



**March – June 2016**  
**Pastoral Care Newsletter**

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**Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you well.**

**MASS DATES**

**Anointing Mass**

- Saturday, 19 March at 10.30am.

To experience, as community, the prayerful and healing power of our faith through the sacrament of 'Anointing of the Sick'. Mass is followed by morning tea.

**Aged Care/Nursing Home Masses**

**Ferndale Gardens:** 33 Jersey Ave, Mortdale

**Shangri-la:** 107 Carrington Ave, Hurstville

**Fairlea:** 11 Hawk St, Penshurst

**Gannon Gardens:** 53 Gloucester Rd, Hurstville

*March*

- Tuesday, 8 March – Ferndale Gardens
- Tuesday, 15 March – Shangri-la
- Wednesday, 16 March – Fairlea
- Tuesday, 22 March – Gannon Gardens

*June*

- Tuesday, 14 June – Ferndale Gardens
- Wednesday, 15 June – Fairlea
- Tuesday, 21 June – Shangri-la
- Tuesday, 28 June – Gannon Gardens

**Nunyara:** 8 – 12 Neilson Avenue, Peakhurst

- First Tuesday of the month at 11am in the chapel

*Visitors MUST sign in/out when visiting a care facility.*



**DECLAN CRAFT**

**Something social & creative for those in their 40s & up...**

Stayed tuned for activities/sessions; these will be

advertised in the bulletin, website and around the church **after Easter**. Thanks for your continuous interest, involvement and support.

**PASTORAL CARE RECORDS**

**Visitation ministers & bereavement group...**

Please contact me if there are changes within your ministry, if you require information, support or if your visit situation has changed. Pastoral Records and updates are necessary and always appreciated.

**REFLECTION**

**Only in the Silence**

The Belgian spiritual writer, Bieke Vandekerckhove, comes by her wisdom honestly. She didn't learn what

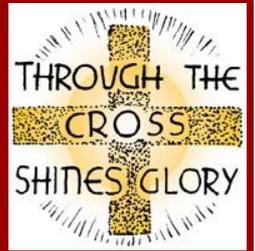
*In this year of Mercy...*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
 you have taught us to be merciful  
 like the heavenly Father,  
 and have told us  
 that whoever sees you  
 sees him.

Send your Spirit  
 and consecrate every one of us  
 with its anointing,  
 so that the Jubilee of Mercy  
 may be a year  
 of grace from the Lord.

May our Church,  
 with renewed enthusiasm  
 bring good news to the poor,  
 proclaim liberty to captives  
 and the oppressed,  
 and restore sight to the blind.  
 Amen.

*(Prayer for Mercy)*



she shares from a book or even primarily from the good example of others. She learned what she shares through the crucible of a unique suffering, being hit at the tender age of nineteen with a terminal disease that promised not just an early death but also a complete breakdown and humiliation of her body enroute to that death.

Her attempt to cope with her situation drove her in many directions, initially to anger and hopelessness but eventually to monasteries, to the wisdom of monasticism, and, under its direction, into the deep well of silence, that desert that lurks so threateningly inside each of us. Away from all the noises of the world, in the silence of her own soul, inside the chaos of her raging, restless insides she found the wisdom and strength not just to cope with her illness but to also find a deeper meaning and joy in her life.

There are, as John Updike poetically puts it, secrets that are hidden from health, though, as Vandekerckhove makes evident, they can be uncovered in silence. However uncovering the secrets that silence has to teach us is not easy. Silence, until properly befriended, is scary and the process of befriending it is the soul's equivalent of crossing a hot desert. Our insides don't easily become calm, restlessness doesn't easily turn into solitude, and the temptation to turn to the outside world for consolation doesn't easily give way to the idea of quiet. But there's a peace and a meaning that can only be found inside the desert of our own chaotic and raging

insides. The deep wells of consolation lie at the end of an inner journey through heat, thirst, and dead-ends that must be pushed through with dogged fidelity. And, as for any epic journey, the task is not for the faint of heart.

Here's how Vandekerckhove describes one aspect of the journey: "Inner noise can be quite exhausting. That's probably why so many flee to the seduction of exterior background noises. They prefer to have the noise just wash over them. But if you want to grow spiritually, you have to stay inside of the room of your spiritual raging and persevere. You have to continue to sit silently and honestly in God's presence until the raging quiets down and your heart gradually becomes cleansed and quieted. Silence forces us to take stock of our actual manner of being human. And then we hit a wall, a dead point. No matter what we do, no matter what we try, something in us continues to feel lost and estranged, despite the myriad ways of society to meet our human needs. Silence confronts us with an unbearable bottomlessness, and there appears no way out. We have no choice but to align ourselves with the religious depth in us."

There's a profound truth: Silence confronts us with an unbearable bottomlessness and we have no choice but to align ourselves with the religious depth inside us. Sadly, for most of us, we will learn this only by bitter conscription when we have to actually face our own death. In the abandonment of dying, stripped of all options and outlets we will, despite struggle and bitterness, have to, in the words of Karl Rahner, *allow ourselves to sink into the incomprehensibility of God*. Moreover, before this surrender is made, our lives will always remain somewhat unstable and confusing and there will always be dark, inner corners of the soul that scare us.

But a journey into silence can take us beyond our dark fears and shine healing light into our darkest corners. But, as Vandekerckhove and other spiritual writers point out, that peace is usually found only after we have reached an impasse, a "dead point" where the only thing we can do is "to pierce the negative."

In her book, *The Taste of Silence*, Vandekerckhove recounts how an idealistic friend of hers shared his dream of going off by himself into some desert to explore spirituality. Her prompt reaction was not much to his liking: "A person is ready to go to any kind of desert. He's willing to sit anywhere, as long as it's not his own desert." How true. We forever hanker after idealized deserts and avoid our own. The spiritual journey, the pilgrimage, the Camino, we most need to make doesn't require an airline ticket, though an experienced guide is recommended. The most spiritually rewarding trip we can make is an inner pilgrimage, into the desert of our own silence.

As human beings we are constitutively social. This means, as the bible so bluntly puts it, that it is not good for the human person to be alone. We are meant to be in community with others. Heaven will be a communal experience; but, on the road there, there's a certain deep inner work that can only be done alone, in silence, away from the noise of the world.

by **Ronald Rolheiser OM** (04/01/2016)

Visit his website on [www.ronrolheiser.com/index.php](http://www.ronrolheiser.com/index.php)

## PRAYER

### A new start...

Lord God,  
as I journey on this precious earth,  
may I never forget the walk Jesus did;  
the journey he took for us  
and with us.

Jesus showed us how to live fully  
and in harmony while on this earth,  
and in doing so,  
enduring times of trials.

He showed us strength,  
compassion, love and forgiveness.  
Help us to live fully in this love  
and the hope for eternal life  
and peace, through your son,  
and with you, our God.

Jesus showed us respect,  
courage, humanity,  
how to care for your people;  
he showed true faith  
and a new way of living.  
Help me to care for your people  
while on this earth,  
and to care and respect the future  
of this earth.

Keep me strong, keep me focused,  
keep me faithful to your word.  
Guide me today and tomorrow  
that I may continue to follow the path  
to salvation and life  
and to know the joy of your love.

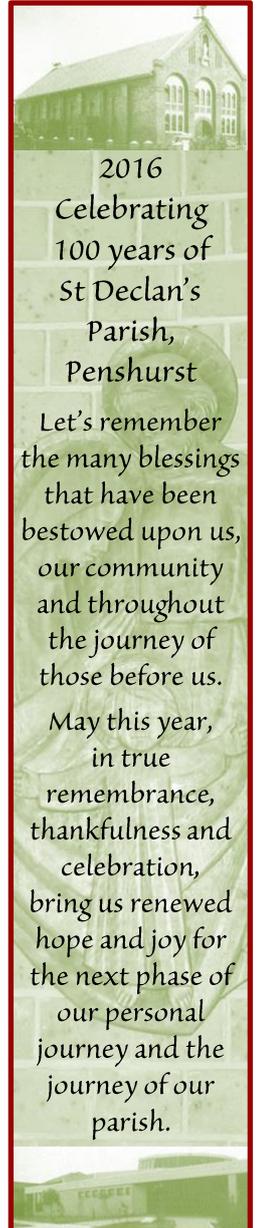
I ask this through your son,  
Jesus Christ.

Amen.  
P.N.

Wishing you all the very best and may each day bring you joy and peace...

Yours faithfully,  
Paulineke

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### *Pastoral Care... responding to the needs of St Declan's Parish*

**Pastoral Care aims to provide spiritual nourishment, social interaction and support to parishioners who are bereaved, lonely, aged, infirmed, sick, disabled and are unable to take part in parish Eucharistic celebrations by:**

- involving parishioners to minister to others & share their faith
- creating a community of care
- developing a strong parish network.