



THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION
DIOCESE of PARRAMATTA

Sustaining Faith Hope & Charity

NEWSLETTER

May Appeal 2018

Welcome to the second edition of the *Sustaining Faith Hope and Charity* Newsletter.

This edition focuses on works of Faith, particularly Holy Spirit Seminary, and the good works our seminarians do on a regular basis.

A gift to Holy Spirit Seminary is not only a gift to our seminarians, although this is vital and valued, it is also a gift that extends to the hungry, to the less fortunate, to asylum seekers and refugees, and to students wanting to learn more about our Christian faith.

Your gift is genuinely a gift that keeps on giving. Thank you for supporting our Holy Spirit Seminary, our young seminarians, and subsequently our wider community.

Without the faithful support from donors across the Diocese of Parramatta, our seminary would not be able to facilitate the growing vocations we have in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Thank you for promoting the faith and making all the subsequent works in our community possible. We couldn't do it without you.



Above: Seminarian, Tom Green, volunteers at the House of Welcome (refugee centre) and hands out food hampers (story on pg 2).

Seminarians Feed Refugees & Share the Love of Christ

Meet Tom Green.

He joined Holy Spirit Seminary in 2016 and is a wonderful addition. He grew up in Glenbrook, in the lower Blue Mountains, and previously attended St John Vianney Parish Doonside. Tom is one of five siblings and his brother, Jack, is also in Holy Spirit Seminary.

Tom, like many of our seminarians, embodies a generous spirit of charity and service and has committed himself to serving others.

Throughout 2017, Tom visited various state schools and provided catechises, scripture studies and taught kids how to pray. When asked what moved him, he said "I'm particularly moved by seeing students, from years 3 to 6, excited about prayer and further want confirmation and the sacraments".

In addition to Tom's volunteer work in state schools, he also takes "feeding the

hungry" literally by volunteering at a centre for asylum seekers and refugees, handing out food hampers.

Tom particularly loves this work as it allows him to further imitate Christ and provides him the opportunity to see and serve Jesus in the less fortunate.

In fact, when asked why Tom joined the seminary he said "For me growing up, I was into superheroes - the kind you see in *The Lord of The Rings* - and as I was getting more into my faith as a youngster, I realised that there was no greater heroism than the love of Christ and I wanted to imitate that as much as I could".

"The love of Christ, is the love of Our Father for His people, and that's why I wanted to join the seminary, to live this love and share it with others".

We are grateful for Tom responding to God's call, and consequently serving the

community. We also thank you, friends of the seminary, for your support which helps facilitate vocations and these good works.



Above: Tom at the House of Welcome.

Students Raise Money for The Catholic Foundation



Above: The Catholic Foundation Director Michael Mendieta presenting the award to St Oliver Primary students.

The primary school students raised over \$55.

Michael Mendieta, Director of the Catholic Foundation, presented the awards to Karen and Kayley during an all-school assembly at Monday 12 March 2018.

Friends and family were rapturous in their applause for the generous and altruistic students.

Both girls are members of the choir of St Oliver Plunkett's Parish, Harris Park and heard about The Catholic Foundation during an announcement from Fr Christopher de Souza, Parish Priest.

The girls donated money themselves and asked their friends to be generous as well.

"We were asking really the whole school," Kayley said.

Karen aspires to be "someone who shows

more compassion, who sees someone in need and tries to help them," she said.

Kayley would like to help homeless people when she is older.

Principal Barbara Young said the whole school was very proud and that the children are a credit to their families and the community.

St Oliver's is a school of 170 students and has a strong community spirit. The all-school assembly began with the school prayer, an Our Father and singing of the national anthem, Advance Australia Fair. School Captains lead the start of the assembly and celebrated a student's birthday.

Barbara reiterated the school's values for its students, who chanted, "We are safe, we are respectful, we are learners." Mercy values also imbue St Oliver's Primary, which was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1930.

Seminarians Build Relationships Through Sign Language

Meet Matthew Dimian.

He joined Holy Spirit Seminary in 2014, and has wanted to be a priest for most his life.

Every Friday, Matthew visits the Ephpheta Centre, which is a community for the hard of hearing and deaf.

During his visits, he also learns Auslan, so that he can converse intimately with those who are deaf and hard of hearing, and build genuine friendships.

Matthew says “it is important to learn Auslan, because as a seminarian, you want all people to know the Gospel and Jesus”. It will also prove beneficial as priests receiving confessions. Members of the deaf community don’t want to confess with an interpreter and would naturally be more comfortable confessing directly to a priest – hence the value of their knowing Auslan.

When asked why Matthew wanted to become a priest, he shared “I wanted to

be a priest as far back as I can remember, probably as young as 3 or 4 years old. The more I learned about the Church, the more this desire grew within me”.

“In high school, I tried to do a few different things, but none of them really satisfied, so eventually, I had to succumb to the desire within me, and I gave my life completely to God. To me, this is better than any occupation, because I completely love it, I completely love God and I hope to serve the Church”.

“There are a lot of things the world promises, but ultimately it doesn’t satisfy. Follow the Lord with all your heart and you will receive his life in return.”

When asked about a typical day at the seminary, Matthew said “a very good part of our time is spent studying. It’s so great, we are studying the truth for its own sake. We study philosophy where we learn about the world and the big ideas throughout history. We also study theology and learn about God’s revelation to us”.



Above: Matthew conversing in Auslan with the community at the Ephpheta Centre.

“We do heaps of things in the seminary, we spend a lot of time in prayer, deepening our relationship with God and with each other, and we also engage in normal human activity, we play soccer often, we play cards, catch up after dinner and listen to music, all sorts of things. It’s a blessing to be in the seminary, and I’m very grateful for all who support us in our vocation, especially for those who pray for us and those who supply for our material needs”.

FUNDRAISING RAFFLE FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2019

Support a pilgrim on their way to World Youth Day 2019 by purchasing a raffle ticket.

To view the great range of prizes & buy tickets online, go to

rafflelink.com.au/wyd2019

or pick up a booklet from your parish or local Catholic school.

BUY TICKETS ONLINE



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Seminarians Bring Community & Communion to the Sick

Meet Michael Axiak.

He joined Holy Spirit Seminary in 2016 and has already hit the ground running, by means of serving the community, being installed as an acolyte and undergoing rigorous intellectual formation.

Michael was born and bred in Westmead. His father is Maltese and his mother is Dutch.

Like Tom, every Friday, Michael visits state schools to provide catechises, scripture classes and prayer instruction to young students. Sharing one lovely experience, Michael said “I remember around Father’s Day, one of the students who didn’t have a father, came to me and gave me a Father’s Day card. I was moved because this young person saw me as a kind of role model”.

Visiting the sick and the housebound, especially to provide communion for those who cannot attend Mass, is also part of Michael’s volunteer work.

For Michael “visiting the sick is very important because it gives those who are housebound a sense of being connected to the Church community. Bringing them Holy Communion is also very humbling, as it allows for God’s grace, peace and



Above: Michael visits sick and housebound members of the community.

love to be channelled to those suffering. It’s a work I very much enjoy and allows me to serve others”.

When asked why Michael joined the seminary, he said, “It wasn’t until I was 24 or 25 where I started to do some mission work in Ireland, which is where the thought first came to me. I met some Diocesan Priests in Ireland, who had a love and fervour for their vocation. These men just loved the Mass, the people in their parish, their ministry and the Eucharist, all of which inspired and

challenged me to pursue the vocation”. In addition to studying philosophy and theology, Michael has also studied some psychology to better understand the human mind and a person’s emotional experiences. This will complement his ministry and pastoral work, now and in the future.

Thankfully, it’s the generosity from parishioners across the Diocese of Parramatta, that Holy Spirit Seminary is able to provide the formation and education required to adequately prepare our seminarians for the priesthood.



Above: Calvin, a Seminarian, teaching Catechesis.