

Areté 

Issue 8 | Autumn Edition

VELLS

et Remis

Anchored in Hope

Leading with hope in the
Jubilee Year



Student Spotlight, Stories
of Grace and More.



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HELLO FROM

Fr Chris

Dear friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of Velis et Remis—a special issue filled with stories of renewal, purpose, and unwavering hope as we journey together during this Jubilee Year.

The Church's invitation to be "Pilgrims of Hope" speaks deeply to our mission at the Areté Centre. In this edition, you'll meet the graduates whose lives bear witness to that hope: from Family Educators inspired by the transformative power of the Gospel, to a student discerning a contemplative vocation, and leaders boldly stepping into their calling in schools, parishes, and dioceses.

You'll read about the profound spiritual impact of our January Intensive, where students were "set ablaze" with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

In addition, we pay a heartfelt tribute to Pope Francis, reflecting on his enduring legacy of missionary leadership and its influence on the Church today.

I hope the stories and testimonies in this issue stir your heart as much as they've stirred mine. This is a time for us to lead with courage, walk in faith, and be hope-filled witnesses in a world that desperately needs Christ.



Let us continue to ascend the mountain of the Lord together, confident in the One who leads us.

With every blessing in Christ,

Fr Chris Ryan MGL

Director

Areté Centre for Missionary Leadership



Areté Centre News & Events

And other Catholic news...



The Arété Centre joined Family Educators at Sydney Catholic Schools Archdiocesan Day



The Arété Centre was delighted to join the Family Educators and the Mission and Identity Team of Sydney Catholic Schools at their annual Archdiocesan Day at Revesby Workers in March.

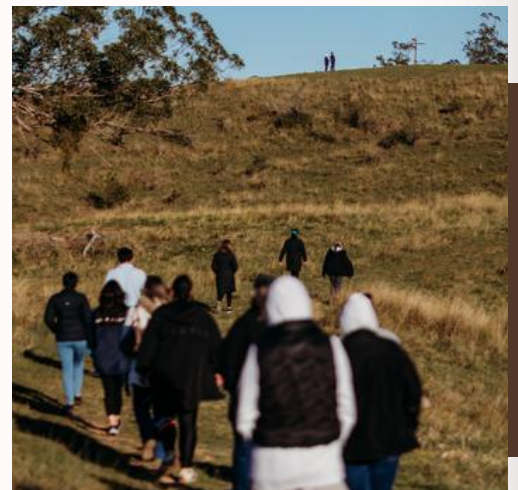
Fr. Chris unpacked the significance of the Jubilee Year, exploring what it means for the mission of Family Educators in our schools, how they can share the message of hope in practical ways, and the graces available to all through this Jubilee.

We had the joy of celebrating Mass together, followed by a shared lunch where Family Educators were the first to receive our brand-new prospectuses and learn more about how Arété can equip them for mission.

"It was a fantastic day, as always, in the company of Family Educators — who are truly the heart and soul of mission, bringing the love of Jesus and the love of others to life." -Fr Chris Ryan MGL

Arété Centre celebrates 5 years of student intake!

This year, the Arété Centre is celebrating five years of student intake and the incredible milestone of almost 250 graduates who are actively making an impact in our Church. From parish ministry to Catholic education and beyond, they are living out their mission with passion and purpose. Stay tuned for details on how we'll be celebrating later this year!





The Areté Centre Partners with Catholic education Diocese of Wollongong

We are excited to announce an exciting partnership with the Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CDOW), to offer their teaching staff the opportunity to earn a category E qualification for leadership through our Graduate Certificate with the University of Notre Dame, Sydney.

The partnership comes thanks to the experience of John Coppola, 2023 graduate of the Foundations program, who recognised the value of this unique formation opportunity for CDOW.



"I have personally completed the Arete course and have found it to be an outstanding formation program which combines a unique academic and immersion approach in developing strategic mission leadership."

John Coppola, Secondary Education Officer, Catholic life and education mission team, CDOW



Ignite Conference in July!

Ignite Conference draws together a network of high schoolers, young adults, ministry leaders, families, teachers, priests and religious from around the country, sending them out with a passion for mission and authentic faith in Jesus.

Experience four days of real-world formation, encouragement in faith, great people and powerful worship.

Sydney

10-13 July 2025

Broken Bay Cathedral Precinct, Waitara

Brisbane

25-28 September 2025

St Laurence's College, Brisbane

visit: www.igniteconference.com.au to learn more



Australian Catholic Youth Festival is back!

The Festival will bring together thousands of young people (Year 9 – 25 years of age) from all across Australia and include opportunities for engagement with other young people, school and youth groups, Bishops, musicians and speakers. Each day will include the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities including prayer, Mass, workshops, talks, live concerts, games, justice issues and an interactive expo.

Find out more by visiting www.acyf.org.au

Carmel House Retreats 2025

**APR
26**

BEHOLD
Day Retreat
Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish

**OCT
10-12**

DELIGHT
Creative Retreat

"BEHOLD, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5)

Take a day to reflect on the incredible gift offered to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and allow God's love and mercy to bring new life.

trybooking.com/CZPVW

Spend time with the God who delights in you and be transformed and restored through a range of creative prayer experiences. Enjoy creativity, play and rest and allow God to recreate you.

trybooking.com/CZPWS

**JUNE
4-8**

JUBILATIO
Pentecost Intensive

Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit

Come and encounter the powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Experience a time of deep renewal and joy as we celebrate and embrace the gift of the Spirit through fellowship, inputs, prayer and practical workshops.

trybooking.com/CZPVZ

**OCT-NOV
31 2**

IMMERSE
Silent Retreat

Dive deep into the graces of silence and contemplation. Immerse yourself in the love of God who waits for us to abide in Him. Join with the Saints and complete the Jubilee Year with a retreat focused on redemption, rest and refreshment.

trybooking.com/CZPWY



Missionaries of God's Love
Sisters



Carmel House

345 St Andrews Rd, Varroville NSW 2566

mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com

mgl sisters.org

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

Year 9 –
25 years
plus leaders

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA • 30 NOV – 2 DEC 2025

ACYF.ORG.AU

  **/ACYF25**





Missionary Leaders as Pilgrims of Hope

A reflection on the Jubilee 2025

By Fr Chris Ryan MGL

As you are most probably aware, 2025 is a Jubilee Year for the Catholic Church. The origins of Jubilee Years lie in the Old Testament. In Leviticus 25, we learn that a Jubilee Year happened every 50 years. It began on the Day of Atonement, which signified that the Jubilee was primarily concerned with restoring the covenant relationship between God and the People. During the Jubilee year those who had lost their land or been forced into slavery were returned to their own land and to their families. Throughout its history, Israel struggled to honour the Jubilee Year, and as the People found themselves in Exile, the expectation arose that God's anointed one, his Messiah, would come in the fullness of time and inaugurate a new and perpetual Jubilee. This new Jubilee was to be a celebration of the new and everlasting covenant between God and his people.

When Jesus entered the synagogue at Nazareth and read from the prophet Isaiah that "the Spirit of the Lord has anointed me", he was claiming to be the promised Messiah of God.

When he declared he was to bring liberty to captives and freedom to slaves and to announce the Lord's year of favour, he was announcing that the new Jubilee had begun (Luke 4:18-21). His ministry of forgiveness, healing, and deliverance from evil culminated in his Cross, making Good Friday the true day of Atonement, not simply for the Jewish people but for the whole world.

By his sacrificial death Jesus established the new and eternal covenant between God and humanity. Jesus then entrusted the continuation of his ministry to the Church and her leaders, giving bishops and priests the authority to forgive and heal in Jesus' name, so enabling people to enter into loving communion with God and each other.

The Church has continued the practice of Jubilee Years, which now usually happen every 25 years (and special additional years of Jubilee also occur). The theme for this Year's Jubilee is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. This theme is very relevant to the task of missionary leadership. Missionary leaders are to be confident in the destination of their pilgrimage.

Our true homeland is in heaven, and so the ultimate goal of all leadership is to lead others in the light of their eternal destiny, and so to their heavenly home (Phil 3:20). To lead with hope is not to engage in wishful thinking or even optimism about the future but is rather to recognise that the Church and her members are called to embody the paschal rhythm of dying and rising with Christ.

Missionary leaders lead with hope because they know that their hope is born on Good Friday, after Christ is crucified, and with the promise of resurrection before them. As missionary leaders, we can remain undaunted, even in the face of great challenges, because our hope is not in our own abilities, but in the saving love of Christ crucified and Risen from the dead.

Areté



CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP



GET FORMED FOR MISSION

2026 Applications opening soon!

In the heart of Sydney Catholic schools, two Family Educators—one with years of experience and one newly stepping into the role—share a common thread: formation through the Areté Centre's Foundations Program.



Though they come from different stages of life and ministry, both speak of a renewed sense of purpose and deeper faith. The program became a space of encounter—where God met them afresh, and where their calling to walk alongside families was strengthened. In their own words, they reflect on how this journey has shaped their hearts, their ministry, and their witness in their school communities.

Two hearts one mission

HOW ARETÉ'S FOUNDATIONS COURSE IS TRANSFORMING FAMILY EDUCATORS



“The silent retreat experience was another transformative aspect of Areté, reminding me of the importance of stillness and reflection in better serving others.”

ST CATHERINE LABOURÉ CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, GYMEA

CATERINA RIZZO

As a Family Educator at St. Catherine Labouré Catholic Primary School for 13 years, my role is to support families in their faith journey by providing opportunities to strengthen their relationship with Christ. I also work to foster a strong connection between parents, the school, and the parish.

I strive to empower parents in nurturing their children’s spiritual, social, and emotional growth by encouraging active participation in core family and faith initiatives, including Family Masses, Faith Learning Walks, Prep and Play, and Sacramental Art opportunities. Recognising that parents are the first faith educators of their children, we integrate social outreach as a core part of our school culture. Our strong partnership with the GyMEA Parish St. Vincent de Paul Conference encourages families to live out their faith through service and compassion, deepening their connection to the community.

Areté has profoundly shaped my approach, particularly in understanding the power of kerygma—the foundational proclamation of the Gospel. It has helped me shift my focus from programs to fostering authentic faith encounters, guiding families toward a true, personal relationship with Jesus. I have also learned that conversion is a gradual journey built on trust. Areté equipped me with the tools to cultivate this trust through intentional, patient accompaniment, reinforcing that my role is not just to share knowledge but to walk alongside families in their faith.

The silent retreat experience was another transformative aspect of Areté, reminding me of the importance of stillness and reflection in better serving others. Learning about the Alpha program further inspired me, as its invitational approach to evangelisation aligns with my mission.

I look forward to launching the pilot Alpha program at St. Catherine Labouré Parish, offering families a welcoming space to explore their faith and encounter Christ. As we embrace the Jubilee Year of Hope, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a Family Educator. Areté has deepened my relationship with Christ and renewed my sense of purpose, equipping me to guide families in their spiritual journey. True evangelisation happens through authentic encounters and intentional accompaniment—meeting people where they are and walking with them every step of the way. With renewed joy, I look forward to continuing this mission, creating spaces where families can experience God's love and grace in their everyday lives.





*Hope is not passive;
it is a response to
God's promise.
Areté has instilled
in me the
confidence to sow
seeds of faith,
knowing that God
brings the growth.*

ST JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LISA HEALY

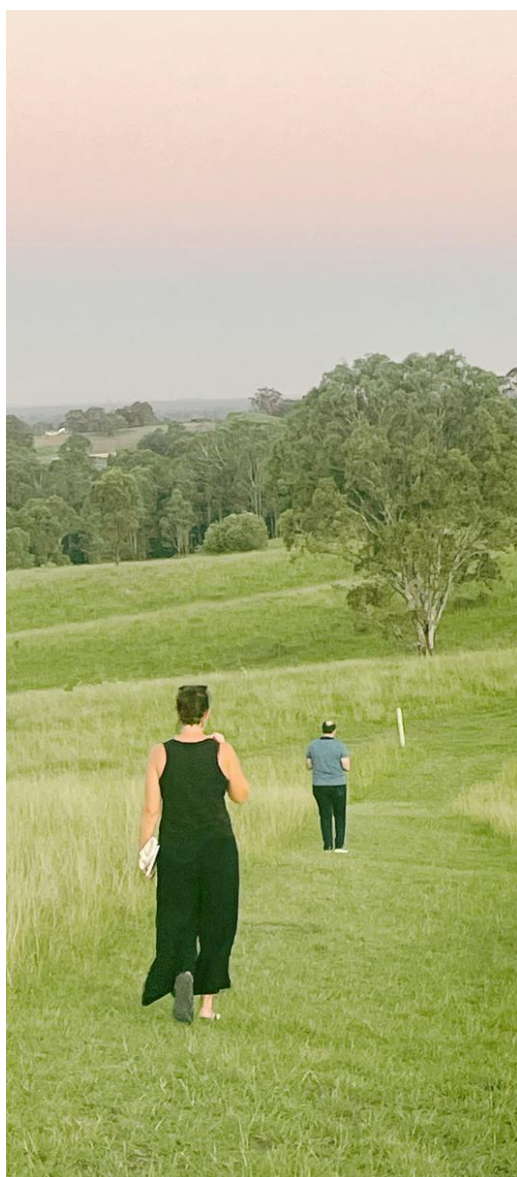
Stepping into the role of Family Educator within Sydney Catholic Schools was both exciting and daunting.

I knew I was called to serve, but I often wondered—how do I bridge faith and family life in a meaningful way? Arété became my anchor, shaping not only my ministry but also my personal faith journey. Through Arété, I was immersed in deep spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.

The rich theological teachings expanded my understanding of the Church, while the practical insights empowered me to engage families in a way that is both invitational and transformative. But above all, Arété cultivated a heart of mission within me. I discovered that evangelisation isn't about having all the answers—it's about being present, listening, and walking with

others toward Christ. This journey has profoundly influenced my approach as a Family Educator. Whether it's creating spaces where parents feel welcomed, facilitating prayer experiences, or simply accompanying someone in their struggles, I now see my role as a living witness of Christ's love. It has deepened my trust in the Holy Spirit and renewed my hope in the Church—especially as we embrace the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Hope is not passive; it is a response to God's promise. Arété has instilled in me the confidence to sow seeds of faith, knowing that God brings the growth. As families navigate the joys and challenges of life, I pray that my presence, shaped by this journey, can point them to the enduring hope found in Christ.



Set Ablaze

A look back at our 2025 January Intensive

The new year began with a powerful and grace-filled experience as students gathered for our first January Intensive, immersing themselves in the heart of missionary discipleship.

Over four days, we journeyed together in faith, fellowship, and formation, encountering the life-changing power of the Kerygma and the love of God that finds us, surprises us, transforms us, and saves us.

Breaking Open the Kerygma

Fr. Ken Barker MGL led us into the depths of the Kerygma—the core message of the Gospel, reminding us that before we ever seek God, He first seeks us. His reflections revealed how God’s unrelenting love meets us in the messiness of life, calls us into deeper relationship, and ultimately transforms and redeems us.

Sharing Grace & Encountering Mercy

One of the most moving aspects of the intensive was the sharing groups, where students opened their hearts and shared testimonies of God’s grace in their lives. As we listened to one another’s stories of forgiveness, mercy, and renewal, we witnessed how God is actively working in every heart.



Through these moments of vulnerability and encouragement, we experienced the Holy Spirit’s presence—stirring, healing, and renewing our faith.

Prayer, Pilgrimage & The Power of the Spirit

The intensive was not just about learning; it was about deep encounter. Prayer ministry offered moments of personal breakthrough and healing, while daily Mass, adoration, and communal prayer anchored our days in Christ’s presence.

One of the most special moments was our mini pilgrimage to the cross on the mountain—a time of reflection, surrender, and gratitude as we stood before the cross, reminded of the depth of Christ’s sacrifice and love.



**“missionary
discipleship
is not a
program but
a way of life.”**

Fellowship, Formation & Fun

Beyond the deep moments of prayer, there was also laughter, connection, and joy. Meals and shared experiences strengthened the bonds between students, forming friendships rooted in faith. It was a reminder that Christian community is not just about learning together but also celebrating, growing, and walking this journey side by side.

A Call to Go Forth

As the intensive came to a close, it was clear that no one left the same. Hearts had been renewed, faith had been deepened, and we were reminded that missionary discipleship is not a program but a way of life.

The Holy Spirit is at work, and this is just the beginning. We can't wait to see how God continues to move in the months ahead!



“Mind Blown. Faith ignited.”

Student feedback

“Loved it more than I thought I would have. I’ve already made some very strong connections. Thank you so much! Cannot wait for the next one!”

Student feedback

“Honestly, the whole thing was of the absolute highest quality”.

Student feedback



Layla Estasy Class of 2024

Layla Estasy, Executive Officer at Clergy and Parishes Broken Bay, is a passionate missionary disciple with a unique background. Originally from London, Layla has called Australia home for over 15 years. Her deep love for the arts, especially theatre, is beautifully intertwined with her faith journey. Through her experiences, Layla has embraced a stronger sense of mission, a love for contemplative prayer, and a yearning to share Christ's love with others.

Which Parish do you belong to?

Our Lady of the Rosary, Kellyville

How long have you been in Australia, and what brought you here?

Over 15 years in Australia – my parents decided they wanted a change in weather and some space, so they brought me and my sisters out here! Mum's Anglo-Irish but Dad's Egyptian-born, so it was a 2nd big move for him.

A highlight from your Areté journey:

The silent retreat melted in me a new and forever home for contemplative prayer... and for Ignatian discernment, both of which have reshaped my relationship with God. Also, our evening sing-a-longs around the piano are memories which bring me the most joy...



Tell us about your passion for acting and how your faith has impacted your experience working in the arts.

I knew I wanted to play professional dress-up when I was 7 years old. The theatre is a magical, time-bending space that uses pretence to explore profound truths about humanity. Being part of a stage ensemble is a truly wonderful experience. As my devotion to the Lord has deepened, the type of roles and stories I'm drawn to has altered significantly. I would love to be part of a Passion play someday. I think there is a calling for a revival of theatrical dramatisations of the Bible.



“When I discovered my charisms, I knew I was in for a rollercoaster ride with the Holy Spirit, yet I had no idea how the Holy Spirit was going to manifest these charisms in me.”



The most important takeaway from your Areté journey (practical skill or spiritual insight):

The many encounters with God and the abundance of grace He poured out during this time formed in me a stronger sense of 'sent-ness' as a Missionary Disciple. My heart really did reorient towards His, which has led me to truly seek His voice, His glory and His will for my life. I have fallen more deeply in love with our saving God and yearn to view every aspect of my life through the lens of His love for me.





As this is the Jubilee Year of Hope, what are your hopes for 2025?

That I would enter into a deeper devotion to Our Lady, that I would come to love others better and more radically, that a desire for others to know the love of Christ would catch fire in my heart, and that those outside the Catholic Church would be drawn to her beauty as the Bride of Christ, and that in all of these things, God would be glorified.

Favourite Bible verse & why?

Luke 7:47 "Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little".

This verse feels like the crux and the heart of the Gospel. I love the simplicity, beauty and intimacy of the exchange between Jesus and this socially ostracised woman, who, despite judgement from the Pharisees, pours her oil and tears on him in deep gratitude for the love He has shown her and will soon pour out for her in His own blood on the cross.

Who is your favourite saint & why?

I returned to Catholicism after some years worshipping in a Protestant Church, so I'm currently enjoying a journey of discovery with the Saints! So far, a few seem to be following me around... one of these is St Maximilian Kolbe OFMConv. His story is one of the most beautiful and encouraging I've ever encountered, in its witness of devotion to the Lord.

He was offered Chastity and Martyrdom, and he chose both. (A life-changing book I read along my journey into the Eucharist was written by an OFM Priest (Celebrate Mass with your Heart), and my Parish in Kellyville OFMConv parish. So, the OFMs seem to be willing me on!)



What book are you currently reading, or can you recommend one you've loved?

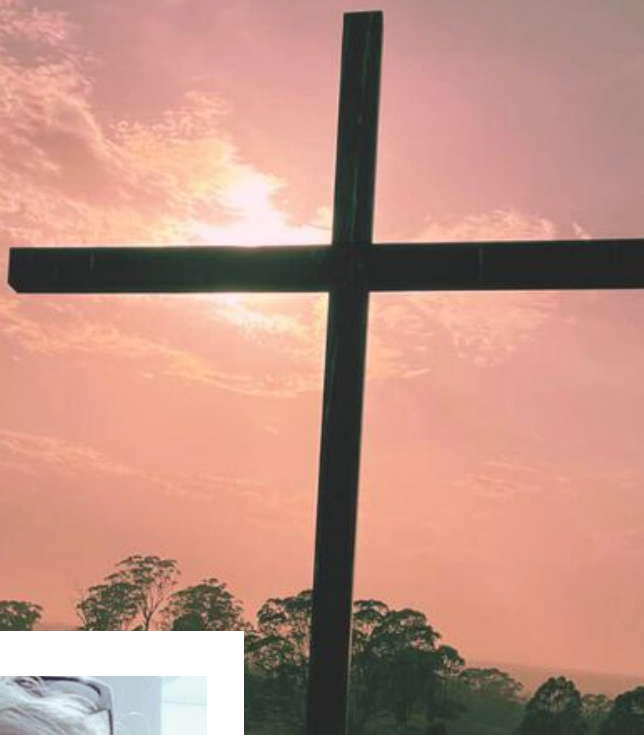
I've just finished 'The Eternal Woman' by Gertrude Von Le Fort, and I highly recommend it as a beckoning towards Catholic Femininity and spiritual motherhood uncorrupted by Feminism and exemplified to perfection by our Blessed Mother.

Alumni News

How Areté Centre graduates are shaping the Church — and reaching beyond it.



*Do you have a story to share with us?
email office@aretecentre.org
to keep us informed.*



Rita Marshall, one of our 2024 graduates, has discerned a call to religious life and has entered the Carmelite Monastery in Kew, Victoria.

Over the past five years, Rita has faithfully served her parish, growing in prayer and ministry. Through deep discernment and inspired by her devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, she felt called to a life of contemplative and intercessory prayer, entrusting her life to God in the Carmelite tradition.

Rita's journey is a beautiful witness to the power of formation and accompaniment in discerning God's call. At Areté, we are committed to equipping laypeople and leaders for mission, and we rejoice when that mission leads to a wholehearted response to Christ in religious life.

Please keep Rita in your prayers as she begins this sacred new chapter. May her witness inspire others to seek God's will with open hearts.



Kiwi Graduate and current Areté Mentor from the class of 2024, Alison Carroll has recently stepped into the role of Faith Formation Manager at the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, where they'll be supporting clergy and lay leaders in creating faith formation opportunities and developing discipleship pathways. Here's what they had to say about this new mission:

"My new role is Faith Formation Manager at the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton. I'll be supporting clergy and their key lay people to provide faith formation opportunities and develop discipleship pathways. I'm so excited about this opportunity to help people grow in their relationship with Jesus, discover a deeper faith, rediscover the beauty of Catholicism and learn how to share it with others!" **Congratulations Alison! We're praying for your ministry.**

Coming Out of the Upper Room.

by Laura Neeson



The days after Easter can feel like a strange in-between. We've journeyed through Lent, we've rejoiced in the Resurrection—and yet, here we are, still navigating ordinary life with its demands, its distractions, and its deep questions. What now?

For the early Church, the post-Resurrection days weren't a return to business as usual. They were a time of waiting, wondering, and being made ready. In the Upper Room, the disciples gathered in expectant hope. As St. Augustine once preached, *"While the disciples were still gathered together and the doors were shut, the Church was being born in the fire of love."* And then, Pentecost happened. The Spirit descended, and everything changed.

They didn't stay in that room. They went out. Boldly. Publicly. With power. That's the moment we're invited to live in now.



Iconography by Fr. Luke Dingman

This is what we're about at the Arete Centre. Not just lighting individual candles, but forming torch-bearers—people who are ready to carry the flame into the world with clarity, courage, and love.

We are a post-Easter, Pentecost-people. And missionary discipleship means more than believing that Christ is risen. It means living as if we've been raised with Him. It means carrying the fire of the Upper Room into the streets of our workplaces, schools, parishes, and everyday conversations.

But here's the key: the disciples didn't evangelise by sheer enthusiasm. They were formed, first by walking with Jesus, then by staying together in community, and finally by receiving the Spirit. Their mission flowed from formation and communion with one another.

This is what we're about at the Arete Centre. Not just lighting individual candles, but forming torch-bearers—people who are ready to carry the flame into the world with clarity, courage, and love.

So as we journey toward Pentecost, let's ask ourselves: Are we still hiding in our own "Upper Rooms" of comfort?

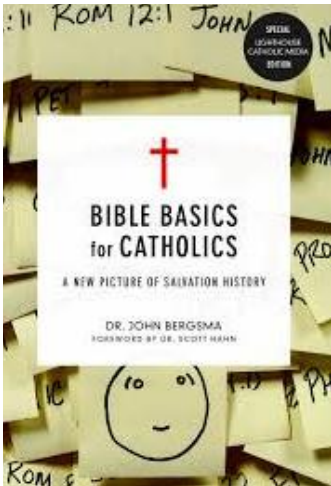
Faith is not a transactional relationship. As Fr. Chris often says, we weren't meant to treat our parishes like a gas station. We are called into a personal relationship with God and into true communion with one another. the Lord asks us to use our gifts, our intellect, and our resources to step out of the Upper Room and bring His light to the world.

So, the question is, are we allowing the Holy Spirit to shape us, not just for our own sake, but for the sake of the Church and the world? And when the Spirit calls us, will we answer?

Wishing you a warm and blessed Easter season.

The Arete Centre Team

Watch | Read | Listen



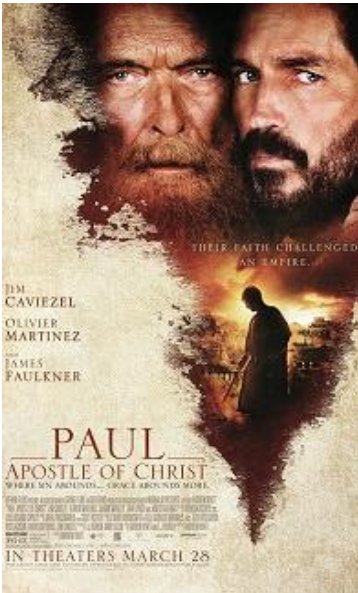
"Bible Basics for Catholics: A New Picture of Salvation History" by John Bergsma

This book is ideal for missionary leaders as it offers a deep yet accessible understanding of the Bible from a Catholic perspective. It's particularly useful for those who need to understand Scripture in the context of Catholic doctrine and be equipped to share that knowledge with others. The book is full of visual aids and charts, which can be helpful for teaching and engaging audiences in a parish or community setting.



Abiding Together Podcast

The Abiding Together podcast is a weekly show that offers a space of connection, rest, and encouragement for individuals striving to live out their passion and purpose in Jesus Christ. Hosted by Sister Miriam James Heidland, Michelle Benzinger, and Heather Khym, the podcast delves into topics such as spiritual growth, prayer, discernment, and authentic Christian living. [Apple Podcasts+2Abiding Together+2Ascension Press Media+2Abiding Together+5YouTube+5Apple Podcasts+5](#)



Paul, Apostle of Christ (2018) Director: Andrew Hyatt

Paul, Apostle of Christ (2018)
Set in the early Church, this drama explores the final days of St. Paul and the early Christian community under persecution. It's a moving portrait of courage, discipleship, and the power of forgiveness. "Where sin abounds, grace abounds more." The film features James Faulkner as Paul the Apostle, Jim Caviezel as Luke, Olivier Martinez as Mauritius Gallas, Joanne Whalley as Priscilla, and John Lynch as Aquila. Available on Netflix, Apple TV, or Amazon Prime.

VÁLÉ

POPE FRANCIS

1936–2025

We were so saddened to learn of the passing of Pope Francis on Easter Monday. Pope Francis leaves behind a profound legacy of missionary leadership that will continue to resonate with, and inspire the Church and its mission for generations to come. His call for the Church to embrace a "missionary conversion" and his emphasis on joy in evangelisation, as articulated in *Evangelii Gaudium*, have inspired countless individuals, including those at the Areté Centre, to embrace their role as missionary disciples.

The Pope's vision for the Church to move beyond the confines of comfort and reach the peripheries of society aligns with the Areté Centre's mission to equip laypeople for missionary leadership in the world and the Church. His invitation to live with a spirit of boldness, humility, and joy in spreading the Gospel echoes the ethos of the Areté Centre – forming individuals who not only engage deeply with their faith but are also empowered to share it lovingly with others. His passing marks the end of an era, but his philosophy of joy, his approach to missionary leadership, and his unwavering call to embrace the margins will continue to guide us in our own missionary journey. **Thank you Pope Francis – Requiescat in pace.**





Want to learn more about
the Areté Centre for
Missionary Leadership?

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