From the Acting Director

This is the last time you will hear from me in Ausvangelist. After over 8 years of sharing in the mission of the Catholic Enquiry Centre as Projects Manager and as Acting Director I am leaving CEC to take up a role assisting in the training of priests. I am moving to lecture in Practical and Pastoral Theology at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. Part of my new role is the supervision of seminarians who are on pastoral placements in parishes, schools and hospitals. It goes without saying that it is important work and I am very much looking forward to taking up the challenges of the new role.

That said, it is with some sadness that I leave the Catholic Enquiry Centre. During my time here I have been very much aware that I have been a link in the chain that goes back to the founding of the CEC by Fr Tom White in 1959. Although it has been around 10 years since CEC has been located in Maroubra for many people there is still a living memory of the early days in Maroubra. In 2009 in the role of Acting Director that year I had the great privilege of travelling around Australia as we celebrated in Cathedrals the 50th Anniversary of the Catholic Enquiry Centre. The stories I heard at these events from loyal donors and supporters remain with me as precious examples of deep and abiding faith and fidelity to mission. Since I began with CEC in July 2007 I have witnessed many changes and been involved in a number of exciting projects. In 2008 World Youth Day came to Sydney and CEC with our sister agency the National Office for Evangelisation had a booth in the Vocations Expo. In 2010 CEC published its new resource for enquirers *Call and Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith*. I had the great privilege of writing this book and it is my hope that it will serve CEC for many years to come. In the following year, working closely with Prison Chaplains and with special funding from the Bishops I developed an audio catechetical resource specially designed to meet the needs of prisoners called *Hearing God's Call*. Reaching out to prisoners is vital work and it is appropriate the Catholic Enquiry Centre is involved in this work. In 2015 CEC as lead partner with others was present in the form of a booth at *Mind Body Spirit Festival* in Sydney. This was an example of outreach to those searching for meaning and healing. It was a huge success and we learned much from the experience. In December last year we also started a new initiative called Catholic Enquiry Centre Companions in which supporters share in the mission of CEC by distributing bookmark coupons for *Call and Response* through their professional and social networks. The early results of this strategy are very positive and CEC is looking to consolidate and develop the *Companions* program throughout 2016. I am reaching the word limit so I had better go. So after eight and half years at CEC I say thank you, farewell and may God continue to bless you and those whom you love.

Dr John Francis Collins
Acting Director
Catholic Enquiry Centre

Inspiration

St Josephine Bakhita

St Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan in 1869. Kidnapped at age 9, she endured years of torment as a slave, being sold and resold by Arab traders. She forgot her real name and was given the name 'Bakhita', meaning 'fortunate', by one of her captors. One of her owners marked her with scaring and tattoos as a sign that she belonged to him.

Finally she was sold to an Italian Consul and received more kindly treatment. When the Consul was required to return to Italy, he allowed Bakhita to go along and gave her to his friend, Mr Michieli. She then served Mr Michieli and his wife as a nanny to their baby daughter. When the Michielis had to leave Italy, they placed Bakhita and the child in the care of the Canossian Sisters in Venice.

It was there that she received assistance from the Italian Government who declared her slavery illegal. She remained with the sisters and came to know God, whom she had always known in her heart. After several months, Bakhita joyfully received the sacraments and was given the name, Josephine.

Josephine Bakhita herself became a Canossian sister, consecrating her life to the Lord, 'her master' in 1896. She was known for her gentle nature and reassuring smile, warmly referred to as 'Our Black Mother'. After years of sickness and agony, she died in 1947. In her final moments before death, she was greeted by the Blessed Mother, as her final words, "Our Lady! Our Lady!" and her smile attest.

She was canonized in 2000, regarded as a patron of those suffering slavery and oppression. Her Feast is celebrated on February 8. This year in Australia on her Feast, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference called for a day of prayer and fasting for an end to human trafficking.

Your Support

TO AID THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE IN ITS MISSION IN AUSTRALIA

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POST THIS COUPON TO: Catholic Enquiry Centre
PO Box 415, Crows Nest
NSW 1585 Australia

Australian Catholic Youth Festival

Recently we had the privilege of attending the Australian Catholic Youth Festival held in Adelaide. This is a national conference for young people, organised by The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and this year welcomed over 3500 young Catholics over three days.

The Catholic Enquiry Centre team presented a workshop to festival participants on the theme of evangelisation, giving tips and pointers on how to evangelise their peers.

We also held an exhibition booth designed to help young people encounter and engage with the work of the Catholic Enquiry Centre. We invited participants to become *CEC Companions,* which is a new project of the Catholic Enquiry Centre, designed to support *Companions* as they work together with us in reaching out to others in faith. *CEC Companions* provide flyers to people they may encounter, such as work colleagues, friends and family members who are not Catholic, encouraging them to request a free copy of *Call and Response*.

The response to this initiative was overwhelming. We were overcome with the enthusiasm and eagerness of so many young people who have volunteered to companion with us in our work. We look forward to continuing to foster these precious relationships with *CEC Companions* as we work together with them to spread the good news of our faith.

Projects Desk

The last three months have been quite busy at the Catholic Enquiry Centre. Here are some updates:

First of all, we attended the Australian Catholic Youth Festival where we had an interactive booth and ran a workshop. We discussed how the young people can share their faith by engaging with their peers using non-threatening ways to get them interested in knowing about the Catholic faith.

Second, we also launched the CEC Companion Program which encourages members to distribute our bookmarks and coupons to non-Catholics and encourage them to email us or fill out the coupons to request our free book, Call and Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith. This book is produced through your kind contributions. We managed to recruit 74 program members.

Third, we started publishing an online newsletter for current and future CEC Companions and supporters so we could reach out to them and share with them the activities of the centre.

Fourth, we still advertise on Google and Facebook Ads to get more people interested in requesting the book or asking a question related to the Catholic faith. We embarked on a marketing campaign for a three month period using Newscorp's Online Ads. We have been pleased with the response, receiving many requests for information about the Catholic faith.

Fifth, we completed the second part of our CEC 2016 Planning that dealt with specific online strategies to reach out to our website visitors in a more engaging way.

As we celebrate this season of the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection, we commit to work and live in the hope that we will be able to share this Good News of our salvation to a lot more people and help the Catholic Church in its work to save more souls.

Roslyn Rajasingam
Acting Projects Manager
Catholic Enquiry Centre

IN GRATITUDE

The Catholic Enquiry Centre continues to remember with great appreciation the precious contributions of all our donors. Your prayer and financial support makes possible our work of reaching out in faith to spread the Good News of Christ Australia wide.

As a measure of our sincere gratitude to all who support our work, please be assured of our regular prayers for you and your families. We hope and pray that your giving is richly rewarded, both in this life and in the life to come.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Luke 6:38

YOUR WILL

The Catholic Enquiry Centre benefits from the generosity of many of our donors and supporters, even after they are no longer able to contribute on a regular basis. Those who have died and left a bequest to the Catholic Enquiry Centre give a gift which keeps on giving.

After meeting all ordinary obligations in your Will, you may consider a bequest supporting the Catholic evangelisation of our nation. The Catholic Enquiry Centre can supply a form of words for such an intention to your legal advisors.

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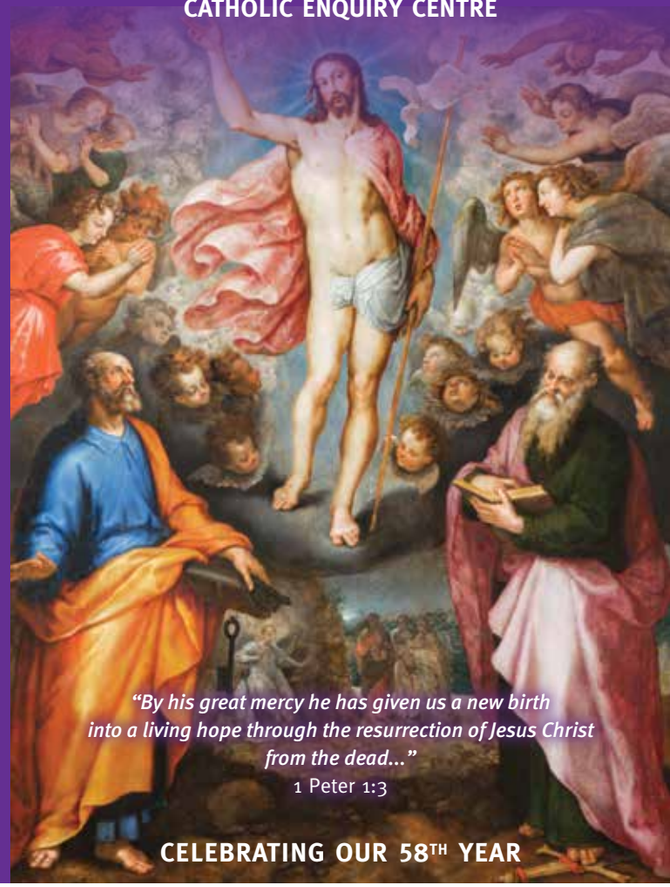
AUSVANGELIST

NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE



CELEBRATING OUR 58TH YEAR

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Reaching out in faith
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

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