



## **COMMISSIONING CEREMONIES**

The North East Region recently celebrated a number of beautiful Commissioning Ceremonies.

On Saturday 23 January 2021 **Swansea Conference** formally admitted two new Members during the Vigil Mass at St Patrick's, Swansea. Following the evening's homily, Philomena Tobitt and Kathy Glover were introduced by the Conference President Mary Ryan. Fr Gerard Mackie PP, asked Philomena and Kathy to confirm their commitment to the Society, then asked the Conference Members present to join him in calling on our Founders to bless the Philomena and Kathy.



Fr Gerard also added a special prayer to the Prayers of General Intercession, asking the congregation to pray for the two new Members. Following Mass, Mary reported that a number of parishioners complimented her on the ceremony.

This ceremony, or Commissioning, serves two purposes: it reinforces the spirituality of the Society, and it brings the Conference, and the Society, to the attention of the broader church Community.

**Brian Halligan, Eastlakes Regional President.**



**The Clarence Region's** Ceremony was held on 17 March 2021 during their Regional Meeting, celebrating three new Presidents:



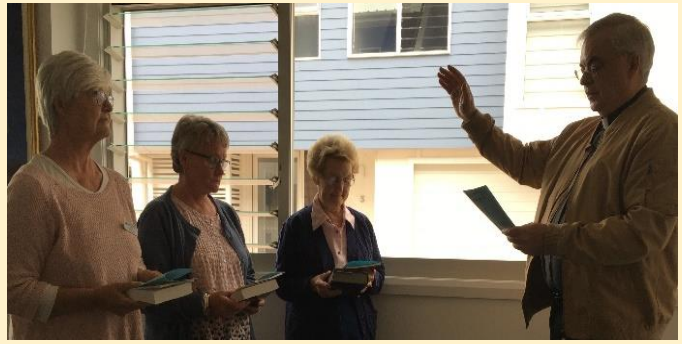
Joseph (Joe) Feeney - St Mary's Maclean, David (Dave) Byrnes St Mary's Grafton, and Alan Schofield St James Yamba.

**Pictured (from left to right):** Terry Carlin (Lismore CC Vice President), Joe, Gail Gaudron (Lismore CC) President, Alan, David and Paul Edgar (Clarence Regional President).

The **Orara Region's Ceremony** for three new Presidents was held on 16 March 2021 during their Regional Meeting.

**Pictured (from left to right):**

Gabi Curwood - Mary Immaculate Bellingen  
Amanda Steinhardt – Sacred Heart Dorrigo  
Pat Winter -Our Lady Help of Christians  
Sawtell  
Father Paul Winter



On 27 March 2021, during the Saturday Evening Vigil Mass at St James' at Yamba, the Commissioning Ceremonies were held for: Paul Edgar – Clarence Regional President, and Terry Carlin – Clarence Regional Vice President. **Pictured (from left to right):** Gail Gaudron, Paul Edgar and Terry Carlin.

On 8 April 2021 at **Our Lady of Sorrows Church Kyogle**, Fr Erick Quinteros celebrated the Commissioning Ceremony for new the President of St Coleman's Conference, Peter Kelly.

**Pictured below:**

First photo – Gail Gaudron, Peter Kelly, Mick Albany Richmond Regional President and Fr Erick.  
Second photo - Gene Trim (VP Richmond Region), Gail Gaudron, Kerry Donaghy (outgoing President), Helen Constantini, Peter Kelly, Anne Kenny (Sec. Richmond Region), Fr Erick, Berryl Currie, Joan Boyle, Mick Albany.



**Photograph Credit: Greg Ryan**



## **PRESENTATION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

### **Robyn Barnett & Barry Moon**



**Pictured: (from left to right) Gordon Egan (St Joseph's Urunga Vice President), Cecily Foley (Orara Regional President), Robyn Barnett (Our Lady Help of Christians Sawtell), Father Colin Reinhard, Barry Moon (St Augustine's Coffs Harbour), Gail Gaudron (Lismore CC President).**

On 14 April 2021, Robyn and Barry were presented Life Membership at Our Lady of the Way Chapel, Marian Grove. Father Colin celebrated Mass and joined members for morning tea

following the presentation by Gail. Robyn has been a member of OLHC Sawtell for twenty years, during which time Robyn completed terms as a Regional President and Conference President.

Barry has reached thirty years' membership and has performed several leadership roles in St Augustine's Conference during that time.

**Photograph credit: Greg Ryan Story: Cecily Foley.**

### **Gavan Browne**

**Pictured: (from left to right – standing) Suzanne Nicols (President St Carthage's Lismore), Mick Albany, Noelene Geraghty, Marie Ganter, Brian Whelan, Marie Harris, Fr Michael Nugent, Maria Miller, Jacklyn Wagner. (Sitting) Gail Gaudron, Gavan Browne, Clare Van Doorn.**

On 29 April 2021, Gavan Browne was presented Life Membership during a celebration with St Carthage's Conference Members. After the presentation by Gail, the Members enjoyed a morning tea. Gavan has been a member of the Society since 1982 working as Conference Member, Shop Volunteer and Day Co-Ordinator.

**Photograph credit: Suzanne Nichols**

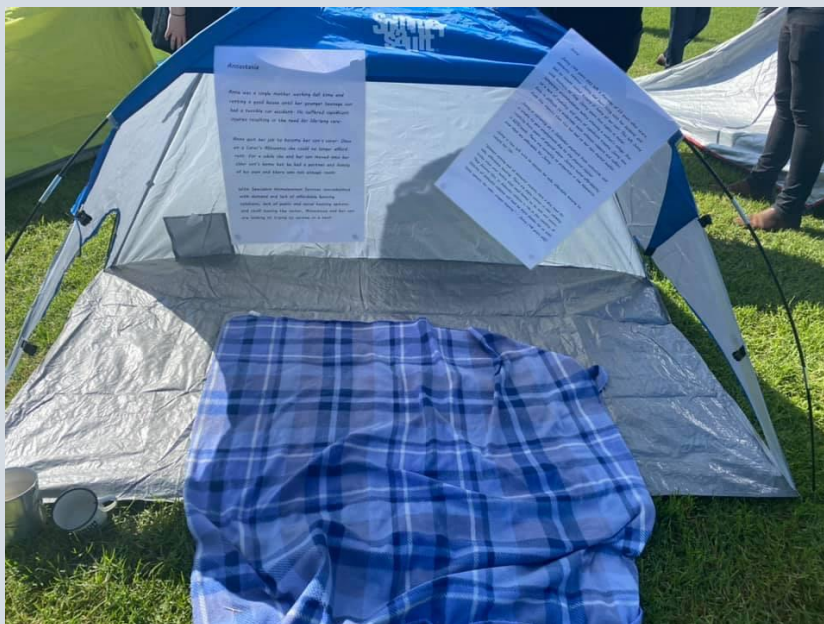




## VINCENTIAN ADVOCACY – MAITLAND/NEWCASTLE



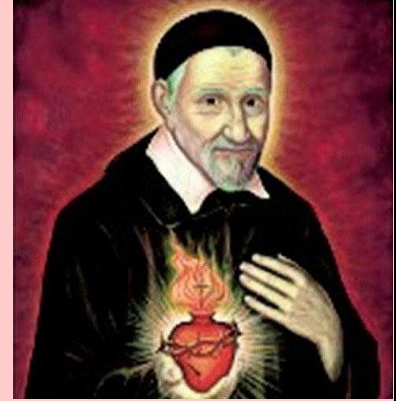
'A Call to Action' was a joint initiative organized by Hunter Community Alliance, Hunter Homeless Connect and Nova for Women and Children held on 29<sup>th</sup> March at Civic Park Newcastle. A tent city was erected on the foreshore to bring urgent attention to accommodation and housing crisis that is not only affecting the Hunter, but right across the state. Our dedicated staff at Mathew Talbot were in attendance and Team Leader, Ryan Pryor addressed the crowd, highlighting the strain on the sector and sharing alarming statistics including the 82 referrals waiting for a caseworker within the service. St Vincent de Paul continue to have a voice through the Build Homes Build Hope Campaign and we hold hope that the June Budget sees the government investing more in Social and Affordable housing.





## ***BEING VINCENTIAN***

Over the past couple of months, we have celebrated the commissioning of nine Conference and Council Presidents, plus the awarding of two Life Memberships to two long standing members of the Society in the Lismore Central Council. It's not that we have had a great turnover of presidents recently, rather we have just had a 'Covid catch up.' A member recommitment was also incorporated in two of these liturgies.



The Rule tells us that Conferences and Councils are genuine communities of faith and love, of prayer and action. It states that, "the entire Society is a true and unique worldwide community of Vincentian friends." This is the third dimension of the Society, the dimension of mutual support, inspiration and friendship.

And as Vincentian friends, it is good to come together to acknowledge and celebrate the service of our members. No one becomes a member seeking any form of recognition. The focus is always on the other rather than the self.

Living out the faith and giving back to the community are often stated motivations for the work done by members. But as a Vincentian Community, it is good to recognise significant service and to bless and commission those members who take on the servant leadership of Conference President.

Commissioning and recommitment ceremonies can be organised to take place during a Mass, at Regional or at Conference meetings, to suit the needs of the local community. Commissioning of new Conference members can also be a way to develop the third dimension of Conference life and to continue their formation as Vincentians. Please feel free to contact if you would like to organise something for your Conference members.

**Greg Ryan. Mission, Spirituality & Pastoral Care Team. 0447 123 109**

## ***FELLOWSHIP***

### **St Mary's Conference, Casino**



St Mary's Conference Members join together every Tuesday evening to enjoy a meal together, often inviting others to share in fellowship.

The Rule says, "*spiritual bonds and friendship between members are essential*" and "*The entire Society is a true and unique worldwide community of Vincentian friends.*"

**Pictured (from left to right):** Rosie, Shirley Murphy (*St Mary's Conference President*), Margaret James, John Kauter, Fr Arthur Stidwill, Don Leo, Angelo Leo, Fr Peter Slack, Pauline Rankin, Cathy Kauter, Rev. Thea Archinal, Sandy Ellem and Steve Ellem.

## TIPS FROM RESILIENCE NSW for looking after yourself.

Apart from their regular conference work, many members have provided care and assistance to those affected by bushfires, the ongoing drought and now floods. Combined with a global pandemic, all this can have a detrimental effect on one's mental health. Here a few reminders and tips from Resilience NSW to stay mentally healthy.

### BE AWARE OF YOUR NEEDS



- find healthy ways to express how you are feeling
- don't be down on yourself for being upset, there is no right or wrong way to feel



### KNOW YOUR LIMITS



- recognise things can be distressing and you may feel upset
- try to maintain a normal routine but rest if you're tired



### LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS



- remind yourself and others things will get better and you have the ability to manage
- find ways to stay connected, for you, and for others



### PLAN FOR BAD DAYS



- remind yourself you can, and are coping
- stay healthy, find time to relax and do what you love
- connect with people you trust



**You can also contact EAP (Employee Assistance Program)**  
**A confidential counselling service available to Members, Volunteers and Staff of SVdP**  
**Ring 1800 818 728 or visit their website: [accesseap.com.au](http://accesseap.com.au)**  
**Or contact**  
**NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511**



## LISMORE



On 12 April 2021, Janelle Saffin MP visited St Carthage’s Conference Lismore, the Lismore Centre and the Lismore Central office.

At the Conference, Janelle met with Suzanne Nichols (Conference President) and Conference Members, most of whom she knew, and discussed concerns around homelessness and short/long term accommodation in Lismore.

Janelle was then given a tour of the Lismore Centre before coming upstairs to the Lismore office where Janelle met with Clare Van Doorn (*North East RD*) , Gail Gaudron (*Lismore CC President*), Mick Albany (*Richmond Regional President*) , Gene Trim (*Richmond Social Justice Rep.*), Anne Kenny (Richmond Regional Secretary) and Rosie to discuss housing affordability, housing supply and homelessness in our region.

The meeting concluded with a plan to have a meeting with other agencies and stakeholders who are also campaigning and seeking improvement in the housing crisis.

Janelle had requested this visit after a teleconference in early March 2021 with Mick, Gene and Anne.

**Story: Anne Kenny & Rosie.**

## COFFS HARBOUR – PETE’S PLACE

On 29 April 2021, the Shadow Federal Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Regional Services and Territories, Jason Clare, visited Pete’s Place in Coffs Harbour, hosted by Manager Anna Scott who provided Jason with updated information and real-life stories about the dire housing situation in the area and the need for Governments to invest in more social housing. Anna also spoke to the local media present.

Link to NBN story:

<https://www.nbnnews.com.au/2021/04/29/shadow-minister-for-housing-visits-coffs-coast/>

**Pictured: Jason Clare, Cecily Foley (President Orara Region), Anna Scott, Leon Walsh (Coffs Harbour President) and Meena Johnson (Wesley Youth Accommodation Refuge).**



**Pictured: Jason, Anna and Meena.**



## **TRAINING**

Face to face sessions will be locked in for the Child Safe Familiarisation and Code of Conduct training from 1 May 2021 and will come to a venue near you. Your President will let you know time and dates in the coming weeks. The office is excited to be able to get back to delivering this valuable training face to face for our Members and we look forward to seeing you. "My Orientation" for our newest Members will also be streamed and participants can get together in small group settings to participate. The next session will be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020 so contact Sarah or Rosie to arrange a screening near you.

***Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them O Lord, and May Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them.***

***May They Rest in Peace.***

**Bob Gorman – St Augustine’s Coffs Harbour**

**Leah Hosking – Mary MacKillop Murwillumbah**

**Marie Bennett – St Therese Casino**

**Ray Vidler – St Mary’s Casino & Raymond Terrace**

**Greg Rooney – St Therese Casino**

**Mary O’Reilly – St Coleman’s Kyogle**

**Ruth Slattery – St John’s Mullumbimby**

**Gwen King – St Carthage’s, Lismore**

**Sr Juliana Dwyer – St Therese Casino**

**Michael Tobin – Rutherford Conference**

**Barry Wheatley – MacKillop Conference**

**James Daley – St Mary Star of the Sea Lake Cathie & Eastwood Conference**

**Vincent Davison – St Matthew’s Laurieton**

## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

If you are a current Member who is interested in taking an occasional shift at our Raymond Terrace site, please call **Sarah** to discuss your availability. The Conference has sadly been nonoperational since Covid and due to the huge demand for our service in the area, we are hopeful that support from the surrounding Conferences will enable us to start operating in the area again.



# MEMBERSHIP



On Wednesday 21 April 2021, Teresa King joined Newcastle President Fran Barber, and Hamilton shop Volunteer Bob Barber at the Inaugural Mini Expo held in the Hive at Hamilton and hosted by Hamilton Business Association for Seniors Week.

Fran was pleased with the opportunity to meet Community Members to speak about Membership and Volunteering.

It was also a great opportunity to network with other local Service providers.



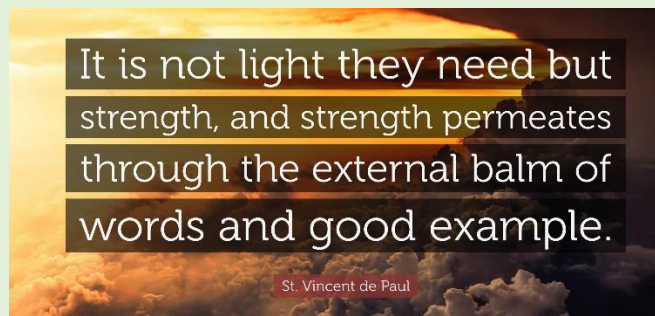
Hello All,

Our Northern region has once again been faced with a natural disaster being, the March 21 storm event and floods. The wide-ranging destruction has caused further damage to some communities that were so severely impacted by the recent devastating bushfires.

Our Conference Members, Retail Volunteers and Staff in these areas have again risen to the challenge of being there to care and assist, for those in need. Often, they were impacted themselves but still supported others with dignity, compassion, and respect, truly putting their “service into action”. I am in awe of the resilience our Vincentian communities display and I thank each and every one of you for doing what you do Everyday!

Many blessings!

**Clare Van Doorn North East Regional Director**



## The Inspiration of Frederic Ozanam:

*The knowledge of social well-being and of reform is to be learned, not from books nor from the public platform, but in climbing the stairs to the poor man's garret, sitting by his bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces him, sharing the secret of his lonely heart and troubled mind ... it is then, and only then that we begin to grasp it and hope to solve it.*



Dear Vincentians,

***“The Lord gives each of us a vocation, a challenge to discover the talents and abilities we possess and to put them at the service of others.”***

Pope Francis-Pontifex July 2019.

The following information does not form part of the Rule. It is meant to be a guide in understanding the workings of the Society:-

- The out- going President should notify in a timely manner the end date of his or her term of office and invite nominations from eligible members.
- Electing a president is one of the gravest responsibilities of a

Council/Conference and all members have a clear responsibility to ensure that a suitable person is identified and elected.



Please celebrate volunteers/member week 1 Please send any photos to Rosie.

I thank you all.

**Gail Gaudron, Lismore Central Council President**

Hello Everyone,

It is very encouraging to see that we are mostly back in normal operation and starting to have one-on-one meetings with our clients. It is so important that we respect and be able to talk with those we help, not just be an agent who provides handouts. Most of the needy we meet require understanding, friendship and care as much as anything else, especially the lonely. So please make an extra effort to listen to and relate to the client and try not just “process” these people.

Also, on returning to normal, we must not forget the pressing need to maintain and build our membership. I would welcome a special effort by all members to increase their conference membership. Can I suggest that something positive and tangible be adopted, for example, having all members agree to contact just one person with a view to membership, even if it is just helping out as an associate member. But I’m sure you will be able to come up with and implement new ideas yourselves.

Thank you and God bless

**John McKendry, Maitland Newcastle Central Council President**



This morning I read a tribute on Instagram by Senator Amanda Stoker remembering her grandmother who recently passed away after a life of hard work and selfless service. One of the sentences Amanda wrote could have been written about so many of our Conference Members:

***“She taught me that doing the small things with pride is dignifying, and you don’t have to have a lot, to give a lot.”***

Thank you, Members, for all your good works and kindness.