



# Together

*The Newsletter of St Michael's Community Services*

*Issue 2*

*2023*

Dear esteemed readers of Together,

We are delighted to welcome you to the second edition of "Together", for 2023, a newsletter that serves as a heartfelt connection between us all, members of our vibrant parish community. With each issue, we aim to spotlight the Homeless, Seniors, Youth, and the array of community activities that make our parish thrive.

In these pages, you will find stories that inspire, initiatives that uplift, and voices that remind us of the power of unity. "Together" is more than just a title; it is a reflection of the bond that ties us, and the shared commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of those around us.

In this issue, we delve into the heartwarming stories of those who have found hope through our outreach to the Homeless. We celebrate the wisdom and experiences of our cherished seniors, whose presence enriches our community. We proudly showcase the talents, aspirations and achievements of our youth – the future leaders who bring vibrancy to our parish. Furthermore, we invite you to explore the myriad of community activities which bring us all closer. From engaging spiritual gatherings to events that spread joy and togetherness, there is something for everyone to connect with.

Happy reading!

The Editors

## FROM STRANGERS TO VOLUNTEERS: BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS AND WORKING TOGETHER

Earlier this year, I was approached by Jacqueline De Oliveria, Head of Social Responsibility at the ATC Foundation (Australian Turf Club). She was looking to see if a team from their organisation could join us on our food run to lend a helping hand. On May 17, 2023, 10 volunteers from the ATC joined us, helping in the food packing and then going to Martin Place and Central Station for the distribution of our meals. To say they were overwhelmed by what they saw would be an understatement. We received a \$2000 grant from the Foundation to help with our work, with their promise to come again.

Ramsgate RSL was looking for an organisation like ours in Homelessness Week to help and make a difference. Julie Lome from Events Management phoned me, having received my number from the ATC, and wanted to also send a group of volunteers and donate goods that would benefit our friends on the street. I welcomed the opportunity and on August 30, we were joined by 12 volunteers who happily undertook a range of responsibilities throughout the night. They also donated 50 top-quality sleeping bags to be distributed to rough sleepers. That night was quite cold and wet, and we all



VOLUNTEERS FROM RAMSGATE RSL HARD AT WORK.

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1.-2. Welcome; From Strangers to Volunteers: Building friendships and working together
- 2.-3. Christianity in Egypt: 2000 years of grandeur, survival and hope
- 4.-6. Getting to Know One Another: The power of one - Michael and Rosemary Suliman
6. Spiritual Corner
7. Mother Teresa and Mary MacKillop: Inspirations for selfless service at SMCS
8. A Vigil for Peace
9. Kitchen Corner: Ladies Fingers recipe by Antoinette Ajaka
9. Reflecting on Old Age and Retirement; Anxiety by Jessica Karame
- 10.-11. This Year in Events
11. In Loving Memory ...
12. Readers' Feedback; Our Mission Statement; Our Vision; Our Story; Contact Us



## From Strangers to Volunteers (cont.)

witnessed the power of a little act of kindness which was expressed by one of these young volunteers who decided to take off her jacket and give it to one of the homeless who was shivering from the harsh weather.

Yet another visitor this year was Tom, a student from Trinity College, who asked if he could join our Wednesday night activities as part of his Community Service for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. Tom was joined by his grandfather, Greg, who was so impressed by what we do that he has asked to stay on as a volunteer. We welcome Greg to SMCS and hope that we have a long and satisfying relationship together as we reach out to the underprivileged. Tom was not the only student completing the DofE programme with us this year. We also have benefited from the support of two students of MLC School, Grace and Mia. These students have all shown great commitment to our cause and have demonstrated willingness to give of their best in all of our activities. We take immense joy in welcoming both students and visitors as volunteers to SMCS and are hoping to have many more in the year to come.

Norma Ghattas



GRACE AND MIA, TWO OF OUR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS.

## CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT: 2000 YEARS OF GRANDEUR, SURVIVAL, AND HOPE

In January and February this year, I visited Egypt for the first time. I spent several weeks exploring the country from Alexandria, on the Mediterranean Sea to Abu Simbel, near Wadi Halfa at the Sudanese border. Throughout my time in the country, I experienced sensory overload, exploring tens of ancient temples and tombs, medieval mosques and labyrinths of souqs from the time of the Mamluks, along with Jewish synagogues, wide colonial boulevards, and the palaces of the deposed Egyptian Royal Family, among other things. Having been fascinated by this region from a young age, Cairo has all the destinations I love in an Arab capital city. But, beyond such awe-inspiring and grandiose monuments, my Egyptian trip was coloured so richly by the personal encounters I was fortunate to have with a range of individuals, including the winner of UNESCO's Literature Prize, Ahmad El-Shahawy, and also Sameh Mahgoub, a prominent presenter on Nile Culture TV and Director of Egypt's Poetry Foundation. In large part through these wonderful individuals, I departed Egypt with approximately 80 kilograms of books (leaving all my clothes in Cairo and taking two huge book-filled suitcases out of the country). Needless to say, my mother was shocked when I arrived home! Gifts from various Egyptian authors and poets at the famed writers' atelier in the capital, a renowned Arab institution, and also purchases from my personal 'pilgrimage' to 10 Cairene bookstores, where discussions over mint tea with shop owners often led to excessive purchases, particularly when they assured me of enviable discounts on seminal works of Arabic literature.

Aside from meeting some more high-profile personalities, my three weeks spent at the archaeological site of Beni Hassan allowed me to engage with ordinary Egyptians in the 'Saeed' region and I was suitably touched by their innate sense of hospitality and warmth to a foreigner. They displayed genuine intrigue at our work and lives in the West but also the requisite kindness and generosity a visitor to the Middle East has grown to expect. As one can imagine, my trip featured so many layers that they cannot be adequately represented in an article of this size. Thus, I will focus on my exposure to Christianity in Egypt, particularly through a Coptic lens. I cannot deny that as my EgyptAir flight from Amman, Jordan, landed in Cairo that I felt some sense of unease – not knowing exactly what to expect of the country I was about to spend a substantial period of time in. Online articles warned me of everything, from pickpockets and scammers to food poisoning and car bombs, and, while some of these may happen, particularly if you do not exercise caution, I was quite fortunate that the only negative components to my entire trip were the traffic jams at Tahrir Square, Zamalek and Souk Al Azhar – where, on occasion, we had to wait more than 1.5 hours for a taxi to arrive! The first view I had of Cairo was from our suite in the iconic Semiramis Hotel, which I was sharing with my close friend and travel companion from Australia, Hugo. Our room, which Hugo confidently insisted boasted "the best view in the whole city", had feluccas on the Nile below us delicately tracing the breadth of Cairo's skyline, with the tips of the Pyramids at Giza visible between



JACK AND HUGO AT GIZA.

the mass of concrete apartments and pollution. Prior to this trip, I had little knowledge of Christianity in Egypt, or that of any religious minority beyond Islam, for that matter. And it is rather easy to be in that position, given the prominence of the call to prayer five times a day resonating across the entire city, which gave Cairo its name, "the city of a thousand minarets".

The Copts, a religious group founded by St Mark the Evangelist around 33 AD, are often considered to be one of the indigenous groups of Egypt and one of the oldest spiritual communities in the country. Based in Alexandria, I was keen to see the Seat of the Coptic Pope, aptly called the Cathedral of St Mark, or Morcosseya. We ventured inside, whereby a sobering monument dedicated to 15 people killed in the Cathedral on Palm Sunday of 2017 reminds visitors of the precarious



## Christianity in Egypt (cont.)

conditions many Egyptian Christians face. The faces of the victims show all ages, from small children to the elderly, including members of Egypt's Security Forces. The complex in which the Cathedral is situated is both vast and ancient, so storied that some suggest Alexander the Great's Tomb lies not far below it. The Cathedral's exterior is an unassuming 1990s construction; however, the interior is resplendent and reflects well the rich Coptic history, with elements dating back to the 3rd, 6th, and 9th Centuries AD, despite having been destroyed by the French Invasion of Alexandria under Napoleon Bonaparte in the late 18th century. The crypt of the Cathedral lays claim to being the resting place of all Patriarchs of Alexandria's famed See since the time of St Mark the Evangelist. It is often told that conniving Venetian merchants visiting Alexandria in the 9th century stole the relics of St Mark to bring it to the new basilica dedicated in his honour in Venice, which I visited in 2018. The Egyptian narrative suggests that St Mark's body is now spread throughout Alexandria (where his head is kept), Cairo and Venice. Either way, St Mark is known to have been posthumously transferred around the Mediterranean for a number of centuries, with the Vatican repatriating some relics to Egypt as recently as 1968.

In Cairo and Alexandria, just about every Christian denomination is represented in the churches and monasteries. A simple walk beyond Talaat Harb Square in Downtown Cairo (*Wasat Al-Balad*, in Arabic) you can find Armenian, Franciscan, Greek Orthodox and Coptic churches. One day in Alexandria, we decided to take the opportunity to visit a number of places of worship. Starting at St Catherine's Roman Catholic Cathedral, with its stunning baroque façade, we moved on to the Melkite Cathedral (directly adjacent) and then the Anglican Church, the sole building to have survived the 10 hour long British naval bombardment of the city in 1882. The Anglican Church's design is very unique, having been conceived in South London in the mid-1800s by an individual who would later join Lepsius' great Prussian expedition to Egypt and Nubia (Sudan) and it combines many architectural traditions. Prior to the construction of Alexandria's Anglican Church, in other cities like Istanbul and Jerusalem, Anglican Churches were

only attached to British Consulates and not on their own land.

This small, spontaneous pilgrimage to Alexandria's churches ended with a visit to the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Evangelismos, a huge and spectacular edifice which has been fully restored, and also to the Greek Monastery of Saint Savvas. It was in this Monastery, established in the 4th century AD, that a large bell from centuries past sits curiously in the front courtyard. Upon asking the reason for this, apparently it was "too big and heavy" to fit in the tower built for it! In the Monastery, we were greeted by the charismatic priest who could not understand my broken Arabic or French because he was a Greek-born Greek-speaker from Patras. It appears that all Greek Orthodox Churches in Egypt are exclusively serviced by strictly Greek clergy.

Christianity in Egypt is so complex and would need a lifetime to understand it properly. But it is one country where religious history is so accessible, so tangible. The mosaics of the Hanging Church in Cairo portray very beautifully the Holy Family's exile to Egypt by King Herod. In a concerted effort to avoid being spotted by Herod's strategically placed spies, the Holy Family moved around no less than 26 destinations throughout Egypt. This significant event is detailed in Matthew 2:13 of the Bible, which reads "...an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'" In recent years, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities even created the Holy Family Trail, which is a pilgrimage path to these sites (using the exact trail devised by Theophilus I of Alexandria in the 5th century), spanning from the Nile Delta to Upper Egypt. The Hanging Church, while it did not have any direct links with the Holy Family, is among



JACK IN THE HANGING CHURCH IN OLD CAIRO.

the oldest churches in all of Egypt, and was certainly my favourite. The intricate wooden marquetry and precise mosaic work was deeply moving. The 110 icons which gracefully adorn the walls and ebony and ivory iconostasis inside are up to 1300 years old and in the unique Coptic style, with exaggerated eyes and features – a completely different style to the Byzantine Liturgical Tradition I know here in Australia. From all windows in the Church, you have a perfect view of the Roman Fortress on which it is constructed, speaking to the multidimensional nature of Old Cairo's religious and historical tapestry. The next-door Coptic Museum is one of the best cultural institutions in all of Egypt and is undoubtedly worth visiting.



A TREASURE IN THE COPTIC MUSEUM, CAIRO.

A stone's throw away from the Hanging Church is Saints Sergius and Bacchus Coptic Church. Unlike the former, this Church (also known as Abu Serga) is said to have a direct association with the Holy Family during their three and a half year stay in Egypt. The current Church site dates to the 4th century, with subsequent restorations throughout Byzantine and Medieval periods. Visitors to Abu Serga flock there for one reason: to go into a subterranean cavern and water well in which the Holy Family is said to have rested with baby Jesus. The crypt is 10 meters deep and is often flooded when the Nile rises. It is quite a moving moment for believers of the Christian faith when you have the ability to enter close contact with locations which were so significant in the life of Jesus Christ.

To conclude, my time in Egypt was quite unforgettable. I was afforded a range of opportunities which gave me a wider perspective, increased knowledge, and appreciation for all periods of Egyptian history. It is a country that I would love to go back to, with so many other special places I have yet to explore. I express my gratitude to all the people who helped make the trip extremely memorable.

Jack Bettar

## GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

### The power of one: Michael and Rosemary Suliman

Michael was born and baptised in El Obeid, Sudan, in the Melkite Church. Rosemary was born and baptised in the Roman Catholic Church, Khartoum, Sudan. They both received their primary and secondary education in the Catholic missionary schools; Comboni College for boys (CCK) and Sisters School for girls. The 'Legion of Mary' was the main activity that kept the youth involved in the Catholic Church instilling in them a sense of leadership, belonging and service to the Church and community. Michael chose to pursue a missionary life with the Comboni Missionaries and was sent to their seminary/monastery in England. There he spent the next seven years (1962 to 1969) until it was time to take permanent vows and commence steps for ordination to the priesthood. However, Michael felt that he was not ready for that. He returned to the Sudan and started to experience life outside the monastery. At that time, there was no Melkite Priest in the Sudan and the Church was closed. However, he volunteered in the Roman Catholic Church to implement their Mass in the 'vernacular'; i.e., Arabic and English from the original Latin. He also helped to train teachers of religion in government schools. At the same time, he was exploring different career options. He finally settled as a full-time teacher of mathematics at Comboni College Khartoum.

Meanwhile, after High School Rosemary progressed to the University of Khartoum graduating with BA (Hons) in Philosophy. She also experienced a variety of work positions during and after finishing her degree; eventually gaining a permanent position as the English language teacher (years 7 to 12) for the Greek Community School of Khartoum. She was the only person in the entire school who did not speak Greek.

Until mid-1970 Michael and Rosemary were not aware of the existence of each other. However, they both had experiences that led to a converging path. They frequented the same Roman Catholic churches and were members of the Catholic Club of Khartoum and other social entities.

The most significant activity was joining the senior 'praesidium' (group or action committee) of the Legion of Mary,

which was a mixed group of young women and men over the age of 18. They had a weekly 2-hour meeting of prayer (the Rosary), spiritual talk, reports on charitable works and other relevant issues. At the end of the meeting members volunteered, or were assigned randomly in pairs, to do 2 hours of charitable work in the community for the next week. There was a wide variety of works; however, there were three activities that were unpopular or considered difficult by some members of the Legion of Mary:

- a) Visiting the centre for the blind and reading to them; these people were semi-isolated from society and sometimes they just enjoyed a chat with the group;
- b) Visiting the Orphanage and helping the nurses (ten or more babies under age 2 per nurse) which was emotionally very challenging for the babies, nurses and visitors. The nurses had no time to cuddle or carry the babies. Feeding them and changing their nappies was a never-ending task. Some of the 2 year olds, who had not yet learned to walk, started to recognise group members and waited for their visit to cuddle or carry them.
- c) Visiting families with severe mental disability who were rejected and abandoned by their community. Their children were neglected and needed adult interaction.

Michael and Rosemary believe that it was through Divine Providence that they seemed to be assigned or volunteered for these specific works together. They had the same outlook and desire to serve Christ in the needs of these people. Sometimes they even did two of these tasks in the same week when possible. In this way they met week after week and the relationship developed into something more personal such as going out for breakfast after Sunday Mass or going to the movies in the evenings.

In the Catholic Club Michael was trusted by both the management and the young men to intervene in their multiple disputes around their sports structure and organisation. He took responsibility for the basketball



MICHAEL AND ROSEMARY BY THE BEACH AT SUNSET.

team and they organised themselves to eventually become champions of international repute in the Sudan and the Middle East.

Another activity in the Club was a weekly Bible study/discussion initiated and conducted by Michael. This started as a small group which quickly grew to an attendance of over 100 young men and women; many of whom were young Muslim friends who were curious about the roots of our Christian Catholic faith and traditions.

The relationship between Rosemary and Michael quickly developed into a marriage proposition. They got engaged on New Year's Day 1972 at the Catholic Club Khartoum (attended by over 500 guests and four priests); got married at St Matthew's Cathedral in June of the same year followed by a large wedding combined with farewell reception; and migrated to Australia on the next day.

1972 was a very significant year; it marked the start of a new phase in their lives. Up until this point the Legion of Mary had been the leading influence in their lives under the direction of Sr Fidelis, Sr Maria and Fr Antonini. These three people had guided them so far, but in Sydney they found the Legion meetings were held in the city during the day and it was not possible for them to join due to their work commitments. They both started teaching in Catholic Secondary Schools in the western



## Getting to know one another (cont.)

suburbs of Sydney. From the very start they became aware of two issues that concerned them. One was that most students were not comfortable about, and were reluctant to acknowledge, their migrant backgrounds. Moreover, there was a confusion of students and parents about having two languages to deal with. At that time, having two languages was considered a disadvantage by Australian society in general, unless the second language was a 'prestige' language such as French or German.

Rosemary found herself faced with these issues of migration and language that had an impact on students' achievement. With this in mind she started implementing small steps to improve the situation as a teacher of English and History to Years 7–10 students. The classes were made up of approximately 80% of students from different language backgrounds, but the majority were of Arab (Lebanese) background. Rosemary decided to teach them Arabic. This was met with unexpected success and she was one of the first to teach Arabic in Australian Schools. This developed into many projects with the students and the parents. The most important was the development of a complete programme to teach the Arabic Language and culture from Kindergarten to Year 12, which required the writing of books and teaching aids suitable to the Australian context.

In the late 1970's Rosemary took up lecturing positions at the University of Sydney and at Western Sydney University while at the same time studying to upgrade her qualifications, obtaining a Diploma in Education (1976), Masters of Education (1990) and Doctor of Philosophy in Education (2001). Meantime she brought up three children while lecturing full-time at the University of Western Sydney. She was guided in her work and studies by a strong urge that her students have to get out of the cycle of disadvantage, economically, socially and educationally. Through all of her research projects and teaching Rosemary has been committed to serving the community. Her work encompassed students, teachers and parents in Government, Catholic and Independent Schools across different religious backgrounds. Her main objective has been to overcome the

disadvantages hindering students' academic achievement. Her work at the University of Western Sydney allowed her to pursue a number of projects to achieve this. She taught there for 35 years, and enjoyed the success of the many projects she implemented in schools.

She received a number of awards:

- The School of Languages and Linguistics Award for best Community Project, (2005);
- The Vice Chancellor's Excellence Award for Social Justice, (2004);
- The Arab Women Award for Outstanding Contribution to Arabic Language (2000);
- Portrait displayed in Parliament House as one of fifteen Arabic background people who made significant contribution to Australian society (Marcelle Mansour, 1998, Shifting Waves Exhibition.)
- "For three decades Rosemary Suliman has been a leading light to alleviating educational disadvantage among Sydney's Arab youth through sensitive and well-grounded programs" (Prof. Stuart Campbell, Acting Dean, University of Western Sydney, 2001)

The other issue of concern was the semi-chaos in the field of religious education (R.E.). Until the late 1960's – early 70's the main teachers of R.E. were the religious brothers and sisters who devised their own programmes in the schools. However, there was a looming crisis of religious personnel since many brothers and sisters were leaving the religious orders and their numbers were shrinking rapidly. R.E. became a 'filler' subject to complete the teaching load of lay staff members.

Michael took on a position of mathematics and R.E. teacher in a boys' school, opting to choose more of the lower level academic classes that other teachers did not want. He helped these students understand that their personal worth was more important than academic achievement. He was very reluctant to 'discipline' the boys by using the cane and the leather strap. He soon shifted to teaching girls where physical punishment was not practised. Moving through a couple of schools, at one of them he suggested substituting a 'pastoral policy' team based on Gospel values instead of a 'discipline' person. This change in school structure became

evident in a vast improvement in school morale and student behaviour. Very quickly, the 'pastoral' concept became popular throughout the Catholic Education system in the late 1970's replacing the 'discipline' concept.

In 1983 Michael took up the position of REC (Religious Education Coordinator) at a Catholic school fully administered by lay persons. In the absence of a R.E. curriculum, Michael picked up a religious education programme imported from France by an Australian nun and changed it to suit our school structures and style, implementing it for 6 years with great success. Throughout his teaching career, he was studying part-time and by correspondence (before the age of internet or computers) to upgrade and strengthen his qualifications.

After 22 years in teaching Michael decided to switch careers to something which he considered less demanding. In 1989 an opportunity came up in 'financial planning' which at the time required minimal training. However, in the early 1990's the government started regulating the industry requiring continuous study and upgrading of qualifications. He decided to go for the highest designation of Certified Financial Planning (CFP) recognised internationally.

All this time, Michael was active in the parishes of the Roman Catholic church as an elected member of the local parish council and as an acolyte, visiting the elderly and the sick and conducting 'communion service' when rostered. Often, on Sundays after Mass, he took the entire family with him to visit the housebound elderly and give them Holy Communion. Michael and Rosemary knew of only one Melkite church in Sydney (St Michael's) and they considered it too far away for regular Sunday Liturgy.

In the late 1990's a combination of several events led to Bishop Issam Darwich catching up with Michael and inviting him to join the Eparchial (advisory) Council made up of 36 members. It was this council that, after an extensive discussion and debate, encouraged the bishop to purchase the property at Greenacre. From that time, they became regular members of St John's Melkite parish.

After studying continually for over 30 years, it became a habit and in 2001,

## Getting to know one another (cont.)

having no more studies, Michael became bored and decided to join a group at the church in 2002 to refresh his theology. He found out that the study class was discontinued. When he approached Bishop Issam about it, his immediate response was a challenge "what can you do about it?" Three days later Michael came back with a programme put together with a team of friends from the parish and that was the birth of St Gregory's Centre that started in 2003. Weekly classes were organised in 6-week modules delivered by the Bishop and Melkite priests of Sydney and other priests. Attendance ranged from 15 to over 40 persons per night. Michael put the resources of his business to service this and other projects in the church. This continued until 2009 when for various reasons it was decided with the bishop's permission to take a break for one year.

At the end of 2010 Michael retired from business and donated his entire office furniture (boardroom table and chairs, five office desks with cupboards and shelves, etc.) to the eparchy at St

John's, where they were needed.

The Bishop insisted that Michael become a sub deacon, and about six months later called him to the full diaconate, and ordained him on January 30, 2011. Before the end of the year Bishop Issam, upon transfer to the eparchy of Zahle in Lebanon, was succeeded by Bishop Robert Rabbat. Michael continued to serve as a deacon in the parish of St John's, but he was looking for more. He joined the National Association of Deacons as one of only two or three Eastern deacons. In 2014 he dedicated his Lenten fasting and prayer to discern his future mission in the Eparchy. Immediately after Pascha (Easter) he approached Bishop Robert to coordinate the recruitment, organisation and formation of men called to the diaconate under the guidance of Fr Ibrahim Sultan. The bishop approved and this is his current mission in the Church.

More recently, Rosemary was looking for a 'work' that brings back into our lives the spirit of the Legion of Mary that we grew up with. St Michael's Community

Services (SMCS) seems to be a great fit. "So, we have joined in a small way as much as we are physically able."

In the words of Rosemary and Michael: "These have been only some highlights of our mission, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement and example of our blessed Mother and the saints, of serving our Lord Jesus Christ in our sisters and brothers in the church and the wider community. We are grateful that the Lord has brought us together and journeyed with us to accomplish what we have done. Praise and Glory to Him."

### How you can be a part of St Michael's Meals

- Pray for us
- Become a member
- Prepare meals
- Join the team in distributing food and clothing
- Donate money (donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible)

## SPIRITUAL CORNER

### • To Be and To Do: Finding Spiritual balance

"You should be less concerned with what you ought to do and focus more on what you ought to be." - Fr. Anthony De Mello, SJ

In the realm of spirituality, the profound distinction between "To Be" and "To Do" lies at the heart of many philosophical and religious teachings. As Christians on our spiritual journeys, understanding this concept can be particularly valuable.

#### • The Essence of "To Be"

"To Be" represents the core of our existence. It delves deep into the very essence of our being and our connection to the Divine. "To Be" is often associated with recognising the fundamental worth of each person as a child of God. It calls for self-examination, self-awareness, and understanding one's true nature as a spiritual being. This aspect of spirituality involves practices like prayer, meditation, and contemplation.

#### • The Significance of "To Do"

On the other hand, "To Do" focuses on actions and deeds. It's about how we manifest our beliefs and spirituality in the world through our actions. This can encompass acts of kindness, charity, and living in accordance with one's faith. Good works are important as means to express one's faith and love for others.

#### • The Balance between "To Be" and "To Do"

Achieving a harmonious balance between "To Be" and "To Do" is where the essence of spirituality lies. It's not just about passive contemplation or active service but integrating both aspects into our daily lives. Genuine guidance toward this equilibrium can be transformative.

Let us not hesitate to engage in practices that nurture our spiritual selves, such as attending Holy Liturgies, participating in the sacraments, and reflecting on Scripture. At the same time, we must translate these inner experiences into acts of kindness and service to others. This could involve community outreach programs, volunteering, or simply being a supportive presence in the lives of those in need.

#### • Reflection and Growth

To foster spiritual growth, it's essential for us to periodically reflect on our lives. Engaging in self-examination, we can ask questions like, "Am I living in accordance with my faith?", "Am I embodying the values I hold dear?", and "Am I making a positive impact on the lives of others?" These reflections can help us realign our "To Be" and "To Do" aspects.

#### • Conclusion

In the journey of spirituality, the interplay between "To Be" and "To Do" is a profound and lifelong exploration. Let us strive to understand the balance between who we are and what we do. By manifesting our faith through actions, we can put ourselves on the right and unique path to spiritual fulfillment.

Fr Gerges Al Butros

## MOTHER TERESA AND MARY MACKILLOP: INSPIRATIONS FOR SELFLESS SERVICE AT SMCS

In the records of human history, few figures shine as brightly as Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Mary MacKillop. These two remarkable women, born in different parts of the world and in different centuries, shared a common thread of unwavering faith, compassion, and a relentless dedication to serving the most vulnerable in society. As we embrace their legacies, we find their spirits resonating deeply with our mission at SMCS.

### Mother Teresa: An icon of selfless devotion



Born Anjeze Gonxhe Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Macedonia, in 1910, Mother Teresa felt a divine calling from a young age. At 18, she joined the Sisters of Loreto, eventually moving to Calcutta, India, where she taught at St Mary's School and later established the Missionaries of Charity. With an almost unparalleled depth of empathy, she embraced the suffering and dying, offering them comfort, love and dignity. Her teachings remind us that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a profound impact on the lives of others. As we work together to feed the needy and the underprivileged, we can draw strength from her words: "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving" and her message to "spread love wherever you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier".

Known as the "Saint of the Gutters", Mother Teresa's commitment to the impoverished and suffering in Calcutta is legendary. Her devotion to the "poorest of the poor" earned her global recognition and numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. While addressing the guests, in Stockholm, she urged them to get to know the poor, look them in the eyes and give

them a smile, "for the smile is the beginning of love. We all have Christ with us, Christ in our hearts, Christ in the poor that we meet, Christ in the smile that we give and the smile that we receive". A professor from the USA who was visiting Mother Teresa in Calcutta asked her if she was married? To which she replied: "yes, and I find it very difficult to smile at Jesus because he can be very demanding sometimes. This is where love comes from. It can be demanding, yet we give it to God with joy!" Her canonisation as St Teresa of Calcutta in 2016 cemented her place in history as a symbol of compassion and selflessness. The Missionaries of Charity, the order she founded, operates now in over 130 countries, carrying on her mission to alleviate human suffering.

### St Mary MacKillop: A pioneer of education and care



Born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1842, a time when education and social services were scarce in the country, particularly for the poor and isolated. Recognising the need for education, particularly in rural areas, Mary co-founded the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in 1866, and later the Sisters of St Joseph, focusing on providing education to the poor indigenous children. This marked the beginning of her lifelong dedication to the welfare of the less fortunate.

Through her pioneering efforts, Mary MacKillop established schools, orphanages and shelters in the remote corners of Australia, catering to impoverished communities. Her motto was: "Never see a need without doing something about it". Her unwavering commitment to social justice and compassion earned her the title of the "People's Saint".

Mary MacKillop's journey from humble beginnings to sainthood is a testament to her exceptional dedication. In 2010, she was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI, becoming the first Australian

Saint. Her canonisation reaffirmed her status as a shining light on the power of selflessness and the transformative impact of small acts of kindness.

Mary MacKillop's values of compassion, empathy and unwavering dedication deeply resonate with the mission of St Michael's Community Services. Our Charity, which feeds the homeless and vulnerable, is driven by the belief that everyone deserves nourishment and care, regardless of their circumstances. Mary's legacy serves as a guiding light, reminding us that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a profound difference. As her story intertwines with ours, we find ourselves inspired to bring light to the lives of the homeless and vulnerable, echoing her eternal message of love and solidarity.

As we proudly recognise Mother Teresa and St Mary MacKillop as co-patrons of our Charitable Organisation, SMCS, we unite their legacies in a symphony of compassion. These two remarkable women, though separated by continents and eras, share a resounding message – that the power of love and generosity transcends all barriers.

Their teachings implore us to see that each act of kindness, every meal we provide, and every hand we extend has the potential to change lives. Let us, in the spirit of our co-patrons, continue to sow the seeds of compassion and create a world where hunger and isolation are replaced by nourishment and community.

Roda Kanawat

*"Gracious and merciful God,*

*We lift our hearts in gratitude for the examples of love, compassion and selflessness Mother Teresa and St Mary MacKillop have shown us. We thank you for the inspiration we have found in their lives, dedicated to serving the marginalised and spreading the message of love and kindness.*

*Lord, grant us the strength to follow their example of unwavering faith, boundless love and tireless service to those in need. Help us to see the divine in every person we encounter and to respond with the same warmth and generosity that characterised the lives of Mother Teresa and St Mary MacKillop.*

*Bless all those who continue to carry out the mission of love and mercy in our world, and may their efforts be a testament to the enduring impact of a life lived in service to others.*

*We offer this prayer in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to love one another as He has loved us. Amen."*



## A VIGIL FOR PEACE

On Wednesday, October 25, 2023, a "Vigil for Besieged Gaza" was held at St Michael's Cathedral. This Vigil was well attended, not only by parishioners, but many from the wider community, including Shia and Alawite Muslims. The aim of the Vigil was to gather for an earnest and peaceful act of solidarity with the 2 million Palestinians suffering under indiscriminate bombardment and a siege in the Gaza Strip. It was strictly non-partisan to ensure that the focus was placed on the humanitarian cost of war and the recent tragedies of the hospitals, schools and places of worship which were destroyed while innocent people sought refuge. Starting at 8pm, after the Wednesday food run, the Cathedral was dim, illuminated only by candlelight. Of great significance, the most senior Shia Muslim cleric in Australia, His Eminence Sheikh Kamal Mousselmani, the Head of the Supreme Shia Council, joined us with a moving address on the situation overseas and also an Islamic prayer. Christian prayers were led by Fr Geroges Al Butros and a special visitor, Fr Dave Smith, from the Anglican Church. The interfaith nature of the event was a beautiful manifestation of peace in action and had a unifying impact!

The prayers were followed with a number of secular reflections and messages. The first was by South African writer Cecile Yazbek, who aptly reminded us that "In today's world, fear can silence us, grief can silence us. It's time for us to find our voice. We are not maimed when we can hold a pen, we are not poisoned, because we have refused to swallow hate...". As she was unable to be with us on the night, it was read by Marlene Obeid. Jasmine Saadat implored us to remember those who are displaced, grieving, injured or deprived of necessities including food and water. The next message was authored and presented by Sam Saadat, who emphasised that one must "repay evil with blessing" (1 Peter 3:9-11) and also a letter from Imam Ali to Malik al-Ashtar, a Governor of Islamic Egypt, which movingly said "...remember that the people are of two kinds, either they are your brothers in religion or your equals in humanity". As an interlude, Sarah Saadat read Mahmoud Darwish's poem "The War Will End" which poignantly treats themes including betrayal, loss, reconciliation, peace, and the need for accountability. A short



PRAYING TOGETHER. FROM LEFT: JACK BETTAR, FR DAVE SMITH, HIS EMINENCE SHEIKH MOUSSELMANI, FR GERGES AL BUTROS, SUBDEACON MAGDI ZARZOUR.

video was then played with Fairuz's 'Ya Rouboua Biladi' setting a mournful yet contemplative tone to photos from the towns and cities of the Holy Land taken in the last century – deliberately selected to represent the cultural and religious tapestry of this sacred place.

As the Melkite Heritage Display at the Cathedral is privileged to host the first-class relics of St Mariam Baouardy (the only Melkite saint), Subdeacon Mark Scotto di Perta led us in prayer asking for the intercession of St Mariam to remember her people, the Palestinians, and her homeland. Subdeacon Magdi Zarzour also referred to Pope Francis' prayer for peace. Wearing black and white keffiyehs, a garment synonymous with Palestine, attendees then lined up to light candles for a moment of silent remembrance. Some were feeling so inspired that they shared with us their raw, emotional testimonies – including one lady who handed Fr Geroges a paper of names for deceased relatives. She has lost, to date, more than 25 members of her family and friends in Gaza. It would be remiss of us not to

acknowledge that situations abroad have very real impacts on those around us in a local context. Roda Kanawati read the text while we held our candles: "...In lighting these candles, we also shine a light on the shared humanity that unites us all. Regardless of our backgrounds, beliefs, or affiliations, we can all agree on the sanctity of human life, the dignity of every individual, and the principle of peace."

As the Vigil concluded with a short address by Naguib Kanawati, we were all feeling spiritually charged. The Catholic Weekly's photographer, Giovanni Portelli, who provided us with a most evocative selection of photographs, remarked to me that he had "never seen something of this nature before". And that sentiment was shared by everyone present. We can only pray that the conflict can be resolved in a just manner so that the senseless loss of life does not continue, and that genuine peace and mutual understanding may prevail.

Jack Bettar



LEFT. PEACE IN ACTION: SHEIKH MOUSSELMANI EMBRACES FR GERGES IN AN ACT OF LOVE AND SOLIDARITY. RIGHT. A MOMENT OF PROFOUND REFLECTION BEFORE THE CANDLES LIT BY VIGIL ATTENDEES.





## KITCHEN CORNER

### Antoinette Ajaka: Ladies Fingers

When Antoinette Ajaka was asked to contribute a recipe to the newsletter, she chose Ladies' Fingers, which she aptly described as "very simple but very delicious". And so, we invite our readers to make this delectable pastry and share it with family and friends..



ANTOINETTE OUTSIDE A NAMESAKE RESTAURANT IN LONDON.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 kg minced beef
- 500 g onion, sliced into small pieces.
- 3 tbsp. pine nuts
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice (baharat)
- 1 box filo pastry

#### Method:

1. In a frypan, fry the beef for around 10 minutes before adding the onion and cooking them together for another 10 minutes.
2. Add the 'baharat' spice mix and salt to taste before letting the mixture cool down.
3. Cut the filo pastry in half, before unfolding the individual sheets.
4. Then layer two pastry sheets at a time and fill it with some of the beef mixture and roll.
5. Continue until all the mixture has been used up.
6. Place the rolls on a tray and spray it with oil.
7. Put the tray in the oven on 130 degrees Celsius until they are golden brown.
8. Serve it with your favourite salad.

Simply delicious!

## REFLECTING ON OLD AGE AND RETIREMENT

In May 2023, I became 82 years old while still in employment, probably the oldest in the organisation. I decided to retire and February 28, 2024 will be my last day at work, at least the last day of paid employment. I have been in the same profession, university teaching and research, for a very long time, exactly 50 years, and time has come to stop or to change direction. Gradually I felt that the generation gap between the students and me has become too wide, more than 60 years, so five years ago I negotiated with Macquarie University a new contract to continue research, but no teaching. It suited them, but also gave me the chance to do what I love most and to plan my life after Macquarie.

For some individuals, retirement can be a dream and for others a nightmare, it all depends on circumstances, interests and planning, but the worst is to feel no sense of purpose. Some people see that old age is usually associated with losses; memory loss, hearing loss, etc., and sadly perhaps the loss of freedom and independence. Yet the truth is that old age and retirement frequently present an opportunity to have more time for leisure activities such as travelling, learning a new hobby, taking classes, or simply time to spend with friends and loved ones and to do what one always wanted. It all depends on how the extra time one has is used that makes it special. One may even

follow dreams that for years he might have put on hold. Many people also find retirement as an opportunity to direct their energy towards bettering the society, thus volunteering to help the less fortunate.

Personally, I have an optimistic outlook on old age. I think that it brings with it many gains; more knowledge, experience, wisdom, understanding and often financial freedom. Most importantly, growing old is usually associated with having grandchildren, one of the joys of life. It is true that there may be more health issues, but poor health can also affect much younger individuals, and medicine is constantly finding solutions to dealing with medical problems of old age. Therefore, age is really just a number, not necessarily an indication of what we can or cannot do. Older people are even learning new technology such as computers, smart phones and now artificial intelligence. True that all these seem easier for younger people, but older ones are catching up, even if it is more challenging for them.

After a long journey with younger age and hard work, I look back with satisfaction on my life achievements, but still, I am happy to retire. Do I regret that time has passed, and do I wish if I was again at the start of this long journey... the answer is certainly not.

Naguib Kanawati

### ANXIETY

Tree shadows flicker, fear creeps.  
A shadow separates, threatening,  
It slithers on the wall, transforming.  
I cannot move. Paralysed.  
There's no escape.

It grows, consuming. Dominating,  
Nothing but me and the shadow.  
Soundless screams leave my body,  
voice lost.

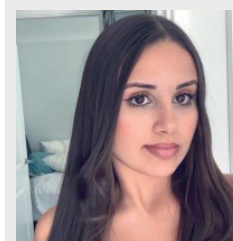
It grabs me, pulls me, traps me.  
There's no escape.

The more it consumes the tighter it  
clenches,  
Stifles, chokes, suffocates me.  
My heart weeps. Lungs, parched,  
cracked, ache with every struggling  
breath.

Eyes burning, raw and heavy. Mouth  
dry and voice lost.  
There's no escape.

Exhaustion takes control. Numbness  
flows through my veins.  
The air thick, disappearing. Erratic  
thumping against my chest,  
Darkness devours my vision, pressure  
builds,

There's no escape. Jessica Karame



Jess' poem was written during the dark days of lockdown. She is now happily working towards completing her psychology degree at Macquarie University.

## THIS YEAR IN EVENTS

How vibrant is our community!

### Christmas in July

Our "Christmas in July" special gathering for seniors and friends was an incredible heart-warming and delightful event! Starting with the Holy Liturgy adds a meaningful and spiritual touch to the occasion, allowing everyone to come together in reflection and celebration. Following the Mass with an outing to the Tennis Club in Rockdale was a fantastic idea. It's a great way to continue the festivities and offer a change of scenery, providing a special lunch definitely pleased the attendees, giving them a chance to enjoy delicious food in good company and incorporating fun activities. This created a joyful atmosphere and strengthened the bonds of camaraderie, including games, music, singing and even a few light-hearted contests which encouraged everyone to interact and have a good time. Overall, this event seems to have successfully combined elements of spirituality, togetherness, good food and enjoyable undertakings to create a beautiful environment. Such gatherings are essential for fostering a sense of community and ensuring that seniors and friends feel valued and connected.

### Riverwood outing

On July 15, a group of 55 volunteers, who regularly cook for the homeless, recently gathered for a special lunch event at GAGE Dining and Co, Riverwood, to thank them for their services to our Charity. We cannot express enough our gratitude for their incredible dedication and selfless service to the underprivileged. Each week, it is a result of their collective willingness to give a helping hand in cooking nutritious and delicious homemade meals that we have been able to bring about positive change in the lives of many individuals. Let us continue to work hand-in-hand, united by our shared goal of creating a better world, to increase our outreach to as many people as we can.

Below are some testimonies from those who attended on the day:

*...I am truly humbled by your passion and commitment. Your genuine care and concern for the underprivileged whom Jesus himself refer to as His "brothers and sisters" reflect the essence of true compassion. By placing your whole heart into your actions, you uplift those in need and bring hope to their lives. Fr Geroges Al Butros*

*We had a blessed time meeting and catching up, all the drops that form an ocean under the inspiring leadership of Abouna Geroges and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Dn Michael and Rosemary Suliman*

*Thank you so much, Abouna, for starting this amazing work. Through your hard work, this community has achieved these amazing results. Laudie Nakhle*

*Wonderful afternoon! Enjoyed every moment of it. Salwa Kaikati*

*Great afternoon spent with a great bunch of people. May God bless your efforts now and always. Samira Haddad*

*One word that summarises all our collective efforts is TOGETHERNESS. Thanks, Abouna, for keeping us together and for showing us the true meaning of unconditional love and compassion. Roda Kanawati*

A final word from our esteemed president:

*Thank you all for attending and for your input. The atmosphere was amazing and we definitely felt the presence of God and His Love in this gathering... God willing, we will have many more days like it. Randa Zakarian*



OUR SMCS GET-TOGETHER AT GAGE DINING & CO., RIVERWOOD.

### Falafel Day combined with the Garage Sale

On Sunday, August 6, our congregation came together for a memorable church activity that left a mark on our hearts and in our community. The Ladies' Fraternity showcased not only their cooking skills but also their devotion to the welfare of the church, preparing delicious falafel sandwiches to fundraise for our Cathedral. The event was a splendid combination of fellowship and gastronomy. As for the Garage Sale, it became evident that it was more than a commercial exchange. The consignment of clothes was offered by Mosaic Group, whereby we were fortunate to have an appealing selection of brand-new men's and ladies' wear. All of the funds raised from the sales of garments, went directly to St Michael's Community Services to contribute to the running of our Charity.



AN IMPRESSIVE SET UP OF BEAUTIFUL OUTFITS.

### Bunnings Day

Amid the bustling movements of Bunnings Alexandria, St Michael's Community Services organised a successful sausage sizzle and sweet delights to fundraise for the homeless and underprivileged on June 24. The event took many months of preparation, including the logistics of setting up two stalls and preparing a volunteer roster. The day started early at 7:30am and did not finish until after 4pm. Naturally, we were all



## This year in events (cont.)

quite exhausted, but left feeling fulfilled after such an amazing day. We were quite fortunate to have so many of our volunteers who showed a willingness to help on the day at different periods, reminding us of the good that can be achieved when we come together for a worthy cause. In addition, at least 10 of our highly talented home cooks, offered an exquisite assortment of biscuits, cakes and chocolates to be sold to Bunnings customers. A few of the Bunnings workers commented that we had the best and one of the most highly successful fundraising days at their location and were willing to welcome us back in the near future. As a result of this event, we raised a total of \$3,345.00.



OUR DELICIOUS CAKE STAND AT BUNNINGS ALEXANDRIA WITH  
ANTWANETTE, MONI, RANDA AND NORMA.



ABOUNA GERGES AND OUR YOUNG  
COOK ON THE DAY, EVIE!

## IN LOVING MEMORY ...

Forever in our hearts

### Gabrielle Carey (1959–2023) A Spiritual Quest

This year Australia lost a wonderful author, in the most tragic circumstances. Gabrielle Carey's works of memoir, literary studies and fiction are a distinguished oeuvre. In May 2023 Gabrielle Carey took her own life. Several obituaries have appeared. Few people seem to be aware that she was a convert to Catholicism. Her writings have a strong theme of a spiritual quest. When she became a Catholic, she was all the more committed to her writing: 'I felt that above all else God was a creator, so that what followed was that if we were to do our holy duty, we must create.' Catholics should feel proud that Gabrielle Carey was part of their community, and no doubt continues to be so now that she has departed to the eternal world. Her faith did not fail her, but her strength gave out, and depression is a most serious illness.

### Elias El-Badawi (1940–2023)

Vale my dear friend Elias El-Badawi



Forever I will miss Elias' greeting 'Keefak Akh Naguib'. We were indeed like brothers; we spoke frequently at length on the phone and met regularly every Sunday at St Michael's Cathedral. Elias knew how much I love olives, so every year when he pickled the crop from his olive tree, he used to tell Antoinette 'Do not forget Akh Naguib when you put the olives in jars'. I felt so close to Elias and his passing while I was away in Egypt was a terrible shock to me. Elias was a very special person, combining gentleness, strength, wisdom, dignity, class, and unwavering love, support and commitment for St Michael's Cathedral. He was one of the main pillars of our beloved church, which he certainly considered as his home,

and cared about its maintenance, appearance and finance. Elias was constantly preoccupied with anything connected with the cathedral and has never spared the effort or cost to undertake any needed repairs or work in general. Despite his frail health during the last few months, he organised and participated in works done to the front fence and the façade of the cathedral.

Elias was the first to arrive on Sunday to make sure everything is in order for the service, and was the last to leave. He even never changed his seat, to the left of the altar, next to the door of the sacristy. He took great interest in the church's activities and its community at large, and even in his last days, he used to ask Antoinette to call and enquire about anyone whom he knew was unwell or who did not attend Sunday mass. My dear 'Akh Elie', as I used to call you, you are greatly missed and will remain in our hearts until we meet again.

Naguib Kanawati

We remember Dad as a loving Husband, Father, Brother, and Grandfather; the rock foundation our family was built on, through his hard work and devotion to family and friends and his unbreakable faith in God. On behalf of my mother, Antoinette, brother, David, and all the El-Badawi family, we sincerely thank Bishop Robert Rabbat, Father Gerages Al Butros and Father Ibrahim Sultan along with the entire St Michael's Cathedral community for all their support throughout this most difficult time.

Paul El-Badawi

## READERS' FEEDBACK

### Friendship. Warmth. Home

I am able to say that on my visits to St Michael's Cathedral, these are the emotions that strike me. Living in Greater Western Sydney, I journey to the Cathedral in Darlington on only a handful of occasions throughout the year. On my visits, I admire a special fellowship that is truly alive there. Fellowship is an important part of faith. It unites us in support of one another with the comfort of knowing that we are not alone. This fellowship from within the Cathedral's walls is also extended beyond them from St Michael's Community Services through to the Friendship Group, and so much more. This is the Liturgy at work! As somewhat an outsider looking in, St Michael helps to show us exactly who God is.

Mark Scotto

Melkite Subdeacon living in  
Greater Western Sydney

What a delightful issue! Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. Below is my feedback.

Thank you for a rich edition of Together. It filled me with hope for the future and gratitude to The Lord. Hope inspired by the young generation represented by Jack Bettar on the board of directors and Evangelos and other young volunteers actively participating in SMCS. Indeed, a beacon of hope seeing the young generation enjoying, giving of themselves and in true discipleship roles inviting other young friends and relatives to participate.

One cannot but reflect and marvel at how God blessed SMCS. Who would have imagined that while many businesses have folded under the current challenging economic environment, with God's grace, SMCS has flourished and grown to reach out not only to the needy at Central Station as it started but also at Martin Place and recently with a new dedicated team at Liverpool Park and currently is responding to international calls for support.

To me, this success is the words of the New Testament coming alive, with Jesus asking his disciples to bring what they have to feed the crowds and for him to bless it and multiply it to exceed what the crowds need. Undoubtedly Jesus doesn't want us to give because He needs what we have but because in giving, our ability to love grows and we are rewarded with a fulfilling joy and a grateful heart.

Emily Latif

[www.smcs.org.au](http://www.smcs.org.au)

### Our Mission Statement

Members of St Michael's Community Services treat others with unconditional positive regard, listen to them with care and empathy, and are genuine in offering their services. This special care is also offered to the elderly as well as the youth in the community.

### Our Story:

St Michael's Community Services is a core group of dedicated parishioners, led by Fr Gerges, Parish Priest and Dean of St Michael's Melkite Catholic Cathedral.

The group splits on Wednesday nights at 7.00 pm to feed the homeless at Central Station and Martin Place. Another team goes fortnightly, on Thursday night, to Liverpool Park. Our aim is to build a trusting relationship with our friends, the needy, so that we not only feed their bodies, but also their souls. The relief, gratitude and friendship of the people we reach is our reward. No-one chooses to be on the street, we look into their eyes and see the person inside. Each has a story, we know the regulars by name and even know their likes and dislikes. So many have an intellectual disability, who are we to

### Our Vision

- Feed the Hungry with God's love.
- Offer the Homeless weekly nutritious meals and genuine friendship.
- Increase our reach by adding locations or increasing the number of days of our meal service.
- Reach out to the elderly, the sick and those with special needs.
- Involve the youth in our activities and prepare them for future leadership.
- Aim to open a centre to feed, house and clothe people on a regular basis.
- Create a mobile team to reach out and help the less fortunate.
- Extend our meal services to those in homes who are experiencing food insecurity.

judge the circumstances that pushed them onto the street? The church asks us to imitate the life of the saints: so let's listen to their words: St Mother Teresa cautions us "If you judge people, you have no time to love them." St Mary MacKillop encourages us to "Never see a need without doing something about it". It is so true that when we give, we receive so much more. Not only do we feel that we have made a difference to the lives of the people we feed, but it has also created a real affection and camaraderie between the people, who show up every week to serve, and the regular disadvantaged on the streets of Sydney.

The disadvantaged are not only our brothers and sisters who live on the street but also many of the elderly, who suffer from loneliness, isolation

and frequently experience difficulties in communication. Our aim is to establish regular contact with them and lend them a hand whenever needed.

With the youth being the future of our society, their involvement in our activities is essential in preparing them to carry the flag and build a better, happier world for everyone.

Our motivation is simple and can be found in the Gospel: Matthew 25: 35-40 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. The righteous will ask: Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? The King will reply: Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

*Design and layout by Leonie Donovan*



St Michael's Community Services, Incorporated Association, INC: 1700314, ABN: 90 281 315 670

Address: Suite 1, 125-127 Canterbury Rd,  
Canterbury, NSW 2193.

Mail: St Michael's Community Services,  
PO Box 4, Canterbury, NSW 2193.

Mobile phone: 0424 560 570

Email: [info@smcs.org.au](mailto:info@smcs.org.au)

Bank Details:

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Account name:

St Michael's Community Services

BSB: 062 158

Account no: 10472614