

Serving Faithfully

Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services
Published by the Diocesan Curia. Editor: Brigadier Alan Hodges AM (Ret'd)

August 2018
Issue #30



TOWARDS A PLENARY COUNCIL



About ten or twelve years ago some of Australia's Bishops started pressing for a Plenary Council. Individuals had started discussing it among themselves and it was brought to discussion in the Plenary Meetings of all the Bishops. There has been much investigation, discussion and reflective planning undertaken. It is a big deal. Because we have not had one for decades we had to see whether this form of activity was still relevant in the modern world. After all the Church had changed a great deal since the Second Vatican Council and one could ask 'was it still a relevant activity?'. A lot of study into what it might mean for the Church nationally, what it might do and how it could be organised, how it could be beneficial in this modern age of different means of communication, etc. was undertaken. There was a need to reflect and pray about it. It was very clear that the Church would benefit from such an activity. The next step was to identify – in our modern understanding – what sort of a gathering was appropriate and achievable. Was it to be an 'Assembly', a 'Synod', or a 'Plenary Council'? Each of those have different methods of operating, different types of involvement, and also different outcomes. About eight years ago the question about the differences was resolved in favour of a Plenary Council and, because it is the one with the most potential for the future, we started the process of identifying the mechanism for it to happen and also gaining approval from the Holy Father. That came through earlier this year in April.

Fundamentally important is that the Plenary Council is very much a 'bottom up', rather than a 'top down', approach. In some ways this is the greatest challenge. It means that the most important phase is the initial listening. It almost seems counter-productive that we start with listening because we are all keen to let people know what we think – and that is talking. But because we all like to be heard - that means listening. Hence the theme that has emerged for the Plenary Council is 'Listen to what the Spirit is saying ...'. So we begin by deliberately opening ourselves to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is the intention expressed in the Official Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.

*O God, bless and unite all your people in Australia
and guide us on the pilgrim way of the Plenary Council.*

*Give us the grace to see your face in one another
and to recognise Jesus, our companion on the road.*

*Give us the courage to tell our stories
and to speak boldly of your truth.*

*Give us ears to listen humbly to each other
and a discerning heart to hear what you are saying.*

*Lead your Church into a hope-filled future,
that we may live the joy of the Gospel.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
bread for the journey from age to age. Amen.*

Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us.

St Mary MacKillop, pray for us.

In a very real way we must recognise that the Holy Spirit often communicates through each other. So we must be generous in sharing and in hearing – without any personal prejudice. Not to hear completely what is being said could be considered arrogant and could even lead to our rejection of what the Holy Spirit is saying. We are a community, before and above all else, of disciples of Jesus who is our constant companion. Jesus' promise to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit was to draw us together and to 'remind you of all that I have taught you'. This has to be our constant focus and our sure foundation.

The journey ahead is for that conversation to be really active firstly in our small groups. In our Chapel communities this can happen through our local pastoral support groups, finance committees, etc, and even some structured sessions. It is most important that what is said or happens in the small groups should all be recorded for reflection and sharing – first in the group and then even further to other groups locally and regionally. I am attracted by the 'start up' question that is used in some dioceses which asks: 'What does Jesus ask of us in our community today?' That is not a bad starting point but at this stage the trick is to keep nailing down a 'local focus' in our responses. It is also a good question to start with individually – 'What is Jesus asking of me today?', and if we stop and listen carefully we might be surprised by the answer. In time that will expand.

There is an excellent website that gives a lot more explanation about what is involved, the national process that is already in train, and heaps of resources. It also provides a means of sharing more widely and while we may not use it a lot in this early stage - although you could start using it now if you wish – it even helps with suggestions about how that might happen down the track just a bit. The website is www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au and I encourage you to use it – save it to your favourites because I am sure you will want to come back to it frequently.

This is the most significant event in the life of the Church in Australia for decades and it will influence our community for decades to come. There is no doubt that we face many challenges in these days ahead. The history of the Catholic community indicates that this is not a new phenomenon – it has always faced challenges and, with God's sustaining grace and gifts, has continued the mission entrusted to us to make Jesus known and loved. This has always been in the context of a communion with the Lord who constantly encourages us to – 'Come, follow me!'



Bishop Max Davis

News from the Diocese



EXERCISE RIM OF THE PACIFIC 2018 (RIMPAC 2018)

Two of our Chaplains have been very much involved in this year's RIMPAC. This multinational activity was held from 27 June to 2 August in Hawaii and off the Coast of California. As the world's largest international maritime exercise, it involved 47 surface

ships, submarines, over 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel from 25 countries. Fr Paul Stuart, as the Senior Coordinating Chaplain-Fleet, was based on HMAS *Adelaide* and took part in this major exercise, while Fr Joel Vergara was with his unit, Second Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR).

2 RAR is an amphibious light infantry battalion of the Australian Army based at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville. The battalion, in its transition to an amphibious unit, took to the rough surf of the Gold coast for training in preparation for its participation at RIMPAC 2018 and beyond.

CHAPLAINS ON SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICERS COURSE

Four Catholic Chaplains will commence the six weeks' initial Specialist Service Officer Course at the Royal Military College, Duntroon in early August. For many years all chaplains have completed the Army's initial training course for Specialist Service Officers, but this is the first time in recent history that four Catholic chaplains will undertake this course together.

Participants in the six-week course are Fr Brendan Quirk (full-time posted to Enoggera), Reservist Fr Kene Onwukwe (Archdiocese of Sydney), Fr Brad Rafter (Diocese of Wagga Wagga) and Fr Xiang (Andrew) Feng (Archdiocese of Sydney).

All are settling into Army life and we look forward to their completing this initial course followed by the ADF Initial Chaplains Course at the Chaplains College Australian Defence Force Academy. These courses will prepare them well for ministry in Army. We wish them well.

FR NICANDRO LIM: RESERVE ENTRY OFFICERS COURSE AWARD

Fr Nic Lim from the Diocese of Bunbury joined the Navy in 2017 and has just about completed the Reserve Entry Officers Course. Within all Reserve entrants for his year, he has been selected to receive an award for his overall performance and officer qualities while on training.

Fr Nic is the first chaplain in the history of the RANR to be awarded this recognition among his reservist peers. Congratulations Nic. The West will be safe!

OUR THREE CANDIDATES IN THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ADF CHAPLAINS

The Diocese has three candidates preparing for ADF Chaplaincy as part of the In-Service Training Program for ADF Members who aspire to become chaplains in the ADF. This program allows experienced serving members to undertake training for chaplaincy over five years of civil schooling. Each completes three years of academic training and two years of pastoral formation in a Catholic setting, such as a parish.

Several of our chaplains have graduated from this program and have subsequently been ordained as Deacons or appointed as non-ordained Pastoral Associate Chaplains in the past. As you could imagine the transition to study and future chaplaincy is challenging.

The three candidates for ADF Chaplaincy are COL Gavin Keating, FLTLT Edward Davis and CPO Nigel Porter: one for each Service, with Nigel in his second year of theological training while Gavin and Ed commenced formation this year.

The Diocese asks for your prayers for Gavin, Ed and Nigel together with their families as they prepare for ministry as ADF Chaplains.

ARMY RECRUIT TRAINING CENTRE - CHAPLAIN LEO ORREAL SPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

The Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC), which incorporates the 1st Recruit Training Battalion (1 RTB) at Kapooka, outside Wagga Wagga, NSW, is very involved within the local Wagga Wagga community through sport and other community activities. The Centre is in the process of creating the *Chaplain Leo Orreal Sporting Scholarship*. This scholarship will be for recruits and staff members who not only demonstrate sporting prowess, but also use their physical gifts in contributing generously to both the Defence and civil communities through sport.

Leo's initial experience at 1 RTB was as a recruit in 1983. In 1992 he was posted back to 1RTB as a Corporal Instructor, then in 1996 as the Military Police Operations Sergeant, and from 2010 to 2013 as a Chaplain. During these postings, Leo always actively involved himself within many facets of both Army and community life. He is an avid sportsman, both playing and coaching rugby throughout his career.

Chaplain Leo has had a significant influence and high profile at Kapooka over many years in his long career as Military Policeman (during which he reached the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 and was the Regimental Sergeant Major) and as a Chaplain following his ordination as a Deacon in November 2009.

The Diocese is very fortunate is having chaplains such as Leo who passionately care for people and give their all.

A new way to support the Ordinariate

Unlike other Australian Catholic Dioceses, the work of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services is funded in the main by a levy on chaplains. Given the reduced number of chaplains and the need to train some clergy within the Diocese as well as fund lay formation and other programs, greater reliance must now be placed on donations and bequests.

To make a tax-deductible donation to support the Diocese, you can now use a direct credit card link at:

military.catholic.org.au/donations

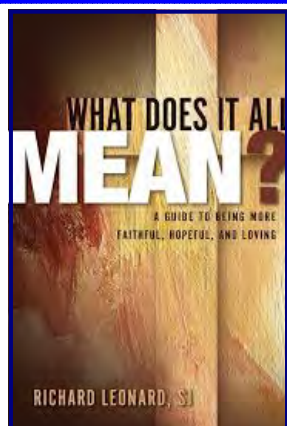
A Gift in Your Will

Making a gift to the Catholic Military Ordinariate is a meaningful way to fund the education of future priests and deacons and to support our clergy in providing spiritual guidance to our service men and women and their families.

To make a bequest, you should consult your solicitor or trustee company. It may be sufficient to make an addition or amendment to an existing will by adding a codicil.

A useful website for more information is: includecharity.com.au

Religion and War



A book published in 2017 by Father Richard Leonard SJ, titled *What Does it all Mean?* received an award for excellence in the Spirituality category at the US Catholic Press Association awards. Chapter 4 of the book is headed Religion and War—a subject germane to earlier articles in *Serving Faithfully* and several parts of that chapter are discussed below with the author's approval.

'With the litany of wars that have been, or are, seemingly waged in the name of God(s) throughout history, the notion that religion is the primary cause of conflict in the world can easily be asserted ... Certainly, religion has had and does have a role to play in the justification of war, and some shocking deeds have been done and are done in the name of God. However, Meic Pearse presents a more intelligent analysis of the causes of war in *The Gods of War: Is Religion the Primary Cause of Violent Conflict?* Here, as well as in the highly respected *Encyclopedia of Wars*, we find, tragically, there that have been 1,763 official wars in all recorded human history. Meic Pearse shows that believers have been responsible for sixty-eight religious wars.

'As far as Christianity is concerned, while we hold the theory of a just war, there should not have been any war conducted simply for religious ends. To justify their murderous behaviour, leaders, including religious leaders, have evoked the greatest appeal to the highest authority they can - God.

'Pearse shows that the vast majority of the world's wars happen because of greed for land or resources, political power, and conflict over cultural, tribal, national, and social issues.'

The author continues, 'These days it is tragic and wrong that some Islamists proclaim their deadly acts of terrorism as "holy wars". In the aftermath of 9/11, the world's leading mainstream Islamic leaders condemned those attacks and have subsequently condemned bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and other Islamist terrorist groups as the equivalent of war criminals whose desires do not represent Muslims and whose actions are incompatible with Islam ... Nor do I want to pretend that all is fine with Islam.

'The distinguished journalist Fareed Zakaria, born into an Islamic family, neatly sums up the grave issues as follows: "But let's be honest. Islam has a problem today. The places that have trouble accommodating themselves to the modern world are disproportionately Muslim ... There is a cancer of extremism within Islam today ... While some confront these extremists, not enough do so, and the protests are not loud enough. How many mass rallies have been held against the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) in the Arab world today?"

'The reality is that religion, as one among many tools, has been and is sometimes used in political, social, and ethnic wars, in the false search for social and political uniformity and colonial dominance. Furthermore, apart from war, and even more tragically, religion has mounted its own persecutions.'

Here, the author talks about The Inquisition and continues: 'Let's not run away from the despicable fallout from the 595-year reign of the "inquisitors of heretical depravity". It is impossible to know how many people were actually killed in this period by these theological tyrants, but most reputable scholars on the Inquisition conclude that it was somewhere between three and five thousand people ... Having now

formally apologized for the Inquisition (easy in hindsight), to my knowledge the Catholic Church has not sanctioned the death of anyone since 1826, which is more than we can say for most other nations or states ...

'Humanity does not need religion to be murderous. A horrible statistic to know is that the atheistic regimes of the Soviet Union, Communist China, the Nazis, Pol Pot, and other nationalist regimes accounted for 1.2 billion deaths in the twentieth century. Some atheists object to believers making such a claim.' For example, the author quotes the writer Sam Harris as saying that, 'People of Faith often claim that the crimes of Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot were the inevitable product of unbelief. The problem is that they are too much like religions. Such regimes are dogmatic to the core and generally give rise to personality cults that are indistinguishable from cults of religious hero worship ... There is no society in human history that ever suffered because its people became too reasonable.'

Fr Leonard considers that, 'these regimes were atheistic in word and deed, and mounted the largest-scale and most systematic murder of innocents the world has ever known ... Given this, we can see some validity in Harris's argument in regard to the symbolic presentations of communism, fascism, and Nazism, but the same could also be applied to some families, sporting clubs, and social institutions that have elaborate quasireligious rituals ... The sad reality is that in human conflict, especially when it involves greed for land or resources, political power, and conflict over cultural, tribal, national or social issues, religion is one of the many things used to uphold the rightness of the claim and the justification for war.

'Despite what some atheists say, religions change, develop, and evolve. The believers interpret their sacred texts in the light of tools at their disposal in order to understand their own history: they discern the essentials of their faith from those texts that refer to a time and period that has passed, and they take into account the contemporary setting in living the faith. All religions have some way to go in this regard, but the intelligent and commonsense majority should not be summarily condemned along with the distorted ideology that can emerge from the most unwell, ignorant, or criminal religious minority.'

The author concludes this chapter with the following questions, 'Does anyone truly believe that if you had not religion at all, we would have no wars? So, it is simply not true to say that Christianity or religion has been the cause and effect of most wars in the world'.

Fr Richard Leonard SJ, is a Jesuit of the Australian Province. He is the director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting and a consultant to the Australian Catholic Bishop's Media Council. He combines his film studies with an active writing and lecturing career in the areas of liturgy, cinema, culture and religion. He has a masters degree in systematic theology and a doctorate in cinema studies.

Other publications include:

Where the Hell is God?

Why Bother Praying?

Beloved Daughters: 100 years of Papal teaching on women.

The Mystical Gaze of the Cinema: the Films of Peter Weir.

Movies that Matter: Reading Film through the Lens of Faith.



Fr Richard Leonard SJ

60th Anniversary of the Military Pilgrimage – Lourdes

On 11 February 1858 Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in the south of France was collecting firewood with her sister and a friend near a grotto when she had the first of Marion apparitions that continued to 16 July that year. During the course of her short life (she died at the age of 35) Bernadette received an astounding 18 visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bernadette was told by Our Lady, 'Go drink at the spring and wash yourself there.' and 'She has told me to tell you that she wishes to have a chapel at Massabielle.' Besides that she said, 'I wish people to come here in procession.' Of course the Chapel was built and people from all around the world come to the Grotto to wash and drink and process while the Rosary is prayed.

After World War II French soldiers and their chaplains invited German soldiers and their chaplains to gather and pray together. This initiative sought to heal memories and reconcile the past by recognising their common identity as Christians in need of peace. Since 1958 the pilgrimage has expanded to include additional countries of Europe, the Americas and other countries. For us in Australia it is not the first Military Pilgrimage and also not the first gathering of the Australian Defence Force Academy Catholics. Fr Damien Ellis, Chaplain ADFA, had organised retreats and a Mission trip to Fiji last year. He sought the permission and guidance of Bishop Max Davis and Mgr Peter O'Keefe to take young men and women from ADFA on this significant pilgrimage – for some it would be their first trip outside Australia.

We were a small but determined delegation that departed Sydney, conscious of the forthcoming 100th anniversary of Armistice day and also the Battle of Hamel, that some argue changed the course of WW I because of the successful tactics of using combined arms against an entrenched enemy. Once more the iconic Slouch Hat was seen wondering the streets of a French Village – the Australians are here! The delegation was led by Fr Damien Ellis, assisted by Deacon Brenton Fry (RMC-D), who was accompanied by his wife Genyese, Mons Peter representing Bishop Max, and nine members of the Defence Academy student body.

The hard work was undertaken by OCDT Lachlan Chadwick in writing the administration instruction. As the President of the ADFA Catholics, he was also the flag bearer of the delegation.

First stop was at Toulouse where the group married up with Mons Peter and conducted a whirlwind tour of the Boeing Factory, which was appreciated by all; this was followed by the train journey into Lourdes, where Deacon Brenton and his wife, Genyese, met the Cadets at the train station ready to

transfer their luggage to their accommodation where they settled in and prepared for the opening ceremony conducted within the Basilica of Saint Pius X, which is underground. The Basilica was at capacity with some standing. In excess of 25,000 pilgrims were all on their feet as the country flags were

processed to take their place around the altar.

The hustle and bustle of the streets immediately outside St Joseph's gate had to be experienced to be believed with much interaction with the many different nations' Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen/ women in attendance. It was with much joy that Fr Damien accepted an invitation for our group to attend a garden party hosted by the British Armed Forces; this gave all an opportunity to engage with peers, Defence Attaches and three-star Generals of all Services in renewing the strong bonds



*The military pilgrims inside the Minor Basilica after the opening Mass
Rear: Fr Damien Ellis, Deacon Brenton Fry
Centre: OFFCDT Nicholas Eberl, PLTOFF Ryan Woods, OFFCDT Sian Johnson,
OCDT Jane Spooner, OCDT Richard Johnson
Front: OCDT Austin Victory, OFFCDT Mai-Khoi Vu, Mgr Peter O'Keefe,
MIDN Sarah-Jane Brown, OCDT Lachlan Chadwick*



*L-R MIDN Sarah-Jane Brown,
Swiss Guard, OCDT Lachlan Chadwick,
OFFCDT Mai-Khoi Vu*

between Australian and Britain. Our Cadets certainly held their own with MIDN Sarah-Jane Brown being invited to a Royal Navy luncheon the next day.

Perhaps SCDT Chadwick explains it best when he said, 'The pilgrimage for me was a unique and interesting experience. I wasn't sure what to expect before I left to go and I had the added bonus of being the head cadet for the group, which presented its own challenges. Upon arriving I was amazed at how friendly everyone seemed to be, it really blew me away. Nowhere I had ever been before was there so much mateship and cohesion among strangers; it was truly an amazing and spiritual experience to know I had a friend everywhere, even if we didn't speak the same language. No matter what time of day or where we were in the town I always felt God with me. Even when things looked bleak or plans didn't work I had no

worries as I knew He would provide. I am sure the Lord was with everyone who attended, after all how can you explain 20,000 military personnel drinking together and not a single incident of violence being recorded or witnessed. I am grateful for the experience and I certainly believed that God wanted us there and for us to continue going. This is definitely not the only time I will go, I look forward to going again and bringing new friends next time.

'The highlights of the Pilgrimage were: the time spent reflecting on the apparitions at Lourdes by each member; the procession of the light on the Saturday night; and of course the concluding Mass, again conducted in the Basilica of Saint Pius X, a very solemn occasion. We give thanks for Fr Damien's ministry in Christ at ADFA, and for his guidance, fellowship and being a driving force behind ADFA Catholics whose numbers continue to grow. Our expectation is that our next pilgrimage will have even bigger numbers. Thanks be to God!'

Chaplain Brenton Fry (Royal Military College Duntroon)

WHAT AN INTRODUCTION FOR A NEW BISHOP

Bishop Antoine de Romanet, newly appointed Bishop of the French Military Forces, was the host of the 60th Military International Pilgrimage at Lourdes this year for his first time. A delightful man, a former Parish Priest in Paris and scholar, he was totally overwhelmed by the number of International Military Pilgrims, the spirit of the occasion and the well-oiled organisation of the pilgrimage event.

His predecessor as Military Bishop, Bishop Luc Ravel, was appointed Archbishop of Strasbourg in early 2017. Bishop Luc has been a good friend of Bishop Max and our Military Diocese, hosting us on several occasions - at one International Pilgrimage, and in the days before World Youth Day in Madrid when we joined the French Military Contingent from Lourdes climbing across the Pyrenees into Spain. All indications pointed to Bishop Antoine being the same welcoming host.

At the opening ceremony of the International Pilgrimage held in the underground basilica, the Australian contingent, numbering fourteen, was very disappointed when we were not invited to parade our National Flag along with the majority of other contingents at the opening ceremony. When we asked 'WHY?', the answer given was that our small contingent numbers did not qualify Australia for this formal recognition!

When Bishop Antoine heard about this matter, he was horrified and assured us that regardless of numbers, the Australian Contingent was most welcome - naming our considerable military ties on French soil. He said that it was very significant to have us represented at Lourdes, particularly this year, and we would be most welcome in the future.

I felt very honoured to be part of our contingent and felt energised to journey with our pilgrims from the Australian Defence Force Academy. These young men and women are caring and welcoming; their vitality and enthusiasm for life and their joy was contagious particularly with their new-found international friends. Their pride in the uniform was



Pilgrims and Genyese Fry (at left front) at the foot of the cross ready to visit the Grotto at Lourdes

outstanding and commented upon by many. The commitment in which they entered into the various religious exercises over the days demonstrated their ever-deepening spirituality, love of Jesus and loyalty to the Church. I certainly came away a better person for having shared these days with them.

I wish to thank Fr Damien Ellis for his ministry to us and for outstanding leadership and Deacon Brenton and his wife, Genyese - thanks for your being part of this pilgrimage, and for all the personal support you gave to the ADFA group, Fr Damien and myself.

Mgr Peter O'Keefe
Vicar General



At Home in Lourdes: The pilgrims felt very much at home when they saw this imposing banner of St Mary of the Cross in the underground basilica at Lourdes

ANZACS

*The children unborn shall acclaim
The standard the Anzacs unfurled,
When they made Australia's fame
The wonder and pride of the world.*

Some of you got a V.C.,
Some "The Gallipoli trot,"
Some had a grave by the sea,
And all of you got it damned hot,
And I see you go limping through town
In the faded old hospital blue,
And driving abroad—lying down,
And Lord! But I wish I were you!

I envy you beggars I meet,
From the dirty old hats on your head
To the rusty old boots on your feet—
I envy you living or dead.
A knighthood is fine in its way,



A peerage gives splendour and fame,
But I'd rather have tacked any day
That word to the end of my name.

I count it the greatest reward
That ever a man could attain;
I'd sooner be "Anzac" than "lord."
I'd rather be "Anzac" than "thane."
Here's a bar to the medal you'll wear,
There's a word that will glitter and glow,
And an honour a king cannot share
When you're back in the cities you know.

*The children unborn shall acclaim
The standard the Anzacs unfurled,
When they made Australasia's fame
The wonder and pride of the world.*

The British crime novelist and poet Edgar Wallace wrote this poem. It was published in The ANZAC BOOK in 1916.

Chaplain Stephane Sarazin

Senior Coordinating Chaplain, RAAF Base Amberley

Fr Stephane Sarazin is the Senior Coordinating Chaplain at RAAF Base Amberley, QLD, Australia's largest Air Force Base. Fr Sarazin is a member of 23 Squadron RAAF, which has a proud history: 23 Squadron was formed in 1937 as a Citizen Air Force unit at Laverton, Victoria equipped with Avro Ansons. It was subsequently based in New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory. Over the years it operated a variety of aircraft: Wirraway, Hudson, P39 Airacobra fighters, Vultee Vengeance dive bomber, Liberator heavy bomber, Vampire jet fighter and Meteor jet fighter. During WW2 the squadron was involved in combat operations in the Pacific. Subsequently, its role changed to provide servicing support for the Canberra and F-4 Phantom aircraft and Chinook helicopter. In 2010 the squadron was transferred to Combat Support Group and at RAAF Base Amberley is now responsible for Fixed Base Management.

The Royal Australian Air Force publication, *Chaplains Stories Beyond their Ministries*, includes the following article on Fr Sarazin:

Kangaroos, sunshine and no snow... As a Canadian who had never travelled to the Southern Hemisphere, those were my impressions of Australia when the ADF came knocking in 2009 to bolster its ranks with experienced overseas Chaplains.

I had been in the Canadian Defence Forces since 1997 but before then I was a church lawyer. In one of the cases in which I was assisting the prosecution, a priest had abused 250 children and then walked away with a plea bargain without doing a day of jail time. This put me off that particular career path. So I moved to a civilian parish and spent some years in that role before realising that I couldn't deal with the politics. I'd always wanted a missionary role and was seeking other opportunities to serve when I met a military Chaplain at a funeral in Canada who promoted military Chaplaincy as a way of seeing the world. I did an internship that gave me experience of all three Services, Navy, Army and Air Force, before going to sea for two years with the Navy and putting in three trips with NATO Forces.

9/11 changed everything; our entire world. I was posted to the naval blockade in the First Gulf War, a fascinating experience in which none of us had any idea of what we were going into. We were training around the clock for chemical warfare and had stopped in the Suez Canal to pick up extra recruits, load ammunition and body bags. For the next three months, we patrolled the Gulf non-stop and were on a high state of alert because of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, two nuclear powers with a history of enmity. I'd returned to Canada to serve in the Air Force when the call came from Australia. Within four days, I'd sold my home, someone took over my car lease, and 30 days later I came to Australia as a missionary and was posted at RAAF Base Williamtown, where I bought a house by the water with help from the Defence Housing Authority.

Australia and Canada are both part of the Commonwealth so it wasn't a big adjustment to move countries. Australia's drinking culture is a bit more extreme than Canada's but maybe the thing that shocked me the most when I arrived was my observation of the lack of awareness of or progress in LGBTI acceptance. Although Australia lifted its

restriction on gays and lesbians serving in the military in 1992, there was a lack of safe spaces and specific policies to address LGBTI issues.

The issue first came to my attention when I was providing advice about a domestic violence issue. I was visiting a 19 year-old member with a broken arm and asked some questions about how the injury occurred while at home. It turned out that the member was in a same sex relationship but while the doctor seemed aware of this, the question wasn't asked to obviate potential embarrassment.

The Aids Council of New South Wales (ACON) had started its safe place program for LGBTI people a year before the ban was lifted in the ADF in 1992 but no unit in the ADF had met the requirements to be certified by ACON as an inclusive, safe place. I worked with ACON and my co-worker Chaplains at RAAF Base Williamtown to rectify this situation and the Chaplaincy Centre became the ADF's first certified safe space in 2014.

Any prejudice toward LGBTI people has no place in the Australian Defence Force and a safe space foregrounds Defence's policy with respect to openness and diversity. The program has really flourished since then. After I became the Senior Coordinating Chaplain at RAAF Base Amberley early in 2016, we set up two places in the Chaplaincy offices that are now certified safe spaces and I've received a request on how to establish a safe space at the Al Minhad Air Base (AMAB) in Dubai for our ADF members.

I'm working towards establishing safe spaces in all the Air Forces Chaplaincy centres and have received a lot of support for this idea. As Chaplains charged with the responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of personnel we are leaders on this issue, and these spaces are beacons for diversity where LGBTI personnel, or more importantly, any member can receive judgment-free spiritual advice and other support.

For inspiring stories about other RAAF chaplains go to: tinyurl.com/RAAF-CHAPLAINS

(Fr Sarazin has updated the above article by reporting that most of RAAF's Chaplaincy Centres are designated as Safe Places and the concept is incorporated into a *Statement of Expectations for the Air Force Chaplain Branch*. Chaplaincy Centres are to provide, at all times, a Safe Place for Defence members and their dependants.)



Fr Sarazin discusses with Chaplain Chew (Ret'd) the concept of Safe Place designation for Chaplaincy Centres



June 2018: Official Opening 23 SQN Fire Section, RAAF Amberley, by AIRCDRE Robinson, Commander Combat Support Group with a Blessing of the building by Chaplain Stephane Sarazin and Fireman's Prayer by Baptist Chaplain Steve Turnbull (background).

Vale - Father Keith Teefey CSsR



Father Keith Teefey CSsR

Father Keith Patrick Teefey, a priest of the Congregation of The Most Holy Redeemer, died on 11 May 2018 at age 85. At his funeral Mass at St Vincent's Chapel, Nudgee, on 16 May, Father Michael Gilbert CSsR delivered the obituary saying that having known Keith from seminary days, he had never wavered in admiration of this good man whose qualities had their beginning and source in his close and loving family of origin. Such a noble testament would be treasured by any grieving

family. Condolences to Keith's family from officers and men of 7RAR reinforced Father Gilbert's moving panegyric.

Born 25 August 1932 and ordained on 11 July 1965, Keith was a leader entrusted often to exercise that quality in difficult circumstances. Early in his ministry he was appointed to be a chaplain to the Military and was posted to the 7th Battalion in September 1969 as its Catholic Chaplain, aware the Battalion was destined for service in South Vietnam.

He described his prior training for his new role, a two-week Chaplains' School, which explained the structures of the Army, showed him how to put on a uniform, salute, put up a hutchie, handle a ration pack, etc. 'After that, one is on one's own' he said, but he was amazed and often embarrassed by the welcome and the cooperation he received wherever he went, surely a credit to the openness of his own character. His way was just to go with the troops.

In the preparation for South Vietnam he recounts that he went on exercises with them in the cold and the wet and the heat of the Putty Ranges and Shoalwater Bay, dug fighting pits, did early morning PT at the Jungle Training Centre, or whatever was required of him. He deployed to Vietnam on the former aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney* in February 1970 with the main body of the battalion.

Army lore attests that whatever their religion, chaplains sent to Infantry battalions fall into two classes: those who stick to the comforts in base accommodation, and those that share the lot of the soldier. Father Keith chose the second class—those that gain the respect and trust of soldiers, and he formed a close affinity with the soldiers of the battalion as he shared their discomfort.

In July he spent a night sleeping on top of an unexploded artillery round buried just a few inches below his bedroll and noticed only the next morning. Although unused to military life, he acclimatised to its demands in Vietnam where he was willing to suffer anything required of his brothers so as to administer to his flock who described him as 'one of us, without a gun'. He wrote 'I did not carry a weapon and this was always a talking point. The CO insisted at one point that I take one and that I could not go into the field without one. I carried an Armalite on one occasion for five days and the CO's short weapon about twice on night patrols ... I had no need to



© AWM reproduced with permission

JON/70/0550/VN

'Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, July 1970, Roman Catholic padre, Father Keith Teefey of Gaythorne, Qld (right), called in Army engineer Sapper Peter Piromanski of Magill, SA, to destroy the artillery shell in the foreground. Both are attached to 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR), on operations. The unexploded shell was buried under a few inches of topsoil, just under Father Teefey's bedroll and was noticed the following morning.'

carry a weapon. That was not my role and I had the utmost confidence in the soldiers about me who were trained to do their job. I kept telling them, you don't have to worry about me. It doesn't take any training to hit the ground.'

The 7th Battalion said, 'he was one of us'.

He celebrated Mass in some desolate places: on the ground; on an ammo box; in D Company Mess at Horseshoe; on a table in a deserted VC hospital camp; on a deserted beach; Midnight Mass at Luscombe Bowl, 600 souls there with the school children; and Sisters and people in the Baria Parish Church.

The obituarist noted that the military did not make Keith militaristic. On the contrary, it shaped him to be a man of peace. His experience as a chaplain taught him that the men in his pastoral care were the ones that suffered and bore the deepest wounds of war. Army life taught him never to leave a soldier behind, reinforcing his Christian conviction that God was a God that left nobody behind. His time in the army made Keith a true serviceman - one who served others.

Coming to the Eucharist in the Requiem Mass, Father Gilbert committed Keith to the care of that hospitable Man, Christ, the prototype of leader who leads followers to the pastures of everlasting life. 'We draw on the reserves of faith in this Man who was Keith's inspiration and his mentor to pray: May the soul of Keith Patrick Teefey, priest who proclaimed God's word, rest in peace.'



These two images are by Will Dyson, illustrator, political cartoonist and Australian WW1 Official War Artist. He was fearless in the places he went on the battlefield and was wounded twice in 1917. His war cartoons were exhibited in London and he published a number in *Australia at War* in November 1918.

The left image is titled, 'One of the old platoon—near Gibraltar Somme'.
The right image is titled, 'The Mate'.



The Return



Dust jacket of the 1944 edition of the Christmas Book 'Jungle warfare: with the Australian Army in the south-west Pacific' published by the Australian War Memorial.

The train rattles on, swaying and bumping. I sink back in my corner seat of the carriage. Snatches of the past week flash before me – the ship from the north slipping out before dusk through the straits, leaving behind those kunai-clad mountains sloping sheer to the sea – passing through the staging camp, I was sure I saw “Massa” there, the same smiling cheery Massa. As he passed me I whispered “Mate” – I always called him “Mate” at school – but he walked on without a word. No one worried me that day at the L.T.D. Now the train is rolling past Cooroora. Over to the east spreads the Wallum where Geoff and I cantered over the frost-covered melon-holes.

I settle down as the train streams through the night. Christmas Eve! By the time we arrive Mum and the girls will be at Midnight Mass. Not long now! We clatter through the yards and lurch to a stop beside the long welcome platform.

Jerry the porter doesn't recognize me. My kitbag with its stenciled “J. J. Carroll” is in the cloakroom.

Two couples walk ahead of me. Our footsteps echo in the quiet street.

It is almost midnight as I enter the reverent silence of the cathedral with its soft lights and rose windows, the candles in myriads, altar cloths spotless.

There are Keith and young Potter, and George Stevens with his mother. In her usual place kneels Mum, head bowed, soft light on her silver hair, eyes bright. Dad's mother-of-pearl rosary in her hands. She prays earnestly. My sister Mary kneels beside her. Mary of the sparkling eyes and gay laughter; she has been a very happy person always, her arms so fragile and white, and those slim fingers which bow “Ave Maria” so wistfully on her violin. Wearing the little Perspex crucifix I sent her is little Eileen, who always seems about to smile – the same little baby sister who used to nestle in Dad's arms – I can remember his holding her ever so tenderly and patting her fair head. Kevin is at the end of the pew, kneeling erect, staring ahead.

A few seats ahead is Maureen, dear Maureen, my first sweetheart, the gay, laughing dark-haired colleen in pinafores now grown up. She seems so earnest tonight. “I'll remember you at Midnight Mass,” she wrote once.

There is the age-old atmosphere of Christmas – the intent sincerity of young faces – the earnest responses of altar boys in surplice and soutane – the glorious voices of the boys' choir.

How happy I am to be back. For the Christmas-tide was always a story-book time; a jingling and tinkling of bells in the snow; a sky sprinkled with twinkling stars; stories of shepherds tending their flocks; the angel's “Unto you is born this day a Saviour ...” tales of Christmas trees sparkling with candles; singing of “Silent Night” and “First Noël”; a time of gifts. I remember those toy soldiers Uncle Frank gave me that Christmas when I was six.

I have a feeling of deep, still repose.

The Gloria is over and we have risen for the Gospel. The priest moves down the altar steps past the altar rails and slowly mounts the pulpit.

“In the Name of the Father ...”

“Your charitable prayers are requested ...” Why, Mum's eyes are really bright with tears. Mary's hand finds hers.

Maureen gazes straight ahead. Kevin bows his head. Eileen's shoulders are shaking.

“John Joseph Carroll ... killed in action ...”

Oh. Mum!

QX38867

The contributor, identified only by his service number, was John Joseph Concannon, who was born in Maryborough Queensland in August 1919. He was a school teacher and enlisted for war service in May 1941. He was promoted to sergeant in November 1942. He served with the 47th Australian Infantry Battalion (The Wide Bay Regiment) and subsequently in PNG in 4 Port Operations Company. He was discharged in February 1946. Commonwealth of Australia Gazette of 6 March 1947 announced that he had been Mentioned in Dispatches.

'Jungle Warfare—with the Australian Army in the south-west Pacific' was published in 1944.

© Australian War Memorial

Serving Faithfully

is a newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services.

It is published quarterly by the Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia.

The Diocese comprises members of the Australian Defence Force and their families, wherever they may be serving.

Its people are scattered widely across Australia and overseas.

Serving Faithfully aims to be a means of sharing events and experiences from across the whole Diocese.

Articles are welcome to be submitted for publication to

The Chancery, Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia

PO Box 63, CAMPBELL, ACT 2612

Telephone: (02) 6248 0511 Fax: (02) 6247 0898

Email: sec@cmoa.org.au Website: www.military.catholic.org.au