent significant renewal under his leadership before his appointment as Bishop in 2023.

Bishop John began by building a team of lay faithful, people with a lived relationship with Christ and of varied gifts, to work closely with him to bring his vision for the parish alive! One of the first initiatives of the parish team was to establish Alpha, and what the parish saw was many Catholics returning to the sacraments and many others coming to faith.

With Alpha, and other offerings that helped people grow in faith, the parish was able to increase engagement, including Mass attendance to around 11%.

As parish priest Bishop John was frustrated with low Mass attendance (New Zealand average of 2-3%), lack of engagement and outreach of the parish community. Bishop Adams recognised that he could not leave things as they presently were and decided to embark on a new way of leading his parish, believing that he was placed in 'such a time as this' to make a difference, trusting that God would guide him.

With Alpha, and other offerings that helped people grow in faith, the parish was able to increase engagement, including Mass attendance to around 11%.

Areté Alumna, Cathy Coman, gave a plenary talk about Charisms, titled "You are Gifted", and encouraged all gathered to discern their unique Gifts so that they can share in the mission of the Church according to how God has gifted them and is calling them to.





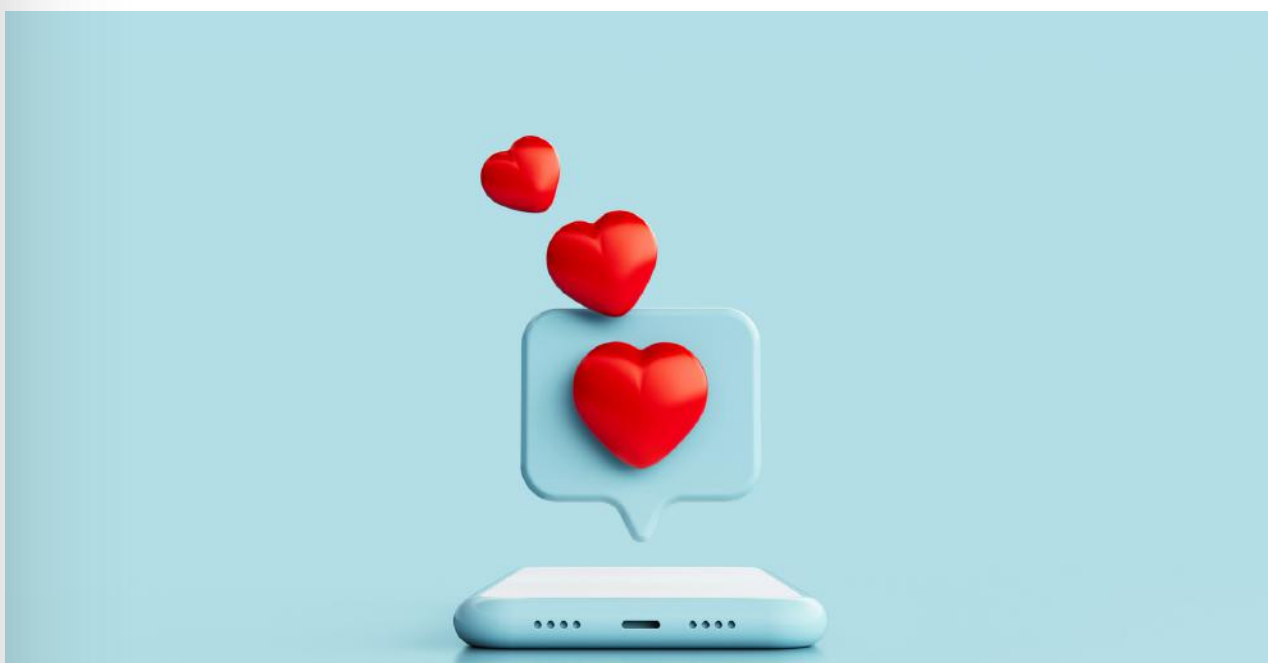
“I was deeply moved, motivated and filled with hope, faith and love. I feel more prepared for such a time as this, than ever before”.

To accompany the talk Terrie Yule gave a testimony of how discerning her charisms has brought her clarity and freedom in how she is being called to serve God “for such a time as this”.

Delegates shared that they were encouraged in a number of ways, with one delegate saying that they were “so happy that our clergy are enthusiastic and energetic, in trying to renew our parishes” and another adding that it was their “first conference related to Church, and I was deeply moved, motivated and filled with hope, faith and love. I feel more prepared for such a time as this, than ever before”.

Each day, we must remember that the Church is a gift from God and that we, the faithful, are the Church. Like Esther and many saints before us, each baptised person—clergy, religious, and laity—has been gifted “for such a time as this.” We are called to move forward in faith and courage, sharing our stories of what God has done for us, and using our gifts to make a difference through His grace and our commitment to love and serve Him daily.

Bring Beauty, Truth, and Goodness to Your Parish Social Media Strategy.



At the recent Parish Renewal Conference in Sydney, our General Manager, Laura Neeson, shared practical insights on developing and implementing an effective social media strategy grounded in the principles of beauty, truth, and goodness. Here are three key takeaways:

Share Visual Beauty:

- 1.** Use high-quality images and videos that reflect the beauty of your parish and the liturgy. Highlight moments from Mass, sacraments, and community events, as well as the architecture and sacred art in your church.



Highlight how parishioners live out their calling to love and serve others.

2. Communicate Truth with Clarity: In a world of information overload, your social media should offer clear, concise, and truthful messages that are held in love. Share teachings of the faith, Scripture reflections, and explanations of Church traditions in a way that is accessible and inviting. Truth is compelling when communicated authentically and compassionately.

3. Reflect Goodness Through Community: Showcase the goodness of your parish community by sharing stories of service, charity events, and testimonies of faith. Highlight how parishioners live out their calling to love and serve others. This demonstrates the goodness of the Church and encourages others to participate in the mission of spreading Christ's love.

“By bringing beauty, truth, and goodness to social media, we can transform our digital spaces into reflections of God’s love and grace.”

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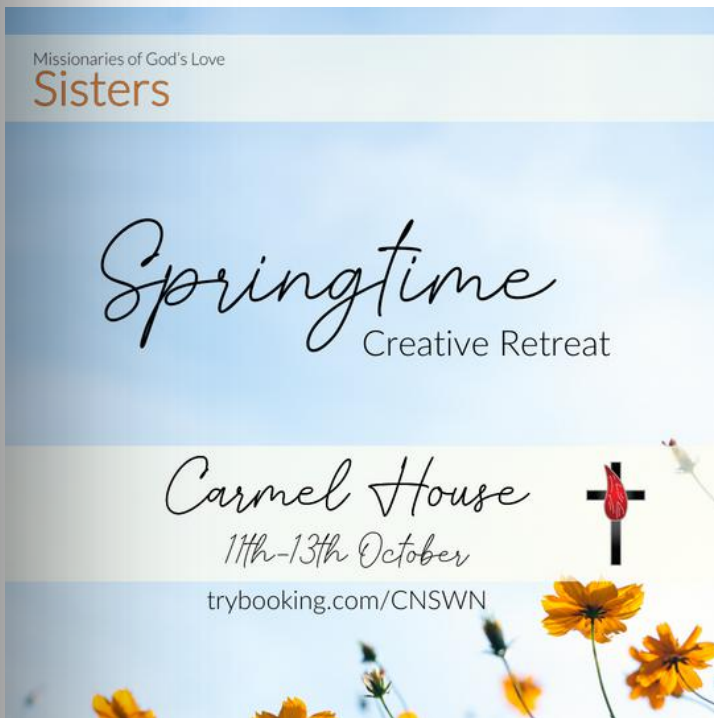


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UPCOMING EVENTS





Springtime Creative Retreat
11th-13th October 2024

Come and experience the healing power of creativity as we step into the blossoming wonders of Spring. Nurture your inner self and watch the boundless possibilities that emerge from spending time co-creating with God.

Venue: Carmel House,
345 St Andrews Rd, Varroville NSW
Bookings: [Click Here](#) (by 27 September)
Contact: Judy mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com

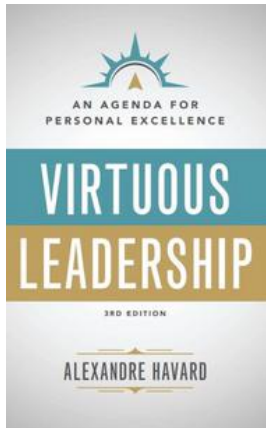


Alight Women's Retreat
Saturday 2nd November 2024

As the season of Advent approaches, join the Missionaries of God's Love Sisters for Alight, a special women's retreat. Rekindle the flame of your faith and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ through a day of reflection, prayer, and fellowship as we explore themes of hope, anticipation and joy. This retreat is being supported by the Catholic Women's Network in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Venue: St Christopher's Parish, Holsworthy NSW
Bookings: [Click Here](#) (by 25 October)
Contact: Berna
mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com

Watch | Read | Listen



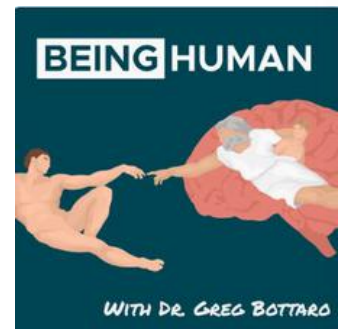
Virtuous Leadership by Alexandre Havard,

Virtuous Leadership outlines the key classical virtues crucial to effective leadership, such as magnanimity, humility, prudence, courage, self-control, and justice. It illustrates how these virtues foster personal growth and lead to true self-fulfilment. Additionally, the book delves into the Christian theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, emphasising that a comprehensive understanding of leadership is incomplete without them.

Currently being read by our Student Spotlight - Cheryl!

Being Human Podcast, Dr Greg Bottaro

Being Human by Dr. Gregory Bottaro offers insightful discussions on the intersection of psychology and Catholic faith. Each episode provides practical tips for personal growth and spiritual well-being, making it a must-listen for anyone seeking to live a more integrated, authentic life.



CabrinI - Director Alejandro Monteverde

CabrinI (2023) is an inspiring drama about St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first U.S. citizen to be canonised. The film beautifully captures her faith and determination as she overcomes challenges to help immigrants and the poor. A powerful tribute to her lasting legacy, CabrinI is both moving and uplifting. Now [Streaming here](#)



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