



Lent and Ashes



In the calendar of our lives there are many celebrations like Christmas and New Year that encourage us to think especially of others and particularly those close to us. We plan to spend time with family and friends and often extend invitations to those outside our immediate circle that we feel need companionship. I know of some families that have plans developed to rotate the hosting of Christmas and New Year celebrations for the next couple of years. We want to share time, stories, each other, gifts, and our sense of belonging. We want to acknowledge important moments that touch each of us and that have been part of our common story. Of course sometimes plans need to be changed for a number of reasons and we adapt or modify our celebration accordingly.

For the community of the family of the disciples of Jesus we mark significant moments that are important to us. Along with Christmas we also mark and celebrate Easter with special plans to enhance and deepen our participation. The plan for Easter is developed during the time we call Lent. It has started already. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and this year particularly I have found myself reflecting on the recent bushfires that have affected so many so very deeply. The community response has been astonishing and inspirational. There were times as the fires raged that were very frightening particularly because they were uncontrollable and seemingly unstoppable. The response at many different levels – victims, survivors, responders, etc - was nothing short of heroic. A steely determination is evident and has a strong foundation in the knowledge of the support of

Ash Wednesday ... is the beginning of a time dedicated to recognising and clearing out our own spiritual dead wood or old self-centred ways to make way for the goodness of the new life won for us, and shared, by Jesus who is always abiding deep within us.

many others who became, and still are, involved. Elsewhere in this edition there is a reprinted article concerning some of the responses from our own particular community to support those affected.

Our Vicar General, Monsignor Peter O'Keefe, as he has done so frequently over recent years, went to our community in the Nowra and Jervis Bay areas to celebrate the Sunday Masses. It was in the second weekend of January and was one of the areas affected. He recounted observing the burnt landscape so close to where people live. He also observed that peeping through the ash and burnt out areas were tiny green shoots here and there.

Without getting involved in the arguments about causes, I sense that the ecology after the ravaging of the fire has responded by bringing forth new life. And so my reflection

led me to ponder what our Ash Wednesday this year might be like if we consider that it is the beginning of a time dedicated to recognising and clearing out our own spiritual dead wood or old self-centred ways to make way for the goodness of the

new life won for us, and shared, by Jesus who is always abiding deep within us. This is what we celebrate at Easter. It is the celebration of acknowledgement that whatever our faults and failings, our weaknesses and sins, we can overcome them by embracing the infinite Love of the Father that Jesus shows us. So now is the time to use Lent as our plan for celebrating Easter this year.



*Bishop Max Davis
AM, DD
Military Ordinary*

The Chaplains gathered at the Marist Brothers Hermitage from 10-15 November for their annual retreat.

The occasion is an opportunity for: spiritual retreat; building up fraternity, as many chaplains only see each other once a year; and thirdly for Ordinariate professional development and information sharing.

Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green of Wilcannia-Forbes lead the spiritual exercises for us. As a police chaplain and outback bishop, he struck a good chord with the Chaplains and was very much appreciated.

On the last morning Chaplain Graham Swan, a long-term member of Navy who recently transferred to RAN



*Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green,
Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, with
Mgr Peter O'Keefe AM, Vicar General*



Chaplaincy, was admitted to Candidacy for Holy Orders at the concluding Mass. This ceremony signified the Church's formal recognition of Graham's preparation for the Permanent Diaconate.

Fr Brendan Quirk, Army Chaplain, was not present at the retreat due to deployment on operations.

Priests swap clericals for camouflage to aid bushfire recovery

Army chaplains offer a 'ministry of presence' amid trauma

Three Sydney priests have swapped clericals for camouflage to join the 3000 Australian Defence Force reservists providing support to firefighters and communities in the grip of the bushfire crisis.

Fr Kene Onwukwe, assistant priest of Sacred Heart, Mosman, and Fr Andrew Feng, parish administrator of St Christopher's, Holsworthy, are chaplains with the army reserve currently working full-time alongside soldiers supporting exhausted firefighters in the bushfire relief efforts.

Both joined the Reserves as part-time chaplains in February 2018 and since 7 January have formed part of the historic deployment. Along with Fr Francis Ghanem ofm, parish priest of the St Joseph Edgecliff and St Francis of Assisi Paddington, they signed up for a full-time deployment this month to help firefighters and communities battling the fires and their immediate aftermath.

They've been pitching in help mend fences, clear roads and set up camp sites but most of all their role is providing a 'ministry of presence' says Fr Kene.

Fr Kene spoke to The Catholic Weekly from Kiah, near Bega in southeast NSW, which had lost its Catholic church to the horror fires on 4 January, and had also travelled with his military unit 5 ER (5th Engineer Regiment) to the towns of Cobargo, Wonboyn and Bega providing pastoral support to the Rural Fire Service, soldiers and military officers and their families as well as the local communities.

'We lead a daily prayer service, talk to them, pray with them and for them and visit families who have been affected by these bushfires,' he said.

Fr Kene also shares in the daily routine of his unit which currently includes sleeping in a public high school gym by night and pitching in to clear roads, mend fences or whatever else needs doing to help the fire-ravaged communities access the damage and make the first steps to recovery.

Outpouring of gratitude

'However mine is primarily a ministry of presence, to provide encouragement and support,' Fr Kene said. 'What has stood out for me is the amount of appreciation for us from the

local community members, those who have been most affected,' he said.

'We are not out here to stop the fires, the RFS is doing a great job at that, but we support them in any way we can,

often in little ways, and people are enormously appreciative of our support.'

A few encounters stand out, including with a man whose family's home had been razed to the ground. After visiting and praying with them Fr Kene gave the father his bible, and the man suddenly broke down.

'He was a man of faith and he told me he that all of his many bibles had been burnt and now the only bible he had was the military one I gave him,' Fr Kene said. 'That touched me.'

Fr Andrew is part of the 1st Close Health Battalion, a military medical unit which has been working in Bateman's Bay, Eden and Cooma supporting struggling local clinics and hospitals.

Before this latest deployment he also provided pastoral support for the army after Christmas in the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains areas.

He said his first time living full-time in the field amid intense heat and smoke and at night, sleeping in freezing cold tents, had its challenges but that the most heart-warming aspect was the welcome the army receive wherever they go. 'Morale can become very low in these communities and the firefighters need support as well,' Fr Andrew said. He is also impressed by the 'suffering and sacrifice' of the soldiers he is assisting. 'I respect them now more than ever and am honoured to be able to serve the people who serve our nation,' he said.

Sister Benedetta Bennett rsj who welcomed Fr Andrew to Our Lady Star of the Sea church at Eden, the picturesque town on the state's Sapphire Coast which was disfigured when the NSW/Vic border fire raced through in the first weekend of January, said that the locals are 'very resilient and good at looking after each other'.

Sr Benedetta had been evacuated at the time along with many others, and now enjoying a respite in Sydney, says she was impressed by how people made sure their neighbours and other locals were able to flee to safety.



Fr Kene Onwukwe prepares to cut down a tree damaged by bushfire in Wonboyn



Josephite Sr Benedetta Bennett and Fr Andrew Feng

Originally published in 'The Catholic Weekly'.
Author Marilyn Rodrigues.

Hope rises from the ashes

Ashes taken from a blackened roadside on Kangaroo Island have provided a symbolic reminder of devastation and new hope for locals who attended an ecumenical Ash Wednesday service on February 26.

Fr Mark Sexton holds some charcoal taken from bushfire ravaged country near Parndana which was to be used to create ashes for an Ash Wednesday ecumenical service on the island.

The ashes were collected by Northern Light parish priest Fr Mark Sexton who spent most of February on the island working as a chaplain for the Australian Defence Force.

Fr Sexton said it was a fitting gesture to mark crosses on people's foreheads with the local ashes in solidarity with those who have suffered from the bushfires and as a sign of hope as they rebuild their lives.



Helping people in the aftermath of a fire is unfortunately something Fr Sexton has previously experienced. In 2015 he returned from a sabbatical in the United Kingdom to witness the impact the Pinery fires had on many parts of his Lower Mid North parish.

'There are many similarities to Pinery, but I am stunned by the incredible loss of wildlife here,' he said.

Fr Sexton paid tribute to the Reservists throughout Australia who have been doing a 'wonderful job' helping with the clean-up on KI. Some of their tasks have included clearing debris, sawing trees,

removing fences and erecting reflective posts on the roadside.

Despite the damage caused and the blackened surroundings, Fr Sexton said it was heartening to now see new growth popping up following the recent rains.



Fr Mark Sexton holds some charcoal taken from bushfire ravaged country near Parndana which was to be used to create ashes for an Ash Wednesday ecumenical service on the island

Picture: Sean McGowan

Emeritus Bishop Eugene Hurley, who has been staying on the island for several weeks to provide pastoral support to parishioners while Noarlunga parish priest Fr Josy Sebastian has been on leave, was also planning to attend the Ash Wednesday service at Parndana.

Dressed in Army greens and living with other Reservists in tents on Parndana oval, Fr Sexton said his most important task during his time on the island had been to listen.

'My main role is just to offer a listening ear... to be there and let people talk to me,' he said.

'For some of them it's the most they have spoken about the fire since it happened. We have people here who have lost everything, but they still think there are others who are worse off.

'Some farmers are still looking at what needs to be done and not knowing where to start, and feeling overwhelmed.'

'And it's really important for people to know that the island is still open for business,' he said.

Parishes in the Adelaide Hills and South East also collected ashes from bushfire affected regions which were mixed with ashes from Palm Sunday fronds for use on Ash Wednesday.

About 20 parishes and schools requested to use these ashes in their services, to show their solidarity with these communities.

*Originally published in Archdiocese of Adelaide 'The Southern Cross'.
Author Lindy McNamara.*

[Fr Mark Sexton is Parish Priest of St Mary of the Cross Mackillop – Northern Light, centred on Kapunda SA, Archdiocese of Adelaide. He commenced ARES Chaplaincy in 2006 and is presently posted to Adelaide University Regiment.]

OPERATION BUSHFIRE ASSIST

Some 85 ADF Chaplains, both full-time and part-time, from the three Services, were deployed, directly or in support of OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST across various parts of the country from Kangaroo Island, throughout SA and into VIC and NSW during the deployment.

The majority of the chaplains were from the Army Reserve, which was called up for full-time service under the Commonwealth's Emergency powers.

These chaplains were among the almost 2,500 reservists involved in OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST. All told 6,400 ADF personnel were involved from the HQ level down to front-line

support. We should not forget also the 350 military personnel from foreign countries involved as well.

Chaplains were also an important part of ADF Primary Health Care Teams - 22 teams were established and 16 teams were active during the deployment. These Primary Health Care Teams are made up of doctors, nursing staff, other medical staff and chaplains. These teams provided care to civilian communities, not primarily ADF personnel, with the chaplains giving brilliant pastoral support, largely to civilian communities and affected citizens.

Appointment of New Chaplains



Fr Martin Monaghan

is a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney, formerly the administrator of Bondi/Bondi Beach Parish.

Some may ask why he would want to give up living at Bondi to become a Military Chaplain. There is some similarity - it's water, as Martin has joined Navy Chaplaincy!

For many years Martin has served as a NSW Police Chaplain within the Sydney Area.

Previous to his work in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Martin had extensive missionary experience in different countries. Martin wanted to experience a new type of Ministry and, given his police background, he was attracted to Military Chaplaincy.

Martin was commissioned as a Navy Chaplain in January. He is currently undergoing his New Entry Officers Course and will be appointed to a Navy base mid-2020. Welcome Martin.



Chaplain Rohan Curnow

has joined the Diocese and will serve as an Air Force Reserve Chaplain. He is a valued addition to our Lay Pastoral Associate Chaplains.

Born in Sydney into a large Catholic family, but having spent years in Canberra, Rohan considered entering ADFA, aspiring to an aviation career, but in the end selected Architecture. In a further academic change he commenced studying Philosophy

and religious studies at ANU. He graduated with a Master of Arts. He found himself embracing studies in Theology, which has lead him to his present position as a lay Theologian at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, one of the major Theological faculties in the country.

He is the current Deputy President and Academic Dean of the Institute. He has a Doctorate in Theology.

Rohan is married with one child.

We welcome Rohan as a lay Chaplain. He has wealth of theological education and pastoral experience, which he will bring to our Diocese as a married Chaplain. Welcome Rohan.

The Knights of the Southern Cross recently raised over \$3,000 for the training of Catholic Chaplains ministering to ADF personnel. Bishop Max, who is also the National Chaplain to the Knights, received the funds from Supreme Knight Brian Cooper.

The occasion was a dinner as part of the program for an annual meeting of the National Executive of the Knights, which had a national meeting at the Parish of the Transfiguration in Curtin ACT.

The evening included an address by Mr David Smith MP, a former Marist Canberra student and member for the federal seat of Bean in the ACT. Wonderful musical entertainment was

provided by a Brass Quintet from the Royal Military College band.



L to R: Bishop Max Davis,
Supreme Knight Brian Cooper,
Mr David Smith MP

Photo by Mgr John Woods,
parish priest, Parish of
Transfiguration

Financial Support to the Catholic Military Diocese

Income to enable the Diocese to operate comes from a number of sources. By far the largest area is from donations from chaplains: priests donate 10 percent of their pay, while married deacons and pastoral associates provide lower amounts because of their family-support responsibilities. The annual *Chaplain Cathedralicum* provides two-thirds of the annual income for the diocese.

Other sources of income are from interest, share dividends (resulting from a bequest from Fr Peter Quilty), chapel collections and donations from other dioceses and the general public.

You can now easily make a tax-deductible donation by contacting the Chancery or by clicking the

Donations tab at military.catholic.org.au

Launch of Navy New Testament

'Nine-tenths of my work is meeting with sailors one-on-one,' says Senior Chaplain Paul Stuart of his work in the Royal Australian Navy.

This gently spoken Catholic priest – or 'Padre' as he is known – explains that any of the men and women on HMAS Canberra III – 480 people when they are docked in harbour and up to 1,200 when they are deployed at sea – are welcome to knock on his door.

And knock they do, to talk through matters of relationships, personal concerns, work conflicts, bereavement and spirituality.

The other tenth of Chaplain Stuart's work is ceremonial. It includes holding memorial services when sailors are out to sea and their loved ones pass away and they're unable to attend the funeral. On his last deployment of six months, he conducted 14 such memorial services.

He also conducts services for deceased Navy personnel who have requested that their ashes be scattered at sea, after which he sends the person's family a chart that shows where the ashes were scattered and memorial booklet.

'Most ships sail with five to six boxes of ashes to be scattered,' he explains. Last deployment he had the great honour of conducting services to scatter the ashes of two deceased veterans who had survived the bombing of their ship, the HMAS Canberra I, from World War II.

Chaplain Stuart was hosting the launch of a new Navy New Testament by Bible Society Australia. This is a pocket-sized New Testament in the New Living Translation, complete with cover in the Navy's new camouflage design.

Chaplain Stuart has seen a big decline over the years in the numbers of young people openly embracing Christianity – particularly in the 18-25-year-old age group. Our interview place took in a lounge area of the HMAS Canberra III, where he holds regular Bible studies. It's a warm and comfortable space, though not large. No doubt he would love the ship's Bible study participants to be too numerous to fit in the room. Next door, he says, is the Officers' Reading Room, where he holds non-denominational church services on a Sunday (The ship's layout is modelled on the Spanish Navy vessel the Juan Carlo).

The number of attendees at both of these meetings has declined, he reports. He knows that is part of a wider story of decline in church attendance in churches across the country. He also knows the factors that have contributed to the result in the navy include the diversification of the defence forces, which has introduced a diverse range of faiths. Chaplain Stuart enjoys being an advocate for sailors of other faiths – whether that means organising places for Muslims to pray or shuffling the schedules of a Jewish sailor so they can observe Shabbat.

'I think the harvest is rich for anyone who wants to get out there.' – Senior Chaplain Paul Stuart

Yet while there's a heaviness to Chaplain Stuart's reports of declining numbers in these gatherings, there's no sense of hopelessness. This Padre is well aware that some of his most significant work is being done behind closed doors.

'All my Bibles have been given away. They are in cabins

being read and used,' he says. 'So even if outwardly it seems like society is becoming more secular, I think people are actually still exploring their faith privately. I think the harvest is rich for anyone who wants to get out there.'

Chaplain Stuart's confidence that God is working in the lives of the sailors he serves is reassuring. In fact, everything about Senior Chaplain Paul Stuart is reassuring. The phrase 'quiet confidence' springs to mind, although it's probably been used glibly too many times to be an adequate description. There's simply a weight to his faith and a humility to his service that have a calming effect on those around him. It's easy to imagine him seated with a young sailor facing an unbearable homesickness after nine months at sea.

I ask whether he thinks sailors relate differently to the Bible under such circumstances?

'When you're on a deployment and you're separated from loved ones, the homesickness becomes more acute,' he says, 'and the Bible can really sustain you psychologically. It becomes more important.' No wonder he's pleased to have given away all of his Bibles and know they're in the rooms of sailors.

The opportunity to provide a Bible for any Australian defence member who wants one, free of charge, is an opportunity Bible Society of Australia gladly welcomes. At the launch, Principal Chaplain Colin Acton welcomed Bible Society of Australia's Chief Operating Officer, Melissa Lipsett, to address a group that included the Navy's top tier of

leadership and chaplains from the Army, Air force and Navy.

'It's a particular joy for me to be here today,' she said, 'because as a young girl of 17 I ran away and joined the Navy.'

'Rev Lipsett briefly told the group about her 15 years in Navy intelligence communications, meeting her husband – a Navy pilot – and their combined 35 years of service. She explained how, at 21 years of age, she met Navy Chaplain Bill Rosier.

'He opened the Bible with me and told me that I wasn't who I thought I was – I was who God said I was. I was the Creator God's child and he has a plan and purpose for life. And it changed my life.

'It is an incredible joy for me to see that come full circle,' she added, delivering BSA's new Navy Bible designs to chaplains today.

'Those of us who are of faith believe that this is the book for life and for living. It changes the way we live, serve and lead. All of us will be better for what we find in its pages.'

Vice-Admiral Mike Noonan thanked Rev Lipsett for her testimony and said it was 'very fitting' that this new Bible design would be launched on a Navy ship docked in Sydney, the city where Bible Society was founded in 1817.

'I'm flying to Japan tonight – and towards the area of the typhoon! – so I will definitely be glad to have this new Bible with me!' he said.



Chaplain Paul Stuart at the launch of the new Navy New Testament

Originally published in Eternity News and CathNews.

Meet our Chaplains: Father Damian Styles



Fr Damian Styles

Hometown:

Ararat Victoria

Year and Place of Ordination:

2004 Diaconate Ararat

2005 Priesthood Goulburn NSW

Scripture Passage that Inspires you the most:

Luke 5:32: in this passage I see the reality of who Christ was calling, those who know they need help, which at the end of the day, any person should realise they are not perfect and need healing.

Favourite Recreations:

I give most sports a run, although current activities include kayaking.

Favourite Saint and Why:

St Francis, partly because he was given the mission from God to rebuild the Church. At the time of this encounter he was in Italy in a neglected Church called St Damian. Usually the Church is linked with his brother St Cosmas. While St Francis did restore this physical building, the mission was to reconnect with God and be a witness to the true reality of our relationship with God through a simple life. St Francis has had great influence on the Church and many Religious Orders and followers, trying to live the Franciscan spirituality. But I say without St Damian and the Church named after him, we might not have St Francis.

What person or experience most influenced you to answer the call to the Priesthood?

I had many different influences, but I think the constant encouragement of others, was the key. This ranged from people I served with as a soldier, to priest mentors, to the ladies in the Church I grew up who thought I looked good on the altar when I served.

What called you to Military Chaplaincy?

I had been lucky enough to have some service in the Ready Reserve Scheme in the Army. Towards the end of my seminary time I was encouraged to follow myself to military chaplaincy.

What has been your greatest challenge as a Military Chaplain?

I think it is the continuous struggle between who I am as Priest and how I operate within the military framework - helping people in a unique context to be able to dig deep and finish their mission.

What does it mean when we say ministry of presence?

As a military chaplain I am often asked, 'Padre what is your job description?' My response is often, 'I work in the realm of ministry of presence.' So what is this that I talk about: for me it is the reality that I have the blessing to have the ability in my work to participate with those who serve our nation in activities and training that they undertake. This will then often lead to a shared experience and a trusted link that then opens doors to people that might not normally have been opened.

So, for example, the picture attached, is of the Northern Territory 1 Brigade Chaplains, who had just all run the cross country like all the officers and soldiers that day. Chaplains are part of the world in which they minister, getting an insight into the struggles and opportunities that arise for people who wear the uniform: in this light then hopefully being a beacon of light, like Christ is the light of the world. The greatest asset the Army has is its people. Being able to walk beside people and minister to them as chaplain is an important role for building people up so that they can undertake the tasks they are called upon to do.



What do you enjoy most about Military Chaplaincy?

It is a unique ministry that like other ministries within the church you have the privilege to step into the lives of people at the highest and lowest moments and their life. It comes with great responsibility.

Do you have any stories about your life as a Military Chaplain?

I am not sure if I can relate any of the stories, most are contextual to certain events. I must admit there have been many incidents.

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: includeacharity.com.au

Two Paths Converge

The poet Robert Frost, in his poem 'The Road Not Taken', wrote of two roads diverging in a forest, symbolising the choices we sometimes have to make in life. We do this OR we do that.

For Lieutenant Colonel Gavin Keating, a very different dynamic is at play. For Gavin, his two paths are converging.

The career soldier, who was raised a Catholic and continued to practise his faith throughout his army life, has chosen to take steps towards becoming a Deacon and a Chaplain in the Army.

'I maintained my faith when I left home and it remained a source of comfort and strength during my army career,' Gavin explained.

In the Army

Gavin started his army life at Australian Defence Force Academy in 1991 and completed his training at the Royal Military College before graduating as an infantry lieutenant in 1994.

Since then he served in most of the areas in which Australian service men and women have been deployed in recent years: East Timor on two occasions; peace monitoring force at Bougainville; Afghanistan on two occasions; Iraq once; a UN observer in the Middle East in Israel and Lebanon; and Indonesia in 2009 for disaster-relief operations.

His service included command of the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and promotion to the rank of Colonel. And while many of his peers and fellow soldiers saw horrific things in their respective tours, Gavin says he was relatively lucky in the things he encountered.

Gavin believes there is a growing realisation in Australia today, and around the world, that returning home safely can be just the beginning of very difficult times on service people's lives.

There's an awareness, Gavin explains, that sending people to war can have a cost in people's physical and mental health. This awareness became part of Gavin's contemplation towards his new direction.

Chaplains

Another influence on his decision was his experience with chaplains throughout his army career.

'Overwhelmingly my experience as an army officer of military padres was positive across all faiths and I saw on many occasions that they filled a very important role, particularly in those tough times when people were overseas and struggling,' Gavin recalls.

'I always admired what they brought in terms of that spiritual welfare and support and so it came to a time in my career where I began to think about how I wanted to continue to serve. I strongly believe that military chaplaincy is a very important part of the military and I feel that I can make a contribution in that sense and perhaps answer a call that had been in the back of my mind for many years in terms of serving God in a more direct role.

'In a way, it was a confluence of joining the two things, my faith and my career, together.'

Military life and a life of faith

The two may seem like strange bedfellows. Most faiths advocate peace and decry killing. Military life on the other hand brings with it the very real possibility of taking lives. But Gavin believes these two threads are not as far apart as they may sound.

'Military conflict is an unfortunate reality,' Gavin explained. 'Obviously from our faith perspective we wish that that were not so, but the kingdom of God hasn't been fully arrived at ... and we're working towards that but in the interim, military conflict remains a reality.'

'The Australian Army is very professional in the sense that we spend our careers learning how to apply violence in a controlled fashion in accordance with government policy – which is the doctrinal definition of what we do. But it's done to limit the number of lives that will be lost. It's done to save lives.'

Keeping the peace

Military training and the use to which the military is put, Gavin believes, can lead to a misconception that soldiers are war-mongers, but that hasn't been Gavin's experience. The more people have exposure to military conflict and its results, he says, the less they want it to be necessary.

There's an old military saying that there are no atheists in a foxhole, or in the trenches ... an oldy but a goody Gavin chuckles. But he says there is a truth underlying it. People tend to ask the deeper existential questions when faced with their own mortality.

'Few soldiers are concerned with the specific denomination of the padre, and it's not necessarily about converting the flock, but being there for them, providing God's

presence to them if you like, and helping them through those tough times.'

'Good chaplains of any persuasion can have a big influence by just quietly going about their business and walking with people. And it's been my experience that there is great ecumenical cooperation between ministers of different faiths in the army.'

The significance of the trauma soldiers experience, and the help chaplaincy provides is not lost on the army. Chaplains form part of a comprehensive approach to the holistic mental and spiritual wellbeing of military personnel that also includes counsellors, therapist and psychologists.



LTCOL Gavin Keating and his wife Myra

A new path

Armed with that understanding, the Army is supporting Gavin's theological studies and all going well he should commence duties as a captain padre in 2023. Whilst it will be a life-changing experience for Gavin, he is doing it with the enthusiastic support of his family.

'I think Gavin's favourite part of being in the army has been working with the soldiers. I'm incredibly proud that he's made that choice and that the army has supported him in it,' said his wife, Myra.

'I think it takes amazing strength of self to take ostensibly several steps back professionally to do what you believe in doing. I have to admit I'm not wild about going back to the posting pool when Gavin is qualified but we've done it before, we'll do it again and in a lot of ways it's exciting.'

Myra said that Gavin's decision had also impacted on her and their two sons in profound and positive ways. 'I think Gavin's decision has brought faith front and centre for all of us,' she explained.

'When I first met Gavin I think the parish priest was a bit disappointed because he had Gavin earmarked for the Church. But I got him,' Myra laughed. 'But it's funny, things work out how they're meant to in the long run.'

Originally published in Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn 'Catholic Voice'. Author Chris Gordon.

Military Chaplains: International Humanitarian Law Course at Vatican

Pope Francis on 31 October met participants of the Fifth International Course of Formation of Catholic Military Chaplains on the subject of International Humanitarian Law. The Course was entitled *The Loss of Personal Freedom in the Context of Armed Conflicts: The Mission of the Military Chaplain*.

Pope Francis began by reiterating the need 'to reject the temptation of viewing the other as merely an enemy to be destroyed, and not as a person endowed with intrinsic dignity, created by God in his image.'

Military chaplains are called to educate the consciences of members of the armed forces so that even in war, the opposing side is not viewed merely as 'an enemy to be destroyed'. He said that the intrinsic dignity of those on the opposing side of a conflict, who are created by God in His image, too often is forgotten. But respect for the dignity and physical integrity of the human person in fact cannot depend upon the actions they have done, but it is a moral duty to which every authority is called. In war, human dignity must be protected, he told military chaplains.

Military chaplains are called to educate the consciences of members of the armed forces so that even in war, the opposing side is not viewed merely as 'an enemy to be destroyed'

the context of armed conflicts are victims of violations of their fundamental rights including abuse, violence and various forms of torture and cruel treatment that are inhuman and degrading. Civilians, he added, are also innocent victims of kidnapping and murder in these conflicts who 'have been kidnapped, forcibly disappeared and killed. Among these, we can count numerous men and women religious of whom we hear nothing more or who have given their lives for their consecration to God and their service to others, without favouritism or nationalistic bias.'

The Pope stressed in particular the need for 'an educational effort alongside that of families and Christian communities.' He further described how this 'involves instilling the values of friendship, understanding, tolerance, goodness, and respect for all persons.' He also said, it meant, 'forming young people who are sensitive to other cultures and their richness and committed to a global citizenship, in order to promote the growth of the one great human family.'



Pope Francis greeting Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and participants of a course in International Military Law for Military Chaplains in Clementine Hall at the Vatican (Vatican Media)

During his address, the Pontiff encouraged the ordinaries and military chaplains present to spare no effort to make sure the norms of international humanitarian law are accepted in the hearts of those entrusted to their pastoral care. The ethical foundation of these norms, he said, 'must be properly and rigorously enforced, especially when it comes to detainees, independent of the nature and gravity of the crimes they may have committed.'

'Let yourselves be guided by the words of the Gospel: I was in prison and you came to me.' Often, persons detained in

Concluding his address, Pope Francis highlighted the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Pope said that, on this seventieth anniversary, he wanted to 'reaffirm the importance the Holy See gives to international humanitarian law and to express the hope that its norms will be respected in every circumstance.' Pope Francis added that, 'the latter should be further clarified and reinforced where appropriate, especially with regard to non-international armed conflicts, and in particular with regard to the protection of persons deprived of freedom because of these conflicts.'

Faith-Based Rehabilitation for Veterans

A former soldier who served in East Timor 20 years ago has told how a recent return to that country on a spirituality-inspired rehabilitation program has helped ease decades of suffering from trauma.

'I feel like a weight has been lifted, and I can now look at things in a different way,' Townsville veteran Murray Sutherland said.

'A lot of the anger I've had, both for myself and towards others, has been released.'

In 1999, Mr Sutherland was amongst the first Australian troops dispatched to East Timor's capital Dili, after an independence vote that descended into violence as Indonesian militia went on a rampage.

He returned to East Timor with his wife Susan and 36 other veterans and spouses last September to participate in the 20th anniversary of the arrival of the Australian-led INTERFET mission.

The Sutherlands also joined Timor Awakening, a rehabilitation program run by the Veterans Care Association, that has completed 11 Timor visits and enabled almost 300 veterans to complete a holistic health and well-being program underpinned by spirituality. (An article on Timor Awakening was published in *Serving Faithfully* Issue 29, April 2018)

Many of the veterans and their families have experienced immense suffering since the Timor campaign, including post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression.

'The VCA (Veterans Care Association) team has given me the tools to forgive myself and others,' Mr Sutherland said.

His wife Susan told other Timor Awakening participants how Murray left home in September 1999 and 'had been wandering in the wilderness ever since.'

'For 20 years he's been lost and now I have found him again,' she said, thanking the VCA team led by former Marist College Ashgrove graduate and army officer Michael Stone and his father Deacon Gary Stone for the healing that her husband had received.

Deacon Stone said other spouses reported similar transformational changes in their partners after Timor Awakening.

'The 20th-year anniversary celebrations had been the first formal opportunity that the Timorese government and people have come together to thank our military and police for their peacemaking activity,' he said.

'Approximately 35,000 Australian troops served in East Timor in the first 10 years of its liberation.'

'Among these troops there was an extraordinarily high experience of trauma as they came to witness and contemplate the unspeakable crimes that had been perpetrated upon the Timorese people; indeed, the incidence of post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression has been twice that reported from troops that deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.'

Deacon Stone said he had witnessed troops who felt let down by how successive Australian governments had dealt with Timor Leste, the lack of justice for perpetrators of crimes in East Timor, and the extent of poverty that resulted from destruction of the young nation's infrastructure.

'Central to the healing of our veterans has been the learning and practice of forgiveness,' he said.

'Whilst VCA promotes and educates in holistic healing of body, mind, soul, relationships and promotes future life purpose, the veterans themselves indicate on every program that a realisation of the need for forgiveness and the actual practice of it has been central to their healing, and a feature absent in other programs that they had participated in, in Australia.'

'After a range of reflections, veterans on the program are invited to participate at Balibo (a border town infamous for the Indonesian military killing of five Australian newsmen in 1975) in a ritual of forgiveness by symbolically leaving behind black rocks that symbolise all the things in their lives that have caused them grief and by taking up white rocks symbolising all the things that they could be grateful for.'

'After a service including Holy Communion, they then proceed down to the border with Indonesia for an opportunity to reconcile with Indonesian troops and police.'

For veteran Michael Williams this moment proved deeply consoling. He was shot at, and returned fire with an Indonesian soldier on the border in 1999.

Mr Williams returned to the spot where the shooting took place, and where he thought he was going to die.

Deacon Stone prayed for him. Then, reluctant at first, but encouraged by his partner, Mr Williams went to the border crossing point and shook hands with Indonesian soldiers.

'I never thought I would be able to do that, to

forgive the Indonesians for all they had done, but I've done it now and a great burden has been lifted from me,' he said.

Two decades on, VCA veterans are also helping in East Timor's reconstruction.

The latest milestone is the completion and opening of an English-language institute in the village of Same in central Timor for the education and training of Timorese veterans and their children to enable them to get employment in the tourism, and oil and gas industries.

Australian and Timorese veterans have assisted in building the facility, a service that is both practical and therapeutic.

Mr Stone who has directed the program, has explained to veterans the importance of a life of service by quoting Mother Teresa: 'Giving is good for your health'.

More details about VCA and its East Timor program are available at: www.timorawakening.com

*Originally published in 'The Catholic Leader'.
Author Mark Bowling.*



Timor Veteran Murray Sutherland and his wife Susan, from Townsville

Father John Corbett Glover

Group Captain John Pratt, KCHS (Ret'd)



Listed among the names in the book *The Cross of Anzac* is that of Father John Corbett Glover (pictured left) who served in the AIF in New Guinea. At the time that book was published in 2000 little was known about his years with the Catholic Mission in New Guinea before WWII. What was known was that his army service was part of that proud record of the senior battalion of the AIF with which a Catholic chaplain had served from Suakin (Sudan 1885) to Wewak across a period of sixty years.

In the 1990s, the Australian War Memorial received a parcel of the Father Glover's papers containing an account of his flying experiences, first in the years before WWII in Australia, and then in New Guinea. The account was probably written in February 1946 when he visited home at the end of his army service, responding to questions of his experiences during the war with Japan.

The account began after his ordination to the priesthood in 1932 at St Patrick's Church, Albury by Bishop Dwyer of Wagga Wagga NSW Diocese and his later mission work in New Guinea, concluding on his joining the AIF as a Catholic chaplain in 1942. It was by a gifted writer who, while remaining true to his priestly vocation, experienced a flying life in a land we know little about even today and even less at the time of his writing. Flying in mountainous New Guinea was fascinating in every sense and the journal is rich in what might today appear hair-raising exploits among rock-filled clouds.

John Glover was born on 4 July 1909 in Perth WA to James and Johanna Glover who had arrived in Australia from Bunratty, Ireland later moving to Whorouly, Victoria where his education commenced at the Wangaratta Convent, then the Whorouly State School and later Christian Brothers' College, Albury. In 1926 he entered the Springwood Seminary College and later the Ecclesiastical College at Manly NSW and was ordained in 1932. He was sent in turn to Crookwell, Gundagai and then Cootamundra in NSW and it was there he 'got the flying bug' to use an apt colloquialism, - a 'bug' that was to sustain him throughout his life.

Although aviation in Australia then was in its infancy, this new mode of transport well suited Australia's vast distances. From 1936 he took flying lessons from instructors at Butler's Air Transport Company at Cootamundra. But when word of his flying reached his Bishop, who did not agree that a stipend was for this, his flying was terminated! Perhaps this disappointment sent him to see other places and he decided to go as a missionary priest to New Guinea with the Catholic Mission at Wau. Before 1918 this part of New Guinea was a German colony and there were many missions in the Territory: Lutheran, Pentecostal from USA, Seventh Day Adventists as well as Catholics, the latter still under a resident German Catholic Bishop.

He arrived at the Divine Word Mission in 1938 with some flying experience but struggled to increase his flying hours among other pilots working the missions with the same intentions. Australia declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941 and on 21 January 1942 Japanese fighters raided Lae, Salamaua and Bulolo, destroying seventeen precious planes and the morale of the inhabitants. Two days later Rabaul fell and the Australian Government had standing arrangements to

withdraw its nationals to the mainland once Australian governance in New Guinea ceased. Many foreign missionaries were not in contact with the world and missed the departure dates and times and gravitated to Mount Hagen in the Highlands to avoid the Japanese soldiers. Communications as we know them today did not exist then and the Department of External Territories in Canberra remained unaware of the existence of this group comprising a few soldiers but mainly civilians.

The few remaining citizens despaired of advising the Government of this problem and Father Glover decided to fly to the mainland to seek urgent help. With his helper, Austrian engineer Karl Nagy, they decided to repair the only available aircraft and for the priest to fly to Australia to make our government aware of the predicament of the eighty people requiring rescue in the Highlands. Although Fr Glover had little experience on that particular aircraft and of navigation, when repairs were finished the two set off. The flight was a disaster and when their fuel ran out after five hours, he ditched the aircraft on a little island at the mouth of the Fly River where they were intercepted by Dutch police from Merauke, Netherlands New Guinea. Neither of the two had passports or any means of identification, nor did the priest have a roman collar indicating he was a priest. Eventually they travelled by

native canoe until they intercepted a commercial launch to Horn Island where they had the same problem and were about to be arrested; Australia was at war and Nagy was a foreigner. Incredibly, the priest eventually got to Melbourne and exposed authorities of the problem.

There were no military aircraft available so two four-engined Qantas DH 86s were prepared; but even with experienced New Guinea pilots, the 5,000 feet elevation of Mt Hagen town, with peaks above 12,000 feet nearby, imposed limitations on the number of passengers these could carry. They would fly through airspace the Japanese controlled necessitating radio silence preventing their finding weather details ahead. Fr Glover returned with the Qantas aircraft to Mount Hagen where he had left some weeks before and was allowed to exit first

from the aircraft to a hero's welcome. Acting as ground controller, he remained there to see all the departures went off safely. Continual aircraft movements turned the grassy field into a quagmire, stopping further flights so the knowledgeable locals encouraged the natives to participate in a 'sing-sing' involving continuous stamping of the ground overnight that hardened, thereby allowing departures to continue. The rescue commenced on 13 May 1942, one that required eighteen flights before all those at Mt Hagen were safely flown to Horn Island. He then returned to his Army chaplain duties, joining in his words with 'the Salt of the Earth - an infantry unit of the 6 Div, AIF.'

This rescue was a truly heroic effort, but regrettably it was never made public, being lost in the grave dangers our country faced in those dramatic war years. Fr Glover completed his army chaplaincy service in 1945, and returned to the Divine Word Mission to resume his priestly duties including flying. He was fond of adages and early in his account had mentioned one of Thomas à Kempis from *The Imitation of Christ*: Man proposes but God disposes.

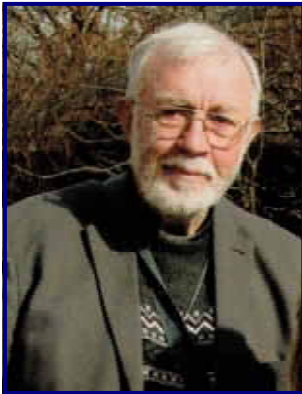
On New Year's Eve 31 December 1948, when Fr Glover was approaching to land at Mingende, his aircraft was caught in a downdraft and crashed and burned, killing the priest instantly.



Fr Glover
enlistment photo
National Archives Australia

Jesus and the Roman Centurion

Reverend Robert Willson



Reverend Robert Willson

When Jesus had come into Capernaum, a centurion came to him ...'

A Study on Matthew's Gospel, chapter 8, verses 5 to 13. Read also Luke 7: 2-10 for Luke's account of the same incident.

One day I came face to face with a Roman centurion just like that fine soldier in the Gospel of Matthew. On a train trip from London to Norwich we decided to break our journey in the pretty English town of Colchester. We walked up the road to see the Norman Castle. It dates from the Middle Ages. There we came face to face with our Roman centurion.

Stooping low, we went down into the crypt that dates back to the Roman Empire. Colchester Castle is built on the foundations of a Roman temple in honour of 'the divine Claudius', Emperor from 41 to 54AD. Claudius, who was Emperor when the Christian faith was beginning to expand, ordered the military conquest of Britain.

He arrived personally in Colchester with his soldiers and his elephants about 43AD. There he accepted the surrender of various 'British kings'. Later the Romans erected this Temple to honour him, and the crypt is open to visitors today.

CENTURION MARCUS FACILIS

One of those soldiers who probably took part in the military campaign to defeat the Celtic tribes of Britain was a centurion named MARCUS FAVONIUS FACILIS of the twentieth legion of the Roman Army. Marcus retired from the Army in Colchester and settled there. He had two slaves named Verecundus and Novicius. Like the centurion who met Jesus, he must have been very kind to them and had given them their freedom. After his death they honoured their old master by erecting this tombstone over his grave to his memory. The inscription records them all.

But Centurion Facilis did not rest in peace for long. About 61 AD the famous Celtic warrior Boudicca and her army rose in revolt against Rome. They were members of the Iceni tribe in Norfolk, and the Roman historian Tacitus tells their story. They descended on Colchester and destroyed it while the Roman legions were away in north Wales. Terrified Romans of the town took refuge in the crypt but were massacred. Colchester, along with Verulamium (St Albans), and London were sacked and torched and thousands died in the slaughter.

The monument to Centurion Facilis survived the destruction of Colchester because it was tipped over into the

dirt and buried. It was rediscovered in 1868.

Now the centurion has been cleaned up and he stares out with Roman dignity at the visitor. I do not think he would mind that I took a photograph of him. He proudly wears his uniform with his vine stick, in Latin a *vitis*, the symbol of his office, but he is bareheaded to show that he has died. Because his tombstone is in such good condition it appears that it was tipped over and buried not long after being erected.

His name probably indicates that he came originally from one of the towns of northern Italy. His tribe was the tribe Pollia and that tribe is found in the north.

We cannot believe that he was the centurion described in Matthew, chapter 8, but he could have served in Palestine before joining the British invasion a few years later. Certainly the two men shared the quality of kindness and concern for their slaves.

BACKBONE OF THE ROMAN ARMY

Professor Barclay, in his commentary on Matthew, reminds us that the centurions were the backbone of the Roman Army. They were the long service, regular soldiers of the Army, responsible for discipline in the regiment. There were sixty centurions in each legion and the centurion commanded eighty men. In peace and war the morale of the regiment depended on them.

If you do some Bible study on 'Roman centurions', aided by a good Bible Dictionary, or the Internet, you will find that there were five of them described in the New Testament and all were good men. All were mentioned with honour. There was the centurion who recognized Jesus on the Cross as the Son of God (See Matthew 27: 34). There was Cornelius, the first Gentile convert to the Christian faith (See Acts 10: 22). One was with Paul on his journey to Rome and treated him with every courtesy and even accepted him as leader when the storm struck the ship (Acts 27: 43)

Of all the centurions this one in Matthew's Gospel stands out. His heart was filled with concern for his sick servant. This was rare in the ancient world where a slave was regarded by most people as a tool to be discarded without a thought when no longer useful. This man's kindness must have moved the heart of Jesus.

But this centurion was also a man of great faith. He knew what it was to be instantly obeyed and he had faith that Jesus could heal at a distance and did not even need to come to his house. He was probably aware that orthodox Jews did not normally enter the home of a non-Jew or Gentile. Most Roman soldiers hated the Jews but this man was quite willing to humble himself. Our Lord paid him the greatest possible praise. In verse 10 of chapter 8 Jesus said simply that not even in Israel had he found such faith. Compassion, humility and uncompromising faith made this nameless Roman centurion a man for the ages.



Monument to Marcus Favonius Facilis, Colchester UK

Rev Robert Willson is a retired Anglican priest and teacher and was for many years the Chaplain of the Canberra Girls' Grammar School.

Originally published in 'The Deacon's Treasure' No. 86.

Son of Vietnam - a family's epic quest for freedom

In a recently released book titled *Son of Vietnam*, Father Kim Son Nguyen describes how his people suffered throughout Vietnam's era of conflict and how he appreciates the freedom and choices allowed in Australia.

The Parish Priest of Bassendean in the Archdiocese of Perth co-authored the paperback with Bedford parishioner Paul Calleja, depicting a true story of the Nguyen family's 10-year quest for freedom from communist-controlled Vietnam.

Fr Son officially launched his book after mid-morning Mass on Sunday 1 December 2019 at St Joseph's Church, Bassendean Parish.

Present for the event were parishioners, book contributors, parents and teachers of St Michael's School, and other invited guests.

Fr Son moved to Australia in 1991 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2000 after years of formation at St Charles' Seminary.

The idea for the book, he said, was to preserve his family's stories for future generations. Religious freedom and the practice of faith are topics addressed in the 179-page piece.

Son of Vietnam was released last year as a gift to mark his parents' 60th wedding anniversary.

'My father wished to write a book a long time ago in Vietnamese,' Fr Son told The Record.

'Millions and millions of people suffered more than we did.'

Although he usually attends Mass at Bedford Parish, Mr Calleja grew up in Bassendean and came to know Fr Son through the duty of regularly driving his elderly father to Mass.

'Dad was 89; [he] couldn't drive safely. It coincided with Fr Son arriving at Bassendean,' Mr Calleja recounted.

'Fr Son was using his homilies to get his parishioners acquainted with him. He told stories of Vietnam, I listened intently because I am interested in history – my brother was called to service in Vietnam.'

'I had just finished another project and was just fascinated with Fr Son's story, so I approached him, and put [the idea of a book] to him. After some time, he said his family were interested for him to go ahead with it.'

The book, he added, is the product of an unlikely union.

'It is my Father's story but my expression.'

Son of Vietnam took more than five years to develop, which Mr Calleja said was far longer than they had anticipated due to interruptions.

An aspect of the book that Mr Calleja highlights is the fact that it is written in English.

'The generation [of Vietnamese people] reared in Australia can have a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the sacrifices and contribution that their ancestors have made to allow them to enjoy these benefits,' Mr Calleja alluded.

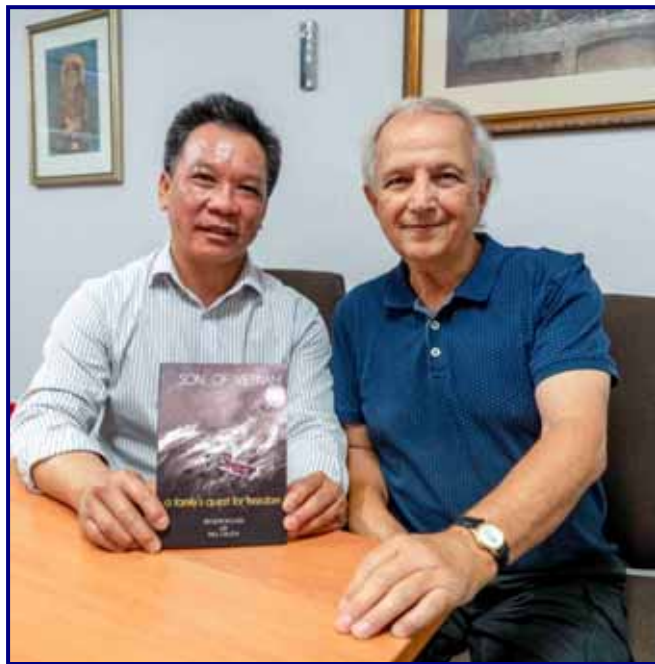
'I think this is often faced by the generation of migrants, a lack of appreciation and knowledge.'

Son of Vietnam charts Fr Son's family's movement from the communist north, their resettlement and growth in the non-communist south, the upheaval of their lives 21 years later by the communist capture of Saigon, and the subsequent 15 years of struggle to escape the religious, political and economic oppression that characterised this period of Vietnamese history.

Their epic quest for freedom was pitted with episodes of destitution, family dispersion and betrayal by family and friends in addition to times of imprisonment, near death experiences, piracy, sea rescues, years in refugee camps and the tragic loss of two of the family's youngest children.

Despite these grim challenges and experiences, the conclusion of their collective endeavours aims to inspire and amaze the reader.

To purchase of a copy of *Son of Vietnam – A family's epic quest for freedom*, contact publisher Eric George Nguyen of Nell Gray Fashions Pty Ltd on 1300 640 446.



Fr Kim Son Nguyen and author Paul Calleja pictured with a copy of 'Son of Vietnam - A family's epic quest for freedom'.

Originally published online by the Archdiocese of Perth at therecord.com.au/news/local/book-launch-son-of-vietnam-a-familys-epic-quest-for-freedom
Story and photo by Matthew Lau.

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