

The *Catholic Walker*

December 2025

The Magazine of The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc.



*The force of wind and waves
Looking towards the Cape Otway Lighthouse
Photo: Carmel Merrey*

From the Editors

In this issue of *The Catholic Walker* we conclude our celebration of 70 years of continuous publication of our magazine with an article from the Archives by one of our very regular and long-term contributors. Perusing back copies of the magazine to select an article from each decade has revealed the riches of reports, articles, photos and other contributions documenting the evolving history of our club. We hope it has brought you, our readers, happy reminiscing, or enjoyable reading of what club members got up to in bygone days!

We are grateful for the continuing support for *The Catholic Walker* from the CWCV Committee and members. This includes both financial support and the flow of contributions into our inboxes. Sometimes the abundance of material requires increasing the number of pages of an issue and holding over some reports to later editions. This has happened this month. Thank you to all contributors throughout 2025, and we look forward to next year's offerings.

We conclude this issue with Corrie van den Bosch's beautiful and thought-provoking reflection on 'An Adult Jesus at Christmas'. And we wish all readers a blessed Christmas, happy reading and wonderful walking in 2026!

Joan Kenny and Jan Wilkinson



December

17th Celinda Estallo
20th Doreen Tucker
24th Joan Kenny
31st Jim Conlon
Carole Donnell

Birthdays

January

3rd Julia Conlon
7th Frances Mongan
8th Barbara Nankervis
11th Ann Fellows-Smith
15th Margaret Cuthbertson
17th Dean Adams
22nd Bernard Jordan, Gillian Lang
31st Andrea Luscombe
Xuan Matheson

From the President

Welcome all to the December 2025 bumper edition of *The Catholic Walker*. A big thank you to all members who continue to provide plenty of material to our hard-working editors.

As another year comes to a close, it is a time to think back over our memories of the walks and social events we have attended, and what we have achieved in 2025, and give thanks to all those who made it possible.

Food for thought for 2026 is: how we as a club conduct our walks and the etiquette, we, as individuals, need to follow. Such as,

- Leaders' selection of a whip, and in some cases a buddy for the whip. The whip needs to be a person who has a reasonable level of fitness and ability to catch up and contact the rest of the group and leader if required. Definitely not the slowest walker in the group. The leader and whip should never be spread to a point where contact cannot be made.
- When the walkers at the front of a walk have a rest, wait for the slower walkers and whip to catch up. We need to ensure that everyone has a chance to have a rest prior to starting again.
- Walkers wishing to go ahead should always alert the leader, have another walker with them and wait for the rest of the group at any track intersections or at a point agreed to with the leader.

The upgrade to the CWCV website is progressing rapidly and we look forward to it being in full operation very soon. The cost to the club for the upgrade has been greatly reduced by the provision of a grant from BWV. As the website beds in, further details and instructions for its use will be provided.

Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe, happy and prosperous 2026. I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Malcom Merrey

From the Archives

Our final trip down memory lane during our year of celebrating 70 years of *The Catholic Walker* is on a trusty (and sometimes rusty) steed: the humble bicycle. Peter Wilson's amusing account of a journey via this mode of transport was first published in the April, 2012, edition of the magazine. For many of us who have ever perched ourselves on a bicycle seat, we can relate to the sentiments he expresses, especially his closing comment!

Bike Ride Upper Ferntree Gully to City 11 February [2012]

Peter Wilson

Cyclists: Tom Buykx, Brenda Coutinho, Laura Dargan, Tony Frigo, John Mader, Christina Warren, Annette Woodward and Peter Wilson.

It was a bit discouraging on arriving at the Upper Ferntree Gully train station to be greeted by low cloud over the hills and steady rain. There was some mutinous talk of catching the next train back to the city but the clouds lifted and the rain stopped. It was one of the showers predicted by the Weather Bureau and we weren't troubled by rain again for the rest of the day.

No names, no pack drill but there was quite some age difference between the oldest and youngest in the party, somewhere in the vicinity of 60 years. Not quite the same spread of ages of bikes but there was also a mix of 'old faithfuls' and more modern machines. The old faithfuls and the more modern machines were all equipped with plenty of gears but I suspect some were like mine with more wear on the lower gears than the high ones.



As Charles M. Schulz observed (probably in one of his Peanuts comic strips), 'Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use.'

One of the great things about bikes is that the mechanics are relatively simple and, well maintained, will keep on keeping on for many years, a bit like the riders really. So it was that we headed off on our ride, the well maintained 'mature aged' riders on their well-maintained machines with the younger riders making up a balanced party and helping to keep the 'average' age of bike and rider down a bit.

Mark Twain was apparently acquainted with bicycles. His advice was 'Get a bicycle. You will not regret it if you live.' Well, fortunately there were no life-threatening incidents on this ride and there were no regrets as we rolled along the various trails between Ferntree Gully and Jells Park in Glen Waverley where we paused for a well-earned lunch break.

Now, as the name Glen Waverley suggests, Jells Park is in a valley and the next suburb is Mount Waverley. There are some options as to which route to take from one to the other but they all involve a steep hill, so in the longstanding tradition of the CWCV, it was 'uphill after lunch'.

Ernest Hemingway must have ridden tracks like this to cause him to observe, 'It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them. Thus you remember them as they actually are, while in a motor car only a high hill impresses you, and you have no such accurate remembrance of country you have driven through as you gain by riding a bicycle.'

Well, we certainly sweated up the hill and then enjoyed the coasting down the other side as we made our way through various streets until we reached the Scotchmans Creek trail proper. From that point our route followed the Scotchmans Creek Trail to the Gardiners Creek Trail that in turn brought us to the Main Yarra Trail and into the city at Federation Square, a total ride of nearly fifty kilometres.

From Federation Square we disbursed through Flinders Street Station to our various train lines for the trip home. Ooohhh, what a relief to sit on a padded seat!

Bimbi Camp (Cape Otway)

Friday 12 to Wednesday 17 September

Margaret Cuthbertson and Bernadette Madden

A total of 27 members and three visitors attended the camp, but participants varied over the five days. On Friday evening from 5 o'clock participants dribbled in to Happy Hour in the Camp Kitchen, a large establishment with three large couches and a number of upright chairs. Experience taught us that the couches were very low to the ground and hard to get out of. Campers became very prompt in attending Happy Hour as they wished to avoid these couches, and many brought their own chairs as well! While the main focus of the meeting was to organise the walks for the following day, it was also a great opportunity to mix and chat.

Friday and Saturday night's walk's groupings were organised very quickly, as everyone knew what they wanted to do. But on Sunday night when Bern announced that due to deteriorating weather conditions, we were going to do Tuesday's walks on Monday, confusion started to set in!

A social activity was held outside on Monday, a balmy night, which meant we could sort the campers at the picnic tables into six groups. As they arrived, we started off with some Word Puzzles (Wordles), then headed into some Trivia. The table with the bank manager and accountant seemed to get the highest scores—some of them higher than the possible highest scores—some creative accounting there! Then there were some other puzzles. A good time was had by all.

The weather broke on Tuesday, with a shower or two, and it got steadily cooler in the afternoon. Happy Hour was simply a time to get together once more before we went our separate ways, and to say

thank-you to Bernadette for the time and effort she had put in to make the camp such a success.

That night the weather really showed us what it could do, with high winds and heavy rain squalls– but someone was sorting the weather, as it dawned sunny, allowing us to pack and leave without further rain.

A wonderful camp with a great group of people.



Station Beach walkers enjoying a Elevenes and a long rest on 'an enjoyable and sometimes challenging walk'. See pages 14-15

Photo: Peter Wilson

Apollo Bay Market and Marengo Beach Walk 1

Saturday

Margaret Cuthbertson

The Tesla Group (Joan, Marg (with Val), Maz and Maree) gathered at 9.30 and set off for the Saturday market with great expectations. On arrival the market was not immediately apparent. There were few stalls and none was very impressive. The hooded plover stall was interesting but a bit depressing.

So we adjourned for coffee. It was an occasion full of laughter, especially when it was explained to Maz that she was the back-up driver if Marg was too tired to drive home. Maz was a little appalled at this.

Then we drove to the bridge over the estuary. There were a couple of wooden viewing platforms, which we sampled to view the water birds. A sign informed us that the powers-that-be are busy 're-snagging' the estuary—putting back dead branches etc so birds would have somewhere to roost, feed and nest. Weird, huh?

We then got down to the business of walking and headed along the track to Marengo. About two-thirds of the way there was a look-out platform, which gave a lovely view of the bay, Apollo Bay village and Marengo. While we were there, a few familiar faces turned up coming from the other direction, so we had a little conversation with them before going our separate ways.

Arriving at Marengo we found another wooden platform with a seat just big enough for four people, with views of the beach. We were part way through our lunch when Alan rang offering to bring Tessie down to us. Marg instantly accepted, as she had had enough of this walking caper for the day. So we did an Alan shuffle (as opposed to a car shuffle?) taking him back to his group. After Marg finished her lunch she took Tessie back to the bridge, leaving the other three to walk back along the beach and investigate the large sand dumps. Earlier we had assumed that 'they' would flatten these out to make a flat beach, but we believe that 'they' are actually going to leave them as is to try and lessen the erosion of the dunes.

We returned to camp after a most entertaining day.

Apollo Bay Market and Marengo Beach Walk 2

Saturday

Alan Cuthbertson

Peter W (leader), Shirley, Tom, Rob, Mel, Adrian, Rose, Quintin and Alan.

We went to the market in Apollo Bay, but as explained elsewhere it was pretty boring. There was some interest in the stall showing the planned redevelopment of the fish market. We then headed along the coast road

towards Marengo with Peter as our nominal leader. We went past the fish shop at the end of the peninsula and generally agreed it was in need of redevelopment.

Along the beach we found piles of sand which had been placed on the beach, each the size of a large tip truck. We presumed the plan was for the sea to spread the sand, but we suspect it will just wash out to sea. Maybe it was intended as nesting sites for the hooded plover. We continued on to the Marengo caravan park where we found the large rusty tip truck used to transport the sand piles. The men were impressed.

We found a table for morning tea and were well entertained by four surfers waiting for 'the big one' about 100 metres off shore. They obviously knew where to wait because after five minutes waiting a big roller came in and brought them right in to shore. We could have done better in our youth, but were glad we were on dry land.

We headed off back to Apollo Bay with three of us going via the beach and rocks. It looked quite safe but some found that the black rocks were quite slippery.

After a brief car shuffle with the other group, we headed back to Apollo Bay where we sat next to a couple of tourists eating the famous scallop pies for \$15 each. They were not over-impressed, so we all bought coffee and assorted cakes instead before returning to camp.

Shelly Beach Loop Walk

Saturday

Words and photo Carmel Merrey

Lead by Bernadette, walkers were Pauline and Derek N, Peter R, Sophie, Carole, Malcom and Carmel.

We set off with overcast skies and misty rain and the weather fluctuated all day. Coats on, coats off, sun hat off, warm hat on. The weather wasn't the only fluctuation—we began with a descent towards the water (we could hear it before we could see it), but once we viewed the coast, we had to pause to admire the sprawling coastline. We all managed to cross the Elliot River



Elliot River crossing: now for the climb back to the clifftop!

stepping stones, which in fact were more boulder than stone. Here we all took a deep breath, dug in and began the 'steep' ascent, about 200 metres, which isn't all that high, but when it is over a short distance, it was a challenge. Going at our own pace, we made it and regrouped at the top. As this loop joined, in part, the Great Ocean Walk, we were able to make use of one of the camping areas for elevenses and use the well-designed and elevated composting toilet.

The vegetation was as changeable as the weather: low thick scrub to tall, beautiful trees. We had crashing waves, a variety of bird calls, babbling creek, swishing winds and bush silence. We had lush foliage, lichen and moss-covered rocks and branches, fungi of many varieties and beautiful ferns.

No whales, but a whale of a time!

Saturday and Sunday

Words Corrie van den Bosch

During our September Club Camp, three valiant women did a two day pack-carry on part of the Great Ocean Walk (GOW), from Milanesia Beach to Moonlight Head. Andrea and Corrie were very ably led by Jan who had the map, distances and how much climbing we would need to do. The info didn't include how much descending we needed to do before we could ascend the clifftop again, but whether up or down, the gradient was mostly steep!

Along the way we got many great lookout spots which gave us views of the sea and the dramatic coastline far below us, with bays and rugged cliffs outlined by white surf where the waves broke against the rocks and cliffs sending up fountains of seaspray. Again and again we scanned the waters below for a glimpse of a passing whale, but none obliged. Above the cliffs natural coastal bush covered the hills and mountains, and in contrast, once in a while we saw some lawn-like spring-green pasture of a farm tucked among the hills. Along the track, a variety of fungi and tiny white stars dotting black soil like stars in the night sky (I discovered later that they dropped down from flowering shrubs above us), pink stars somewhat larger and blooming close to the ground and some flowering wattle contributed to the interest. We didn't see the snake which another walker not far behind us saw.

We came across much evidence of recent wild weather in the many trees and branches lying across the track. Most of them were *Leptospermum laevigatum*, known as Coastal Tea Tree. Growing 3–5 metres tall and 2–4 metres wide, it forms a dense, spreading screen with twisting branches and grey-green narrow leaves. That description comes from Google and might stimulate your imagination to see us stepping over (seldom), crawling under, with or without packs, or weaving our way through, the myriads of branches of its dense canopy. All part of the fun of backpacking.

The first day we covered just over seven km, with 291 metres climbing (it felt like 400 metres). We camped at Ryan's Den, a beautiful campsite with a three-sided shelter, seats along two walls and a large table around which to prepare our meals and welcome our two fellow campers.



Our second day was 5.28 km, again with much steep up and down: 240m climbing, that felt like double! We reached Moonlight Head by 12.45pm, after an 8.30am start, feeling pretty pleased with ourselves. Then and there, we started to plot a return to do the next section of the GOW!

*Jan and Andrea on the hundred plus steps, with laden packs!
Photo: Corrie van den Bosch*



*Corrie admiring the view towards Moonlight Head,
the pack carry end destination!
Photo: Jan Wilkinson*

Bimbi Park to Cape Otway Lightstation

Sunday

Words Maree Slater, photo Joan Kenny

Six of us set off from Bimbi Park along the undulating country road, along the wide grassy Bracks Track and then through the scrubby track which leads into the Cape Otway Lightstation area. A very pleasant three km trail. However for four of us, nearing the end of the trail, it was transformed into something much more special. Rob and Joan saw a splash of brilliant, iridescent blue nestled in the scrub beside the track.



It was a beautiful blue wren, recently dead, as it was still so soft and delicate in our hands. None of us had ever held a blue wren. We were in absolute awe at this tiny lightweight creature. Because it had recently died we were able to hold it, look at the exquisite colouring, notice the intricate fine legs and truly marvel at this wonderful creature. Tom and I, Rob and Joan, placed it with tenderness and thanks as we cradled it back into Mother Earth.

We then continued to the Lightstation area, an amazing collection of historic houses and other buildings, which was paid entry. We decided we wouldn't go in, as it needed much more time. Some of us continued on part of the Great Ocean Walk track to get a glimpse of the Cape Otway lighthouse. Before retracing our steps to Bimbi Park, we explored the tiny historic cemetery.

See also the photo on page 40, and the colour image on the CWCV website

Bimbi Park and Return via Station Beach, Rainbow Falls and Cape Otway Cemetery

Sunday

Words Carole Donnell, photos Peter Wilson

The first joy of our Sunday walk was walking from Bimbi Park and back to Bimbi—all on foot—no car travel! Hooray! We set off on a well formed, narrow track. It was about 2.5 km to reach the impressive, isolated Station Beach.

We knew we were close when the crashing of waves could be heard and the track changed to a timber walkway. Station Beach is the first of the high wave and wind energy beaches west of Cape Otway. It is impressive and powerful—huge waves with plumes of white spray billowing and craggy bluffs at each end of the almost three km beach.

Once on the beach, we walked to the left following the sign to Rainbow Falls. Soft sand slowed us down. Fortunately, the strong wind at our backs helped our progress. Most of us reached the rocky bluff which hid the Falls from our view. Some of the group went around the bluff on the rocky reef, others climbed over it and some, knowing the return would be hard going, decided to head back. Shirley was one of these, and through example, led a small group of beach cleaners. Thanks Shirley! None of the group managed to reach the Falls! Many of us were grateful that a couple of the group took photos of this unique waterfall. The beach return had been difficult as it involved pushing against the fierce wind.

*Rainbow Falls -
View this image
in colour on the
CWCV website!*





Approaching Station Beach and the crashing waves

Unusually, the falls are fed by an underground spring which has been flowing for thousands of years. It is one of the few places where fresh water meets the sea. It makes this area deeply significant for the indigenous people. And it also explained why we had walked past a rusting windmill on the track above the beach. It is thought that three settlers had pumped water to their farms from Rainbow Falls.

Eleven hours and a long rest were needed before we started on the GOW track towards the historic Cape Otway cemetery and Lightstation. The track was well formed although in several places we had to navigate our way through, and past, fallen shrubs. Several of these were the Sallow Wattle. Lunch was at a scenic spot where we considered we possibly had a view of King Island. Refreshed by lunch we walked to the small historic cemetery. After spending time there most of us returned to Bimbi Park via Bracks Access Track. Thanks to Peter W for his usual splendid leadership and to Bernadette, our tail, for keeping a careful watch on our group of fourteen in what proved to be a wonderfully enjoyable, diverse and sometimes challenging, tiring walk.

Cemetery Walk

Sunday

Margaret Cuthbertson

Our group (Marg, Rose, Jane, Maz) drove two cars to the lighthouse car park, with the theory that we would meet up with the other Lighthouse group that were walking there, and would have extra spaces in case some wished to be driven home.

Rose had done a recce with Shirley and knew the way to the cemetery, so we started on that path. It started uphill (that's OK, downhill on the way back), but then we hit sets of stairs. Some were OK as Val could fit around them. But as some of you may have noticed, Val is quite wide in the beam and requires quite a bit of path! So for those steps Maz took her up the stairs and Rose gave Marg her arm. Then we were at the top and the whole reason for the uphill walk was revealed to be a lookout. It may have been an extensive lookout once but now was just a peek at the lighthouse through a hole in the bushes. We continued on the path and soon came to a very long set of stairs back down this hill! Fortunately, Val isn't too bad at going downhill. We noticed a flat path coming in from the left with no signage and wondered where that came from. Anyway, we proceeded to the cemetery and soon arrived there.

It was much smaller than we expected, with only four graves visible, but a sign explained that there were originally many more graves there but that sand had covered them. We pondered on how they got the bodies there, how much sand must have drifted and how high the infant mortality was in those early days of settlement. We had thought the other Lighthouse walking group may call in at the cemetery on their way to the Lighthouse but after half an hour decided that we must have missed them and set off back, not looking forward to THAT HILL!

After about five minutes we ran into Dean, Rob and Quintin and were absolutely delighted when Dean told us that we didn't have to go back over the big hill but could continue on the unnamed path—it went around the hill. Jane joined that group to walk back to Bimbi Park, while the other three continued back to the car park where we met up with Joan's group and drove home.

Parker Hill Long Walk

Monday

Words Quentin Tibballs, photo Jan Wilkinson

We were a band of 11 (Jan W – leader, Peter R, Dean, Carole, Malcolm and Carmel - whip, Harry, David (visitor), Derek and Pauline and myself, Quentin) that left Cape Otway Lighthouse carpark at around 9.15am on Monday with a little cloud, but mostly sunny, and with a light breeze.

Progress was initially east along the Great Ocean Walk (GOW) for about three km and leisurely, taking in the ocean views to Bass Strait and a foray down to Crayfish Bay and back, before arriving at Crayfish Bay Track. Here we commenced a short circuit walk of about three km walking along this track, Parker Hill Track, and returning to the lighthouse via the same stretch of GOW we had already covered.

Lunch was had at Parker Inlet at 12.00pm or so, and most took the opportunity for a little exploration as the spot was quite picturesque with the brackish water of Parker River, wide sand terraces and waves crashing into the surrounding rocks. Peter R walked upriver far enough to locate a waterfall.

The return was equally as leisurely, with a foray this time down to Point Franklin (500m), with arrival back at the lighthouse carpark at around 3 pm. The overall distance covered was about 13km with about 260m rise.

*Shady
avenue,
approaching
Parker Hill
campground*



Crayfish Bay Walk

Monday

Words Margaret Cuthbertson, photo Joan Kenny

Walkers: Marg, Joan, Maree, Maz, Jane, Sophie, Barbara and Brian.

As we drove from Bimbi Park toward the start of the walk at Crayfish Bay campsite car park, the flora changed and there was a whole heap of smaller wattle bushes in flower, and it looked spectacular.

At the car park we separated into two groups, mine and Peter Wilson's. Being the least well-prepared leader ever, I had to ask Bernadette which way to go and hope I could work it out after that! Anyway, we set off and walked along an old 4WD road. The gum trees beside us were delightfully gnarled. The road started going down and soon we could see the sea. We arrived at the Crayfish Bay Campsite, and I needed a short rest and the others went ahead, except for Maz. We saw two beautiful large seabirds soaring. No idea what they were but if I say sea eagles no one can contradict me! In the quiet we could also hear many small birds in the bushes.

The path led ever downhill to the intersection leading to Crayfish Bay. What a beautiful bay! Sophie, Barbara and Brian went down to explore. Jane went for a short explore along the cliff path and decided we should go a short way along for an amazing view of the bay. We were nearly to her vantage point when we saw other walkers coming along—it was the group doing the long walk! They told us we hadn't made it to Crayfish Bay yet, that was further on! After the other group went on, this very bad leader fractured the group still more. Joan and Maree walked on the cliff path towards Crayfish Bay while Jane, Maz and I went to Point Franklin where the others later joined us to have lunch.

The last part of the track down to the beach was quite narrow, steep and sandy and not really suitable for Val, so I hoped Alan's group



Margaret, Val and entourage on Crayfish Bay track

would arrive before I needed to leave. (They did and Alan carried Val to the top for me!)

Another beautiful bay was in front of us with views of the lighthouse and waves to watch. It never gets tiring watching the waves roll in, especially with an offshore breeze to make the spray stand up.

Peter's group arrived just as we were about to leave the beach and after some comparing of notes we headed off leaving them to have their lunch.

We then headed home to rest and recuperate after a wonderful walk!

Castle Cove lookout to Aire River

Tuesday

Words Rob Giebels

The forecast for the Apollo Bay area for Tuesday, the last day of our Bimbi Park five day camp, was to expect mixed sunshine, overcast skies and some rain showers. Although only 5.5 kilometres, the Castle Cove lookout to Aire River walk promised expansive views along the coast from a section of the Great Ocean Walk (GOW).

After a car drop-off, our party of seven was ready to start at 10am. We took in the panoramic views from the well-positioned timber lookout where many passing tourists spend their time taking photos. A U3A group from Apollo Bay was assembled to commence its botanical expedition in the proximity of the lookout. However, we were eager to commence our walk while the sun still shone brightly.

Wildlife sighting was limited to a feral cat sitting on the track some distance ahead of us (or did we glimpse the elusive black panther often reported living in the Victorian bush?) This section of the GOW sidles above the beach and under the magnificent eroded limestone cliffs, providing protection from the wind. The track undulated, with minor climbs made easier with timber slats over the predominantly sandy path, to several vantage points which provided extensive views over the coast and sea beyond.

A short cloud burst meant that we made use of our parkers before arriving at the now deserted overnight camping area uphill from the parking and picnic areas at Aire River, to settle down for lunch at noon under the protection of a shelter with table and seats. An entirely civilised end to an enjoyable walk.

Two cars had been left at the bridge and after a short drive back to Bimbi Park, we settled into a restful afternoon in our respective cabins.

Thanks to Malcom and Carmel for organising transport and Tom, Rose, Harry, Sophie, Alan and Corrie who shared the walk with me.

Cape Otway Lightstation

Tuesday

Words and photo Joan Kenny

The cost of admission to the Lightstation (\$17 for Seniors, if ticket purchased at Bimbi Park) seemed a disincentive for many of our group until the final full day, when about 10 of us decided not to miss the opportunity of visiting the precinct.

The Cape Otway Lighthouse is perched on the cliffs above where Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean collide. The oldest lighthouse in Victoria, it was built in 1848 after hundreds of lives had been lost in shipwrecks along the coast. The lighthouse was converted to electrical operation in 1939, and now a small, automated solar-powered beacon beams a light that can be seen 48 kms away.

The story of the building of the lighthouse, and the lives of lighthouse keepers and their families on the isolated station, is well told through videos, artifacts, static displays and guided tours. Some of our group climbed to the top of the lighthouse, then braved the strong winds and ventured out onto the balcony to take in the spectacular views along the coast and out to sea. Maz even made two circuits of the balcony!



A radar bunker provides startling information about German and Japanese enemy activity off Cape Otway during World War II.

An excellent café (only available to those with a ticket to the lightstation) added to the attraction of the site. After morning tea in a room overlooking the lighthouse, we agreed that the visit to Cape Otway Lightstation is well worth the entry fee!

Byers Back Track and The Tunnel

Sunday 31 August

Words Peter Wilson, photo Peter Naughtin

On the last day of winter Caroline, Harry, Rob, Peter N, Shirley and yours truly met briefly in Blackwood before driving a further 2.5 km to the start of our walk on Byers Back Track at Golden Point.

The Blackwood / Golden Point area has a history of gold mining. <https://www.blackwoodpublishing.com/home/history-of-blackwood-victoria/> tells us that *Gold was first found at Jacksons Creek, Golden Point, Mt Blackwood, Victoria, on Sunday 14th November 1854 by Harry Athorn and Harry Hider while filling their 'billy' with water to make a cup of tea and that in 1855, four years after gold was first discovered in Ballarat, Edward Hill found gold at Blackwood on January 4th 1855 at Ballan Flat which is on the Lerderderg River near the present day Blackwood Sports Ground. By the end of that year, the goldmining village of Blackwood, 85 km north-west of Melbourne, had 13,000 prospectors panning the creeks and sluicing the river banks and hillsides.*

The alluvial prospecting was followed by a period of mining in deep shafts to follow gold reefs but that also eventually ran its course, and Blackwood is now a small township of permanent residents and holiday homes, a couple of cafes and the historic Blackwood Hotel, dating back to when it was built in 1868. It is little more than a memory of the bustling settlement that existed in the late 1850s.

Two and a half kilometres from Blackwood, along the Golden Point Road brought us to the start of our walk along Byers Back Track. The Byres family, English migrants, were prominent in Blackwood during its settlement and the gold rush era. <https://www.blackwoodpublishing.com/byres-family-street-name-and-pitchfork-hill/#:~:text=Byres%20Road%20that%20comes%20down,of%20fresh%20clean%20drinking%20water> tells us that:

The Byres family had a great interest in gold mining in those early days. Byres water race that was used in the sluicing for gold ran from Simmons Reef for some fourteen miles down to 'Cane Saddle' which is between 'Break Neck' and 'O'Briens Crossing'. Water flowed very quickly through the race. It was a good supply of fresh clean drinking water.

The track now known as Byers Back Track (note the change in spelling of Byres to Byers) mostly follows the course of the old water race—a narrow channel carved into the hillside following the natural contours of the land. The channel is mostly filled in now and collapsed in some sections but generally makes for good walking on an easy gradient on the hillside high above the river. An occasional fallen tree across the track and some wet sections provided some challenges but were made up for by views of the river as well as the pink heath, wattle and hakea plants in bloom along the way.

Six kilometres from our starting point brought us to Gribble Track that leads steeply down the side of the valley to where the river used to flow around a spur in a long, almost circular bend in the river. During the Victorian gold rush miners blasted a tunnel through a ridge to divert the water to allow unimpeded access to the alluvial gold in that river bend.

Some made the trip down to the tunnel and then back up to our track for a well-earned lunch before we all retraced our steps along the six kilometres back to the cars at Golden Point and on to Blackwood for afternoon tea at the local café.



Shirley and Rob find a way around one of the 'occasional' fallen trees

MCG Parklands to Australian Catholic University Thursday 4 September

Words Carole Donnell, photo Joan Kenny

*W*hen communicating with the walkers, the arrangements for the day included a reminder to come prepared for a day of sun, cold, wind and rain. It proved to be salutary. However, the changeable weather did little to impact on our enjoyment of the day and the joy of some wonderful, unexpected surprises.

From Richmond Station we walked to the MCG Parklands and up some stairs to look at some of the 'Parade of Champions' Statues - the work of sculptor Louis Laumen. Born in the Netherlands Louis arrived in Australia with his family when he was two. A professional artist since 1995 he is well-known for his sculptures of elite sports men and women, war time heroes as well as significant public and religious figures. Louis is the principal artist for the larger-than-life bronze sculptures of elite sportspeople on the concourse of the MCG. Looking closely at the striking sculptures we appreciated the details of their features and the fluidity and movement of their bodies. The sculptures included Ron Barassi, Sir Don Bradman, Betty Cuthbert, Shirley Strickland, Shane Warne and Jim Stynes. Laumen's skill to craft an accurate likeness to the person was evident— many were identifiable from a distance.

The Fitzroy Gardens was a delight with its avenues of elms, rafts of daffodils, the historic Sinclair's cottage, the Fairy Tree and the Tudor Village all visited or revisited before coffee and a treat at the KereKere Green cafe. When we were ready to leave, the heavens opened and a heavy shower delayed our entry to the stunning display of pink cyclamens, purple and grey cinerarias, as well as hanging baskets. We were surrounded by colour and beauty. When the rain eased, we continued to the dolphin fountain which caught our attention with its interesting array of sea creatures and six small owls!

Waiting to cross Victoria Parade, we tried deciphering the names of Catholic saints displayed on the ACU building. It was tricky as only half of each letter is visible.



We arrived in Brunswick Street Fitzroy at the entrance to Australian Catholic University where there's a completely different Louis Laumen sculpture. Named the St. Mary of the Cross Square, located opposite Mary's birthplace, sitting on a bench is a contemplative, young woman gazing into the distance. She holds a book and has a peace dove beside her. Leading to and from the sculpture are pavers on which is printed the most significant events of Mary McKillop's life. Laumen depicts Mary as a young teacher showing his sensitivity to the context of

this setting - a place where young people are embarking on a career.

The Uni has more than 20 sculptures in different parts of the building. We first viewed Guy Boyd's **The Deposition**. We all sat silently taking in this monumental and powerful work that profoundly expresses the raw agony of the crucifixion. A very different work found at the entrance to the Raheen Library is **Yolngu Angel** carved by First Nation's artist Guykuda Mununggurr. He works with bush timber sourced near Arnhem Land. In the new St. Teresa of Kolkata building we found a large bronze bust of **Mother Teresa** by Maudie Brady. Our visitor, Liz, coming from India, was thrilled. Liz wanted to send some photos to her mother, who met Mother Teresa, with Liz when Liz was a two-year old toddler. Whilst this was happening, a couple of people approached us. As we chatted we found we were speaking with Caroline Field, the curator of the ACU Art collection and her friend. After explaining Liz's connection and that we were members of the CWCV Caroline offered to take us on a tour of art works on the Sixth Floor. What a 'God incidence'!

She took us to see three modern sculptures all situated on the balcony with plantings to enhance the sculptures. We then viewed some other precious art works and some paintings in the staff section of ACU. At the cafe, where we had lunch, we spoke of the unexpected blessings of a day rich in beauty, new experiences, companionship and learning. Thanks to our visitor Liz for joining us: Joan, Quintin, Teresa, Carmel, Malcom, Barbara N, Maree and Rob. As we headed for Parliament Station, we were grateful for our shared appreciation of nature and fascinating, new art.

Tree Planting for the Regent Honeyeater Project 27-28 September

Tom Buykx

*E*arly in September an email went out to all CWCV members with details of the Club's proposed participation in the Project's 2025 planting program. Participation was also promoted during the Bindi Park camp.

The location for planting was in the Winton Wetlands, a little out of Benalla, which used to be Lake Mokoan. Since this (artificial) lake was drained, being useless for its intended irrigation purposes, a re-vegetation program is underway. RHP propagates seedlings from locally sourced seeds of native trees and plants, and organises four or five planting weekends in August/September each year. CWCV usually participates in one of them.

On Friday, 26 September, three members travelled to Benalla, Bernadette, Corrie and I, using accommodation in the caravan park and the Girl Guides hall. On Saturday we went out to the lake's dis-used dam wall to meet Andie Guerin, the RHP organiser, and the other planters: local, country and metropolitan people with whom it is a pleasure to work. They included Benalla based CWCV member, John Lane. A little further was the planting area where we were equipped with wheelbarrows, mattocks, trowels, stakes, and trays of well grown seedlings, mostly eucalypts. We were introduced to Country and the requirements and risks (snakes amongst them, and we did see one later) of the work.

Scattered over the one-time lakebed is some shrubby re-growth. Next to many of these bushes we found a patch of cleared ground and a wire plant guard. Then it was a matter of making a hole in that cleared patch of ground with the mattock, planting a seedling and providing it protection against wildlife by staking the wire guard around it. Simple work, really. We worked in teams of three or four, alternating the work. With breaks for morning and afternoon tea and BYO lunch (coffee, tea etc provided) we worked until a bit after four o'clock.

Back in Benalla Corrie and I enjoyed hospitality (and showers) at Susie's. The RHP provided all planters with dinner in the Benalla Bowling Club, a very sociable evening.

We returned to the Wetlands on Sunday morning and continued planting near where we had left off on Saturday. Work finished about one o'clock. The newly planted trees will be watered in the next few days. On our way back we detoured to an area that had been planted in 2019 to see trees now up to four metres tall. A most encouraging and satisfying result of the RHP's work. Andie also showed us aerial photography of the Benalla-Lurg-Winton Wetlands area covered by RHP, very, very impressive indeed!

We then went to Zeus in Benalla, where we had lunch, again courtesy of RHP. And then Corrie got me home safely.

So that was another tree planting weekend, as enjoyable as the others I, and the other CWCV members, have participated in. If only we could get more members participating in this beneficial and, again, enjoyable work. You'll find more information and, I trust, inspiration at:

regenthoney@outlook.com.

New Member

A warm welcome to a very enthusiastic new member, Rose Knauth.

Many of us have enjoyed your company on recent activities, Rose, and we look forward to walking with you in the future.



Kananook Creek -Frankston Beach - Seaford Sunday 28 September

Words Carole Donnell, photo Peter Wilson

*F*ourteen of us gathered in Seaford to walk part of the Kananook Creek Trail - a trail that weaves its way from the Seaford wetlands to the Frankston Foreshore and which received Land for Wildlife Status in 1996. For the original custodians of the land - the Bunurong people - this area provided abundant food and was rich in animal and plant life. Unfortunately, the area was greatly disturbed and compromised by the claiming of land for agriculture by white settlers in the late 1800's. Thankfully, for over 60 years the Frankston Council and the Kananook Creek Association have worked systematically to restore the creek. Today it is much healthier and is once again a haven for wildlife with a large number of native animals and over 200 indigenous plants being recorded in the Reserve. Personal connections with this urban haven emerged when we met. We learned Rob had worked in the restoration of the creek, Shirley had happy childhood memories of the family shack beside the creek and I had grown to love the area when I worked in the Seaford/Carrum Downs Parish.

The trail makes its way mostly through coastal bushland with occasional glimpses of the creek. It wasn't long before we were aware of the peace and tranquility of the area. The flowering coastal tea trees and the wattles added to our enjoyment of this hidden urban gem.

After crossing Nepean Highway, we walked along the Frankston beach enjoying the beauty of the water, waves and view of Olivers Hill. Leaving the beach at the Frankston Life Saving Club we returned to the Kananook Creek Trail. In this section homes are on each side of the Creek. However, the track is wide and there's an abundance of trees and shrubs that help retain a sense of quiet and peace. Lunch enjoyed beside the creek was accompanied by a very noisy cacophony of wattle birds.

We completed this circuit walk via the Seaford Foreshore Reserve, a five km strip of remnant coastal vegetation with 50 hectares of the finest banksia woodland in Melbourne. It is a vital habitat for a large number of birds and reptiles. We arrived back in Seaford with ample time to enjoy afternoon tea and engaging conversation at the quirky 18 Eightyeight cafe. My thanks to Shirley and Peter W, Marg and Peter C, Joan, Quintin, Caroline, Frances, Mary, Rob, Lily, Vanna and Robyn (visitor) for their company and obvious appreciation of this area of natural beauty with its quiet charm and rich diversity.



Returning to Seaford along a shady, sandy coastal track



*Wanda Fitzgerald's sister,
Sophie, died in September.
Please remember Wanda
and her family in your
prayers.*

Season of Creation Retreat

Caroline Vaitkunas

*I*t's been many years since we had a retreat, so taking up the suggestion of a couple of club members to resurrect the experience, Corrie van den Bosch, our Pastoral Support person, led a Season of Creation retreat day at the Janssen Spirituality Centre in Boronia on Friday 3 October.

The Janssen Spirituality Centre is a work of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) devoted among other activities to peace and harmony through prayer and meditation, and the promotion of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. It was an excellent venue for the retreat during which 10 participants were invited to reflect on material that was both deeply personal and communal. The Janssen Spirituality Centre is set in a large garden with views of the Dandenong Ranges. The nearby Blind Creek Trail also provided a beautiful bush setting for reflective walks between sessions. Corrie continues a long association with the Janssen Spirituality Centre.

The Season of Creation is a month-long global event during which Catholics join the worldwide community of Christians to pray for the care of creation. It is a celebration of our relationship with God our Creator and all creation, that can help us reflect on the holy ground of where we are and for us as walkers, our love for the bush. The Season of Creation concludes on 4 October, the Feast Day of the St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology whom Pope Francis took as his guide and inspiration. Pope Francis said St Francis 'was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.' *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis 2015.

A pilgrimage can be an outer journey, an inner one, or both. The pilgrim journey calls for openness and attentiveness and Corrie's first session invited reflection on the questions, 'What do you want? Or What do you seek? What is the deep desire of your heart?' based on Jesus' question to the disciples, 'What are you looking for?' (John 1:33-39). Following quiet time to sit with these questions, participants shared beautiful, enriching insights grounded in life's experiences.

Following a fabulous morning tea provided by Corrie, the next session's question was: Who am I really – within the context of the evolving Cosmos? Corrie led us on a guided meditation back to God before creation, the beginning of creation and its stages of evolution until we human beings came to be - with the capacity to reflect, to know and to know that we know. Over past decades humankind has been blessed to come to know so much more about the 14.1-billion-year-old universe. Expanding our thinking about the presence of God in this vast story and our evolving place in it, can make a big difference to how we might live in these turbulent social and ecological times. This year the Church marks the Jubilee Year of Hope, a time for reawakening and renewal as Pilgrims of Hope.

After lunch we gathered for further sharing and a session about the way of the heart. A poem from the Vedic tradition was shared that speaks of the lotus flower as an image of a small shrine in the centre of the body containing the sacred One within whom the whole universe dwells. Following a period of silence participants spoke of being attentive to the big and the miniature, in the marvels of all creation and God's working in our lives to help bring it all home.

Lastly, Corrie shared two practices to help develop our awareness 'to dwell with the One who dwells within our heart;' Conscious labour that is, being mindfully present and giving ourselves for the good of the other and the good of the whole. Our final prayer was a paraphrase of Psalm 144, 'Blessed are you, O Radiant One, You who are hidden within our hearts, even as we are hidden within your Heart!'

Thank you Corrie for all you shared, your deep listening and wonderful facilitation of our retreat day.

~~~~~

## Reports in the next issue:

Sherbrooke Forest, Buttongrass and Mt Cannibal Walks, Potter Museum, McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery, Andrews Hill, Gellibrand Hill, Jumping Creek Reserve, Bike Ride along Merri Creek to Coburg and Return and more!

Thanks to the writers of these reports which have been held over until the February 2026 issue.



# *Visit to St Patrick's Cathedral*

## *Wednesday 14 September*

*Words Joan Kenny, photo Peter Cosgrave*

**W**e gathered by the larger-than-life statue of Archbishop Daniel Mannix in the forecourt of the Cathedral. Mannix was a familiar figure to the people of Kew and East Melbourne, as he walked many mornings from his residence at Raheen in Kew to the Cathedral. And he is a significant person in the creation of St Patrick's. But the story of this building and the site on which it stands goes back well before the third Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne.

The beautiful Aboriginal stone inlay in the forecourt depicts the Creator Spirit, who is a continuing source of life in both Aboriginal and Christian spiritual traditions. A gift of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne (ACMM), the inlay is an acknowledgement of the thousands on years of Aboriginal custodianship of the land on which the cathedral sits.



St Patrick's Cathedral was designed by an English architect, William Wardell, who arrived in Melbourne at the height of the Gold Rushes in 1858, and was almost immediately engaged as its architect. The Cathedral is built in the Gothic Revival style, of local basalt (bluestone), a sombre dark material. After entering the Cathedral, it took a few moments for our eyes to adjust to the glorious light-filled interior.

*St Patrick's, Pilgrim Place,  
Place of worship, and  
Architectural gem.*



From a position half way down the central aisle of the Cathedral we took in some of the beautiful features of this place of worship and teaching: the magnificent West Window (depicting the Ascension), the light from the lovely yellow and pink glass of the nave windows, the carved timber angels which support the hammer beams of the nave roof, the twelve massive pillars (many displaying brass plaques naming donors, including small country parishes), the original altar and the post-Vatican II altar. And more!

Plaques recording the stories of Melbourne's previous Catholic archbishops attracted our attention, before we moved around the 'ambulatory', viewing the seven chapels grouped in a semi-circle around the sanctuary. The central chapel, the Ladye Chapel, is the largest and beautifully decorated with Marian symbols and stained glass; this chapel had special significance for Wardell because of his special devotion to Our Blessed Lady.

Before leaving the building, we paused at the Aboriginal Message Stick near the South Door (sadly in an 'out-of-the way', poorly-lit area). This item depicts symbols of Aboriginal Catholic Communities which were sent to the second Aboriginal Mass, held in Melbourne in 1993, and deposited in the Cathedral by the ACMM.

After looking at some sculptures and the Waterway leading up to the South door, a few of us visited the Cathedral shop and then joined the others at 'Heaven on the Hill', the social enterprise coffee van outside St Peter's Anglican Church, Eastern Hill. Coffees were welcome, and also the chance to sit down. Peter Cos highly recommends the pies sold at the van!

Then followed a brief visit to the lovely 1846 St Peter's Anglican Church (with a beautiful small chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Walsingham), and also to St Peter's Bookroom. A short walk along Albert St brought us to a cafeteria in the Orica Building.

Thanks to Peter Cosgrave for his superb photos of St Patrick's Cathedral, a selection of which is on the club website, and to the other five who joined me for a visit to this 'designated Pilgrim Place' during the 2025 Jubilee Year.

# *The Maribyrnong River Trails*

## *Wednesday 1 October*

*Words Tom Buykx, photo Peter Cosgrave*

*I*n what used to be an industrial part of Melbourne, there are now parks, residential developments, and walking/cycling tracks, and, of course, river and City views.

We met at the Elizabeth/Flinders Streets intersection in the City and took tram 57 to Maribyrnong, alighting at stop 41, near the left bank of the river. 'We' were Marg and Peter Cos, Quintin , prospective member Rose K and leader Tom, setting off on our walk about 10.15 a.m.

Via Wood St we went down to the walking/cycling track along the river, going downstream. There is much parkland here and further on a golf course, in flat country. The track then goes up into a suburban street and beside the bluestone boundary wall of Flemington Racecourse. Some interesting and fancy domestic architecture here. The street (sorry, it is actually a Parade: Fisher Parade) then descends to and crosses the river. We did that too and then turned upstream.

Here we moved away from the river a bit to follow the path between a large luxurious residential estate on our left and an artificial lake linked to the river on our right. There was much to be admired, wondered at and talked about: architecture, gardens, and birdlife near and on the lake. In this interesting area we had our elevenses. Apropos the birdlife, during the walk we saw swans, different cormorants, a darter, swamphens, coots, herons, mudlarks, magpies, and noisy miners (and birds we didn't know).

The track rejoined the riverside track near the information panel about Jack's Magazine and canal. That magazine, built in 1878, was a storage for the explosives used for gold mining and other purposes. The buildings are solid bluestone, surrounded by ten metre high earth mounds, and the whole 12ha complex has a high bluestone perimeter wall. Since 2015 it is managed by Working Heritage Victoria and is open to the public. Hint, hint for a future walks program.

A little further a small rotunda commemorates several Irish pioneer women, their names set in a mosaic in the floor. Here we met Bernard and Ben who had come down from Raleigh Road, as arranged. Continuing upstream, we came to Coulson Gardens with picnic shelter and tables, a good place for lunch. While munching, we watched some young people on the footpath decorating it, protected by shelters. I gathered it is a project by the local council.



*Checking the historic flood marker*

When we continued our walk, we soon came to a tall upright pipe besides the path on which the levels of historic floods are marked. The path is about 1.5m above the river's water level, and the highest flood mark is a bit more than 2m above the path. Add that up and then imagine a flood like that. Further upstream we crossed the footbridge below Afton Street and turned downstream. The path here is lined by palms and eucalypts alternating. Many trees have a guard below which is a plaque naming a naval vessel lost in war, but it does not say whether it was a RN or RAN ship.

Close to the end of our walk, we passed a stretch of earthen terraces, which I believe were for the spectators of the boat races on the river. We finished our walk after refreshments in the Boathouse café. My thanks to the good company on this walk, and to Peter for the photos.

~~~~~

Federation Weekend – Halls Gap *Saturday-Sunday 11-12 October*

Words Bernadette Madden

The Federation weekend was held in Halls Gap this year with walks in the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. It was an amazing achievement for the local walking club with assistance from Boroondara Club. The walks focussed on the section of the park which has recovered (at least in part) from the bushfires which ravaged the area a few months ago. Twenty-three walks were offered over the two days with variety to suit everyone – including photographers and artists. Our club was well represented by Jan W, Greg, Wanda, Adrian, Mel, Carole, Margaret and Peter Cos, and myself. Joan and Maree also enjoyed the weekend in the area doing their own version of ‘Fed walks’.

The weekend was an opportunity to enjoy the bush in the company of other like-minded people and to share stories across clubs. Next year the weekend moves to Portland (10–11 October), so mark the date in your diary. The Great South West Walkers told us that they are preparing a Great South West program.

Seek and ye shall find? Or Curiouser and curiouser...

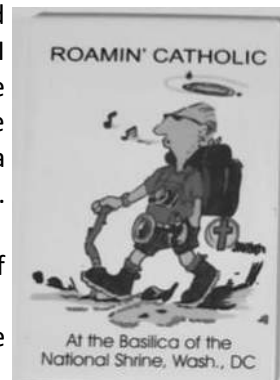
Rose Thomas

An unsigned cartoon (‘Roamin’ Catholic’) has appeared in several past issues of *The Catholic Walker*.

You may recall a request in the October 2025 issue (page 21) for readers to enlighten our editors, if possible, as to the origin and creator of said cartoon. When I read that request, I was immediately galvanised into action, searched the web and located this colour version on ebay. The description reads: ‘ROAMIN’ CATHOLIC Basilica National Shrine D C. Fridge Magnet Souvenir 2”x 3”. Price \$8.72, Shipping \$12.85.’

However, we are none the wiser as to the creator of this version or the original one.

If anyone else can shed some light on this we are keen to hear from you!



An Adult Jesus at Christmas

Corrie van den Bosch

December begins with the first week of Advent. Everywhere we see reminders that Christmas is near and to prepare for it. That's also what Advent is about: prepare, for the Lord is near. The question is: What are we preparing for as Christmas approaches? Or, more to the point *who* are we preparing for?

Recently, Peter Matheson mentioned that he was reading a book entitled *An Adult Jesus at Christmas*, by Raymond Brown. What? An adult Jesus at Christmas? Isn't Christmas about celebrating the birth of baby Jesus? That's what we assume, because our churches and Christmas decorations include the scene of Bethlehem, with Mary, Joseph, shepherds and kings gathered around a crib in which lies the newborn Jesus.

Recently, I celebrated my 86th birthday. Did I see myself as a newborn in that celebration? Of course not. Rather, we celebrated all I have become through all the experiences of those years, the people and places that have been part of that journey, with all its ups and downs, successes and failures, joys, hopes, losses, etc. etc. that have brought me to this moment, that have made me the woman I am today. It was a celebration of joy and gratitude.

What if Christmas, the birthday of Jesus, were about celebrating all that Jesus became during his life on earth, his death and resurrection? We would then need to reflect on who he became, as we can know it from the Gospels, from our teachers and our liturgical celebrations of the seasons of his life, and from our reflection on our own experiences in the light of his teachings.

Jesus is called the Christ, the title, 'Christ', means the Anointed One. At the beginning of his public life, Jesus claimed that title when he read from the Prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth:

"The spirit of the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor,
to bring release to captives,
sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord." (Luke 4: 16-22)

At the end of that reading he says to those present: “This day this text is being fulfilled even as you listen.” That was his mission, the reason he was born as one of us. That’s what salvation is about.

We call ourselves Christians. As followers of Christ, we are also anointed ones. Our baptism and confirmation liturgies both include the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This means we are anointed to **be Christ** in the world of our day. The question for us then becomes: Are we good news for the poor? Liberty for those who are oppressed? Sight to the blind? Strength to the lame? Freedom for prisoners? Do our lives proclaim a year of God’s favour for our world?

Most of us are so familiar with the stories of the Gospels that we miss just how radical Jesus was, both in the way he lived and in what he taught. He turned all our expectations and values upside down. He was not on about a love of power. Rather, he lived the power of love. And the power of love works miracles.

The power of love Jesus lived by tells us that we are not merely individuals, on about myself, my family, my tribe. He tells us we are all parts of and participants in something much greater: *a community in which everyone belongs equally*, in which each contributes his or her unique giftedness for the flourishing of the whole community, of humanity, of life and of the Earth. As we grow into the power of love, we become nourishment for one another; our lives become a living Eucharist: my body given for you, my life poured out for you – and yours for me, for us, for all.

Imagine our world if we lived and worked towards that vision of what we could be! We certainly wouldn’t have the disparity between rich and poor; we wouldn’t have a world with at least 42 million refugees and we wouldn’t have such harsh policies that keep refugees homeless. Our governments would govern with justice and care for every person within their jurisdictions and for the environment that sustains life. To govern in that way is to **serve** for the flourishing of all.

This is the vision for which God took on our limited human condition in Jesus of Nazareth, whose birth we prepare for during Advent and celebrate at Christmas. 2000 years later we are still a long way from realising this vision. We ‘get’ it in miniature – in our love and care for our spouse, our children,

our grandchildren, for all who are part of our extended family and community. We experience it in our walking club in the friendship and care we have for one another, in contributing to the life of our club in various ways. We see it in action in the work Theresa and Joan and their co-workers undertook earlier this year, when they helped to welcome and settle a refugee family in Australia. We see it in Alan in his continuing activism on behalf of the environment.

As we prepare for Christmas, let us reflect on the vision for which Christ came into our world. Let us ask his Spirit to enlarge our vision of who belongs to us and to whom we belong. Living that vision in the values we hold and in all our relationships, would be the best Christmas gift we can give to the adult Jesus on his birthday, and also to our fractured, broken world. None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something, and when we do that *something* together, we can change the world.

This is my prayer for all of us during this Advent and Christmas season.



CWCV Annual Christmas Party

Saturday 13 December 2025,
Midday until 4:00 pm

Shirley and Peter Wilson's, 79 Valley Parade, Glen Iris

BYO food, drink, plates, cutlery, glasses, chair.
BBQ Available

Christmas raffle - lots of prizes

RSVP Margaret Cos- 0425 715 416 or Peter - 0413 403 220

Pick up from Glen Iris Station, and return later, can be arranged for
anyone travelling by public transport



**THE CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB
OF VICTORIA INC.
Woiworung Country
PO Box 476, Eltham VIC 3095**

Editors: Joan Kenny and Janet Wilkinson

In this issue

- 4 Bike Ride: Upper Ferntree Gully to the City
- 6 Bimbi Camp (Cape Otway)
- 22 Byers Back Track and The Tunnel
- 24 MCG Parklands to ACU
- 26 Tree Planting for the Regent Honeyeater Project
- 28 Kananook Creek–Frankston Beach–Seaford
- 30 Season of Creation Retreat
- 32 Visit to St Patrick’s Cathedral
- 34 The Maribyrnong River Trails
- 36 Federation Weekend–Halls Gap



*Beauty in a little dead bird
Photo: Joan Kenny
See page 13*

- 37 An Adult Jesus at Christmas
- 39 CWCV Christmas Party

WEBPAGE:

40 <https://www.catholicwalkingclubvic.org.au/WP/wordpress/>