

THE STAR

ROSARY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Dear Rosarians,

Do we think enough of our *union* with each other in prayer? Certainly the Rosary Confraternity is a community of prayer. We pray for each other, keeping in a general way, each other's intentions before the Lord. And we can say that we do so through the motherly heart of Mary. But let's not confine the focus of our togetherness in prayer to our Confraternity. People who are sick, suffering, uncertain in recovery, or even confronted with death, speak of the sense of the prayer of others sustaining them. Often they are just too weak or exhausted to pray. Some say, "I wish I could pray, but I just can't". Well, able minded and able bodied fellow Christians can themselves carry Godwards the minds and hearts and intentions of their sisters and brothers through prayer.

In a related but different way Christmas might be a special time for us to be more widely inclusive in our prayer as Rosarians. Togetherness is a treasured feature of Christmas. The precious beginning in family and society of the Christ-child is our focus. Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds and Magi, all caring and sharing, supporting and rejoicing in the presence of the Baby Jesus, show the world the golden experience of togetherness.

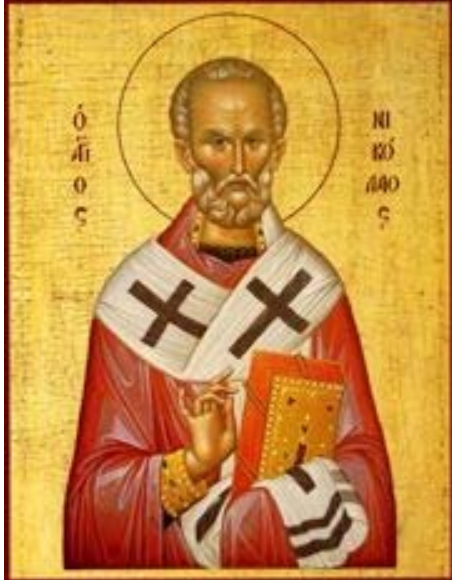
In our time marriage and family life is often damaged and disabled in many and varied ways. Christmas being such an occasion of togetherness, can also –in a sort of reverse swing- accentuate its very opposite. Let us band together in prayer and ask Mary Mother of the Child and of the Church to soothe and help those who will suffer isolation and estrangement this Christmas. And where possible, be actively inclusive.

**Let Christians all with joyful mirth,
Both young and old, both great and small,
Now think upon our Saviour's birth,
Who brought salvation to us all. (Yeoman's Carol)**

A Blessed Christmas to you all.

Fr Ben Hensley OP

Promoter of the Rosary Confraternity



St Nicholas bishop of Myra in Lycia (modern Turkey) was born in the last quarter of the 3rd century and died in the 340's. He became a very popular saint in eastern Byzantine Christianity in succeeding centuries. When that part of Asia Minor was taken over by Saracens, Christians were concerned to rescue his remains and a group of sailors and two priests managed to achieve this, bringing the body across to Bari in S.E. Italy on the 9th May 1087. His body remains there to this day in the Cathedral dedicated to him. In Italy he is known and loved as St Nicholas of *Bari*. Many churches throughout Italy bear his name as patron.

It is this same Nicholas who is patron saint of Russia. He is also patron saint of sailors. But it is as patron saint of children that brings him into this issue of *The Star*.

Tradition has it that a family with three daughters fell on hard times so that they were quite unable to raise the needed dowry for their daughters'

marriages. To ensure that they not be put into the planned prostitution, Nicholas threw a sack of money out of his window on three succeeding nights, one for each of the three young women. So he became someone very special, venerated by girls and those preparing for marriage.

Over a period of centuries in the West (Holland, Germany and America, e.g.) Saint Nicholas became Santa Claus.

AN EPIPHANY CONVERSION

Fr Bernard Maxwell is an experienced and dedicated promoter of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). When asked whether he had encountered people coming to the process from other faiths, he spoke of his experience of an eminent Jewish scientist who had shown interest. Whenever this man would come to Mass, he gave his whole attention to what was happening. In fact his level of attention could be a little disconcerting for the celebrant.

He came regularly to the RCIA sessions. And he came with well thought out questions. On the night of the Epiphany as they were going through the details of Matthew's penetrating story of the Wise Men "seekers" with Fr Bernard, it suddenly all became clear to this inquirer. These eminent seekers from the East with their science of the stars had come to a dead end in Jerusalem. The star which they had so faithfully followed on their arduous journey no longer led them. They were men of great learning and prestige who had no difficulty in gaining an audience with the powerful Herod. And as this Jewish enquirer listened carefully to the account of how Herod was forced to call in "all the chief priests and scribes of the people", and turn to the Jewish Scriptures, it suddenly struck him that it was these Scriptures, *his* Scriptures, that led the Wise Men to Jesus.

And there and then, surrounded by the other enquirers and the RCIA team, this Jewish scientist knew himself to be in the loving presence of the same Jesus.

MEDITATIONS ON THE MYSTERIES OF LIGHT

The Baptism of Christ (continued)

Our preceding meditative exploration of the first Luminous Mystery took us into the role of John the Baptist's baptizing as a paving of the way for the Saviour. By word and deed John prepared the people for the Lord, making paths straight. "Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain", sings the tenor in Handel's Messiah. Let us turn now from the Forerunner's role in preparing God's people to his role in baptizing the "Mightier One".

John the Forerunner was the Saviour's herald. He preached Christ, he prophesied Christ. The cry of his words at the Jordan were matched by his life in the wilderness. He was authentic. John lived in the wilderness like Elijah and he dressed like Elijah. The angel Gabriel likened him to Elijah. He lived an extremely simple life of self denial. Byzantine liturgy and theology like to describe him as angelic. And although preselected in the mind of God as a prophet of the Most High, and although filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb and although living his life in complete accord with the will of God, he counts himself unworthy to untie the sandalstraps on the feet of Jesus. The crowds knew John; they did not know Jesus. But John was created solely for the purpose of making Jesus known; that was his reason for being. So in his preaching to the crowds of people streaming to the river for baptism he could use *himself* as the key to knowledge of Jesus. How? By that graphic "stooping" comparison. No matter how graciously God may have smiled on him and equipped him with such gifts, and no matter how zealously this new Elijah had shown his zeal for the Lord of Hosts, in comparison with Jesus he did not consider himself worthy to do what a slave would do for his master in loosening the straps of his sandals.

As well as drawing the crowds towards the Person of Jesus through a comparison with his own person, John goes on to compare their respective activities. Here too he highlights for God's pilgrim people the enormous difference between their two baptisms, elevating the power and effect of Jesus' baptizing beyond that of his own preparatory baptism of repentance. "***I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.***" (Mk 1:8).

What then is the meaning of Jesus coming to John for his baptism of repentance?

The Master comes to the servant who could not see himself as fit to undo His sandals. Jesus Christ, the Son of God can have nothing to repent of. This was John's problem. He was clearly aware of the apparent predicament in which he found himself. As Forerunner divinely designated to prepare the way of the Most High, his focus was on the people. Preparation was needed *in them* before they could receive the Messiah into their hearts and community.

But Jesus, the “mightier one”, actually joins the people He has come to save, asking to undergo the very thing that they must undergo in their needy sinfulness. How could He need the preparation that they needed? John resisted. Perhaps he was aghast. **“John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’”**(Mt 3:14)

John makes the point with great effect as he again compares himself with Jesus in a way that highlights the Saviour’s holiness by suggesting baptism from Him. For (we know) John was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb. Yet being baptized by Jesus’ Spirit-baptism would make him even greater before the Lord (Cf .Lk 1:15). He even speaks of having the need of it. But alternatively, what could be the point of Jesus receiving *his* baptism? Just as this was a problem for John on the spot, it was to become a major theological challenge in the early Church and the patristic era as the Sacred Teaching about Christ and the Holy Trinity were being carefully clarified and purified of errors.

“...and do you come to me?” asks John. If it seems incongruous for Jesus to be coming to the purified and holy Forerunner, it seems even more so for Him to be coming and joining John’s crowd of sinful catechumens. But in coming to John Jesus is really coming to the rescue of the whole human race.

Entering into John’s question helps us to enter a little further into the mystery of Jesus’ baptism, especially when we delve into Jesus’ reply. As we will find throughout Jesus’ public ministry with its questions and answers, He will be the Teacher, even as we saw He was at the Finding in the Temple. And so it is here. Not that His teaching will yield in us a comprehension so complete as to dissolve all mystery. Mary and Joseph did not understand what he said to them in the temple. The mysteries of God go on without end, to be treasured in our heart. But in the grace of our faith, the Church and we her members can know something!

“But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness’”. (Mt 3:15).

We are told by Matthew that at these words John consented. We have been exploring the whole issue of Jesus coming to John for baptism. We have looked at reasons why John would naturally hesitate about, even want to deny baptism to the Messiah. The word of Jesus is enough. John resists no longer but consents. This word of Jesus is His very first utterance in St Matthew’s gospel.

What meaning can we find for this word that changes John and ushers in The Baptism? Preachers and Pastors from earliest times have appreciated the significance of these words of Jesus, recorded only in St Matthew’s gospel. For the early Church wrestled with the puzzle of the divine and sinless Jesus presenting himself for repentance baptism.

And they recognised that John, who also wrestled with it, found that the solution would have to lie in allowing the **“fulfilment of all righteousness”**.

What sort of meaning do we give to “all righteousness”?

First, such righteousness cannot be inconsistent with the act of the “mightier One” choosing to submit Himself to the lesser, weaker one’s baptism. However unexpected this submission may be in its revelation of humility, it is not incompatible with righteousness.

Secondly, baptism such as John's was not an obligation under the precepts of the Law. There is no reference in it to a ritual of baptism. And while the Law certainly looked for righteousness, it did not do so exhaustively. There is something greater. Jesus' submission to baptism was to fulfil *all* righteousness, in a manner that included all the requirements of the Law, while going beyond them. That is, the accomplishment of *all* duties with regard to God; happily doing all that is good *and* doing it well. Even here at the baptism Jesus is fulfilling the Law and lifting it up in Himself to a higher perfection; the New Law of grace and virtue. Thirdly, “all righteousness”, as initiated in Jesus' baptism, will radiate from Him, extending to all who are reborn to be now His sisters and brothers bonded with Him, as beloved children of the Father.

Fourthly, we notice that John is included in this fulfillment of “*all righteousness*”, because the Lord's reply to him held that it is fitting for *us* to do so. This does not imply that John does so on an equal footing with Jesus.

To sum up the point, it seems we should not take too narrow a view of “righteousness”, but allow it to be the doing of God's will both in nature and in grace, there and then, and for the future (Aquinas on Matthew).

Any further aspects to consider?

One feature that we should not overlook or take for granted is the humility of Jesus. If Jesus comes to baptism as the Mighty One to the camel-hair clad messenger, as the Creator to the creature, He does so as the humble Servant, reminding us of the “Servant Songs” in the prophecy of Isaiah. He comes to submit to the Baptist’s baptism. And He comes along in the midst of those whom He is to save; hoodlums and the wayward in heart, heroines and hopefuls, the poverty stricken and the powerful, the rebellious and the super-righteous.. His mission is to free humankind from sin; the enslavement that began with pride. And so at the very beginning of His public life (doing and suffering) He exemplifies behaviour which is the very opposite of that marking our human downfall in the Garden of Eden. His humility is imaged in the humility of John as he backs away from the Lord’s wish as an honour of which he cannot be worthy. But Jesus teaches him the Father’s will and again in humility he consents. We can be reminded of the humble consent of Our Lady in the first Joyful Mystery. She too needed to be taught through the Annunciation that the Most High wanted her to cooperate in the fulfilment of all righteousness by conceiving the Son who would rule over the house of Jacob for ever.

Is there a solution to John's dilemma? Why was Jesus baptized?

How can we appreciate that there was no self-contradiction in Jesus' approach to baptism in his humility and obedience?

By grasping the truth that Jesus took the whole of humanity with him into the waters, cleansing-in-anticipation all the children of Adam. By his incarnation the uniquely enfleshed Divine Word could become the New Adam, "summing up the whole human race in Himself, just as the first Adam summed up and contained all humankind in himself at the Fall" (*Festal Menaion*, p. 57). "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1Cor. 15:22).

Christ as Head goes before the rest of humanity. But He does so in our human nature and bonded to our human nature. The elevating and unconfused union of the human nature with the divine in the Divine Person of the Word gives humanity a new relationship-potential. At the same time there can be no bonding in guilt between Jesus and human beings. The very same nature which in Him is sinless, in us is sinful. St Thomas' quotation from Pseudo-Chrysostom captures the idea nicely: "He comes to baptism, that He who has taken upon Him human nature, may be found to have fulfilled the whole mystery of that nature; not that He is Himself a sinner, but He has taken on Him a nature that is sinful. And therefore that He needed not baptism Himself, yet the carnal nature in others needed it." (*Catena Aurea*, Vol.1 St Matthew, p.109)

How can we be saved? Does the sinfulness in fallen human nature impede its new relationship-potential established with Jesus at the Annunciation?

No, although Jesus' becoming human is an "emptying of Himself", enabling Him to submit to baptism, He is guilt free. Becoming human does not mean He empties Himself of human perfection. Fallen humanity still shares humanness with Him although there is no sharing together in guilt. Human nature is common to Christ and human; sin is not. So in the Saviour's redeeming baptism there is commonality and distinction together. In the baptism, because of that commonality of nature, He can take us sinful humans with him into the water, leading the way and showing what must be done. Already at the very beginning of His public ministry Jesus reveals Himself as the *Mediator*, bringing fallen humanity back into union with God. So in anticipation the whole human race is washed with Him in the Jordan.

Why do we have to add "in anticipation?"

First because Jesus' baptism anticipates His Passion, Death and Resurrection. In a sense the baptismal action itself foreshadows what is to come in the climax of His mission. As He goes into the water we contemplate Him emptying Himself (Philippians), humbling Himself in His human form in a symbol of dying, with John crying out in an ancient Byzantine liturgical hymn for Theophany, "How shall I stretch out my hand and touch Thy head, before which all things tremble?"

And then as He ascends from the water, we contemplate His rising to new life in His resurrection. “Wishing to bury our sins with water in the streams of the Jordan, Christ our God comes forth in His compassionate mercy, and through baptism He forms us anew who had grown corrupt.” (A Matins canticle from the Byzantine liturgy for Theophany). It is in view of the merits of His whole life, death and resurrection that human beings are saved, healed from sin and lifted to a new life. In this mystery we ponder only the beginning of His public ministry. But we do so in the awareness that it is all of a piece with His whole saving mission .

As well as Our Lord’s initial gospel action of baptism anticipating later acts and events in His own redemptive ministry, there is anticipation of its impact in human lives and especially the life of the Church. For the baptism of Jesus looks forward to the baptizing life of the Church. Again Augustine’s saying that we humans have been created without ourselves but we are not redeemed without ourselves is applicable. It is in anticipation of the actions of the Church that Christ’s baptism will be actualised. Every baptism will be Christ baptizing through his baptism as manifested in the Jordan. But every baptism must also be accepted in each candidate. What is effected pre-eminently and universally by Christ the cause becomes reality in each newly baptized Christian. We are not redeemed without our participating in some way.

It is in this way that He is our Mediator, with the sinfulness of our humanity being washed in and through that same humanity He took sinlessly to Himself at the Annunciation.

Why does St Matthew write of John's resistance to Jesus' baptism?

John resists but then gives way to Jesus. This amounts to an exercise of authority over John by Jesus. He is therefore the governing cause of His own baptism, unlike the crowds He has joined for John's baptism. For the crowds streaming to the Jordan for John's baptism were there at the Baptizer's unhesitating command. Jesus' very act of insisting upon John's acceptance of His submission to baptism demonstrates at once both His superiority and His lowliness. For it is in having emptied Himself and being found in human form (Philippians 2:7) that the Mightier One who was in the form of God could be baptized. John's resistance (recorded by Matthew) provides Jesus with an opportunity to reveal something of the mystery of His *humanity* as Mediator.

What about the actual baptism?

What can we say about the details given us in the gospels about the act of Jesus' baptism? Few details are given. Both Mark and Matthew speak of Him coming up out of the water. That should imply that He first went down into the water. What was John's role physically? We don't know. We are not told whether he poured water over Jesus as He stood in the river, or whether He was immersed in the water. His coming up out of the water could suggest the latter.

“By the immersion of His body He dedicated the laver (bathing, washing) of baptism”, is how Rabanus Maurus (d. 856) put it.

What are we shown by the baptism?

We are shown a very great deal as Jesus comes up out of the waters. Remember that John was the extraordinary one. John was the well known one, calling the crowds to his baptism. His father was the priest, his mother conceived him miraculously in her old age. John had lived an ascetic life in the wilderness, standing out no doubt in his garment of camel hair. By comparison Jesus seemed to be the ordinary one. But suddenly that all changes, at least for us, as Jesus emerges and the heavens are thrown open, the Spirit descends in the likeness of a dove and resting on Him. Then came the Father's voice: *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”*. The great Baptism as the foundation of our Christian life is established and revealed.

How can we begin to appreciate the mystery of it?

The Baptism of the Lord Jesus manifests (Theophany) His identity as human and divine. He is human among humans and divine among the Divine Persons. But His baptism initiates His communion with us humans to an altogether higher degree. Through His baptism we are re-created. His baptism allows us to be re-born. The identity of us His followers is therefore also made manifest. We are to see ourselves as identified with Him now as we are reborn in baptism. [To be concluded]

MIDNIGHT MASS DECEMBER 1942

In February 1942 Singapore fell to the Japanese Military Forces and some 22,000 Australians were taken prisoner. Their prison was the infamous Changi. Among them were a number of Catholic Chaplains.

A notable character among these was an Irish priest named Fr Con Sexton, known for his persuasive capacities.

Some of the men got together and formed a music group. In this way they could add variety and keep up morale with some singalongs. Among the group was a soldier named John who played a small harmonium.

As Christmas approached, Fr Con went to the Japanese commanding officers with request that the prisoners might have a Midnight Mass.

When his request was eventually granted, and the basic necessities for Mass were being arranged, he thought the occasion called for some music. So he went to John the harmonium player and asked him to play some hymns.

“I don't know any hymns” he responded, “And I'm not a Catholic”. “Alright”, said Fr Con, “Then just play any type of soothing music”. And so John did just that as the Aussie soldiers gathered for the Mass, ringed around by a cordon of Japanese guards with bayonets drawn and fixed. And as he was playing, one of the guards broke from the ranks and moved towards John and his harmonium.

There was tension as John kept playing. But as the guard approached John, he laid aside his military kit, put down his rifle and joined the worshipping prisoners as a fellow Catholic in an extraordinary profession of faith.

(Courtesy of Fr Bernard Maxwell OP, Military Chaplain with Australian and US Forces in Vietnam)

THE WINDSOR GARDENS VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STORY

An Interview with Laura Luongo

Gilles Plains High School, Adelaide, a dying state secondary school in an area fraught with social and family difficulties was earmarked for closure because of low enrolments. But it didn't die; it was revived and it developed with a new name and a new focus. It became a vocational college with training in several different pathways for future employment. This is a remarkable success story in state school education. This college is now the bench mark for such vocational schools.

*In a staff committed to fight for the school's survival Laura played the key role. In large measure **Windsor Gardens Vocational College** owes its success to her. Let us look at the school's history, its working and its impact, with a view to drawing some broader lessons.*

Ed: Laura, tell us how it all began. You and your fellow teachers must have had some affection for the original school and its pupils or you wouldn't have fought to keep it going. Was there already a dissatisfaction among pupils about their class subjects that you had picked up and with which you sympathised?

Laura: An attempt was made to lift the number of enrolments by the original school amalgamating with another one, Strathmont High School.

Ed: Did that help? Or was it just a stop gap?

Laura: It helped, because our numbers went from 200 to over 300. Our staff and Principal met to discuss ways of improving our engagement with the kids. They had so many problems: drugs, fights, criminality. Boys were predominant. Our staff of 75 wanted to save the school by transforming it. Our main concern was the welfare of our students.

Ed: How did that transformation begin? What was the new idea and who came up with it? I presume that there was already at least the germ of an idea floating around in the education system. I mean that there was a category of vocational school already known to the education department but not really taken up, almost like a horse waiting to be broken in.

Laura: Yes, old technical schools need to be re-opened. We were thinking along the lines of the tech. school model. Our students were rebelling against the traditional subjects. They didn't see the connection between English, Maths and Science and getting a job. Learning in a more practical way is what attracted them. So we had to be more "hands on" in our way of teaching. After staff meetings and talks with the students to get their views, the Principal went to the Department to present our recommendations.

Ed: What was the upshot?

Laura: The Education Department had statistics available that indicated areas of work calling for future employment. That is how we came up with our seven different vocational pathways. They also sent us a person for six months to organise some glossy promotional material advertising our launch and giving the college some needed publicity. After the launch she disappeared! But in 1999 we had become a vocational college.

Ed: How did you manage its development? It sounds a bit like a newborn baby with lots of new things to attend to, lots of challenges, and some of them urgent ones.

Laura: The Ed. Dept. said to us, “You need to develop a partnership with training providers, businesses and community organisations.” This meant it was over to us the school and to our staff as a team.

Ed: So what was your role?

Laura: In March 1999 I had 6 months’ sick leave for breast cancer treatment. I call it my “hiccup year”. I was back in September, battling with energy levels but the Principal was very understanding about that. She let me work to the extent that I could manage.

Ed: You have said that although it was a co-ed school, boys were predominant. Was the changeover to a vocational tech. type school with a majority of male students a special challenge for you and the Principal? Were there more women than men on the staff?

Laura: That was never a problem. We managed. And there was a mixture in the staff; probably more women than men.

Ed: Obviously the Principal had confidence in you.

Laura: Yes. She just said to me as I returned to the school, “Can you sort out the Vocational Education Training (VET) mess? Fix it!” And I did. Then in December of that year (’99) I applied for a 5 year contract and was successful, and I did the same in 2004. We are now delivering 7 Vocational Pathways with certificates. This year in science there is to be a level 2 certificate in laboratory operations, in 2010 we will deliver a level 2 certificate in transport logistics with a mathematical pathway. So there’s a change in culture with the teaching staff so as to bring maths and science into greater relevance to the work place.

Ed: Let’s go into a little more detail. Would you explain the meaning of a pathway?

Laura: The College is there to motivate and educate young people to pursue successfully their chosen future in their work, their learning and their life. Life long learning and wellbeing is our aim. The 7 Vocational Pathways on-site at the college get the students started and ready for the areas of work and life that they choose.

Ed: And the 7 Vocational Pathways?

Laura: Building and Construction, Business, Community Services, Hospitality, Multi Media, Skilled Metals (= Engineering), and University. Each of the pathways is linked to industry experience. We now have over 120 industry and community partners.

Ed: Before we take that set of relationships further, we need to look at when and how students come to choose their particular pathways.

Laura: Students during their time at Windsor from Year 8 – 10 have a career programme within the care group programme. Students get to have a taste of each Vocational Pathway, after which in Year 10 they do in-depth career research and prepare for round table interviews for acceptance into their chosen pathway.

Ed: And so having each student more or less settled on a particular pathway, what sorts of roles do the teachers have in helping students maintain and develop their pathway growth?

Laura: Each student from Year 8 to Year 12 has a Personal Learning Plan. This is under the guidance of teachers in what we call “case management” with each teacher having responsibility for twelve students. I look after twelve Year 11’s. We case manage each student with life long learning, work exploration and career building for the future.

Ed: What sorts of issues are covered by that?

Laura: Any issues to do with students’ well-being find their way into case management. It’s the mentoring side of what we do. Health, family and personal problems, encouragement, keeping an eye on growth and progress and any impediments. It means contact with families at home where many issues come up.

Ed: Could you say briefly what sort of family life issues affect the students? Are there major issues, and if so, how do you deal with them?

Laura: There are families without much real structure or family routines. There can be problems with drugs, alcohol, no money, gambling. There are occasions, even patterns of abuse within a family – verbal as well as physical. We have to be caring and nurturing for the students.

That’s when we find out really the family life of our pupils. So you become a “counsellor” , a psychologist, a mediator and a mentor. Some of our students are under the care of a government agency – for their protection.

Ed: Are there limits and guidelines that prevent you becoming involved with, say, issues of law and health that go beyond your responsibilities as a teacher?

Laura: Yes. We have to now report family problems like those I’ve mentioned to the authorities and they will act. At school we can only monitor and care for the student. But the thing is in our school we don’t sweep these issues under the carpet, hiding them like some schools do.

Ed: Even so it sounds like a challenging side to your work. What sort of support do you get?

Laura: We do have support within the school structure, a psychologist to help us when things get really bad. And staff members mutually support each other. We believe in quick action and we have a good relationship with the police if there’s a crisis. One thing I want to say about our staff; the great majority of them want to stay. They are happy here at Windsor Gardens in spite of the pressures and crises that build up from time to time, and that says something. Our Principal and Assistant Principal are both women, but their deputies are men. It works well, granted that we have more boys than girls. There is a new problem: parents with the wrong image about the vocational school. So often parents want all children to have the opportunity of going to university. They believe the Vocational College doesn’t prepare students for university. But this is very wrong because all 7 vocation pathways lead to university. The students get to experience the pathway of their chosen university degree.

Ed: How would this work?

Laura: For example, Building and Construction can lead into Architecture, Civil Engineering; Community Services can lead into Nursing, Teaching and Education, Medicine; Business Services into Accountancy, Management, Marketing; Engineering into various Engineering degrees and so on.

Ed: So is this all appreciated in the wider community?

Laura: It is important to realise that Vocational Education is an addition to the normal system of education. And so our students now receive two qualifications: their vocational certificates and the South Australian Certificate of Education.

Ed: Let's turn now to the relationships you have as a school with business firms and community organisations. How did you get started with that? Were there any obstacles?

Laura: First, we introduce our partners to the school and we show what we do, and the standard in which our students work to. They advise us on what training we need to do and the particular level required. They then reward students who achieve highly, with awards or scholarships and they also become sponsors.

Ed: Has all that brought any problems? I mean clearly you have many success stories with students doing very well in apprenticeships and business and community ventures that their pathways led them into. But has it had any negatives effects on the school? Has it raised issues of funding? Has it compromised the freedom of competition among businesses?

Laura: The funding is a big problem. We are funded as a high school. But we have a great deal of "high end" equipment which has to be matched to industry levels for our students to succeed in their work placement on the companies' shop floor.

Ed: Our discussion has taken us into the realm of young people's *vocation* in today's (secular) world of employment and business careers. A most important feature of the successful system run by Windsor Gardens Vocational College is the active partnership between school and so many business and community enterprises. Two worlds are brought together; that of school and that of adult employment. Upon leaving school young people don't have to plunge into the unknown. The transition to the adult world and its responsibilities should be smoother through the experience of the vocational pathways. And the world of business and community services will be more welcoming and confident about what new blood they are getting. Do you think a similar sort of initiative would work with the Church? In the life and practice of the Faith, the school world and the parish world are often almost foreign to each other. Students leaving Catholic schools so often fail to continue any real Church practice of their faith. Do you think our Catholic schools could develop vocational pathways into life-long learning *and practice* of faith in parish and diocesan ministries?

Laura: Yes.

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