



Vianney Bulletin

A Publication of Vianney College, Wagga Wagga

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From the Rector

The first term of our 30th year, 2021, has been eventful and this news bulletin is produced to record these events and to keep in touch with our friends.

But first a look back on the previous year, the year we will remember as the "Covid Year". This was the year that the Wagga Diocese received a new bishop, Most Rev Mark Edwards, O.M.I. Two alumni of the seminary were ordained to the priesthood, Rev Casimir (Peter) Zielinski, OSPPE, on 13 June in Poland and Rev Cyprian Onuorah on 12 December in St Michael's Cathedral Wagga. A third priestly ordination was that of Rev Anthony Lobo I.V.D in India on 30 January 2021. Three men, on the road to priesthood have also been ordained to the diaconate, over the past year. Rev Rogelio Del Monte, for the diocese of Broken Bay on 7 October, Rev Connell Perry, for the diocese of Wagga on 12 December and Rev Prodenzio Bognay, for the diocese of Lismore on 12 March 2021.



We give thanks to God for all these blessings. What follows records some of the highlights of Term 1, 2021.

– Fr. Peter Thompson C.M.

Vianney College 2021



Back: John Sloan, Denis Hickey, Jose Lim, Patrick Drum, Br. Joseph Hoang, Br. Valentine Nicholas CCS, Gerard Letchford, Dominic Franssen, Saxon Onions, Mark Matthew Vettikombil, Br. Xavier Nguyen CCS, Michael Perry, Deacon Connell Perry

Middle: Fr. Peter Murphy, Br. Anthony Dang CCS, Br. John Baptist Nguyen, Br. Michael Pham, Br. Hoat Nguyen CCS, Nicholas Kennedy, Peterpaul Chikezie, Br. John Nguyen CCS, Christopher Gillespie, Br. Marvin Coonghe CCS, Deacon Rod Letchford, Dr. Donald Boland

Front: Mrs. Anna Abraham, Dr. Matthew Tan, Fr. Justin Darlow, Fr. Henry Ibe, Fr. Sean Byrnes, Bishop Mark Edwards OMI, Fr. Peter Thompson CM, Fr. Steven Ledinich, Fr. Damien Jellett

Recent News

On the 9th of February Vianney College welcomed three new seminarians, all from the Wagga Diocese: Denis Hickey (Berrigan), Gerard Letchford (Wagga Wagga), and Christopher Gillespie (Jindera). The returning seminarians joined them a few days later and there followed a week of orientation activities, human formation sessions, and a visit to St. Mary Mackillop College in Jindera where the seminarians spoke to the various classes and joined them for a BBQ provided by the Wagga Serrans.



Christopher Gillespie, Gerard Letchford, Denis Hickey



Michael Perry, Bishop Mark, Br. John Baptist Nguyen

On Monday, 15th February the opening Mass was celebrated by Bishop Mark Edwards. During the Mass, Bishop Mark instituted two seminarians, Brother John Baptist Nguyen and Michael Perry, into the ministry of Acolyte. We welcomed two new staff members, Doctor Matthew Tan, the new Dean of Studies, and Mrs Anna Abraham from Canberra who lectures in Theology and Catechetics. We also welcome Father Gabriel Murray from The Rock who teaches the English course to the First Year students. Bishop Mark also began on that day to interview each of the seminarians individually. The Bishop fits this into his busy schedule when time allows and so this process continues.

Bishop Mark came to the seminary again on March 9th to meet the Wagga Serrans and join them in their monthly meeting. He then celebrated Mass for the Serrans and seminary community and instituted three men into the ministry of Lector: Brother Michael Pham, Brother Xavier Nguyen CCS and Mark Matthew Vettikombil. Following the Mass, all gathered in the seminary dining room for a light supper.



Br. Xavier Nguyen, Bishop Mark, Mark Matthew Vettikombil and Br. Michael Pham

On 12th March work began on the review of Vianney College, announced by Bishop Mark some months ago. It is being carried out by Bishop Anthony Randazzo of Broken Bay Diocese and Sister Isabell Naumann ISSM, President of Catholic Institute of Sydney. Bishop Anthony and Sister Isabell were guests of Vianney College for four days, where they carried out extensive interviews with the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, staff, seminarians, some priests of the diocese and some of the lay faithful. The two guest reviewers were great company over the four days and we were left with good memories of their visit.



Bishop Anthony Randazzo and Sr. Isabell Naumann with the Seminary community at the conclusion of their visit.

On Tuesday, 16th March at 8:30 pm, Bishop Mark visited the seminary community and announced that Father Rick Micallef will take over the position of Rector from 1st January 2022. The following day he announced that Father Bradley Rafter will become Vice Rector. We look forward to welcoming both of these priests to guide the seminary over the coming years.

* * *



The three new seminarians holding their soutanes which Fr. Thompson has just blessed.

Bishop Edwards celebrating the Opening Mass for the seminary in which Br. John Baptist Nguyen and Michael Perry were instituted into the Ministry of Acolyte.



Seminary Faculty 2021:**Rector:**

Rev. Peter Thompson C.M.

Vice Rector:

Rev. Sean Byrnes (Acting)

Spiritual Director:

Rev. Steven Ledinich

Dean of Studies:

Dr. Matthew Tan

* * *

Recent Events:

12/12/2020:

Ordination of Deacon
Connell Perry and Fr.
Cyprian Onuorah
(Wagga Diocese)

30/1/2021:

Priestly ordination of Fr.
Anthony Lobo I.V.D
(India)

9/2/2021:

Arrival of three new first
year seminarians

15/2/2021:

Institution of two
Acolytes

9/3/2021:

Institution of three
Lectors

12/3/2021:

Deaconal ordination of
Rev. Prodencio Bognay
(Diocese of Lismore)

12-15/3/2021:

Seminary Review

16/3/2021:

Announcement of a new
Rector

17/3/2021:

Announcement of a new
Vice Rector

I comfortably and peaceably responded by saying yes.

I hope and pray that as I now embark on this new challenge as Rector and Formator, that with the help of my brother priests, and others praying for me, my journey will prove to be another fruitful chapter in my life and my vocation, that is, for the good of the Church in her people.

– Fr. Rick Micallef

About the Rector-Elect, Fr. Rick Micallef

Born and raised in Warrawong, my parents migrated from Malta as young children. I have two younger brothers who are married with children.

I came to Wagga Wagga to join the seminary which was highly recommended at the time and was flourishing with vocations. I entered in February 1996 at 27 years of age after having worked for just under ten years for an insurance company.

After settling in, and through the grace of God and guidance of my Spiritual Director and formators, I was called by Bishop Gerard Hanna to ordination in May of 2003. My first placement was for five years as an assistant priest at Holy Spirit Parish in Lavington under Fr. Patrick O'Connell. He was an inspiration to me not just as a dedicated, hardworking priest, but more so as a father figure who encouraged me and willed the good of my priesthood.

I was appointed as the Administrator of Howlong for two and a half years before I returned to Vianney College, this time as the First Year Formator. I clearly remember telling Bishop Hanna at the time: 'surely there are more suited priests than I that can do the job. Are you sure you want me?' and his reply was: 'yes, I think you will be a good role model for the students'.

My time at Vianney College was, I believe, to be a fruitful part of my vocation. I saw, particularly in the students, and as I had experienced myself, the need for ongoing formation. I also saw the need to be supported in the future ministry of the priesthood which comes from the fraternity of brotherly love.

After three and a half years in Vianney, I was appointed as the Administrator of the Cathedral. A challenging role in such a busy place, there is a great opportunity to minister to the pastoral needs of a great many groups of people.

Some years later, I applied for a parish and was appointed to my current parish of Mulwala. Residing here, I also minister to the town of Barooga and the parish of Berrigan. One of my predecessors has referred to this parish as 'the resort parish'. I admit that it is attractive due to its scenic view of the lake, natural wildlife and nature walks, not to forget its 45 hole scenic golf course! As we labour in God's harvest, there is always work to be done, people to see and places to go and it will be sad to leave as I have come to know many wonderful families who are so supportive of the priesthood and love the Church.

It was recently announced by Bishop Mark Edwards that I have been called upon to be the rector of Vianney College for 2022. Initially, my reaction to this invitation was the same response that I gave to Bishop Hanna, however, this time I was grateful to have been given more time in prayer to 'surrender' my will to the will of the Holy Spirit. He has helped me to reach a decision to which



About the Vice Rector-Elect, Fr. Bradley Rafter

Upcoming Events:

18-24/4/2021:
Annual Seminary
Retreat
23/6/2021:
Celibacy Seminar
(1st and 2nd Years)
27/6/2021:
Mid-year break begins
26/7/2021:
Term 3 commences
To be confirmed:
Vocations weekend

I was born on the Central Coast in January 1977 and lived in the Newcastle district with my family before moving to the Riverina in 1992. In 1999, I commenced an apprenticeship in Green Keeping in Sydney, specialising in bowling greens and golf courses.

In 2006, I entered Vianney College, the Wagga Wagga Catholic Diocesan Seminary. After obtaining a Bachelor of Sacred Theology in November 2012 from the Urbania University in Rome, I was ordained in St. Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga, by Bishop Gerard Hanna on the 5th of April 2013.



After spending 2013 assigned to St. Michael's Cathedral, I was posted to Sacred Heart, Griffith, where I was Assistant Priest in 2014 and 2015.

In February 2016 I was appointed to St. Mel's, Nerrandera as the Parish Administrator and have been an Army Chaplain since June 2017 where I work one to two days a week at Kapooka Training Battalion, Wagga (1-RTB).

– Fr. Bradley Rafter

VALE Norman Corbett

Vianney College lost a long time friend and supporter with the death of Norman Corbett on March 17. Norm and his wife, Margaret, supported Bishop Brennan from the start in his project of a diocesan seminary, which eventually became Vianney College. They knew each seminarian personally, and in the early days, filled the role of “substitute parents” for many of them. Their home was always open to the Vianney seminarians.

We remember the barbeques held in the Corbett home to welcome and farewell the seminarians each year. We remember the birthday cakes for each individual seminarian. We remember the valuable support that Wagga Serra, led by Norm for 20 years, gave to the seminary on Open Days, on the occasions when the seminary hosted the Inter Seminary Soccer, and on countless other occasions.



Our prayers, and sympathy to Margaret and the family. We will treasure all those memories.

– Fr. Peter Thompson, C.M.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.
And may perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace.
Amen.*

Seminary Formation, My Project of Life!!



Over the years I have been in the Seminary, I have tried to know and understand more fully what path in life God wants me to follow. This is called discernment. It involves listening to God in prayer; but also involves doing my homework.

Just as the Apostles spent three years close to Jesus, preparing for the time when they would be sent out in his name, so the purpose of the years in the Seminary is to relive, in a way, the experience of the twelve apostles. Hence, seminary formation is a process of conversion and growth, of attuning seminarians ever more perfectly to the mind and heart of Jesus, so that they are captivated by his person and mission and want to be like him and serve him as priest.

The work of the seminary formators involves a painstaking effort to help each seminarian know, accept and then work through his area of weakness and become the person and priest that God wants him to be. In the seminary, a seminarian is either growing in virtue or declining; and no one can see this better than the seminary formators, fellow seminarians, and of course the seminarian himself.

As my remaining seminary formation days are numbered, two questions that are of paramount importance keep surfacing in my mind. Have I come to a realistic sense of my strengths and weaknesses? Have I really listened to God and to my formators?

Honestly, these are very challenging questions that will take a lifetime to answer; and this is exactly why I have seen my seminary formation as my project of life. The good news remains that, priestly formation is a life-long ongoing journey, which begins again after the seminary formation, and which never ends until we behold the Lord of the harvest face to face. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference” (Reinhold Niebuhr).

O Lord grant us priests! O Lord grant us holy priests! O Lord grant us many holy priests! O Lord grant us many holy religious vocations! St. John Mary Vianney! Pray for us.

– Peterpaul Ikenna Chikezie
Seventh Year
Armidale Diocese

Deaconal Ordinations



Rev. Rogelio Del Monte
Broken Bay Diocese
October 7, 2020



Rev. Connell Perry
Wagga Wagga Diocese
December 12, 2020



Rev. Prodencio Bognay
Lismore Diocese
March 12, 2021

Vianney College visits Saint Mary Mackillop College



We were very blessed to have the opportunity to engage with the school students and staff of Saint Mary Mackillop College (SMMC), Jindera. We were invited by the school to visit various classrooms from kindergarten to year 12, in order to give talks on vocations, especially on the vocation to the priesthood. Later we were able to mingle with the students through various sporting activities and a communal BBQ. During the talks on vocations the students showed a real interest. It was edifying to see them engage with the topics as they responded with openness and an understanding of the Catholic faith. This will hold them in good stead when they go out into the world and seek to follow God's call in whatever vocation that Jesus is inviting them to follow. In *Pastores dabo vobis*, (a document written by Saint John Paul II on the formation of priests) it speaks of the family being the first



seminary, where the seeds of a vocation are first sown. A school helps to contribute to this formation by providing students, with the grace of God, the means of helping them to grow in their love of God and neighbour and a deepening of their understanding of God's call of love for each one of them. Whatever the students decide to do in the future, we hope that they will all grow in that universal call of God, which is holiness and sanctity. We thank SMMC for their invitation and the very fruitful and joyous day and we look forward to having the opportunity of visiting again.

– Michael Perry
Sixth Year
Wagga Wagga Diocese

Priestly Ordinations



Fr. Casimir (Peter) Zielinski,
Order of Saint Paul
The First Hermit (OSPPE)
June 13, 2020

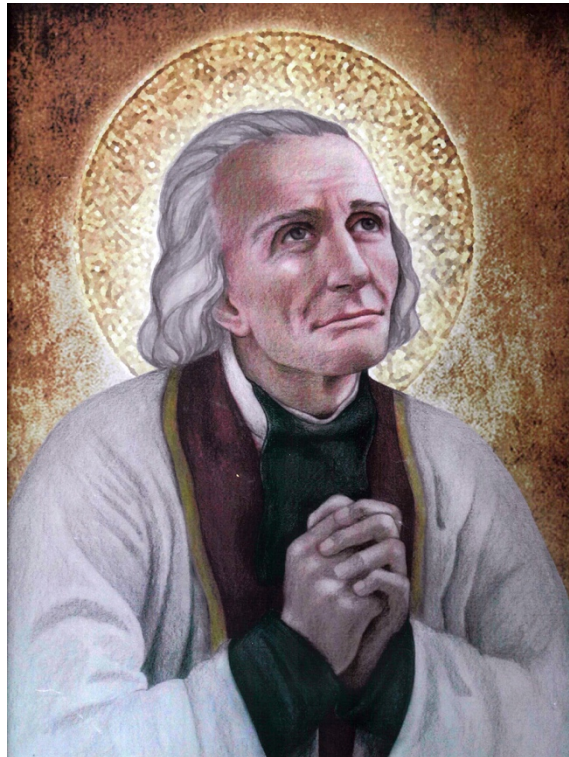
Image taken from 'Msza Trydencka w Kaliszu' Facebook page.



Fr. Cyprian Onuorah
Wagga Wagga Diocese
December 12, 2020



Fr. Anthony Lobo
Voluntas Dei Institute (IVD)
January 30, 2021



*St. John Vianney,
Pray for us!*

Vianney College

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