



NETWORK NEWS

August 2012



Rev. Dr. Elio Capra

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends,

In this issue of Network News I'd like to put before you two great opportunities.

As you know, we are preparing for the ACN National Conference to be held in Brisbane from Thursday 11 October to Sunday 14 October. We are very grateful to the Archdiocese of Brisbane for volunteering to host this conference.

While the ACN Executive takes care of the actual content of the conference (topic, keynote speakers, workshop presenters, timeline, etc.), the local diocese takes on the responsibility for the venue and all the organisation that goes with it. It is a lot of hard work done by a great number of people. But I'd like to put it to you that it is also a great opportunity. It is an opportunity to clearly show that the central mission of the Church is the work of evangelisation and catechesis; to revitalise the work of the RCIA; to involve and invite new members to your RCIA teams; to affirm the great work that the current teams are doing. As the ACN Chair, I therefore invite you to consider volunteering your diocese to host the 2014 ACN National Conference.

The second opportunity is for you to consider submitting your name or someone else's name to become members of the ACN Executive. Again this is asking you to take on an extra duty over and above all the work that you are already doing. I have been a member of the ACN for several years and I am currently working with a wonderful and committed team. This team provides guidance, direction and help to many RCIA teams throughout the country and beyond. This is done through our monthly teleconferences, through our annual face to face meeting, through Network News, through the website and through the ACN National Conference. I therefore see this as a wonderful avenue for you to offer your gifts and talents to promote RCIA beyond your Diocese; to contribute to the constant and continuous work of renewal of the ACN Executive; to contribute new ideas and projects not just for your Diocese but for the Australian Church.

These are the two opportunities I am offering you. If you would like to volunteer your diocese to host the 2014 ACN Conference or if you would like to submit your name or someone else's name as a member of the ACN executive for the next two years, please contact me at elio.capra@cam.org.au.

Smiles and blessings,
Elio

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Rev Dr Elio Capra SDB

Br Patrick Cronin cfc

Elizabeth Harrington

Australian Catechumenate Network (A.C.N.) seeks to support all those who share the vision of the path of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The Mystagogy of the RCIA

Br Patrick Cronin cfc MThS, DMin

After catechumens have received the sacraments at Easter, they embark on a seven week journey to Pentecost called the Period of Mystagogy. This word has its origins in the Greek language of the Church in the fourth century. It means the deepening in understanding of the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection expressed in sacramental form. Another way to see this journey is to relate it to the disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus when the Risen Lord appeared to them, and 'explained all that had happened'. The neophytes, and if appropriate the newly-received, are invited to undertake this journey.

The Journey from Initial Conversion to a Mystagogical Journey

From the very beginning, the pastoral Introduction to the Ritual book (*Ordo*) for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults uses the language of conversion. The conversion process in simple religious terms is an *apotaxis* (turning away from sin) and a *syntaxis* (turning to God). This can only take place from the promptings of the Holy Spirit working through human agents. The process of conversion has begun already by the time individual people present to a parish RCIA team in response to an invitation to come to inquiry sessions.

From the pre-catechumenate period the catechumens proceed through a continual hearing of the word of God until they receive the sacraments at the Vigil. The continuing conversion after the Vigil is what is meant here as the mystagogical journey because now the newly-

Initiated deepen their spiritual life by the sacraments as well as by hearing the word.

The conversion process in the mystagogy period is very different to that of the Purification and Enlightenment period in Lent. During the latter, the conversion process for the catechumens is through an experience of the Johannine Gospels of the scrutinies: the woman at the well; the man born blind; the raising of Lazarus. Here the catechumens experience feelings of empathy for the woman, the blind man and Lazarus' sisters. They see Jesus addressing the core meaning of life and offering them faith and forgiveness and eternal life.

By comparison, the conversion in the mystagogy period is more subtle and more protracted. The *Ordo* speaks of, "a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community." (RCIA #7.4) In this way there is a transition from a call to initial conversion (*apotaxis*) to a mystagogical journey (*syntaxis*). Both processes occur throughout our lives; however there is a change of focus from one conversional aspect to a deeper conversional aspect as catechumens and candidates progress to being neophytes and newly-received.

This movement of initial conversion to a mystagogical journey can be seen when the words and rites used in the Lenten period are compared with the words used in the mystagogical period as illustrated below.

<p>Conversion is understood as entrance into the church</p> <p>Conversion is radically Christocentric</p> <p>Conversion is essentially an ecclesial event</p> <p>Conversion is fundamentally a sacramental experience</p>	<p>→</p>	<p>Conversion comes to be understood as a spiritual journey</p> <p>Conversion becomes part of a larger journey using the language of the Rite</p> <p>Conversion becomes a comprehensive reality involving transformation of the whole person</p>
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These words illustrate that there is a movement from 'joining the church' in its practices, tradition, and sacraments to living a spiritual life through the sacraments.

Welcome by the Church Congregation

The "entering into closer ties with the other faithful" aspect of Mystagogia referred to in the *Ordo* (RCIA # 236) is achieved by the neophytes and newly-received engaging in the works of charity, participating in parish services, and joining other parish groups.

In some recent research, questions were asked of the neophytes and newly-received.

To the question: "Did you think you learned, during your time in the mystagogy, how these Christian attitudes (to the works of mercy) could become relevant to you?" The answers were very supportive of this activity, with a continuum of responses from 'not at all' (5%), to: a 'little' (5%), 'some' (29%), 'much' (32%), and 'very much' (29%). Therefore the neophytes and newly-received obviously saw relevance of engagement in works of mercy as part of their Christian commitment.

To the question "Did you feel welcome in the parish?", 67% of the responses indicated positive feelings of inclusiveness, but the responses to the question about further engagement in other parish groups indicated that there was little engagement in on-going parish groups. To the question "Did you think of joining any other discussion group e.g. Lenten discussion group, Passionist family groups, Teams of Our Lady, etc.?" the responses from 34% of neophytes and newly-received indicated such groups were not at all promoted, 17% well promoted, and the other 49% indicated something in between. The comments show how parish communities can learn to engage new members of the Church. There are obvious reasons why some people cannot attend other groups and services, as the mother with school-aged children attests. However, there seemed to be evidence of a disappointment that more was not done to allow them "to experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful".

Mystagogical Journey as Transition in Life's Passages

The current literature of conversion experiences is couched within the life cycle transitions of human

psychology and hence is best understood through our common humanity. The existential nature of faith development has been well accepted since the time of Rahner and Vatican II.

In a piece of research I conducted in 2008 with people who had come through the RCIA in a 20 year period, nearly all the interviewees recounted times of difficulty, challenge, and crisis. These varied between suffering the loss of loved ones to being caught up in the abuse scandal in a Catholic school. In nearly all cases, there were emotional periods, even tears, during the interviews. In most cases the interviewees were able to express what faith means to them in times of crisis. During such times, some felt abandoned by faith and others recovered their faith. Most of the interviewees stated that the crises led to a stronger and deeper faith.

Mystagogical Journey as Self-transcendence

This area of discussion of spiritual development through self-transcendence is written about extensively by Walter Conn in *The Desiring Self* and by Thomas Keating in *Invitation to Love*. There has been a theological evolution of self-transcendence as a synthesis of self-denial and self-realization into the awareness of God's presence and love. This is the journey of life into which mystagogy propels us, not as denial of previous levels of consciousness but as fulfilment of God's love in us. In my research I found that there was a discernible movement from one stage of faith to another, not necessarily 'higher' but in a way that was more mature and more embracing of life's situations.

Keating describes this surrender of the self in God, leading to a deeper level of faith: "*Human growth is not the denial or rejection of any level, but the integration of the lower into more evolved levels of consciousness*". The Gospel calls for a full development of the human person and invites us to the further growth that God has in store for us: the intuitive and unitive levels of consciousness to which mature faith and love gradually raise us.

Conclusion

The mystagogical journey in faith is not confined to the period from the Easter Vigil to Pentecost but continues throughout a life-time. The neophytes and newly-received embark on a journey towards God in which all of us are involved.

REFLECTION ON 2010 CONFERENCE THEME: TRANSFORMING THE PARISH

The 2010 National RCIA Conference had “Transforming the Parish” as its theme with three sub-themes:

- Mission of the Parish
- Renewing the Life of the Parish
- RCIA bringing conversion

With the next conference just 3 months away, perhaps this is a good time to reflect on our experience of parish life since 2010, using the following questions as a guide.

Mission

- Do we see the balance in our parish services shifting from ‘maintenance’ towards ‘mission’?
- Does the diocese have a policy of ensuring that the RCIA is available in all parishes through strategies such as combining or twinning of parish RCIA groups?
- Has there been a change in awareness from ‘RCIA in the parish’ to ‘parish RCIA’?

Renewal of Life

- How do we use the RCIA processes in our parishes, e.g. Gospel reflection, rituals, symbols, prayer-partners?
- Do we address the adult needs in our parishes through avenues such as scripture classes, Lenten discussion groups, Teams of Our Lady or Passionist Family groups? How can new Catholics avail themselves of these?
- Has the implementation of the revised Missal been used as the opportunity to offer formation on the meaning of the Mass?

Conversion

- How do we foster conversion among the parishioners?
- Do we use Lent as a preparation for renewal of Baptism for all parishioners in the same way as do the Candidates for Reception into Full Communion?
- During Lent we hear the call to ‘metanoia’ and to reflect on our Baptism promises. However this question applies particularly after Easter with the Gospel readings from John calling us to a deeper spiritual life. How does our parish meet this need, e.g. through parish retreats?



Time is a great teacher

Facts are, of course, imparted in catechesis but sometimes the imparting of information is given too much prominence. Formation needs to cultivate a listening heart

A Benedictine novice mistress told me recently that her community had stopped sending novices to study at university - not on the grounds of cost, or lack of intellectual capacity. They had come to realise that university education now, compared with 30 years ago, was at war with monastic formation - and what the novices need is a totally different kind of learning altogether.

It was exactly 30 years ago that my own tutor asked me seriously if I thought that the university could actually teach without daily prayer at the heart of its common life - the kind of daily prayer that had been practised in that university from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries. Today such a question, even if it could be asked, would be greeted with incomprehension.

For faith communities, there is a painful and puzzling mismatch between the clearly articulated aims of contemporary education, and formation in the way of faith. That is not simply an issue for faith schools, faith colleges, faith universities, but for each local church. If the models our children and young people experience day by day are genuinely at war with formation in a way of faith, then parishes need to model something different.

The other day, a very bright A level student explained to me carefully and without irony that the important thing about A level history was not wider reading but knowing the mark scheme for each individual question. When I pointed out to him that two of my most intellectually able contemporaries at Oxford got in on an A and two Es, he looked utterly mystified.

And that is a real challenge. Churches have the wonderfully broad vision of the catechumenate, and the liberating freedom of lectionary-based catechesis. But, again and again, when it comes to a confirmation group for young people or a nurture group for adults, it is far too easy for the busy priest or catechist to reach for the book or DVD containing the curriculum - closing down the questions before they have even been asked, imparting a body of knowledge rather than forming people in a way of life, and treating the journey of faith as if it were getting a GCSE in divinity.

Information and formation are not completely at war. But it is essential to get them the right way round. For a person or group on a genuine journey of faith, a deeper knowledge of the four gospels and the complexity of their overlapping narratives can be a wonderful handmaid to a deeper encounter with Christ. But a series of lectures on the synoptic problem, however excellent, is going to feed the head and leave the heart quite untouched.

Information is always and only the handmaid of formation. It is never just about intellectual capacity. One of my first catechumenate groups contained a senior medical physicist from the local teaching hospital, and someone whose mental capacity had been seriously compromised after an accident. But both participated in the group as equals. As Richard Foster says at the beginning of his classic *Celebration of Discipline*: "Superficiality is the curse of our age ... the desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people." Jane and Alan, whatever different worlds they came from, were launching out into the deep together.

Recent figures for England suggest that 34 per cent of people over 16 have absolutely no direct experience of Christianity or the life of the Church. A common assumption is that all enquirers need is a six-week course and then they are launched. This assumption is seriously misplaced.

Here, I insist on a minimum 15- to 18-month catechumenate process for young people and adults (which also helpfully subverts the ticking

boxes for faith-school entry). But that is only the start. The pattern from the outset is permissive, open - seeking to help people reflect on their genuine experience and ask their real questions, however far out. Themes are explored together and brought into relationship with the gospels. Gradually the groups move into a stable pattern of lectionary-based catechesis in which they feel both challenged and at home.

A lot of research on the catechumenate in the 1980s suggested real disappointment by many in the period after initiation, when groups began to break up, and the assumption seemed to be that you now just had to make your own way. That is why it is crucial at this point to offer people a range of possibilities.

Here the current offering includes a monthly, church-based, in-depth session introducing people to the regular practice of lectionary-based reflection, as both groups and individuals; five lectionary-based house groups meeting at different locations; and the weekly provision of both lectionary-based preaching as a key resource, and study notes each week on the Sunday gospel reading. We have found the most helpful resource for this has been the wonderfully accessible material developed by Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal

(montreal.anglican.org/comments). These relate directly to the Sunday lectionary used by both Catholics and Anglicans.

Crucially, all this leads to not simply an inward journey, but also an apostolic ministry. You journey with God in depth and part of the outcome is you begin to own the task God has given you - a volunteer in the charity shop, a life-changing vocation, opportunities to grow in discipleship and service. Churches need to be more proud of their traditions of formation. There is a better word to say on this, a bigger vision, where - in the words of Dom Jean Leclercq's great study of Benedictine culture - the "love of learning and the desire for God" always go together.

Churches, certainly, and maybe church schools, are called to model a different set of values. This involves, not a lack of intellectual rigour, but a recognition that in the Christian tradition the purpose of study is ultimately to equip the heart to love. In west Newcastle in the late 1990s, the manager of our local sheltered-housing project would only have students on work experience from the local faith schools. She had learned the hard way that, regardless of their own personal faith, but because of their formation, there was a difference in the quality of care they provided. They "knew" about compassion, the highest accolade she could give. They had genuinely been novices in what Benedict calls a "school of the Lord's service".

■ The Revd Nicholas Henshall is vicar of Christ Church on the Stray, Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

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THE TABLET, 17 March 2012



Companions on the Journey

My Journey into the Catholic Family

Barbara Buckley

Being born into a very large family and living in the middle of the bush, we never had as much time for church as other families. My mother was baptised Catholic and my father was Church of England. The first born was christened but sadly that was where the introduction into church finished as the rest of us babies were never baptised because, as mum put it, "that's up to you to decide what you want to do".

As a student in the local public school I was asked each year for my religion, and as I was required to attend a scripture lesson on Thursday mornings I had to be placed in a scripture class. I remember going with another boy in my class to Church of England scripture and so that is where I started to learn about the Christian ways. It is a funny thought, but as each year came I was asked the same question, and each year I would tell them that the previous year I was put with this particular student, and so that is where I was placed again, with the Church of England children! I enjoyed scripture class through my early years; I tried to understand the way of the church but with living so far out of town was unable to attend church and the scripture class was only an hour long.

A few years later mum met our stepfather and decided it was time to get us into some kind of religious education. The Sunday school at a neighbouring town was operating and desperately required children to fill the positions so, for only a short time, mum allowed us to attend the school.

Many of my older siblings started to leave home and got involved with the local Christian fellowship. They sang lots of great songs and introduced me to the bible. The words that they spoke about made lots of sense to me and for this short time in my life I was able to really enjoy this.

By the age of 16 I moved away from home and moved into a home for homeless kids. The people who ran this home were from a church but also from the local Department of Community Services. Living at this house allowed me to finish high school and mix with some other religions, in particular a Jehovah's Witnesses girl. She gave me a copy of their bible and started to teach me a little about their thoughts on this whole religious idea; what she told me was a little too hard for me to understand, so I thanked her and left.

The next time that religion came to my life was when I joined the Army Reserves and was at camp for a few weeks. I was approached by the minister and asked if I would like to attend Mass on the Sunday morning. I declined saying that I was not religious. He again invited me to come if I had the time and gave me a copy of the bible (covered in camouflage) that I still have to this day. I used to look through it trying to make sense of it but the course finished and I never saw the minister again.

In 1998 I met my life partner and found that he was Catholic and so was his family. This was something that interested me as this was a religion that was always - in my mind - out of bounds. I didn't know how I would be accepted as I was not religious and knew nothing about what was supposed to be done inside a church. We were engaged within 3 months, and because I had been engaged 3 times before, I decided to take things very slowly. Meeting my mother-in-law was interesting as I knew very little of her except she was Phil's mum.

Getting married was fun! I wanted to make Phil happy and get married in the local Catholic Church, St Patrick's. We met the priest who asked us about our faith, and at this stage I needed to tell him that I was not baptised. I remember he looked at me, said that this was fine, and told me that I was able to be married in the church because Phil was Catholic. He explained that if we were to have children Phil would promise to do his best to have them brought up in the Catholic

way. This was agreed upon and so it was – we married in a Catholic Church and I was given away by a Druid!

My next Christian contact came about when we moved to Toowoomba in Queensland. At work I found a friend, a new Christian, who invited us to go to her church. She told me that it was very up-beat and that there was a rock band that was very loud. I had fun but found that this was not the church for me, so once again I found myself looking for my own church.

In 2003 our son Jackson was born. He was baptised in the Catholic Church and I really felt as though this could be something that I could fit into (even the getting up and down business at Mass!). However, Phil and I went for a while with no church in our lives, and then after two miscarriages we had our second child, a baby girl named Emily Gayle. At 5 weeks I almost lost her, and after being rushed to the doctor for a scan and saying a silent prayer, I cried when told she had the smallest heart beat - I realised that good things do happen. She is our miracle; and during the 8.5 months of pregnancy I found myself saying many silent prayers for her to come safely into the world. We were unable to let anyone know about her as the chance of losing her was very real. We informed Phil's mum with only 5 weeks to go.

In 2008 we moved to the Hunter to be closer to our families. We lived with Phil's parents for 6 months and learnt a lot about each other. Over the next years I became close to Phil's mum and dad and found that love was in my heart and not only for my own family.

I decided that I wanted to be Catholic. I remember going up to church one Sunday morning and asking the ladies there how was I to become a Catholic. They gave me some information and a phone number for the RCIA group; I left there wondering if I was prepared to go through it at this late stage of life. I asked Emily, who is 4 years old and not yet baptised, if she would like to be baptised; she didn't want to, so I said "If you do, I will." She agreed we would do this together. I thought that I could keep this private but soon found that I was blurting it out to my mother-in-law asking what she thought. She became my sponsor and came to the meetings with me. I was very happy to have such support from this very special lady.

Joining the RCIA group has been the best step that I could have ever taken. I have enjoyed what this wonderful team has offered me and not once have they questioned my thoughts or ideas but have guided me towards Baptism and the Catholic way.

The journey has been filled with so many lovely things – the team that has given their own time and expertise, being accepted by the local community, meeting Bishop Bill who is a warm and funny person and makes the whole church experience one to remember.

Being involved with the Chrism Mass and Holy Thursday procession and carrying the Oil of Catechumens impacted on me deeply. The oils are treated with the upmost care and are seen by all as sacred which is why I held on so tightly to my bottle and made sure the lid was very secure!

The Catholic community is one that is very strong together; it has become my new family. The ceremonies of the Easter Vigil, Emily's and my baptism, cemented my love for my new family; everything about the night was so warm. Thank you so much for allowing me to become part of your wonderful family!

There have been wonderful changes in my life - Phil has also found his passion for faith again through my journey, and I have grown from a little lost girl trying to understand religion, to a young mother living the Catholic way of life for herself, her family and her community.

A Very Special Invitation

Tess Buckley

I have received many invitations throughout my life. Last year I was invited to be a Sponsor. The invitation came like this: "Tess, I want to become a Catholic. Will you be my Sponsor and come to meetings with me?" What a wonderful invitation to receive!

Yes, my daughter-in-law, Barbara, had already made enquiries and attended an RCIA meeting in her Parish of East Maitland. She had been so warmly welcomed by the group, as I was, and I continued to attend these information evenings each Monday with Barbara.

These weeks and months of sharing our faith have been a very special time in our relationship. The RCIA team members were so experienced; I believe some have been involved in this ministry for almost twenty years. What dedication! Each week we were informed of some teachings of the Catholic Church, the liturgies, the feasts, the prayers, the seasons, the sacraments and so much more, but most of all the faith, which these special people not only preached but practised in their lives.

The Gospel for the week was always read and the message shared. There were plenty of opportunities for questions and comments.

As the weeks went by, I realised that I was on a journey with Barbara and with a number of others who were seeking to know more about the Catholic faith and with the RCIA team members. I came to realise we had all heard the wonderful, special invitation from Jesus to "Come follow me... share my life" I felt I was on a refresher course, a time of renewal of my own faith, which gave me the strength, courage and confidence to sponsor Barbara on this special journey in her life.

The joy of those enquiring and learning about our faith and the joy of those imparting, instructing and sharing our faith was infectious. This was a happy and fulfilling time for me. I felt that I was being called to witness to my faith, to Barbara, and to others.

During the weeks and months of instruction, the team organised a number of special liturgies and celebrations, especially at Christmas time, during the Lenten period and of course the great and wonderful celebration of Easter, at which time Barbara received the three Sacraments of Initiation.

This was a very special Easter for me and for my family – how wonderful were the prayers, the hymns, the ceremonies and the celebrations! To add to all this joy our little granddaughter, Emily - Barbara and Phillip's daughter - also received the Sacrament of Baptism with Barbara during the Easter Vigil Mass!! My husband Grahame and I are Godparents for Barbara and our daughter Susan and her husband Rodney, are Emily's Godparents.

So, with the Catholic community at St. Joseph's East Maitland, we renewed our Baptismal Vows, our commitment to our Catholic faith.

I hope that if you are ever invited to sponsor someone who has heard Jesus' words "Come follow me", you too will realise that it is your "Very Special Invitation".

You would always be welcome at an RCIA gathering in your parish. Sometimes people there who are receiving instruction in the Catholic faith need someone to sponsor them on their journey. You could be that person for them!



News

NSW State RCIA Conference 2013

To know Jesus and to make him known!

Friday 14th - Sunday 16th June 2013

Location: Diocesan Centre Newcastle

841 Hunter Street

Newcastle West NSW

Contact: Loretto Lynch

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www.mn.catholic.org.au

Hosted by Maitland-Newcastle Diocese



DATES TO REMEMBER

"Dear Diary"

What is happening?
in your Diocese / Parish
for RCIA **Please let us know**

For more detailed information on what is happening check out the ACN web site
<http://www.ozcatechumenate.org>

Check out Your Website

The Executive of the ACN has developed a great website for you and your RCIA team. Come and see it at <http://www.ozcatechumenate.org>.

We are constantly reviewing and changing the website, so come back regularly to see the latest articles and resources for you and your teams. You will find material to help set up and run teams for RCIA groups and those working with children through the RCIC. You will also be able to review past conferences presentations and papers.

We rely on the contributions of all of our teams working in RCIA, so if you have any stories or tools you would like to share, or even an upcoming event in your diocese, please email the information to Stewart Bazzica at bazzicas@au1.ibm.com.

Embracing the Faith

AUSTRALIAN CATECHUMENATE NETWORK
2012 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



11-14 October 2012

(THURSDAY 7PM - SUNDAY 3PM)

Robertson Gardens Comfort Inn & Suites
281 Kessels Road, Nathan, Brisbane

The Conference will address the following topics:

- RCIA Ministers and their Formation (Rev Fr Tony Chiera)
- The Rites of the RCIA (Rev Dr Tom Elich)
- An Ongoing Catechumenate (Mrs Sue Thomas)

Workshops will follow these addresses to further explore each of the topics.

For conference updates, visit the ACN website
www.ozcatechumenate.org



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION

You need to organise your own accommodation. There are various types of rooms available at the conference venue. Check their website <http://www.robertsongardens.com.au/> or phone **07 3875 1999 or Toll Free 1800 777 374 (24 hours)**. For other accommodation possibilities in the area go to <http://www.wotif.com/hotels/landmarks/australia/queen-elizabeth-ii-jubilee-hospital-hotels.html>.

CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

THURSDAY 11th

17:00	Registration opens
19:00	Welcome, Opening Liturgy, Formal opening & address.
21:00	Convivial Time

FRIDAY 12th

8:30	Opening Prayer
9:00	Keynote address: RCIA Ministers and their Formation – Fr. Tony Chiera
10:30	Morning Tea
11:00-12:30	Workshops
12:30	Lunch
14:00-15:30	Workshops
15:30-16:00	Afternoon Tea
16:00-16:45	BGM chaired by Elio
16:45	Prayer to end the day
17:00-17:30	Sharing the Wisdom

SATURDAY 13th

8:30	Opening Prayer
9:00	Keynote address: The Rites in the RCIA Process – Fr. Tom Elich
10:30	Morning Tea
11:00-12:30	Workshops
12:30	Lunch
13:30- 14:30	Forum
14:30-16:00	Workshops
16:00	Afternoon Tea
17:00	Buses leave for Cathedral
18:00	Mass at the Cathedral
19:30	Conference Dinner

SUNDAY 14th

8:30	Opening Prayer
9:00	Keynote address: An Ongoing Catechumenate – Sue Thomas
10:30	Morning Tea
11:00-12:30	Workshops
12:30	Final Session – Drawing it all together – Closing Liturgy
13:00	Lunch



Australian Catechumenate Network

HOST DIOCESE NOMINATION FOR ACN 2014 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

To: All Arch/diocesan Coordinators,

As you are all aware the 2012 National RCIA conference has been planned and will be held in October in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

I would urge you to promote this biennial conference in your dioceses as important for all practitioners of RCIA because it is a valuable opportunity to share ideas and contacts within our community.

I would also ask you as coordinators in your diocese to consider whether you would be prepared to host the next conference in 2014. Planning would be undertaken collaboratively; the host diocese would be responsible for the planning and coordinating of logistics on the ground and assisting in venue selection and day to day running. The national committee would be responsible for the content of the conference agenda and engaging speakers.

We plan to announce the next conference location at a hand over ceremony at the conference in October. For that reason we need nominations to be finalised by the end of August. The National Committee will then choose the successful Diocese.

Elio Capra SDB

Chairman Australian Catechumenate Network

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NN Help Desk

The readership of Network News includes people with vast experience and enormous expertise in the Catechumenate. If you have a question or issue about the RCIA that you need help with, email it to the editor at harrington@litcom.net.au. We'll publish your questions in future issues of Network News and ask our readers to offer their advice or suggestions.

Q. I am a parish pastoral associate and RCIA team coordinator. At our deanery leadership meeting I raised my concerns about four Muslims who have enquired about becoming Catholics. I have spoken to one couple who arrived in Australia at the beginning of March. The wife is on a student visa but I am not sure about the husband. I asked what they were hoping to do when she finished studying, and she said that they wanted to stay here. When I asked what would happen if they had to return home to Iran and it was found out they were now Christians, he said that he would be killed and she would be imprisoned for life. They seemed very sincere, but I have this nagging feeling that they see becoming Catholics as a way of increasing their chance of staying in the country. I don't want to end up in a legal battle, nor do I want to refuse them the option. A priest warned me against getting involved unless they had proper residency visas. Someone else suggested ringing the Australian Catholic Immigration Office in Canberra. Surely we are not the first parish to have Muslims inquiring, so I am wondering if a "Network News" reader can give me some advice.

A. *Two members of the ACN executive offered the comments below. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who can add the wisdom of experience to the discussion!*

Response 1: I have had a fair bit to do with Muslims as my husband and I, together with a small town community, welcomed and supported Afghan and Iraqi refugees who had come from the Darwin Detention Centre. I would suggest that they be invited to the Inquiry sessions where the Christians could learn about Islam and vice versa. They have only been here a few months, hardly time to be looking at major life changes. A lengthy Inquiry time, plus discernment, would throw light on this situation.

I certainly would not want to return to Iran with any sign that I was Christian and I can appreciate that the parish pastoral associate feels responsible for their safety, but the possibly dangerous conversion is their own decision.

Response 2: I have no experience in this particular situation but will give you my thoughts. I believe we sometimes have valid questions about the motives for certain people wanting to become Catholic. Experience tells me that one of two things can happen: either they don't continue because the process is too long and too intense for them, or the Holy Spirit does her job and conversion takes place. Discernment along the journey is a great tool!



Australian Catechumenate Network

Executive

Nomination Form

*The future of the Australian Catechumenate
Network depends on you, the members.*

Can you, please, nominate yourself

or someone else to be an executive member of the ACN

for the next two years?

**I wish to nominate the following person to serve on the Executive
Committee of the Australian Catechumenate Network for two (2) years,
commencing at the National Conference on October 11-14, 2012**

Name Arch/diocese

Address

.....Postcode

Phone Email

RESOURCES:

Web addresses for your "favourites":

Australian Catechumenate Network - www.ozcatechumenate.org

Team RCIA - teamrcia.com

North American Forum on the Catechumenate - www.naforum.org/wordpress

RCIA Network of England and Wales - www.rcia.org.uk



ON BEHALF OF THE NETWORK NEWS TEAM
THANK YOU TO ALL
WHO CONTRIBUTED
TO THIS ISSUE OF
NETWORK NEWS

We leave you with this short reflection:

Faith is believing in what is true, and has two elements:

- 1) being convinced of the truth, being certain of reality, having evidence of unseen things,
- 2) believing, hoping in, embracing and seizing the truth.

While faith requires being convinced that what we believe in is true, just knowing the truth is only half of faith. God's word must be hoped for, embraced, seized!

Hebrews 11:1

Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen.



The next issue will be circulated at the end of November 2012.

If you have any articles to contribute
or resources to recommend
please send them by 20th November 2012
to the editor, Elizabeth Harrington, at:

harringtone@litcom.net.au

