

Areté 

ISSUE 5 | AUTUMN EDITION

VELLIS

et Remis



The Power of Teamwork

The transformative
impact of mission-
driven teams.



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



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HELLO FROM

Chris

The start of 2024 has been bustling with activity as we celebrated the graduation of the 2023 Areté cohort and welcomed a fresh group of participants into our 2024 program.

In addition to these milestones, we've had the privilege of spreading the message of the Areté Centre and missionary leadership at various conferences and events across Australia and New Zealand, attended by both clergy and lay people.

Recently, I discussed with a friend the noticeable signs of renewal within the Church. Despite many ongoing challenges, there's a growing sense of renewal and hope, with the Holy Spirit seemingly reinvigorating many hearts.

We've experienced unprecedented interest this year from laypeople eager to respond to the invitation to take this journey with us in 2024, leading to our longest waiting list yet.

We are eager to see how this enthusiasm translates into the future growth of our Church. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to move among us, inspiring us to reach new heights and accomplish even more for the Kingdom of God.



Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy the latest issue of our e-magazine. We look forward to welcoming new missionary disciples taking up the challenge to be leaders in our Church's mission into the future.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Fr Chris Ryan MGL
Director, Areté Centre
for Missionary Leadership



Mountain ranges, Peru

HOW A HIKE IN PERU LED TO A JOURNEY HOME

Summit of Salvation

By Joy Pertile

Growing up in a devout Italian Catholic household in Chicago, USA, I attended Mass weekly, yet found myself grappling with the depths of my Catholic faith. I never really understood what I believed as a Catholic. At 16, influenced by a close friend's conversion to Protestant evangelicalism after a trip to the Deep South, I, too, drifted away from the Church, swayed by the allure of a newfound spiritual path.

Immersing myself in evangelical teachings, I became proficient in scripture and evangelisation, feeling content in my newfound faith. However, profound tragedy struck in my mid-twenties with the loss of my mother to cancer.

My life had been shattered and I felt so alone, unable to understand why God had not healed her. I was told that talking to my mum was a grave sin since there is no concept of a communion of saints in Protestant theology. I was so lonely without her, and for the first time I questioned my Protestant faith.



Joy, her husband Stephano and son Luca

Relocating to Virginia years later, I found myself drawn back to Catholic rituals. I started sneaking into the vigil Mass and going to my evangelical church on Sunday morning.

Catholicism is considered a cult by many in evangelical circles but I loved being back at Mass, although I couldn't figure out why.

It was then that I started reading about Catholicism, the early church, and books by modern theologians like Scott Hahn and David Currie. They explain the contrast between Catholic doctrine and Protestantism on topics like the Eucharist, Mary, praying to the saints, reconciliation, the Pope and many other areas.

As a Protestant I was taught this was idol worship and to stay far from Catholicism. When I read how much evidence there was to support the Catholic faith, I felt so silly for being so easily persuaded away from it. And ashamedly, as well as being extremely anti-Catholic, I even tried to convert others away from it.



Joy at the first Intensive of her Areté Journey, 2023

When I turned 30, I embarked on a month-long hiking expedition in the high mountain range of Peru. Accompanied by a group of 14 Italians from my father's hometown, including my cousin, we were led by former street boys from Lima.

These individuals had undergone profound transformations, having surrendered their lives to Christ through a Don Bosco mission. Witnessing their devout prayers and actions throughout the journey deeply moved me. I felt inspired by their unwavering faith.

On our final day in Peru, while in Lima, my Italian cousin and I, along with some friends, stumbled upon a Mass.

Though I hadn't fully reconciled with the Church, I felt a longing to receive the Eucharist.

Surprisingly, my cousin refrained, explaining that he hadn't confessed beforehand and couldn't receive the Eucharist.



Joy and her family in Colorado

His words lingered in my mind during my return journey to America. Despite my apprehensions stemming from a 15-year absence from reconciliation and the unpleasant memories associated with it, I felt an undeniable urge to seek confession.

Upon my arrival in Virginia, I promptly sought out Father Carl, a warm, compassionate and knowledgeable priest.

In our conversation, I bombarded Father Carl with numerous questions, to which he provided insightful answers.

I suddenly sensed a palpable presence enveloping me— a tangible, physical cloud descending from my head to my shoulders.

Convinced of the necessity to confess, I mustered the courage to ask for reconciliation. Father Carl agreed, suggesting we conduct the sacrament right then and there, face to face in his office—a departure from my usual experience behind the confessional curtain.



Joy and her Areté mentor group with Fr Tony Alex MGL

As I began recounting my sins spanning 15 years, it proved to be a lengthy process.

Following my confession, Father Carl pronounced the prayer of absolution over me. With my eyes closed and head bowed, I suddenly sensed a palpable presence enveloping me — a tangible, physical cloud descending from my head to my shoulders. At that moment, I instinctively recognised it as the Holy Spirit, overwhelming me with His divine presence. It was an indescribable sensation, so powerful that I feared opening my eyes, believing I might encounter God and perish from the intensity of His presence.

Following the sacrament of reconciliation, Father Carl proceeded to consecrate a host and offered me the Eucharist, symbolising my return to the Church. It felt like the warmest embrace from God Himself.

This was a profound moment of grace for me and I felt like the prodigal daughter returning to her Father's loving arms, knowing I was completely forgiven.

I am eternally grateful for God's boundless grace and forgiveness.



Areté Centre welcomes New Team Member

We are thrilled to introduce Felicity Chang as our newest addition to the team, stepping into the role of Program Coordinator.

Felicity brings with her a wealth of experience including a Masters in Accounting! Beyond her professional qualifications, Felicity is a devoted wife, nurturing mother, and active member of St. Luke's Parish in Revesby. Fun fact: she also happens to bake an incredible cheesecake! We are delighted to welcome Felicity to the Arété team.

Welcome aboard, Felicity!



Footsteps of St Paul

Calling all graduates and current students of the Arété Centre...

We are embarking on a pilgrimage to follow in the footsteps of St Paul this coming October!

This tour is both a pilgrimage and a scenic adventure across the mainland of Greece, the Greek Isles, and Turkey, taking you to pivotal New Testament locations as well as some of the Mediterranean's most breathtaking vistas.

The scriptures will come alive as you explore the ancient communities where Paul founded churches and wrote his letters to the Thessalonians, Philippians, Corinthians, and Ephesians. Check your inbox for booking details! We hope to see you at the airport in October!

GREECE & TURKEY

14 DAYS

Areté • St Paul Expedition

Travel with St Paul and his companions as they courageously preached the word of God and kept the early Christian communities vibrant and alive in faith. Be prepared to capture afresh the fervour and spirit of the Church's greatest evangelist.

COMMENCES TUESDAY 08 OCTOBER 2024 • 11 NIGHTS / 14 DAYS

Athens (2 nights) • Acropolis • Ancient Corinth • Kalambaka (2) • Meteora Monasteries • Berea • Thessaloniki • Kavala (2) • Ancient Philippi • Island of Patmos (2) • Kusadasi (1) • Ephesus • Pamukkale (2) • Laodicea • Colosseum. Optional Istanbul Post-Tour Extension (2 nights)

With **Rev Dr Chris Ryan MGL**

Areté
CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP
A work of the Missionaries of God's Love

the genuine pilgrim experience

harvest
journeys

Youth ministry representatives head to Rome

3 April 2024



Fr Chris Ryan MGL, left, and Kyle Correya will attend the youth ministry congress in Rome

International Congress on Youth Ministry

We're excited to announce that Fr Chris will be a keynote speaker at the International Congress on Youth Ministry in Rome this May!

To mark five years since the release of *Christus Vivit*, youth ministry representatives from around the globe will head to Rome for this special event hosted by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

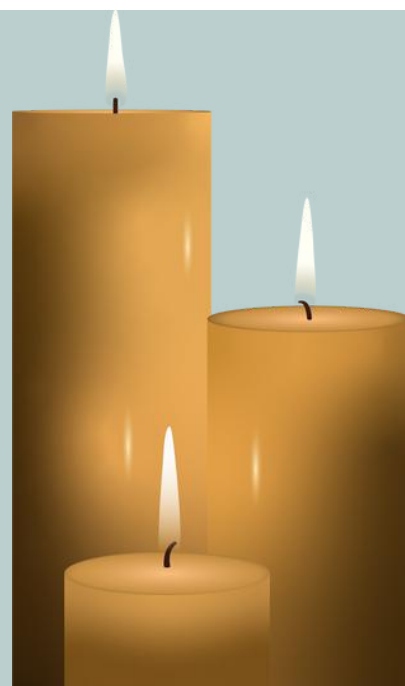
The Congress aims to explore themes drawn from *Christus Vivit*, a key document setting out Pope Francis's approach to young people, faith and vocations.

Stay tuned for plenty of updates from the Congress!

Read [the full story here on CathNews.com](#)

We would like to once again offer our deepest condolences and prayers to the Victims and families of the recent Bondi attack. We pray for the Lord's peace and consolation as you navigate the difficult time ahead.

-The Areté Centre team.



Spreading the Word



A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF MISSION

Fr Chris has had a busy March and April, with a number of speaking engagements across Australia and New Zealand.

Fr Chris spoke to the priests, principals, and assistant principals for mission from the Diocese of Lismore on the topic of “mission together”. His talk explored the necessity of parishes and schools aligning for the common mission, and offered some practical strategies for how this might take place. He also spoke to the Australian province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, as well as the priests of the Diocese of Bathurst on the topic of missional preaching.





Photography: Cheryl Surrey



Fr Chris also traveled to New Zealand in March for Divine Renovation Australasia.

He spoke with 7 bishops, around 70 priests, and approximately 400 lay leaders across four dioceses about the need for parishes to adopt a missional stance.

He shared his experience about what it takes to move parishes from maintenance to mission.

The whistle-stop tour included Auckland, Palmerston North, Dunedin and Christchurch.



The trip included a first-hand experience of what it is like for our six current Kiwi students to attend the online Areté lectures: Fr Chris gave one of the Theological Foundations of Mission lectures from Palmerston North from 9 pm to 11 pm Sydney time!

Thanks to Cheryl Surrey, Divine Renovation's Relationship Guide for New Zealand and a current student of the Foundations of Missionary Leadership program, who organised Fr Chris' trip.



Uniting for a Higher Purpose:

The Power of Teamwork in Parish Ministries

In a parish setting, teams are defined as small groups of people who work together to achieve a common goal. However, their importance goes beyond mere functionality; it touches the very core of community ministry. We sat down with Fr Chris and asked him to share his insights on the importance of teamwork in any parish or ministry setting.

Why do we need teams in parishes?

The best teams consist of people who are each able to contribute their diverse skills and perspectives in complementary ways. When all these diverse gifts are woven together, it enriches the tapestry of the parish. Working together not only amplifies the Grace in ministry but there's an extra joy and satisfaction in sharing the parish journey with others.

How do you create the right kinds of teams in your parish?

The experts would say that real teams are forged when there is a focus on a "worthy challenge" or purpose. Parishes have the most worthy challenge of them all – to play their part in the fulfilment of Jesus's Great Commission: to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28: 18-20). Disciple-making is a 'team sport'! If we galvanise ministry teams around the great commission, wonderful things are possible.

When ministry teams are also characterised by mutual love for each other, great things are possible. Jesus calls us to love one another as Jesus has loved us (Jn 13:34), and so when teams are grounded in these kinds of relationships it is possible for teams to accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God!

Finally, ministry is much more fun when we do it together. We were not supposed to do things on our own for Jesus. The Church is the Body of Christ, and so we do it best when we do it together, and with, in, and for Jesus.

A final word for priests

As priests, we are much more effective when we are leading out of a team. We make better decisions for the parish because we are benefiting from the wisdom of others. We are healthier too, because the responsibility and burden of leadership is shared amongst others. Many priests aren't used to a team approach to leadership. I can honestly say that having experienced what it is like to lead out of a team, I will never go back to trying to do it all on my own.



Kristy Komadina

Introducing Kristy, a graduate of Areté in 2023, and the Regional Coordinator (Sydney North Shore) Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Broken Bay. Kristy was born into an immigrant Croatian family from Western Sydney and is the eldest of 4 siblings. Kristy has been happily married for almost 20 years to her husband Marko and they share 4 beautiful children.

What Parish do you belong to and what role do you serve in?

I belong to the Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore which encompasses 3 churches from Northbridge, Willoughby and Naremburn. I am currently serving in the music ministry there by being a cantor and choir member. Until recently, I was the Parish Sacramental Coordinator. Now my main focus is our mission. I'm working behind the scenes, collaborating with others in our parish to launch our first Alpha program, to engage families from our parish schools and to overhaul our digital presence through revamping our website and social media.

How has Areté deepened or impacted your faith journey?

I think when I first contemplated joining Areté, I knew that I wanted more formation and deeper spiritual experiences. I was in that sweet spot where I was a committed Catholic, I understood that I was responding to my baptismal call to go make disciples, I was involved in multiple church ministries already. However, there was still so much to learn and discover. I found this immediately at the first intensive when I was introduced to concepts I had never heard before, experienced forms of prayer that I had never tried and was pushed ever so gently past my own defences and inhibitions to share my story candidly with others.



The whole journey over the course of the year unfolded at just the right time. It felt like with every new learning and every new experience, I opened myself up more to receive God's love.

How has the leadership element impacted your professional life?

It has given me the confidence to see myself as a leader. Sometimes as adults, we feel like we're faking it until we make it. The Areté program delves deeply into leadership and explains that we can lead, even if we are not necessarily in charge. I have taken that on board in my parish and through my work as a part of our Mission Broken Bay team. I believe people have seen leadership qualities in me and have been given opportunities to speak from a place of expertise and knowledge on many occasions in the last 12 months. I was particularly honoured to be asked to contribute a reflection for our Diocesan Lenten Program titled "Participating in the Mission of Christ"

“ **Seeing how my prayers could impact somebody else and witnessing the Holy Spirit working, then and there, right in front of me was one of the most powerful experiences of my life.** ”

What is one highlight or moment of grace that you can share with us from that journey?

Over the course of the year, I was able to receive and give prayer as a ministry. In the beginning, I found it confronting to be prayed for by a stranger and the thought of doing that for somebody else scared me more than anything. As time went on, I received so much grace in being able to pray for others. Seeing how my prayers could impact somebody else and witnessing the Holy Spirit working, then and there, right in front of me was one of the most powerful experiences of my life.



Singing is one of Kristy's many gifts.



Sharing her gift for music in her parish.

What is your Favourite Bible or Gospel verse?

1 John 4:8 - "But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

This verse absolutely blew my mind last year. It had only taken me 42 years of living to understand that every time we love someone or someone loves us, that IS God.

Favourite method of prayer?

I'm so lucky to work with a team that prays together every day. We practice Lectio Divina through a prayer website called pray-as-you-go. It's so powerful to reflect on the scriptures daily and let God's word speak directly to you.

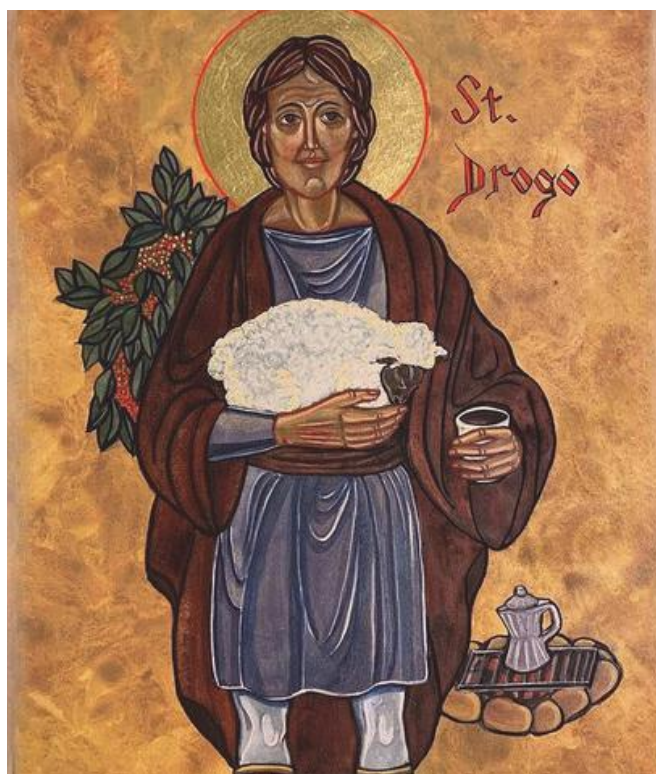
Who is your favourite Saint?

St Drogo, mainly because he is the patron Saint of coffee!

What is your favourite praise and worship song?

Restless by Audrey Assad

Find out more about Kristy's Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore here.



Renewing the Church:

Faith-Filled Missionary Leaders Ready to Inspire Change

By Laura Neeson

On a balmy Friday evening in February, our 2023 graduates, accompanied by their guests, made their way to St. Declan's Church. Brimming with anticipation and excitement, they were poised to commemorate the culmination of their transformative Areté journey at their graduation ceremony.

Amid smiles and joyous embraces, attendees from all over Australia and as far away as New Zealand demonstrated the strong bonds that had been formed on their journey.

The liturgy was beautifully accentuated with hymn singing, and the students actively participated in the celebration and expressed gratitude through a formal vote of thanks and a student-led speech.

Following the Mass, each graduate was called to the sanctuary steps to receive their Certificate of Completion from Fr Chris, in a moment of well-earned recognition and accomplishment.

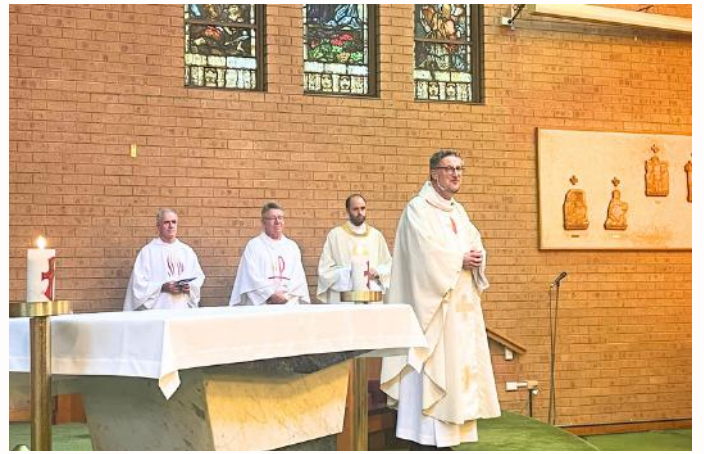
The event was graced by the concelebration of Fr Paul Monkerud, Fr Josh Whicker MGL, and Fr Steve Fletcher, Moderator of the MGLs.

Amidst these celebrations, the community bid a fond farewell to our much-loved team member Melanie Dooner and warmly welcomed Felicity Chang to the team.



Later, the ceremony transitioned into a festive dinner at Enzo's Cucina, where laughter, storytelling, and sumptuous food and cake fostered an atmosphere of fellowship and joy. This graduation ceremony not only marked the culmination of a significant chapter for our graduates but also reinforced the sense of community among all present.

Our Church is sure to be blessed by the positive contributions these newly minted missionary leaders will make in the years ahead.





Congratulations to the Class of 2023 for your fantastic accomplishment! Remember, the journey doesn't end here... We'll be praying for you as you go out and bring the good news to the people! - Fr Chris.



Saintly Reflections on the Holy Spirit

Here are our favourite four quotes about the Holy Spirit according to the great saints of our Church



Prayer by St Augustine

"O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams."

1

St. Teresa of Ávila

"The Holy Spirit is the sweet guest of the soul, who brings peace, joy, and consolation."

2

St. John Vianney

"The Holy Spirit leads us like a mother. He leads His child by the hand... Wherever the Holy Spirit goes, He goes as a mother."

3

St. Basil the Great

"The Holy Spirit dwells within us like a divine fire, consuming our sins and transforming us into the image of Christ."

4

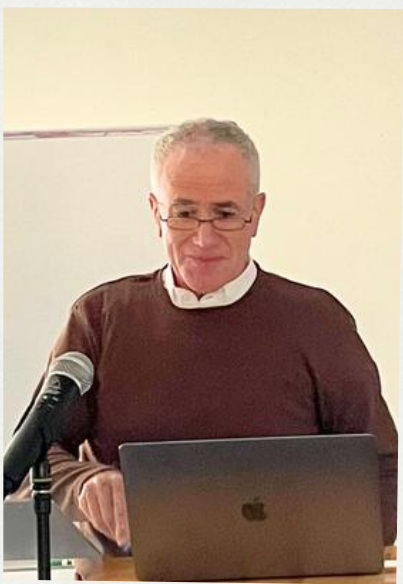
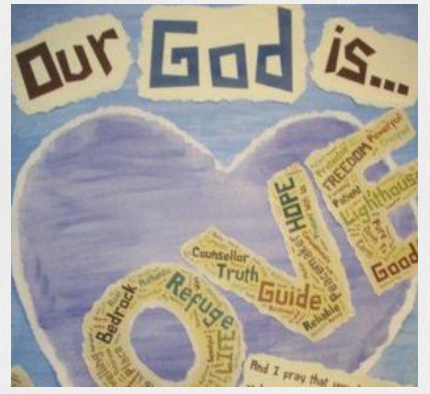
St. Pope John Paul II

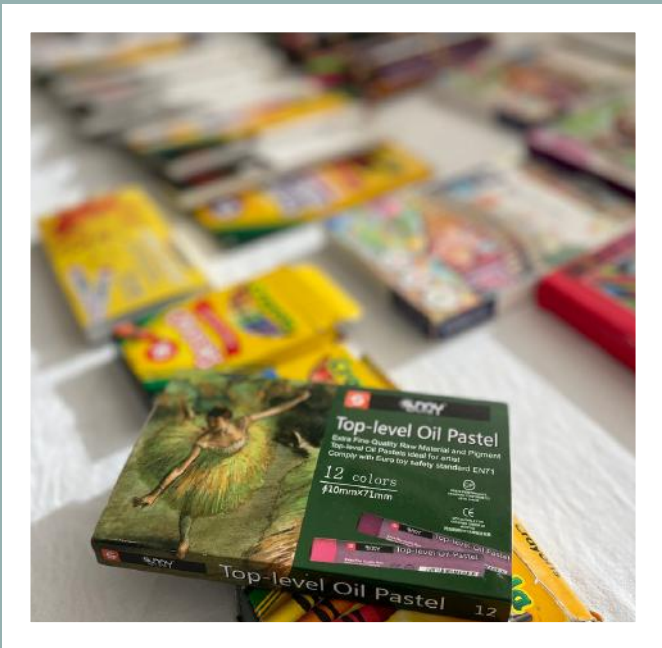
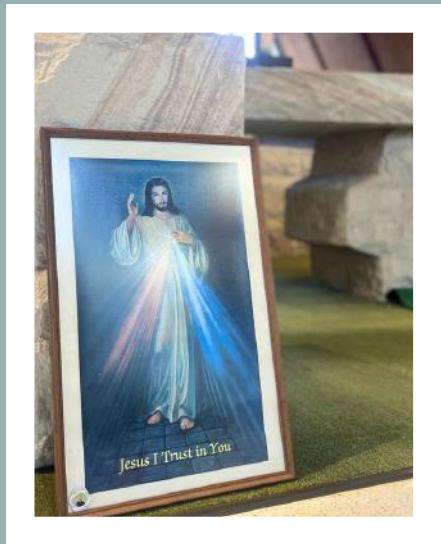
"The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church, the breath that gives life to her members, and the source of her unity in diversity."

Silent Retreat

Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, 5th-7th April, 2024







Thank you to our wonderful student cohort who came from all over including interstate and NZ to share this time of sacred silence with us. What an incredible weekend of healing, grace and growth!

A special thank you to Sr Kat Stone for leading our students into the heart of Ignatian spirituality, and for sharing her gifts of teaching and wisdom with us!

Thank you also to our amazing and gracious group of volunteer prayer ministers, to the gifted Clergy and the MGL Priests who joined us. And a special thank you to Fr Steve Fletcher MGL who also shared his wisdom with us.



Did you know

St Francis De Sales,

Patron of writers, journalists and the Catholic press, is one of the Patrons of the Areté Centre. Here are some fun facts about him:

- ✱ Francis was born in 1567 in the Castle of Sales, Duchy of Savoy, then part of the Holy Roman Empire, now in France. He passed away at the age of 56 on December 28, 1622. His feast day is celebrated on January 24th.
- ✱ Despite grappling with a fiery temper from a young age, Francis, now known as "the saint of kindness", overcame it, crediting the Virgin Mary for his transformation.
- ✱ Among his notable contributions is the renowned work, "Introduction to the Devout Life," offering guidance on achieving holiness in daily living.
- ✱ Canonised in 1665, his profound theological insights led to his declaration as a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1878.
- ✱ In 1610, with St Jane Frances de Chantal, he founded the Visitation of Holy Mary (the Visitation Nuns).

SOURCE: BRITANNICA.COM



W I S D O M O F S A I N T S

The work is never finished, we have continually to begin again and that courageously.

What we have done so far is good but what we are going to commence, will be better and when we have finished that, we shall begin something else that will be better still and then another - until we leave this world to begin a new life that will have no end because it is the best that can happen to us."

ST FRANCIS DE SALES

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UPCOMING EVENTS



CLICK ON THE PAGE TO BOOK

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

- Esther 4:14 -



PARISH RENEWAL CONFERENCE 2024



SATURDAY
3 AUGUST
8:45AM-5PM

Liverpool Catholic Club

424 - 458 Hoxton Park Road,
Prestons NSW 2170

Do you want to see our parishes renewed? Join us for a day of formation, workshops and networking to be equipped and strengthened for mission. Be part of the transformation in our Church today!



CONFERENCE COST

\$75 | Book by 31 May

\$90 | Book from 1 June

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE 19 JULY
gomakedisciples.org.au/cas-events



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WALK WITH CHRIST

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

2ND JUNE | 2024
SUNDAY



CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF SYDNEY



Catholic
Cemeteries +
Crematoria



Aid to the
Church in Need
ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

VISIT: [SYDNEYCATHOLIC.ORG/WALKWITHCHRIST](https://sydneycatholic.org/walkwithchrist)

FESTIVAL:

Martin Place from 1:00PM.

PROCESSION:

Begins at 2:30PM sharp.
Corner of Martin Place and Pitt St.



Carmel House Retreats 2024

MAR
1-3

Consecrated Life Weekend
Discernment Retreat

A time for single women aged 16-35 to listen for the voice of Jesus, ask questions and experience prayer, talks, sisterhood and sharing to help discern your vocation.
mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com

MAR
28-31

Light To The Nations
Easter Pilgrimage

Young people come on pilgrimage from all around Australia camping under the open skies and joining in a awesome celebration of the Easter liturgies.
facebook.com/light.to.the.nations.pilgrimage

APR
1-5

Disciples School of Mission
Formation for Ministry

Be formed in mission through fellowship, powerful inputs, workshops and times of prayer, taking your new skills back to your local context or out on short-term mission.
facebook.com/discipleschoolofmission

APR
19-21

Emmaus
Silent Retreat

Embark on the sacred journey to Emmaus, discovering God's victorious love through Jesus' abiding presence. Renew in solitude and let your heart ignite.
trybooking.com/CNSXK

MAY
17-22

Banquet
Pentecost Intensive

Explore God's love and the gifts of the Spirit in our Banquet Intensive. Feast on the powerful gifts of God's love and charismatic generosity through fellowship, inputs, prayer, and practical workshops.
trybooking.com/CNSXA

JUN
15

Awake
Day Retreat

Awaken to a renewed experience of God's love and rediscover the joy of your life with the Risen Jesus during this day retreat with the MGL Sisters.
trybooking.com/CNTCH

AUG
23-25

Wildfire
Holy Spirit Retreat

Feel the Holy Spirit's transformative power, igniting a wildfire within. Immerse in a retreat deepening your connection with God and unleashing Love's fiery passion.
trybooking.com/CNSWT

OCT
11-13

Springtime
Creative Retreat

Experience the healing power of creativity. Nurture your inner self and watch the boundless possibilities that emerge from spending time co-creating with God.
trybooking.com/CNSWN

NOV
2

Alight
Women's Day Retreat

Rekindle the flame of faith and prepare for Advent through a day of reflection, prayer and fellowship. This retreat is being supported by the Catholic Women's Network in the Archdiocese of Sydney.
trybooking.com/CNTCL

Missionaries of God's Love
Sisters



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mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com
mgl sisters.org



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