



From the Principal

John M Freeman
Principal



Bushfires

Please keep in your prayers all those who have been affected by bushfires recently.

As a school we are planning fundraising activities to raise funds in support of those who need assistance. More details will be outlined in future Newsletters.

We also express our gratitude to those who have and continue to volunteer their time and energy to support our communities.

Commissioning Mass

I want to thank everyone in attendance at our Commissioning Mass, which was conducted last Thursday, for their reverent and respectful participation. This is a very important part of our school tradition. It is very good that we can gather to share in the Eucharistic Sacrament and also formally welcome new students and staff as well as acknowledge the appointment of students to significant leadership roles within our school.

The Champagnat Centre was the venue for our liturgical celebration and there was more than 1400 people in attendance, including staff, students, parents and many other guests. I want formally extend my thanks to everyone who worked so hard to ensure the success of this significant liturgical celebration, but in particular Mr Chris Roga for his leadership in this celebration.

I must also thank our celebrants – Father James Fernandez for celebrating and Monsignor Allman and Fr Harry Dyer for con-celebrating. We are very blessed and privileged to have such significant support from our Parish Priests.



Swimming Sports

Congratulations to Champagnat House at Kildare Campus and MacKillop House at St Paul's Campus on their success at the Swimming Carnivals. Attendance and participation levels were very high. Thanks to all involved and congratulations to Ms Nikki Schroeter and Mr Dwayne Tibballs for their organisation of both days. Results are in the sports section of this newsletter.



Ash Wednesday

Thank you to our Alex Rathbone and the Year 12 YME students for their work in both preparing and leading our Ash Wednesday liturgies at both campuses this week.

The organisation of the liturgies was impressive, but what really had great impact was hearing and seeing students give witness to their faith, particularly those who provided personal reflections – Lori Scholtes and Julien Alessi. Their message was clear, that during the next 40 days our focus should not necessarily be about what can be foregone, but what simple things can we do to make life better for others.

Student News

Congratulation to Nathanael Duffy who has made it through to the Semi Finals of the Melbourne Youth Orchestra Virtuosity Concerto Competition for 2019.

He is one of only eight finalists from across Victoria who has made it this far. The semi-finals will be held on Sunday the 28th of April. Please cross as many appendages and break as many legs as you can for him as he prepares for this final round, it is a great achievement to have made it this far.

Conviction of Cardinal Pell

You are no doubt well aware of the recent conviction of Cardinal Pell, which relates to sexual abuse of children. Cardinal Pell's lawyers have lodged an appeal. Our legal system is based on the premise that all are equal in the eyes of the law. Victims are entitled to bring forward their grievances and have them considered in our courts. Those charged are entitled to defend themselves, and to appeal their conviction if such an avenue exists.

At present, the Church is understandably under close scrutiny, due to this case and the Conference which recently concluded in Rome. We need to hold in the forefront of our minds all who have been abused over the years. Within the Church, it is our responsibility to remember them and all concerned in prayer, to do whatever is right and just in reparation.

Attached to this newsletter are: A statement from Archbishop Mark Coleridge, on behalf of Australian Bishops; and an article by Fr Frank Brennan SJ, that was published in Eureka Street.

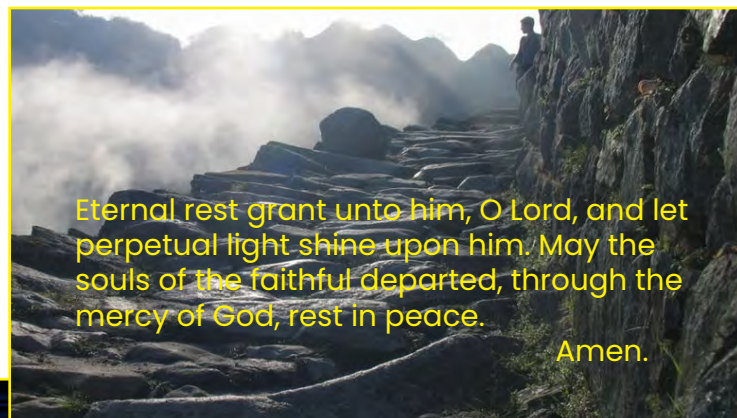
National Redress Scheme

Please find attached to this Newsletter a very important communication from the Marist Brothers Provincial, Brother Peter Carroll, in regards to the National Redress Scheme for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

Condolences

Finally, can I please ask that you remember in your prayers the family of:

Allyn Bettridge who passed away recently. Allyn is Kirsty Bettridge's father-in-law (her husband is Glen) and grandfather to Harrison (Year 9) and Isabella (Year 10).



Freddie Mercury sang, "I want it all and I want it now". He describes the desire for instant gratification. Pope Francis advises, that this Lent "we tend constantly towards Easter, towards the horizon of the Resurrection," that we look ahead beyond now. The Resurrection remains the fulcrum for Christianity; no Resurrection = no Christianity and our world does not exist. We need understand what the Resurrection means to us.

The question we hear often during Lent is "What are you giving up for Lent?" Instead, I propose we ask ourselves, "What positive actions and attitudes can I adopt this Lent?"

I suggest we become more aware of the wonder of creation. A good photograph, gratefulness for living, cleaning up a mess etc., are some things we can do to awaken ecological awareness and care for our common home, Planet Earth.

There is an election coming; we should educate ourselves about the issues underpinning the election. We must be informed enough to use the power of our vote to maximum effect. We must vote on issues and policies. We must learn to evaluate what parties say; slogans, speeches, podcasts, media statements, images etc. to get to the truth of the matter.

Asylum Seekers and the state of the Indigenous People remain urgent issues that need informed, enlightened discourse. And, there are many more that need to be tackled to keep Australia a truly 'lucky' country.

This Lent, let us venture beyond ourselves.

Commissioning Mass

The Commissioning Mass was held on 28 February in the Champagnat Centre at St Paul's Campus. About 1400 persons attended. Fathers James Fernandez cp (Parish Priest, Morwell and Churchill) celebrated the Mass, with Father Harry Dyer omi (Parish Priest, Moe Newborough) and Monsignor John Allmann con-celebrating.

At the Mass, the Student Leaders and Mr Chris Denny (Director, Digital Technology) were commissioned as College Leaders for 2019. Their families made it a special occasion by attending.

Father James' homily stressed that, God does not call qualified people. Instead he called people first and then qualified them in mission and service.

The number of people who contribute to this Mass is enormous, and everyone needs to be proud of their contribution. It is truly a whole Lavalla Community enterprise. The students and staff participated with

reverence and the choir brought in a sense of the divine.

Remar Embarkation Camp

Over the weekend of February 22nd, 20 Remar students and staff took part in their 2019 embarkation camp at Allambee camp.

The weekend was filled with formation in the areas of leadership, community and faith. Over the course of the camp, the Reds (Year 10), Blues (Year 11) and Golds (Year 12s) were each challenged to look at themselves and their place within the communities that they belong to. A major highlight for all at the camp was Rohan Symonds conquering the vertical challenge.

Thank you to all the students, staff and their families for giving up their weekend to start the year in such a fantastic manor.

Year 12 Youth Ministry

The Year 12 YME class has been involved in everything this year at the college. The team has been responsible for the running of the Ash Wednesday liturgy at both campuses, including personal sharings from college captains Lori Scholtes and Julien Alesi. The inspiring group have also ran two fundraisers this week, including the 'Caritas Shrove Tuesday' pancake sales, making approximately \$250 in sales and then on Thursday taking initiative to run a Lunchtime BBQ to raise funds to support ongoing bushfire relief, raising \$400. Thank you to all of those that have supported these initiatives, including 'St Michael's P.S' and 'Coles Traralgon.'

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday liturgies were celebrated at St Paul's and Kildare Campuses yesterday. The highlight was the student-led, written, organised and run liturgies. The leadership, participation and energy were very



satisfying. The challenge for community singing was a step forward. Credit goes to Mr Rathbone and his Youth Ministry team that took responsibility for the liturgy. Below are the reflections delivered by two of the College Captains.

Reflection from Julien Alesi College Captain 2019

The theme of the Marists in Australia this year is "Holy Today". The image on the left depicts the simple yet complex concept.

Pope Francis in "Gaudete et exsultate" (19 March 2018) described this concept as living a life in Christ. Simple!

He went on to state that it is not limited to necessarily following a priest, bishop, or even a religion. The call to holiness is aimed at everyone. Catholic, Christian or not, you can still be "Holy Today" in your life.

Living a life of Christ means living a good life, an authentic, moral life with Christ as the model. To be Holy simply means to be spiritually fulfilled and to do good for others as well as yourself; to connect with God, to respect yourself, accept yourself, love yourself. And reach out to others and start an outflow of love. This will bring you content with the kind of life you live.

If living "Holy Today" is for everyone, religious or not, then how are we called to be Holy? We are called to be Holy every day, through the simple interactions with others. Every time we are faced with a choice, we can choose to either live Holy and do the moral right, or we can make the decision we know are wrong. We're all humans and we make mistakes. We are called to be Holy in these situations; we are called to make good morally right decisions. That is our calling. That is our test.

Prayer, has always been described as a method of living Holy. I would rather describe it as a tool to assist in living Holy. Prayer is a tool that allows us to reflect, repent and receive. We can use prayer to reflect on the life we live or to seek feedback on our life. We can also use prayer to repent, to seek forgiveness for the times we have done wrong, and failed to live holy. However, one of the most useful ways to utilise prayer is to receive, through asking God for the different virtues and fruits of the Holy Spirit, to help us live Holy in different situations. When struggling, we may ask for strength, when in fear, we may ask for courage, all in an attempt to live the best life we can... the most moral life.

A misconception we all have as young adults, is we are generally force fed concepts of prayer from our elders or from society itself; to be Catholic, we are expected to go to Church, to pray the rosary every night. This misunderstanding blocks many young people from connecting with their faith. Prayer does not need to

be complicated and is not only for religious people. Anyone can pray in informal ways, God is your friend; talk to him like you would your mates, and like your friends, God is always there for you. That is how you pray. A simple method; I wake up every morning, say good morning to God and then think of 5 things I am grateful for and then 5 things I need assistance with for that day. Prayer can be as simple or as complex as you like.

"Holy Today" is about living a full life today by following in the footsteps of Christ. Not tomorrow, not yesterday, but focus on today. And, it starts with you. Here. Now.

Reflection from Lori Scholtes College Captain 2019

Lent is not so much a time for people like you and me to brag about not eating chocolate, doing more homework, or not using plastic for 40 days. Instead, Lent is a time to prepare ourselves and our hearts for Easter.

Lent is an opportunity for us as a Catholic community to better who we are as people and modestly live out our college moto by being individuals with "Strong Minds and Compassionate Hearts."

In the past, for Lent, I have given up things such as chocolate, soft drink or Macca's. It was only this year after being in Ministry I learnt that Lent was not for self-improvement, but for improving the world for others. Lent is all about doing good quietly. As Mr Van Berkel mentioned at our first assembly this year, we should strive to be more than average in our study habits, but this mantra also applies to all areas of life. I am hoping to inspire members of our Lavalla community to be better than average.

Stuck for ideas of what you could DO for Lent? What about... - compliment someone new everyday not just your friends but maybe someone in your LA, a staff member or a stranger in the hallway. - Donate to project compassion. Do the dishes for Mum or Dad. Send a thank you email to your teachers or sing in the Easter liturgy.

So please this Lent let us all make sure we are giving up something for the right reasons and as strengthen our sense of community within the school.

Thank you for all listening, and let us have safe & meaningful Lent period.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTING

At *Lavalla Catholic College*, we provide regular feedback to parents about the academic progress of their child. This feedback is available to parents via the Family Connect portal every six weeks (each six-week block is known as a Learning Block)*. We believe that providing feedback on a regular basis allows parents to be better informed about the progress of their child, which in turn allows early interventions to be put in place wherever necessary.

In 2019, there will be a slight change made to the information that is reported to parents:

LEARNING BLOCK	FEEDBACK
Week 1 18 th March	Learning Behaviours
Week 2 13 th May	Learning Behaviours Grades Comments
Week 3 24 th June	Learning Behaviours Grades Victorian Curriculum Levels (7-12) Maths Pathways Report (7-12)
Week 4 26 th August	Learning Behaviours
Week 5 28 th October	Learning Behaviours Grades Comments

Week 6

9th December

Learning Behaviours
Grades
Victorian Curriculum Levels (7-12)
Maths Pathways Report (7-12)

Learning Behaviours

Although Learning Behaviours have been used as a feedback tool in the past, this year they will look slightly different.

Learning Behavior descriptors have changed. The following four areas will be assessed;

- Readiness to Learn
- Contributing to a positive learning environment
- Manages learning tasks
- Uses feedback for improvement

The 'Four Pillars' will be supported by a Learning Behaviours Rubric (assessment tool) where students will be assessed on a continuum from 1- Inconsistent to 5 Consistently.

An email will be sent on Monday 18 March which will outline how to interpret the rubric. Feedback in the form of the Learning Behaviours for each subject will be available via the Parent Portal on Monday 18 March.

Year 10 students will be provided their feedback in the Learner Advisors (LA) meeting that will be scheduled during the week of the 18 March. Your child's LA will be in contact with you to organise a time to meet to

POWER STATION VISIT

Over the past week year 9 students have been visiting Loy Yang B Power Station as a part of their studies on Electricity and Magnetism. The excursion in a part of the "Our World" focus for year 9 science in which students are encouraged to explore the wider applications of the science they are studying.

The half day tour had students donning safety gear and heading out into the facility. Highlights included

seeing how coal enters the boiler from 20 stories up, being inside the control room, and hearing the huge turbines at work!

Students really enjoyed the experience and came away with a much clearer understanding of the complexities of electricity production in terms of its scale and the energy transformation processes involved.



UNIVERSITY CAMP

On Monday 11th of February 41 Year 12 students left Kildare at 7am to head to Melbourne for two days to explore 7 Universities and their accommodation options. In the two days we walked nearly 30 kilometres and listened to a variety of speakers of staff and current students at Deakin, Swinburne, ACU, Melbourne, RMIT, Latrobe and Monash Universities.

Our students should be commended for their impeccable behaviour, interest and openness to explore new possibilities for their future.

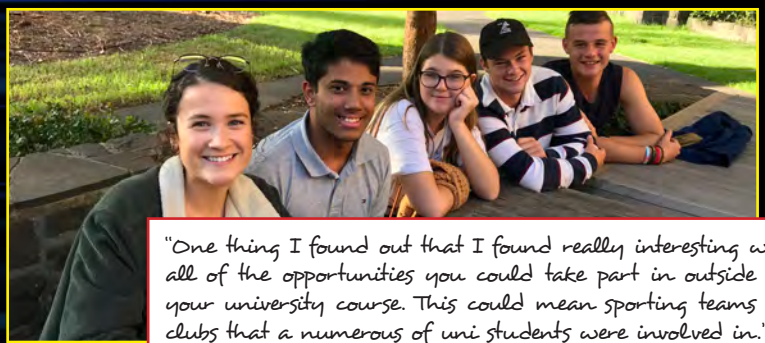
"One thing I am going to spend more time thinking about or researching now is different courses I could take up."

Monee Poole



"I found the different programs within all of the Uni's interesting, including the different pathways into uni, all the scholarships available, and just getting a feel for all of the campuses"

Sarah Van Den Brand



"One thing I found out that I found really interesting was all of the opportunities you could take part in outside of your university course. This could mean sporting teams or clubs that a numerous of uni students were involved in."

Maddison Knowles

BUSHIES HOT CROSS BUNS

A big, big thank you to everyone who supported our Bushie's Hot Cross Buns drive. We had an overwhelming response with over 500 packets of buns being sold yielding just over \$1000 in funds raised for our department. A big thank you to Jo Richards and our Music Support Groups for facilitating such a successful fundraiser.

If anyone is interested, the traditional buns fell just short of the ton with 99. Jam donut with 78 just pipping Caramel White Choc (77) for the silver.

Junior Choir & Training Band

We are still very keen to welcome any students who would like to be a part of our 2019 Training Band and/or Junior Choir. Please feel free to contact our Music Secretary, Sarah Duncan on 5174 8111 or email us through music@lavalla.vic.edu.au Any of the classroom teachers will also be happy to help answer any questions.

Singing Lessons

We still have a few vacancies for any students who may wish to take singing lessons this year. It has been great to welcome Mary Mirtschin to our staff this year as our vocal teacher. Please contact us on 51748111 or music@lavalla.vic.edu.au if you are interested. Enrolments are also still being taken for all of our instrumental lessons as well.



YEAR 7 CAMP

All Year 7s have now experienced camp at Mill Valley Ranch. The main focus of the camp was establishing and building friendships, connectedness within homerooms and the year level and developing resilience.

Students participated to the best of their ability, challenging themselves to higher goals. Students were positive and encouraging, where we have seen the beginnings of many new friendships. On Camp students participated in a variety of activities making every activity fun and memorable for all. The horse riding proved popular, especially with the introduction of the semi- mechanical bull ride as part of the horse riding activity, with many students riding for the first time. The crate climb was a chance for many students to challenge themselves, especially those terrified of heights.

Archery made students focus and it was a competition to see who could get the bullseye, some were extremely successful. Raft building was popular when it was warmer – some rafts upon completion effectively navigated the lake course, others well...some students were well and truly wet, but all were laughing at the end. Competition between the homerooms during the scavenger hunt was exciting, but friendly, all participated with enthusiasm.

Overall the camp was enjoyable for both students and staff.



SWIMMING CARNIVALS

A big, big thank you to everyone who supported The 2019 Lavalla Catholic College swimming carnivals have once again been dominated by the Champagnat (senior campus) and Mackillop (junior campus) houses.

Champagnat again proved to be the powerhouse at the Kildare swimming carnival by blasting the opposing houses out of the water with a massive 3711 points, 1168 points clear of Nagle who claimed second place.

It is the fifth Carnival triumph for Champagnat in the past 10 years. Delaney finished third in the points tally while Mackillop placed fourth.

In the age group champions, Champagnat almost made it a clean sweep by capturing five of the six

age group awards.

At the St. Paul's swimming carnival, Mackillop once again outlasted the opposing houses despite being challenged by Nagle and Champagnat.

Mackillop claimed the carnival honours with 2673 points with Nagle a close second with 2431 points. Champagnat were only marginally behind in third while Delaney was a distant fourth.

The age group champions were spread amongst all the houses this year with Champagnat capturing three of the six on offer.

Another great start to the year at Lavalla Catholic College with a successful swimming carnival for the entire College.



Kildare Carnival

Pl	House	Points
1st	Champagnat	3,711 points
2nd	Nagle	2,543 points
3rd	Delaney	2,394 points
4th	Mackillop	2,315 points

St. Paul's Carnival

Pl	House	Total	Points
1st	Mackillop		2,673 points
2nd	Nagle		2,431 points
3rd	Champagnat		2,397 points
4th	Delaney		2,097 points

Age Champions

13 Year	Ben Waller (Champagnat) Sienna Affleck (Nagle)
14 Year	Joshua Hamilton (Delaney) Samantha Sbaglia (Champagnat)
15 Year	Ashleigh Mihaly (Champagnat) Mark Pistrin (Mackillop)

16 Year	Logan Archibald (Champagnat) Rachael Sbaglia (Champagnat)
17 Year	Nathan Higginson (Mackillop) Elayna Pistrin (Mackillop) Rachael Sbaglia (Champagnat)
18+ Year	Paige McLennon (Champagnat) Kieren Georgeson (Champagnat)

CALENDAR & EXCURSIONS

Monday March 11

- LABOUR DAY – Public Holiday

Tuesday March 12

- Clay Target Shootig – Bairnsdale

Wednesday March 13

- Yr 12 Legal Studies VCAT Excursion

Thursday March 14

- Marist Cricket Trials
- SSV Swimming Yr 7 – 12 Boys & Girls
- Unit 1 Geography Fieldtrip
- Canoe Skills Day

Friday March 15

- National Day of Action
- Unit 1 Geography Fieldtrip
- Yr 11 Physics Aust F1 Grand Prix Excursion
- GIS Ecumenical Service

Saturday 16 – Friday 22 March

- Santa Teresa Immersion – NT

Tuesday March 19

- SSV Touch Football

Wednesday March 20

- Yr 12 Allied Health SWL

Thursday March 21

- Year 9 Wellbeing Day
- Yr 12 Allies Health SWL

Friday March 22

- Yr 12 Allies Health SWL
- SSV Wellington Volleyball Yr 8
- SSV Wellington Tennis Yr 7 – 12 Boys & Girls



2nd Hand Uniform Shop
St Paul's Campus

Opening Times
3.30pm – 6.00pm

DATES

21st March

4th April

2nd May

Unidentified School Fees

We have received several unidentified BPAY payments recently that cannot be traced.

These payments have been returned to the Payees's bank as we are not able to receive sufficient information to contact the Payee.

Please contact the Finance Officer, Colleen Earl at Marcellin House on **5175 8209** if you require any further information regarding these, or other BPAY payments.

email: earlcoll@lavalla.vic.edu.au

HOW TO DO SIT-UPS:

LAY DOWN. HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD.
WOW, THIS IS A GOOD POSITION FOR
A NAP. MAYBE JUST TAKE A NAP.



MARIST BROTHERS
Province of Australia

MARIST CENTRE SYDNEY
a Suite 5.01, 247 Coward Street, Mascot NSW 2020 Australia
p PO Box 1247, Mascot NSW 1460 Australia
t +61 2 9218 4000 f +61 2 9218 4084
e reception@marists.org.au
w www.maristbrothers.org.au
ABN 96 932 856 240

27 February 2019

Dear Marists

Today the Minister has announced that the Marist Brothers are now a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme effective Thursday, 28 February 2019. Click [here](#) to read the announcement.

This is another significant step in our ongoing work to respond to those who have suffered abuse in our facilities as a result of the criminal actions of both religious brothers and by lay staff.

For more than 20 years, dedicated Marists have worked to provide some healing to those whose lives have been damaged by the abuse inflicted upon them as children, working with them to provide apology, counselling and compensation.

Today's announcement of our inclusion in the National Redress Scheme is the culmination of more hard work to ensure that survivors of abuse now have an alternative path, independent of the Institute, to seek recognition and redress for what they have endured.

Through the National Redress Scheme, those who have experienced abuse will be given access to personal approach such as an apology, if they choose it, as well as counselling and monetary payments.

The Marist Brothers fully support this approach and have done so since the Royal Commission first proposed it some three years ago.

I have said before and I reiterate today, that we are powerless to change the past and we cannot undo the damage that has been caused.

The only option open to us is to find any and all pathways to healing that openly recognise the terrible hurt and suffering these events have caused and for which our apology is unreserved and enduring.

Now that our membership as a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme has been declared, on behalf of all Marists, I earnestly hope that its work brings some small measure of healing to those who have been wronged.

In addition to the National Redress Scheme, we will continue to work with survivors providing apology, counselling and compensation through the means of their choosing, either in direct approach or through civil legal channels.

I would also like to thank all of you across the various works, for bringing to life the Marist charism and your contribution on this journey of healing.

Yours sincerely

Br Peter Carroll FMS
Provincial

The Pell Verdict

Frank Brennan

The suppression order in relation to Cardinal George Pell has been lifted. In December, a jury of twelve of his fellow citizens found him guilty of five offences of child sexual abuse. No other charges are to proceed. Cardinal Pell has appealed the convictions. The verdict was unanimous. The jury took three days to deliberate after a four-week trial. The trial was in fact a re-run. At the first trial, the jury could not agree. The trial related to two alleged victims, one of whom had died.

Members of the public could attend those proceedings if they knew where to go in the Melbourne County Court. Members of the public could hear all the evidence except a recording of the complainant's evidence from the first trial. The complainant, who cannot be identified, did not give evidence at the retrial; the recording from the first trial was admitted as the complainant's evidence. The recording was available to the public only insofar as it was quoted by the barristers in their examination of other witnesses or in their final addresses to the jury, and by the judge in his charge to the jury. So, no member of the public has a complete picture of the evidence and no member of the public is able to make an assessment of the complainant's demeanour. The complainant's evidence at the first trial lasted two and a half days. He had been cross-examined for more than a day by Cardinal Pell's defence barrister, Robert Richter QC who has a reputation for being one of the best and one of the toughest cross-examiners in the legal profession. Pell did not give evidence but a record of his police interview, denying the allegations, was in evidence.

The complainant's evidence related to events that occurred back in 1996 or 1997 when he was a thirteen-year-old choir boy at St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne. Most other witnesses, had been choir boys, altar servers or Cathedral officials in 1996 when Pell first became archbishop of Melbourne. The complainant claimed that the first event, involving four charges, occurred after a solemn Sunday Mass celebrated by Archbishop Pell in the second half of 1996. It was common ground between the prosecution and the defence that the dates to which these four charges must be attributed were 15 December 1996 or 22 December 1996. These were the dates on which the first and second solemn Sunday Masses were celebrated by Archbishop Pell in the Cathedral after he had become archbishop in August 1996. The Cathedral had been undergoing renovations and thus was not used for Sunday Masses during earlier months of 1996.

The complainant said that he and another choir boy left the liturgical procession at the end of one Sunday Mass and went fossicking in the off-limits sacristy where they started swilling altar wine. The archbishop arrived unaccompanied, castigated them, and then, while fully robed in his copious liturgical vestments proceeded to commit three vile sexual acts including oral penetration of the complainant. The complainant said that the sacristy door was wide open and altar servers were passing along the corridor. The complainant said that he and the other boy then returned to choir practice. The choir was making a Christmas recording at that time.

These two choir boys stayed in the choir another year but, the complainant said, they never spoke about the matter to each other, even though they sometimes had sleepovers at each other's homes. The second boy was once asked by his mother if he had ever been abused by anybody and he said he had not.

The complainant claimed that a month or so later, after a Sunday Mass when the Archbishop was presiding (but not celebrating the Mass), Pell came along the corridor outside the sacristy where many choristers and others were milling about. He claimed that Pell grabbed him briefly, put him against the wall, and firmly grasped his genitalia. This was the subject of the fifth charge. Pell knew neither boy and had no contact with either of them thereafter.

The prosecution case was that Pell at his first or second solemn Sunday Mass as archbishop decided for some unknown reason to abandon the procession and his liturgical assistants and hasten from the Cathedral entrance to the sacristy unaccompanied by his Master of Ceremonies Monsignor Charles Portelli while the liturgical procession was still concluding. Portelli and the long time sacristan Max Potter described how the archbishop would be invariably accompanied after a solemn Mass with procession until one of them had assisted the archbishop to divest in the sacristy. There was ample evidence that the Archbishop was a stickler for liturgical form and that he developed strict protocols in his time as archbishop, stopping at the entrance to the Cathedral after Mass to greet parishioners usually for 10 to 20 minutes, before returning to the sacristy to disrobe in company with his Master of Ceremonies. The prosecution suggested that these procedures might not have been in place when Pell first became archbishop. The suggestion was that other liturgical arrangements might have been under consideration.

In his final address, Richter criticised inherent contradictions and improbabilities of many of the details of this narrative. I heard some of the publicly available evidence and have read most of the transcript. I found many of Richter's criticisms of the narrative very compelling. Anyone familiar with the conduct of a solemn Cathedral Mass with full choir would find it most unlikely that a bishop would, without grave reason, leave a recessional procession and retreat to the sacristy unaccompanied.

Witnesses familiar with liturgical vestments had been called who gave compelling evidence that it was impossible to produce an erect penis through a seamless alb. An alb is a long robe, worn under a heavier chasuble. It is secured and set in place by a cincture which is like a tightly drawn belt. An alb cannot be unbuttoned or unzipped, the only openings being small slits on

the side to allow access to trouser pockets underneath. The complainant's initial claim to police was that Pell had parted his vestments, but an alb cannot be parted; it is like a seamless dress. Later the complainant said that Pell moved the vestments to the side. An alb secured with a cincture cannot be moved to the side. The police never inspected the vestments during their investigations, nor did the prosecution show that the vestments could be parted or moved to the side as the complainant had alleged. The proposition that the offences charged were committed immediately after Mass by a fully robed Archbishop in the sacristy with an open door and in full view from the corridor seemed incredible to my mind.

I was very surprised by the verdict. In fact, I was devastated. My only conclusion is that the jury must have disregarded many of the criticisms so tellingly made by Richter of the complainant's evidence and that, despite the complainant being confused about all manner of things, the jury must nevertheless have thought – as the recent royal commission discussed – that children who are sexually violated do not always remember details of time, place, dress and posture. Although the complainant got all sorts of facts wrong, the jury must have believed that Pell did something dreadful to him. The jurors must have judged the complainant to be honest and reliable even though many of the details he gave were improbable if not impossible.

Cardinal Pell has been in the public spotlight for a very long time. There are some who would convict him of all manner of things in the court of public opinion no matter what the evidence. There are others who would never convict him of anything, holding him in the highest regard. The criminal justice system is intended to withstand these preconceptions. The system is under serious strain, however, when it comes to Cardinal Pell.

The events of the Victorian parliamentary inquiry, the federal royal commission, the publication of Louise Milligan's book *Cardinal* and Tim Minchin's song *Come Home (Cardinal Pell)* were followed, just two weeks before the trial commenced, by the Parliamentary apology to the victims of child sexual abuse. The Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, 'Not just as a father, but as a Prime Minister, I am angry too at the calculating destruction of lives and the abuse of trust, including those who have abused the shield of faith and religion to hide their crimes, a shield that is supposed to protect the innocent, not the guilty. They stand condemned... on behalf of the Australian people, this Parliament and our government... I simply say I believe you, we believe you, your country believes you.' Such things tend to shift not the legal, but the reputational, burden upon an accused person to prove innocence rather than the prosecution to prove guilt.

Would the verdict have been different if Pell had given evidence? Who can tell? All one can say is that, although the defence seemed to be on strong ground in submitting that the circumstances made the narrative advanced by the prosecution manifestly improbable, that failed to secure the acquittal.

Was the verdict unreasonable? Can it be supported having regard to the evidence? Those are questions for the appeal court. I can only hope and pray that the complainant can find some peace, able to get on with his life, whichever way the appeal goes. Should the appeal fail, I hope and pray that Cardinal Pell, heading for prison, is not the unwitting victim of a wounded

nation in search of a scapegoat. Should the appeal succeed, the Victoria Police should review the adequacy of the police investigation of these serious criminal charges.

When the committal proceedings against Cardinal Pell first commenced in July 2017, Fran Kelly asked me on ABC Radio National Breakfast: ‘Do you have concerns about this case, regardless of the outcome, and how it’s going to affect the Church?’ I answered: ‘Fran, I think this case will be a test of all individuals and all institutions involved. And all we can do is hope that the outcome will be marked by truth, justice, healing, reconciliation and transparency. A huge challenge for my church, and yes a lot will ride on this case. But what is absolutely essential is that the law be allowed to do its work. And let’s wait and see the evidence, and let’s wait and see how it plays out. And let’s hope there can be truth and justice for all individuals involved in these proceedings.’ And that is still my hope.

Frank Brennan is a Jesuit priest who attended some of the Pell proceedings.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE, PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

The news of Cardinal George Pell's conviction on historical child sexual abuse charges has shocked many across Australia and around the world, including the Catholic Bishops of Australia.

The Bishops agree that everyone should be equal under the law, and we respect the Australian legal system. The same legal system that delivered the verdict will consider the appeal that the Cardinal's legal team has lodged. Our hope, at all times, is that through this process, justice will be served.

In the meantime, we pray for all those who have been abused and their loved ones, and we commit ourselves anew to doing everything possible to ensure that the Church is a safe place for all, especially the young and the vulnerable.

February 26, 2019

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