

## Words from the Chair



Dear Friends,

As we near the end of the Easter season we approach three great Solemnities: Pentecost, the Most Blessed Trinity, and Corpus

Christi. These celebrations will help our neophytes appreciate and experience the great mysteries that they were initiated into at Easter. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Church is born, the new law of the Gospel is inscribed on our hearts through the outpouring of the Spirit, we become children of God and partakers of the divine nature so we can now call God 'Abba, Father!' and we are united together in Body of Christ made present for us in the Holy Eucharist.

This edition of Network News includes inspiring stories of the Rite of Election in Brisbane and the Easter Christian Initiations at Wollongong and Adelaide. We also have news about the 31st July National Catholic Men's Gathering, focusing on the Year of St Joseph.

Inside there is information about the upcoming 'Alive in the Spirit' conference on 8-10 July, in which CIAN is partnering with the Pastoral Ministry Network and the Mission Planners Network of Oceania. CIAN decided not to run its own conference last year in preference for this combined conference, which will have at least 5 workshops that focus on the RCIA. You can [watch a replay of the official launch](#) of the conference [here](#) that will introduce you to this Virtual Conference.

Lastly, I'd like to highlight the announcement that Pope Francis has established the "Lay Ministry of Catechist" in response to the urgent need for evangelisation in the modern world. In his document, *Antiquum ministerium*, the Pope states that the ministry of Catechist is an ancient one with evidence of 'teachers' of the Christian faith in the New Testament.

This ministry for lay men and women springs from "the missionary commitment proper to every baptised person, a commitment that must however be carried out in a fully 'secular' manner, avoiding any form of clericalisation," says the Pope. Lay catechists will collaborate with the bishop who remains the primary catechist of his diocese, a ministry he shares with his priests. Christian parents are also the first educators of their children in the Christian faith.

This announcement is good news for those involved in RCIA as it officially recognises the role of the lay catechist in the initial proclamation of the gospel and the instruction of catechumens in preparation for the sacraments of Christian initiation. The Vatican will soon publish the Rite of Institution of the lay ministry of Catechist. Dioceses are encouraged to provide suitable formation for catechists.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Christine Wood

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### Contents

<a href="#">Words from the chair</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Rite of Election Brisbane</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">CIAN Website Update</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Alive in the Spirit Virtual Conference Details</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Barry's Long Road to Connect with Faith</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Coming Events</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Stewart's Easter Initiation</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Alive In The Spirit Keynote Speakers</a>	<a href="#">7</a>

Christian Initiation Australia Network seeks to support all those who share the vision of the RCIA

# Rite of Election – Brisbane

By Lisa McKerr, Evangelisation Brisbane



The Rite of Election was held on Sunday 21st of February. Over 500 people attended, including 118 Catechumens from 35 parishes, as well as candidates, RCIA teams, sponsors, Godparents and families. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm, spirit and support for those journeying towards baptism.

The Rite of Election, the second step in the Initiation journey, closes the period of the Catechumen – that is the lengthy period of formation of the catechumen's mind and heart. The Rite of Election is held on the First Sunday of Lent as it marks the beginning of the final and more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation where the elect are encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity. (RCIA#105)

The elect, now in the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, are encouraged to use this time for reflection and prayer. It is a time to focus deeply on discernment of self and to listen to the voice that says, "Follow me", all the while being supported by the parish community.



## CIAN Website Update

You may have been experiencing trouble connecting to our CIAN website.

We are aware of the issue and are in the process of fixing the issue with our website provider.

In the meantime you can access all our valuable information using this link:

<https://www.ciannetwork.net/>

Just go to it and bookmark it and as soon as we have fixed the issue on our previous web address that address will also take you to our excellent range of information to support your work with those seeking to build a relationship with Jesus.

Coming soon to the website will be short video presentations by some of our workshop presenters from the past few conferences sharing their wisdom and knowledge.



# Alive in the Spirit

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**Christian Initiation**  
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Hosted by the Pastoral Ministry Network in collaboration with Christian Initiation Australia Network and the Mission Planners Network of Oceania.

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# Barry's Long Road to Connect With Faith

By Lindy McNamara

It's been a long and sometimes bumpy ride as he has navigated his faith journey, but now at the age of 82, Barry Horwood says there is a "sense of comfort" as he prepares to become a Catholic.

The octogenarian was the oldest of the catechumens affirmed by Adelaide Archbishop Patrick O'Regan at the Rite of Election ceremony this year. The 27 men and women were initiated with the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and first Communion at the Easter Vigil on April 3, 2021.

Reflecting on his desire to learn more about the Catholic faith in his twilight years, Barry said it was underpinned by wanting to understand his late mother's connection to the Church. She died when Barry was only 18 months old and after learning his mum and grandmother were Catholic, there had always been a nagging need to "fill in the gaps".

"At this time in life you become a bit pensive about what it's all about and so that was the notion, that sense of not having had a real connection with one's mother," he said.

"It was a thing I wanted to understand more, to have a better sense of who she was and what her influence on my life was in that short time, and what it might have been had certain facts been different.

"Maybe if things weren't as they were I could have seen myself having the complete Catholic experience, from baptism, to a Catholic education and the whole thing."

While he was not baptised as a baby, Barry grew up attending the Methodist Church and later married in the Church of England.

In more recent years he had more time to think about his faith, the Catholic Church and his mother.

"It's about understanding the values that she was brought up with. It brings a sense of comfort, it's completing a section of the journey...it's filling a bit in.

"That faith journey – we are all somewhere along the track. It adds a dimension to your life that you hadn't possibly had."



Photo: Ben MacMahon

Barry said his friendship with Fr Maurice Shinnick over the past 25 years had resulted in many discussions about the Catholic faith and the ideas shared were considered as he eventually came to the decision to sign up for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) process.

"This learning process I am on is reinforcing values and it is all part of understanding the significance of bits and pieces," he said.

"As the Archbishop told us, becoming a Catholic is just opening the door, this is not the end. Now is the opportunity for this to be expanded and to learn more and get as involved as you want to be."

Supporting Barry in the RCIA process has been Mary Camilleri from the Emmaus parish. She described it as a privilege to accompany Barry, "a questioner and deep thinker", and fellow catechumens Paul Saler and Adrian Graziano on their journey.

"They have a deep spiritual yearning and their questions both challenge and excite me, awakening anew my own faith each time we meet," she said.

"Being involved in the RCIA program in a number of parishes over the last 35 years has been a phenomenal experience.

"I am always surprised and delighted by catechumens' inquiry stories and the courage it takes to commence the RCIA journey."



# Coming Events



## Australian Catholic Men's Gathering 2021

*"They were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other Apostles,  
Brothers - what then must we do?" Acts 2:37*

### LAUNCHING NATIONALLY ONLINE FROM SATURDAY 31 JULY 2021

As an initiative of the Australian Catholic Bishops, the National Catholic Men's Gathering aims to inspire and encourage all men with a vision for personal discipleship, service and mission in the family, parish/diocese and the world. The online program hopes to reinforce that it is important to gather as men in the faith environment of the Church and be challenged to ensure the Gospel is alive in our homes, parishes/dioceses and our communities

In this Year of St Joseph, the National Catholic Men's Gathering is again being offered as a **free event for registered participants**. All dioceses across Australia are invited to participate in the 2021 program which will focus on St Joseph and will include a pre-recorded introductory session, three pre-recorded sessions, and a final commissioning, all available from **Saturday 31 July 2021**.

To read about this year's speakers, click [here](#).

The 2021 program offers flexibility so that you may participate individually or gather with others from your parish/diocese or men's ministry group. The sessions are designed so that they can be used on one full day or across a number of days and they can be integrated with local initiatives such as Mass, testimonies and group discussions.

Individual registration will ensure you receive updates about the program and all links to the pre-recorded videos when they are available.

**Registration** is available now at <https://www.nce.catholic.org.au/catholicmen>

## Making Disciples: Online Seminar



Join the TeamRCIA global community for three Saturdays of workshops, questions, conversations, fun, and social time all centred on the catechumenate ministry. [Check it out here](#).

Learn how to become more confident in your ministry. Discover sure-fire methods for engaging your seekers at a deep, spiritual level. And figure out how to lower your stress while increasing your joy in this grace-filled, powerful ministry.

[REGISTER by JUNE 4 to get the SALE PRICE:](#)

### **\$50 / person for non-TeamRCIA Members**

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### **\$25 / person for TeamRCIA Members**

- full access to all Seminar events
- **view all the recordings after the Seminar for 6 weeks**

# Stewart's Easter Initiation

Bishop Brian Mascord presiding at Stewart Wallace's initiation at the 2021 Easter Vigil at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong.

A special thanks to the livestream crew from the cathedral for these stills from their livestream video of the Vigil Mass.

Next issue we'll bring you Stewart's testimony of his faith journey.



Baptism of Stewart Wallace



Presentation of a Lighted Candle



Clothing with a Baptismal Garment



Presentation of a Lighted Candle



Celebration of Confirmation



# Alive In The Spirit Virtual Conference 2021

## Keynote Speakers

### Lana Turvey-Collins

#### Plenary Council Facilitator



In November 2017 Lana Turvey-Collins began with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference working to facilitate a three year process of listening, dialogue and discernment about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. Prior to this appointment, Lana worked as

the Program Manager for Mission Formation and Professional Development for Catholic Mission. She has studied in the areas of mission, theology and Church, and holds bachelor degrees in commerce and arts and a master's degree in development and human rights.

Before joining Catholic Mission, Lana worked with teams in business on leadership, implementation of vision, values and organisational culture. Lana is passionate about God's mission and believes there is great richness amidst the diversity and difference in the world. She has lived and worked in Zambia, Peru, Timor-Leste and Japan.

### Richard Lennan

#### Professor of Systematic Theology, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry



Richard Lennan, a priest of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle since 1983, is Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College. His principal fields of research and teaching are ecclesiology and the theology of ministry; he has a particular interest in the theology and spirituality of Karl Rahner. His new book (to be published in 2022) is *Tilling the Church: Theology for an Unfinished Project*.

Prior to moving to Boston, he taught theology at the Catholic Institute of Sydney from 1992-2007 and served as president of the Australian Catholic Theological Association from 2005-07. Most recently, he was a consultant member of the group that drafted *The Light from the Southern Cross* (2020).

### Leisa Anslinger

#### Associate Director for Pastoral Vitality for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati



Leisa Anslinger is the Associate Director for Pastoral Vitality for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the founder of Catholic Life and Faith, a centre for evangelization, stewardship, and servant leadership development. Leisa brings extensive experience in parishes and schools to her ministry as an author and

speaker. She is a frequent presenter on topics ranging from parish leadership, stewardship, evangelization, and strengths development. Her most recent publications include *A Vision for Conversion: 8 Steps to Radically Change Your RCIA Process*, *30 Days on Stewardship*, and *What Can I Do?: Ways to Build Parish Community*. Leisa is the author of *Impact*, a monthly formation resource connecting the Sunday readings with daily life.

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# NETWORK NEWS

*Network News* is the quarterly bulletin of the Christian Initiation Network Australia.

The Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN) is a support network of those who share the vision of the catechumenate. Its purpose is to promote the practice of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) through sharing ideas and challenges.

CIAN Membership is open to all who have a commitment to and/or work with the RCIA in Australia.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of *Network News*.

To send feedback or get further information about items in *Network News*, contact the editor:

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The next issue will be circulated in July 2021.

Please send stories to share, news or events to publicise, articles to contribute or resources to recommend by 22nd June, 2021 to the editor, Max Norden, (contact details above) or to the CIAN chair:

Dr. Christine Wood  
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M: 0408 321 002

For more RCIA Resources, go to [ciannetwork.net/](http://ciannetwork.net/)

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