

# The M.U.S.E.U.M.

A magazine of the Society of Christian Doctrine, founded by Saint George Preca



Issue 10 September 2011



The

# M.U.S.E.U.M.

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*The spirit and vision of George Preca*

*The M.U.S.E.U.M. is issued biannually for friends and associates of the Society of Christian Doctrine in the Australian Region. M.U.S.E.U.M. represents the first letter of a prayer in Latin, Magister Untinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundus translating Divine teacher, may the whole world follow the Gospel.*

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Vale Sofia Cavalletti (1917 -2011)

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Anthony, Ally and Jessica from Preca Centre, Altona Meadows prepare the gifts before Mass at the annual St George Preca Mass held at Queen of Peace church, Altona Meadows on 13 May 2011

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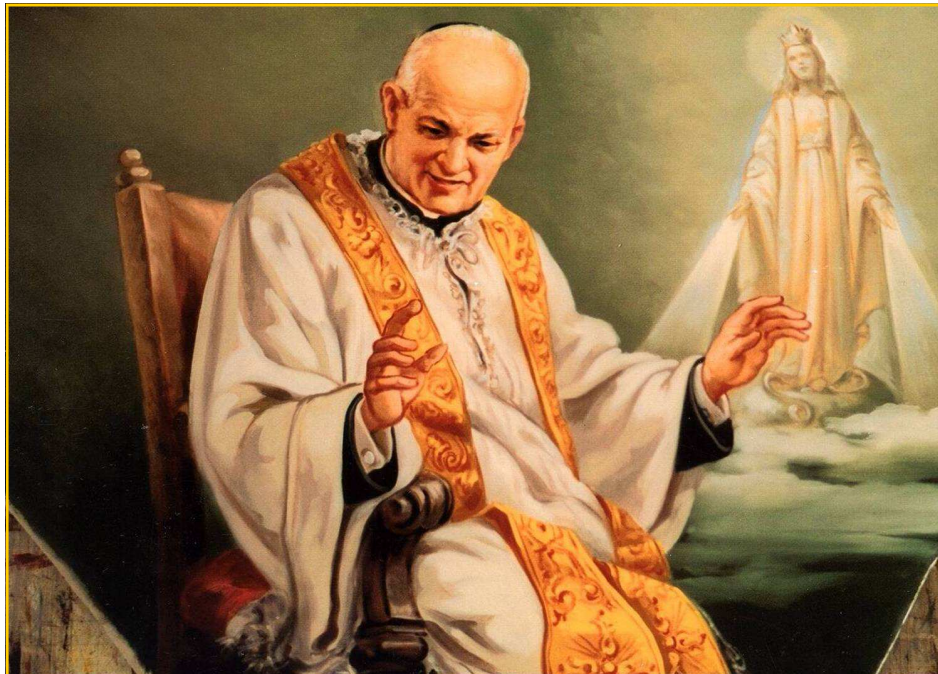
# Saint George Preca

## Committed to the Gospel

Following the untimely death of Bishop Joe Grech, little was recorded or perhaps more correctly, less known, concerning Bishop Joe's relationship with St George Preca. On his part, George Preca's profound spirituality witnessed to a close union with God, which filled him with a special charisma to understand and lead God's people. Bishop Joe captured much of this charisma growing up and attending the Balzan centre of the SDC in Malta.

Prior to a talk given by Fr George Preca in Balzan, Bishop Joe's mother, Yvonne Grech, presented him to Fr Preca and asked that he bless him. As a preacher, George Preca was much sought after, and when the news ran through village or town that the priest was on his way there, village and town would arouse itself and flock to hear him speak. As he walked through the streets, children would gather around him and mothers would beg him to bless their babies and rosary beads.

On this occasion, Fr Preca blessed Joe and foretold that he would become a priest. This event remained with Bishop Joe and was recounted by him in a talk he gave at a general gathering of Members in Malta.



*Painted by David Camilleri*

More recently in November last year when Bishop Joe was in Malta, he was invited by the Members and parish priest to preside at the Confirmation ceremony at his home parish in Balzan for the children prepared by the SDC.

The charisma that Bishop Joe possessed owes much to the influence of St George Preca and the work of the SDC in Malta which has centres in nearly every suburb.

What is this charisma that we acknowledge today? George Preca opted for a way that was unheard of in the early 1900s: teach the people so that they could be convinced of their beliefs, no matter who and what challenged them. This was at

a time when the laity had not yet been officially recognised as specifically sharing in the mission of spreading the Gospel; as this was before Vatican Council II. The role of the laity was given special emphasis at the Council where together with the whole Church, can share in the work of the apostles.

George took the involvement of the laity even a step further, in forming the Society of Christian Doctrine, in the spirit of Vatican II, again before the Council, inspiring many of the faithful to commit themselves to Christ in the monastic tradition.

George was convinced of this lay involvement in the active life of the Church. This was a dream for him and at the heart of every dream, there is a motivating power that creates the visions of possibilities and sustains one in the pursuit of them. As his house-keeper, Nellie Bartolo, testified, he would often burn the candle (literally, for he lived a life of absolute poverty) late into the night - preparing his sermons or writing some of his more than 150 pamphlets and tracts. His wish was to educate Malta in its love for God and neighbour, and he was ready not to spare himself any pain in achieving that ideal. At a time when the language question was raging in Malta, and the Maltese language was forgotten in fight for supremacy between Italian and English, George Preca began writing for the public in Maltese. The earliest manuscripts date as far back as 1909, and his merits as a writer have already been recognised.

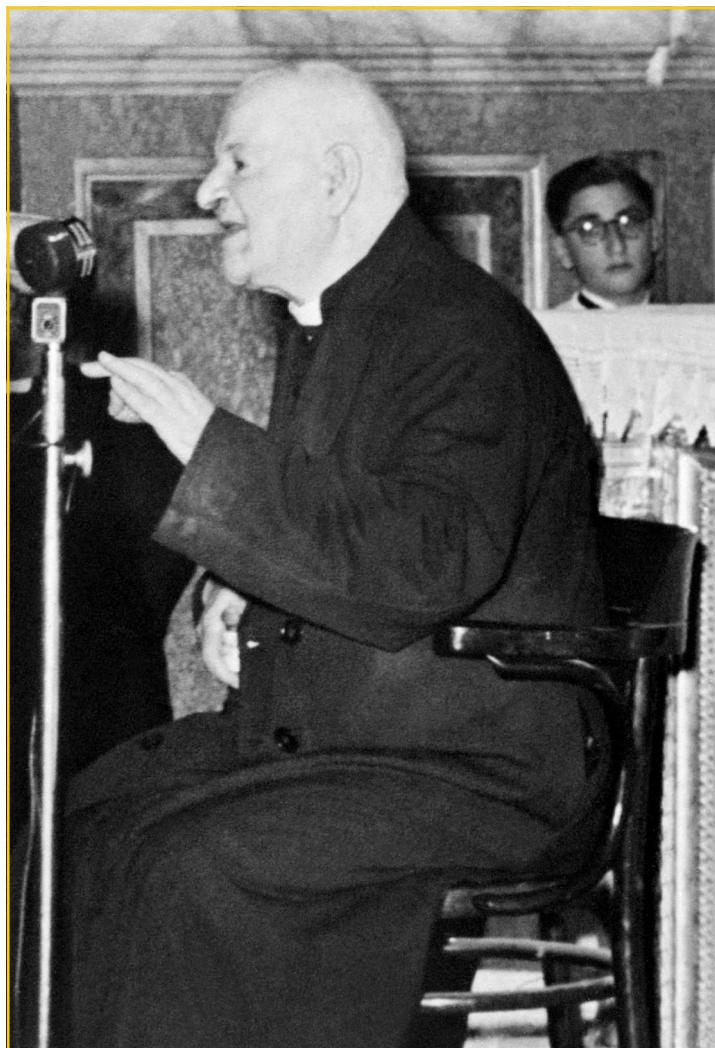
We learn much from St George Preca especially his humility which was proverbial. When the SDC celebrated its golden jubilee in 1957, one of the less extreme examples of this humility was when he proclaimed St Paul as the real founder of the Society by virtue of the words: "... hand on to reliable people so that they in turn will be able to teach others." (2 Tim. 2:2).

Pope Benedict, during his visit to Malta last year addressed the gathered clergy saying: "St George Preca was a priest of remarkable humility, goodness, meekness and generosity, deeply devoted to prayer and with a passion for communicating the truths of the Gospel. Let him serve as a model and an inspiration, as you strive to fulfill the mission you have received to feed the Lord's flock." We all can draw from George Preca as our model by having commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as he most certainly did.

He prayed and meditated on the Gospel to the last, his death was a testament to his life. For even on his death-bed, he prayed that others may follow the Gospel. This is a remarkable testament of faith and that's why many gather each year from all around the world to celebrate a life that has inspired so many.

Peter Judge sdc

*From reflections delivered at Queen of Peace church, Altona Meadows, 13 May 2011*



# Preserving the Maltese Language

Language can delight and enlighten as to where the heart and the soul can be engaged. Language forms the very basis of a culture, and loss of language is the very first threat to loss of that culture. Speaking and understanding your own language maintains a national identity.

Maltese is the national language of the island sovereign state of Malta, whereas both Maltese and Queen's English (UK) are its official languages.

The Maltese language is closely related to the western Arabic dialects and is the only EU language that has a Semitic origin. It is also the only Semitic language written in the Latin alphabet. In the course of its history, Maltese pronunciation and words have been subject to the influence of southern Italian and, more recently, English usage.

The preservation of the Maltese language led to a dispute throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, involving the two major political factions, centred chiefly around the language question of English versus Italian in education. The National Party, made up of the legal class and most of the clergy, supported Italian while the Constitutional Party, led by Lord Gerald

Strickland, supported English. The so-called 'Language Question' was finally resolved in 1934 when Maltese and English became the official languages of Malta, whilst the official use of Italian was abandoned.

One of the underpinning aims St George Preca had in founding the SDC in 1907 was to create a vocabulary in Maltese through which theological matters could be accessible to the average man and woman. This was to enable a deeper understanding of the faith for people who might simply go through the motions of devotions, without knowing the rationale.

As a significant publisher, the SDC has always been to the fore in promoting correct

Maltese usage.

The SDC encouraged the Maltese biblical scholar, Mgr Prof. P P Saydon (1895–1971), in translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Maltese. In recognition of the assistance given, Prof. Saydon left the copyright of his Bible translation and his manuscripts to the SDC. Since his death, the SDC has printed a number of editions of this Bible which includes a library edition and a pocket-size edition for more general use.

The early Members were encouraged to read and study the Bible regularly, individually and communally. This practice was not current for the laity in the Church at the time.



Sketch by Frank Schembri

As a prolific writer in the Maltese language the Founder is recognised as one who made a considerable contribution to the preservation of the Maltese language, heritage and culture.

The *lingua franca* in theological circles of the SDC in Malta is Maltese with a determined effort by the SDC to keep this going. Periodicals and in-house publications are in Maltese including the use of proper Maltese fonts.

Currently there are Members who are authors and write in Maltese maintaining this at a professional level. Some are also involved in literature circles promoting the language. Some even write in local papers to point out errors and inaccuracies in the usage of Maltese, especially by the media.

Furthermore, the SDC has its own printing press, 'Veritas Press', which prints books, periodicals and leaflets mostly in Maltese, and 'Preca Library', a leading bookshop selling amongst other items, a great number of local publications in Maltese. The SDC has also recently established its own publishing house by the name of 'Preca Publications' which publishes about six books annually which are mostly in Maltese.

Many of the Founder's writings have been translated but a wider English audience remains untapped. There are not enough interpreters to translate and connect to his spirit and his writings. However, the legacy of the Founder in preserving the Maltese language through the SDC continues.

Current issues of SDC periodicals in Maltese may be viewed at:  
<http://issuu.com/search?q=preca>

Peter Judge sdc

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# SDC Celebrates 50 Years in Hobart



*Early Hobart group at St John's, Glenorchy. Are you here ?*

move from the cathedral presbytery and live here but he found the traffic too noisy and acquired a property in Fisher Avenue, Sandy Bay. In the early years, penguins nested in the riverside of the property with their calls at night being a familiar sound.

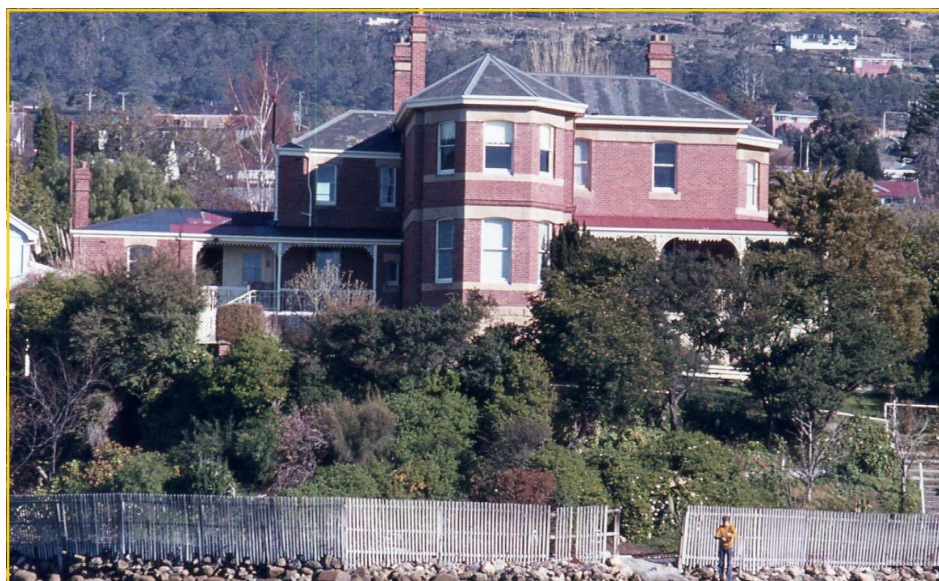
Under Maurice Mifsud's leadership, the Members in Hobart persevered and today we are able to give thanks for the enduring work over fifty years. The first meetings began in the now demolished St John's church on Main Road, Glenorchy.

In 1961, three Maltese Members – Maurice Mifsud, Emmanuel Gauci and Joseph Camilleri settled in Hobart. The SDC had only established itself in Australia a few years earlier and the Members were experiencing cross culture tension as their expressions of faith were often misunderstood. This was even more prevalent in Hobart where cross cultural experience was not widespread. The Members however always viewed themselves as part of the wider Church; evangelisation for all, especially the young and were committed to this.

A community was set up at 500 Sandy Bay Road, Lower Sandy Bay and in 1963 the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the house. Over the years, the house became iconic for the SDC, due to its

impressive location on the Derwent River. The house was bought by the Catholic Archdiocese of Hobart from the catholic family Connors, owners of the now closed department store in Harrington Street. Sir Guilford Young, Archbishop of Hobart's intention was to

Following the collapse of the Tasman Bridge in January 1975, the mission increased on the eastern shore with an emphasis in Warrane and surrounding areas. The bridge was not restored until October 1977.



*Precia Centre, Lower Sandy Bay in 1970s – view from the Derwent River*



*Anthony Case, Ben Brooks, Maurice Mifsud (deceased) and Charles Caruana*



*St John's church, Glenorchy - now demolished*

Over the years the dynamics of the ministry have changed from supporting catholic families in the early days, pre - evangelisation and education in faith in the 1970s through to the 1990s. Today the emphasis is on smaller groups who seek the faith.

Archbishop Young, champion of lay initiatives, was a mentor and avid supporter of the SDC in Hobart. He visited our generalate in Malta during a break in Vatican Council II. During a Mass in 1986 to celebrate 25 years of the SDC's mission in Hobart, he said that the work of the Members was impossible to measure in a quantative kind of way for they came quietly, asked for nothing and sustained his hope through their example in bringing others closer to Christ.

Maurice, who died in Malta in 2010, Charles and the Members worked tirelessly and now the legacy has been passed onto local Members to

continue. In 2009, Charles Caruana, the last Maltese who came to Hobart, left to retire in Malta.

This leaves a challenge in a time when Members joining us are not forthcoming. However, although much reduced, the SDC in Hobart still remains challenged to reveal the faith as a welcoming place of action.

**A Mass to give thanks will be celebrated at St Canice chapel, Lower Sandy Bay on Saturday 12 November at 11.00 am.**

## SOCIETY of CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Men and Women who share in the apostolate and example of Saint George Preca by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We do this through the witness of our faith and ministering to others through catechetical formation in the Catholic tradition. Following the instruction early last century of George Preca: "Divine Teacher, May the Whole World Follow the Gospel", the Members of the SDC share in the evangelising mission of the Church.



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# Regional Centre Celebrates 50 Years

In July 1957, Fr Leonard Egan was appointed Parish Priest of North Sunshine. The early Members knew Fr Egan whilst he was Administrator of Star of the Sea church, West Melbourne, where we taught in the crypt of the church. He admired the work of the SDC and visited our work in Malta. He requested that a centre be established in North Sunshine.

The first meeting for boys was held on 10 August 1957. Over thirty attended this gathering which was held at St Bernadette's church. On 15 September meetings began in earnest and over the years, boys and girls have been prepared for the sacraments and received formation in their faith.

The Members saw there was a need for a purpose-built



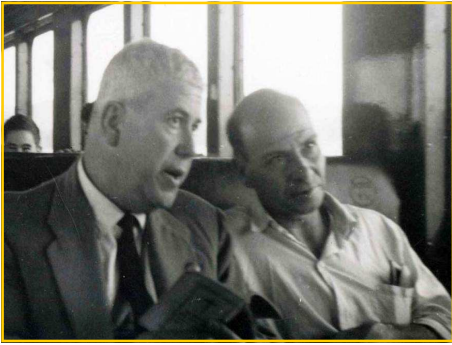
*Blessing by Monsignor L Moran*

centre in the parish and under the direction of Vincent Xerri, who was the moderator of the SDC in North Sunshine, arranged for land and a dwelling to be

built close to the church. On 17 February 1961, foundations began on the house at Westmoreland Road, North Sunshine.



*Refreshments following the Blessing in 1961*



*Early Members at North Sunshine - Vincent Xerri and John Micallef bound for a SDC gathering in Sydney - 26.12.62*

Preca House which is opposite the present St Bernadette's church was opened by Monsignor L Moran, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Melbourne on 28 December 1961. During his address, the Vicar General said: "People from many nations were bringing to Australia their countries' best traditions and greatest glories, not only to share with others, but to give them to others." (Advocate 4.1.62). This attests well to the commitment of the SDC Members to the parish of North Sunshine over the years.

We have participated in the liturgical, sacramental and spiritual life of the parish; supporting and connecting with families.

In 2000, the North Sunshine activities were transferred to Rosslare Parade, St Albans and the property at 82 Westmoreland Road was modified and upgraded. The building remains as a focal point for all activities in Melbourne and also serves as a Regional Centre for Australia.



*Preca House, North Sunshine in the 1960s*



*Anthony Messina, Delegate of the Superior General in Australia, Cardinal James Knox and Stan Drozdow sdc inspect the teaching areas on the property at 82 Westmoreland Road - 1967*

# In the Footsteps of Saint George Preca

Tony Vella continues to promote the life and work of St George Preca through activity-based projects, publications and promotion of the spirit of the Founder. In 2010, as a result of this commitment he won an award for outstanding service to catholic education.

The award known as 'The Katharine Award' recognises an individual, group or school whose charitable efforts honour the spirit of giving of the late Katharine Splinter and are consistent with the character of the system as expressed in its mission statement. Katharine Splinter was a dedicated and hardworking teacher who was killed in a car accident on her way home from the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District school board office. The award was established in her honour and is awarded annually.

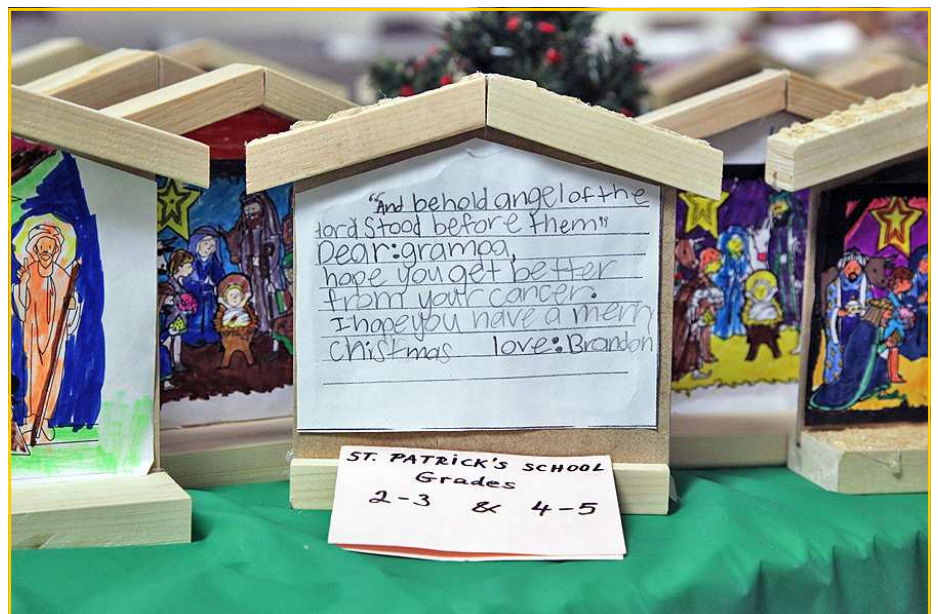
Tony spends his time giving presentations to students about his great uncle, St George Preca, speaking about his life and his work. Tony also shares his expertise as a carpenter and contractor to teach intermediate students how to design and build furniture as well as working with junior and primary students creating advent projects. He has created a craft kit for students which guide them in the making of a simple



Tony Vella with Kathy Turkinton – Trustee of the Katharine Award

nativity scene. It was designed to be a project by students for students. One high school became involved in the making of these kits

and also demonstrating to elementary school students how to construct and decorate these sets.



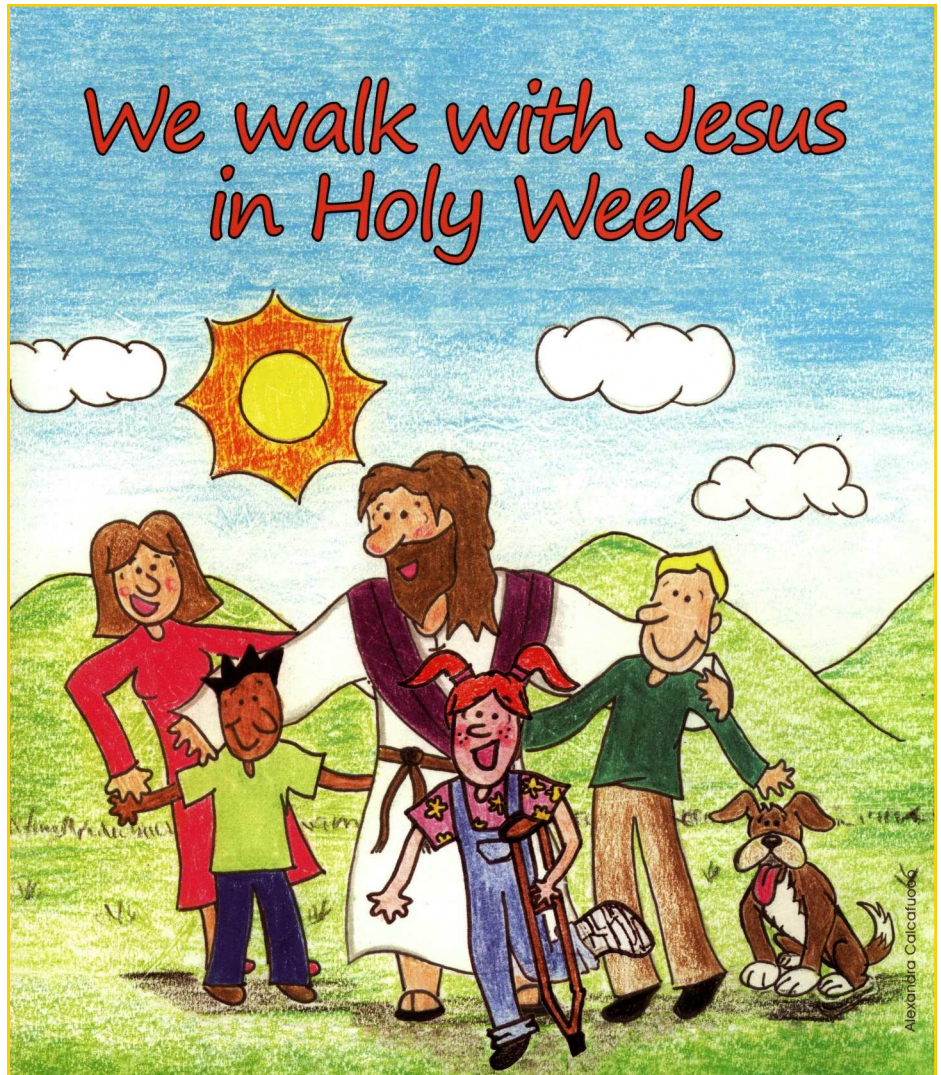
Examples of a completed Nativity kit

In addition to the nativity scenes, a holy week book entitled "We Walk With Jesus in Holy Week" has also been launched. This is a colouring book and includes quotations from the bible and activities. The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board high school students and staff designed this book. The text was compiled by the religious group with the endorsement of the Archbishop of Kingston.

Both of these projects are Tony's way of involving young people in a practical way in the two significant seasons of the Church – Easter and Christmas. Tony relates that his great-uncle, St George Preca, saw that young people needed good foundation in faith to be able to carry this through into their adult life.

Tony, together with his wife, Connie, quietly and prayerfully show consistent interest in assisting the students to be aware of their faith. Their work exemplifies the home/school/parish relationship that strengthens catholic education.

Each year they actively promote the Feast of St George Preca in their church at Kingston, Oratorio, Canada providing a particular focus relating to the saint's life. This year's Mass was dedicated to the sick who need our collective spiritual support. The celebration in 2012 will be dedicated to children.



Cover of 'We Walk With Jesus in Holy Week' book

Parishioners were told of Fr Preca's illness prior to his ordination and the suggestion that his doctors did not encourage his ordination as

his life span was in doubt. Fr Preca outlived his father and his doctors! This was God's grace at work.



**In controlling our thoughts,  
we train our heart to be gentle.**

*Saint George Preca*

# Mass for You at Home

## FORTY YEARS OF BROADCASTING

Mass For You At Home started broadcasting from Channel 0 in Melbourne in August of 1971. Fr Michael King was concerned that there were large numbers of Catholics in Melbourne who were unable to attend Mass due to illness, age or distance and saw the medium of television as a means of giving them some access to the Mass.

Forty years later Mass For You At Home still broadcasts out of Melbourne, now as a part of the 10 Network and can be seen across the whole continent. The Aurora Channel on pay TV now also replays the Mass and it can be viewed on-line from anywhere in the world on its own website: [www.mfyah.com.au](http://www.mfyah.com.au)

Letters are received from across Australia from Catholics and non-Catholics thanking the producers of the program for allowing them to have some access to some spiritual thought and presence – outback stations, hospitals, prisons and the homes of the elderly tend to be the sources of most mail but there are times when a person speaks of how they chanced upon the Mass on TV and found it to be uplifting and thought provoking even though they



*The team who assist on Mass for You at Home*

have not had any formal connection to the Church for many years. Mass For You At Home has allowed people to return to discover the Mass in a way which then challenges them to return to community in a more physical way.

I have had the honour of producing Mass For You At Home for the past 24 years. In that time I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of those who have given their time to the program: sacristans, readers, congregation and priests. We also have to be thankful to the Ten Network which provides a crew and studio space and has done so for over 40 years now.

The clergy who have been able to capture the spiritual imaginations of generations



*Frank Russell who has read on the Mass for over 20 years*

of viewers are also very special. There have been some long time favourites of the letter writers: Fr Michael Elligate in the 80s and early



*Fr Michael Casey getting some last minute wardrobe help*



*Above right - one of our directors, Samantha Hart, and producer, Jeff Hobbs*



*Right: the studio*

90s and Fr Richard Leonard SJ in the more recent past both come to mind as being priests who have been able to use the medium of television to speak very directly to people in their homes. There are others such as Fr Peter Matheson and Fr Michael Casey who have been celebrating Mass on television for almost the entire history of the program and are well loved by those who watch.

One aspect of the Mass which has allowed it to reach out to many other people is the inclusion of an Auslan signer for hearing impaired people. Bruno Broglio, our Auslan consultant, has become a favourite of many viewers. We have had letters asking where Bruno is when he has taken a break over the years and the celebration of his 80th birthday on Mass For You At Home led to many letters of congratulations being sent in.

Mass For You At Home has always walked a fine line of

existence over the years. Since the Broadcasting Act removed the legal necessity of having religious content on television there has been no obligation on the Ten Network to keep the program on air but each year they generously renew their commitment to the program. For a program which is broadcast at 6am on a Sunday it gets, at times, over 50,000 viewers and hits to the website show that it is now popular around the world – our first email from an internet viewer came from Poland and we have had visitors from every continent (except Antarctica). Even Vatican City has had a glance at the website and the program – we have yet to receive a letter from them to hear what they thought.

That, and a Logie, are the two missing high points we still look forward to.

If you do watch the Mass, or know of people who do, please encourage them to write to their local Network Ten station to thank them for the program and to let them know how important it is to the Australian community.

Jeff Hobbs  
Producer

# World Youth Day 2011

## My days in San Sebastian & Madrid

*World Youth Day 2011 was held in Madrid, Spain between 16 and 21 August. Under the theme "Rooted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith" (cf Col 2:7) over two million people from 193 countries gathered to celebrate their Christian faith, making it the third most attended WYD. A group of SDC Members and young people made the pilgrimage to Madrid. Christopher Grima, an SDC Member from Fgura, Malta, shares his experiences with us.*

World Youth Day (WYD) in Madrid was a great event! To attract some two million people from all over the globe is a remarkable achievement. The SDC contingent comprised of thirty seven Members and young people. We participated in the Days in the Dioceses in three separate groups - Valencia, Seville and San Sebastian, before meeting together in Madrid.

### San Sebastian

I with five other SDC Members stayed with the Abad family in San Sebastian. They welcomed us with great hospitality; from the moment of our arrival, we felt at home. During these days their kindness reminded me of the atmosphere present among

the first Christians. During meals we shared experiences about our respective countries including issues about our faith and the socio-religious situation in Europe.

On one of the days, we climbed a nearby mountain. While walking up the ascent, I reflected about the mountain as that special place where a person meets God in its splendour and silence. There we had the opportunity to contemplate the greatness of God's creation. We went further up the mountain to a Sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. There other pilgrims from different countries were already gathered for a Marian celebration. All the people present were invited to sing a Marian hymn in their own language.

On another day, we visited Loyola, the place of St Ignatius. There we met many pilgrims that resided in the Diocese of San Sebastian, had Eucharist, participated in an International Festival of traditional song and dance, and in the evening we attended a concert prepared for us by Spanish youth. We had the opportunity to meet many other pilgrims from all



*SDC pilgrims with the Abad family*

over the world, exchanging badges and other souvenirs.

Our stay at San Sebastian concluded with Eucharist in the Cathedral presided by the Bishop of San Sebastian. The urn with the relics of St Therese of Lisieux was on display for this occasion.

### Madrid

We arrived in Spain's capital on the 15 August. During our first three days in Madrid, we had catechesis sessions and celebrated the Eucharist presided by three different bishops. These sessions were very profound experiences shared with pilgrims from many other nations, providing a good preparation for us to receive the Pope and his message. During the afternoon we visited places of interest such as the Cathedral of Madrid, the Royal Palace and Del Prado Museum.

Together with some thousands of other pilgrims, we also found the time to attend a Taizé prayer session by Taizé Brothers, which proved to be a very fruitful experience. During these days we welcomed Pope Benedict XVI at Cibeles Square, and also attended the Via Crucis. We saw the Pope deeply moved by this celebration.

As the final climax was approaching, we left for Cuatro Vientos on Saturday morning, 20 August, to secure a good vantage point where the final activities of the World Youth Day were to take place. On arrival, we were amazed by the vast number of people there. Perhaps the most vivid memory was a moment during the Prayer Vigil when the Pope started to deliver his message. At that moment, the heavens unleashed a great thunderstorm. Benedict XVI insisted that he wanted to stay there with the youths who were completely drenched. He waited patiently for the storm to pass and then he continued with the Prayer Vigil. Benedict XVI appeared very emotional by the enthusiasm of the young people in front of him. It was a marvellous scene when all those present knelt down on the moist soil in great silence to adore the Eucharist in front of them. It was really impressive!

The following day, the Pope arrived at Cuarto Vientos in the pope mobile and circulated among us.



*Pilgrims with Fr Charles Gauci, SDC Chaplain Australia and Archbishop Philip Wilson of Adelaide*

Benedict XVI's first remark was: "I thought a lot about you; I hope you were able to get a little sleep." At the Cuatro Vientos, during his homily at the closing Mass, he told us that we cannot live our faith alone. The Pope warned against the danger of individualism and invited us to follow Jesus in the communion of the Church, not alone, because of "the risk of never meeting Jesus Christ, or of ending up following a false image of him." He added that, "having faith means leaning on the faith of your brothers and sisters, and that your own faith in the same way serves as a support for that of others." The Pope urged us to "love the Church" concretely by inserting ourselves in "parishes, communities and movements", and "to participate in the Eucharist every Sunday, to approach the sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and to cultivate prayer and meditate on the Word of God." Benedict XVI insisted that this friendship with Jesus will also lead us to bear



*Street procession—Madrid*

witness to the faith in the different environments, including those where there is rejection and indifference. "It is not possible to meet Christ and not to introduce him to others." The world, the Pope stressed, "needs the witness of your faith; it certainly needs God." He exhorted us to be "disciples and missionaries of Christ in other lands and countries where there is a multitude of youth who aspire to great things and, glimpsing in their hearts the possibility of the most authentic values, do not let themselves be seduced by the false promises of a lifestyle without God."

**Continues on page 19**

# School Chaplaincy Program



*John Paul Grima*

As a young person I attended the Preca Centre activities. I know that my involvement in the program in my adolescent years had a formative affect on the values I now have as an adult. For me, a good analogy would be to think of what I gained from my experience with the program as a moral compass; helping me in my decision making even now, years later.

I now work as an Electorate Officer for Anthony Byrne MP, federal parliamentarian

in the outer South-East of Melbourne. In my experience in community engagement with schools, businesses, faith based and NFP organisations, I have seen how important it is to foster hope, strong values and community connections for young Australians.

Young people need positive role-models and strong ethics and values. Moreover, they need to develop skills and strategies to address the challenges that we all face.

There are some government programs that are fundamental to supporting this.

In particular, I would like to mention the School Chaplaincy Program and the Family Support Program.

The National School Chaplaincy Program commenced in 2007 and provides grants of up to \$20000 per year for schools to establish or expand school chaplaincy services. It is a voluntary program that assists school communities to support the wellbeing of their students, including strengthening values, providing greater pastoral care and enhancing engagement with the broader community.

Chaplains provide personal and religious advice, comfort and support to all students and staff, irrespective of their religious beliefs. The program funds both government and non-government schools.

In August 2010, the Government announced that a total of \$222 million would be provided for the program, extending services in all currently funded schools to December 2014 and expanding the program by up to 1000 additional schools.

It is also great to see the Government's Family Support Program continuing to assist at risk children and families in our community. Through this program, the Government funds community organisations to deliver services like parenting skills training, playgroups, relationship counselling and post-separation support.

One of the programs that provides support is the 'Christians Helping in Primary Schools' (CHIPS) which works to support a significant number of local families in the Outer South East of Melbourne.

The CHIPS organisation runs innovative programs such as 'Life Gets Better' camps for children and their carers who have experienced major grief, divorce or loss. Props such as the bright and witty puppets (pictured) are an integral part of these camps in conveying messages to the camp participants in a fun and understandable way.

It is great to see that the invaluable children and family programs such as the 'Life Gets Better' camps can continue to help families navigate transitions in life and strengthen their relationships.

For more information on the Chaplaincy program visit <http://bit.ly/h26dUY> and for Family Support Programme visit <http://bit.ly/q5tgMX>

John Paul Grima



*Sue Waddell, Eric Wieckmann, Sam Brown, Anthony Byrne MP and Cathy Wieckmann at the CHIPS launch*

**From page 17**

## **Some Final Reflections**

This World Youth Day was an unforgettable experience. Every pilgrim had the opportunity to strengthen one's faith and to realise that one is not alone in following Jesus Christ. You could also feel the universality of the catholic church, and appreciate the positive aspects of youth. It is not true that youth gather in large masses just to consume alcohol, drugs or to have sex. Someone said that only in wartime would youth gather in such large numbers. But this does not apply for World Youth Day! Two million young people

gathered in Madrid to celebrate their joy in following Jesus Christ. The fact that all the chants and noises that youth bring along with them were suspended during the moments of prayer, adoration and the celebration of the Eucharist showed how important this was for them .

This experience awakened in me many hopes for Jesus' Church. With the help of the Holy Spirit, this World Youth Day has given me the energy to join Pope Benedict XVI in continuing the evangelising spirit of the Church, delivering Jesus Christ to others who are searching for the Truth.

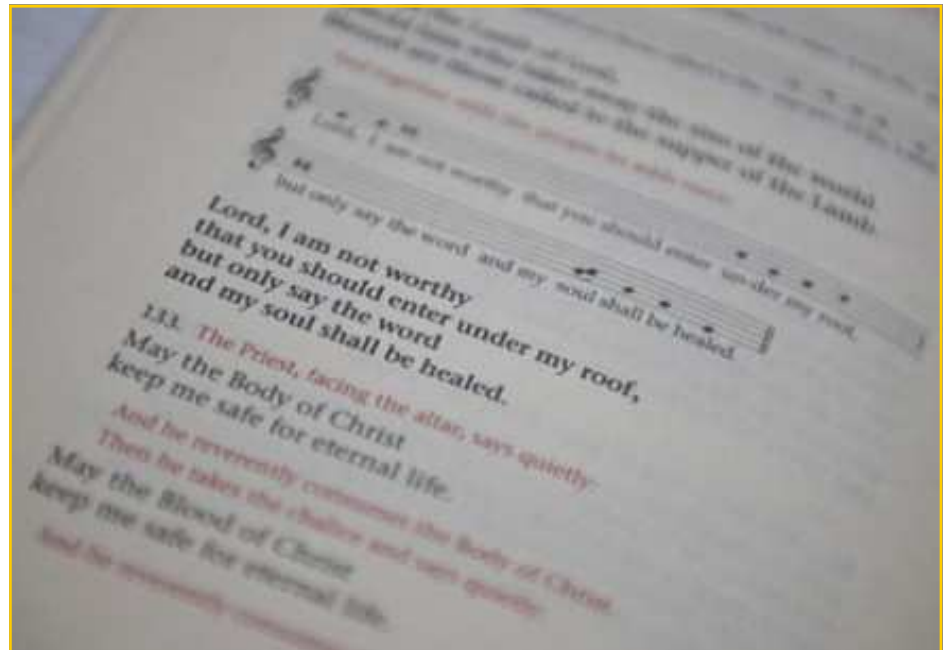
Christopher Grima sdc

# New Words for an Old Rite

A few years ago I was invited to preside at a Eucharist of farewell – not for a person but for a home. A community of sisters was bidding farewell to the house that had for quite some time been the centre of their life and mission as a religious institute. It had been a house of great hospitality for community events and for visiting sisters. But after much discussion and discernment the difficult decision had been made to sell up and move on. Understandably there were very mixed feelings about the decision.

I had the opportunity to share a brief reflection in the course of the Eucharist. A Latin phrase came to my mind from school days. It occurs at the end of a poem by Catullus in which he grieves the death of his brother. The final words of the poem are “*ave atque vale*” – “hail and farewell”. They express a melancholy goodbye. It struck me that these words could be reversed to suggest a more positive perspective on what was happening for the sisters – “farewell and hail” – farewell to a precious past, hail to a new future. What that future would be was quite unclear at the time but it still could be welcomed in hope.

What has prompted me to tell this story is that



*The new Mass translation (photograph courtesy of Mazur/catholicchurch.org.uk)*

Catholics in the English-speaking world are being asked this year to say their own collective “farewell and hail”. We’re in the process of bidding farewell to the translation of the prayers of the Mass that we have been using since 1975. These are prayers that we have become familiar with and know more or less by heart, prayers that are the only ones that church-goers under the age of about forty have ever known. And we’re being asked to welcome a new translation that has generated some controversy.

Why are we being presented with this new translation? The short answer to this question is that when the decision was made after Vatican II to celebrate the liturgy in people’s native language the translation into

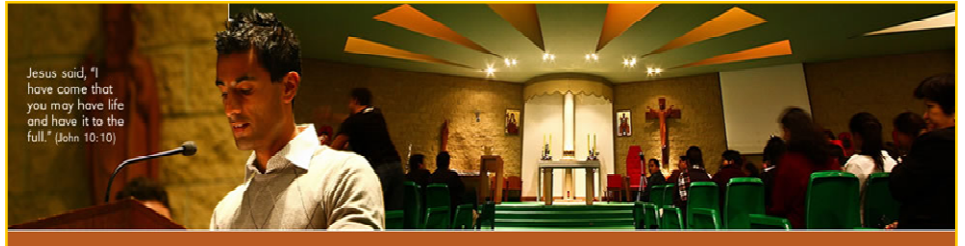
English was done remarkably quickly. It has served us well, but it was understood from the start that in due course it would need to be revised in the light of experience. It does have its deficiencies. In some respects this initial translation over-simplified and abbreviated the content of the original Latin texts. In particular many of the hints of scripture and other writings of the early church that are found in the Latin were not captured in the 1975 translation.

The revision process got under way in the early 1980s. After fifteen years of extensive consultation and final approval by all the English-speaking bishops’ conferences of the world, the final text was submitted to the Vatican in 1998. For

reasons that have not yet been made public this translation was not approved by Rome. Instead a new set of principles for translation was issued in 2001 (in a document known as *Liturgiam Authenticam* or LA for short) and the work began all over again. This time, it was decreed, the translation had to follow both the text and the form of the Latin more exactly. It was claimed that only this would do justice to the theological, biblical and literary richness of the ancient Roman prayers.

Those who will be most immediately and seriously affected are the priests who preside at Mass. They have the challenge of letting go of a translation that many have prayed on a daily basis for decades and of learning to pray a comprehensive set of new texts. One feature of these texts is that sentences are generally longer and more complex than before. By contrast, the texts which are prayed by everyone form a relatively small part of the missal, and some of these are either unchanged or only minimally different. For example, the *Lamb of God* is unaltered, and the *Holy, holy, holy Lord* has only one small change (from "God of power and might" to "God of hosts"). On the other hand there are significant changes to the *Gloria*, the *Creed*, and the *Memorial Acclamations* in the Eucharistic Prayer.

Those who have had the opportunity to study the new texts have mixed feelings.



Certainly the prayers reproduce the content and shape of the Latin originals more faithfully. From this point of view they are theologically richer and more fertile with images and a wider vocabulary. On this basis the claim can be made that the new translation as a whole is a significant improvement on the current one. Unfortunately it isn't easy to give short and simple examples of change for the better; it's the overall sense of fuller faith and deeper mystery that will appeal in time. There will be beauty and power to reward those who meditate on the texts.

Experience is showing that opinions are divided as to the merit of using expressions that are unfamiliar (words such as "oblation" or "inviolate" and most especially "consubstantial", for example). Some applaud this for establishing a more dignified tone, others deplore it as alienating, especially for young people.

The big question is, will this new translation enable us to pray better? Will it inspire us to praise and thank God more wholeheartedly and to live more lovingly with glad and generous hearts? Twelve months ago the editor of the Brisbane publication *Liturgy News*, Fr Tom Elich, concluded his editorial about

the new translation with these words: "*I do not think we can pretend before our people that we are getting lucid, poetic prayers. But this is what the Church has produced for our use at this time. . . Irrespective of any disagreements, we all seek to do the best for the Church and, at this juncture, that means enabling to retain its voice at prayer. We must learn how to use these words for our prayer – to praise, bless and thank God, to ask for God's help in our need. . . Whether we like it or not, such hard work will have the benefit of leading us more fully into the beauty of liturgical prayer.*" (March 2010, 40/1) It seems to me that only this kind of perspective – one which keeps the big picture in view – will enable us to appreciate the qualities of the new translation, on the one hand, and to take its deficiencies in our stride, on the other. With the whole church we pray, "Come Holy Spirit!", in the hope that this new translation will trigger not only a renewal in our shared life of our prayer and worship, but a fresh realisation of who we are as church and a new enthusiasm for our mission in the world.

Tom Knowles sss

# Saintly People

## Vale Sofia Cavalletti (1917 -2011)

### CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR & FOUNDER OF CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Sofia Cavalletti, a woman widely regarded as one of the greatest children's religious educators of all time, died in Rome on Tuesday 24 August, aged 94.

Cavalletti was an unlikely starter in the field that became her own. She had very little to do with children until her thirties, and her first love had been the Scriptures. The young Sofia Cavalletti studied at the Sapienza University under Eugenio Zolli – former chief rabbi of Rome during World War II, and a convert to Catholicism afterwards. Cavalletti was to become a first rate scholar of the Scriptures and of the Hebrew language. She was a little bemused when asked to prepare a child for his First Communion in 1954, but accepted the challenge. What astonished her was that the seven year old boy, Paolo, was profoundly moved by her presentation of the Creation stories from Genesis. He did not want to leave, even after two hours! The encounter alerted Cavalletti to the deep attraction children feel towards the Scriptures, simply presented.

Thereafter, Cavalletti began collaborating with one who was to work with her for the rest of her life in developing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – Gianna Gobbi, a professor of Montessori education. Together, they painstakingly adapted Montessori principles to the Religious education of children.



*Photo supplied by  
National Association of the Catechesis of  
the Good Shepherd, USA*

Three key themes were to characterise their approach: Scripture, Liturgy and Mystagogy. Both observed that children respond profoundly to the concrete realities and mystical meanings contained in the Scriptures and the Liturgy. Through these, they are able to enter into the mystery of Christ through the celebration of the Sacraments. Mystagogy refers to the way in which the Sacramental signs and symbols connect us to the life of Christ himself. The children seemed to understand this without being told.

Cavalletti was no starry-eyed theorist. She and Gobbi were determined to be led by the children and by the God who drew them to himself. They experimented with large numbers of materials over more than 50 years. Never would they only allow any of these works to take up space on their shelves if the children were not genuinely drawn to them and desired to use them to help in their reflections.

Those who knew Cavalletti were always struck by her evident holiness and simplicity. Despite the wide popularity of her work, she willingly and freely shared what she had, wanting only to see children come closer to their Lord. She perceived that she was receiving from them much more than she was giving. To the very end her long life, she remained capable of being enchanted by the discoveries of children encountering the love of their God.

Perhaps her most astonishing legacy is an enduring sense of unity in Christ. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has an extraordinary capacity to bring together people from many different walks of life and theological perspectives. Perhaps it is the concrete directness of the method, or the enchanting beauty of the materials. I have no doubt, however, that Cavalletti's own view would be much simpler – it is because the Good Shepherd himself goes out to all, seeking the lost and the lonely, and drawing them into his one flock. We can only now be grateful that this humble and talented woman has walked among us and drawn our gaze in wonder to the deepest love ever known – the Shepherd of our souls.

Dr Gerard O'Shea  
John Paul II Institute  
Director, Catechesis of the  
Good Shepherd, Victoria

Source: [www.cam.org.au](http://www.cam.org.au)





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