

Ministry in a digital age

□ Lay Ministry Conference considers challenges of a rapidly changing world

Andrew Graystone believes that we are living in an era when we have too much information.

Guest speaker at the recent Diocesan Lay Ministry Conference, Andrew Graystone is Director of the Church Media Network, based in Manchester, UK.

Held at St Barnabas', East Orange, on Saturday March 3, the conference attracted about 70 people - mostly Licensed Lay Ministers, plus several clergy.

Andrew Graystone said the Church Media Network had been established in 2009 to help build bridges between the media and the Christian community, and Andrew is currently involved in broadcasting and also in training people in the use of media.

To illustrate the age of rapid change and instant communication in which we currently live, he told the conference about his son, Ben.

"Ben lives on a different planet to me," Andrew explained. "He lives in the digital age: his life is played out between his mobile phone, online computer games, the internet, radio and television. He never reads a newspaper, and only reads a magazine if it's about boxing."

He said that recently, against all the odds, Ben had become a Christian.

"I now have two very urgent questions: the first is, what will Ben find with his engagement with digital media that will help him to grow as a Christian; the second is, what will Ben find in our church that will help him to think Christianly about the digital media that he is using?"

By way of contrast, Andrew then showed a picture of his 81-year-old mother.

"Last year she got a mobile phone, and she sometimes uses it to send a text to Ben. But if you call her on it, she rarely has it with her and if she does it isn't charged.

"My mum has never sent an email; she's never used the internet; she



LINKS: Andrew Graystone is introduced by Bishop Ian at the beginning of the LLM Conference. His work in the UK involves building links between the church and the media.

certainly hasn't played a computer game; she buys a newspaper each day but mostly it's for the TV listings; her TV has 45 channels but mostly she only watches two of them.

"Now for me, that raises two more very urgent questions: when my mum watches TV or listens to radio, what does it say to her about her faith and the church; and second, given that they now speak entirely different languages through entirely different communication devices, how can my mum and my son ever talk to each other about the faith they share?"

By introducing these two extremes to the conference, Andrew illustrated the diverse world within which the church now exists in Western cultures, and the challenges this world presents for anyone involved in any kind of ministry.

He then suggested several avenues the church could pursue in developing a new media strategy:

- ♦ Using communication as a missional activity.
- ♦ Re-engage the mainstream media.
- ♦ Support Christian vocations to media.
- ♦ Invest in proactive communications.
- ♦ Equip local churches and Christians.

Communication and cancer

Andrew Graystone's interest in language and communication reached a new level four years ago when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and encountered the vocabulary associated with cancer.

Because he saw the cancer cells as part of his own body, he rejected the 'military' jargon that was frequently used; he didn't want to use terms such as 'fighting' cancer, or to be conscripted into battle with his own body.

"Declaring war on those cells felt like declaring war on my own body," he said. "These poor little cells needed loving back into line."

He has spoken of this in the UK, and a recording of a BBC Radio broadcast of his speech is available at <http://podbay.fm/show/417705184/e/1375905600?autostart=1>

John Croudace commissioned as Priest in Charge of Cowra Parish

The Five Marks of Mission, originally developed during the 1980s by the Anglican Communion, formed an integral part of the worship service Bishop Ian Palmer used when commissioning John Croudace as Priest in Charge of Cowra Parish on Saturday evening, April 5.

For John Croudace, the commissioning marked the latest step in a ministry journey that began many years earlier. He was ordained as a priest in 2011, 16 years after being made a deacon.

Late last year Bishop Ian appointed him Associate Priest in Cowra, assisting the then locum tenens Les Barley.

Bishop Ian read out the Five Marks of Mission:

- ♦ To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- ♦ To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- ♦ To respond to human need by

loving service;

- ♦ To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation; and
- ♦ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth.

“John, this is the mission of God in Christ,” he said. “It is the mission of our diocese; it is the mission of the people of this parish; and it is your mission as you seek to serve our Lord in this community.”

Members of the congregation presented John with various symbols representing these Marks of Mission.

Preacher for the occasion, Archdeacon Frank Hetherington, drew on the idea of ‘hinge leadership’ outlined by Rob Daborn at the recent Diocesan Clergy Conference.



ANOINTING: Bishop Ian anoints John Croudace for his new ministry, watched by Regional Ministry Coordinator Margaret Finlay and priests Bob Lindbeck and Les Barley.

Walking the walk, talking the talk

Trundle priest Brian Schmalkuche has completed a 100-kilometre walk from one end of his parish to the other.

His ‘Walk for Christ’ left Bogan Gate, the southern end of the parish, after the Sunday service on April 6 and arrived in Albert on Thursday morning.

Bishop Ian Palmer, former Bogan Gate district resident Lew Hitchick and a young parishioner from Trundle accompanied Brian on the first day of the walk, covering the 23 kilometres from Bogan Gate to Trundle in four and a half hours. Brian said various members of the parish joined him for other stages of the trek, giving him wonderful opportunities to talk in depth and also to pray with them.

He also prayed for people he met on the road, and for landholders whose properties

he passed.

Brian’s wife Judith acted as ‘roadie’ for the trip, providing a hot cuppa and a snack for Brian and his travelling companions at regular intervals along the way. Brian and Judith camped in a borrowed campervan for several nights, allowing them to start the next morning where they had stopped the night before.

He staged his daily walks so that the final day only required a three-kilometre stroll into Albert, where he said 30 people gathered for a Thursday morning worship service.

Brian described the walk as being a very significant experience both for himself, and for the parish, as people from the four centres (Bogan Gate, Trundle, Tullamore and Albert) went out of their way to support the venture.



ARRIVAL: Bishop Ian and Brian Schmalkuche arrive in Trundle after the first day of Brian’s ‘Walk for Christ’.

CLERGY MOVES & APPOINTMENTS

♦ **The Reverend John Croudace** was commissioned as Priest in Charge of Cowra parish, in St John’s Church, Cowra, on Saturday evening April 5.

Retreat takes women on 'Heart's Journey'

The Annual Diocesan Women's Retreat, organised by MU Australia, Bathurst Diocese for all women, was held at Shalom House of Prayer, Carcoar, in March.

Twelve ladies from Faulconbridge in The Blue Mountains to Nyngan gathered in the old Convent and were graciously pampered by Nick and Fran, John and Kate. Many improvements have been carried out by the Stewards of the Community and with the excellent menu our physical needs were more than adequately taken care of.

Mrs Liz Palmer led the Retreatants each morning in Tai Chi which "broke" the overnight silence as we went for breakfast.

Six sessions, under the theme "Heart's Journey" were delivered over the time Monday Evening to Thursday morning and retreatants were encouraged to reflect and then respond by writing, collecting or creating a mandala - drawings in a circle like a Rose window in a Cathedral.

Sharing time showed how each lady was inspired by God in many different ways. The Eucharist was celebrated on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons by the Rector of Blayney, Anastasia Webster Hawes, and we all enjoyed the drinks and nibbles under the olive tree in the peaceful garden.

Our Retreat next year will be in the week following the third Sunday of Lent - 9th - 12th March.



FELLOW TRAVELLERS: Liz Palmer (back row, 5th from left) led twelve women from various parishes within the diocese and beyond in the three-day retreat which pursued the theme, 'Heart's Journey'.

'Barney's' still in business

The congregation of St Barnabas' Church, South Bathurst, has been meeting for worship on Sunday mornings in the chapel of the Community of St Joseph in Perthville since the historic South Bathurst church was virtually destroyed by fire on March 2.

In an impromptu service on the footpath beside the burnt-out church on that eventful Sunday morning, parish priest James Hodson had stressed that the church was made up of its people, not the building.

"We've lost a building, but the church will continue," he had said.

Early plans to hold services in St Martin's Church, Perthville, had proved to be impractical as the building no longer has electricity connected.

Roman Catholic Bishop of Bathurst Michael McKenna had offered his help within days of the fire, and the Community of St Joseph took this offer a step further by inviting the St Barnabas congregation to use their chapel.

James Hodson has expressed his deep appreciation to the Community for this generous gesture which has helped the South Bathurst congregation maintain its own strong sense of community.



OPEN HOUSE: While the fire damaged all the structural timber, which had to be removed, the bell tower is undamaged and it is still hoped some of the brick walls can be retained.

Apart from the ten kilometre trip to Perthville for services, the other significant change has been to merge the two morning services into one: instead of services at 8:00am and 9:30 am, the congregation now meets for worship at 9:00am. The regular 6:00pm service on Wednesday evening is currently also being held in Perthville.

Meanwhile, the clean-up work at St Barnabas' church has progressed and engineers are assessing the integrity of the remaining brick walls. It is hoped that a significant part of the structure can be used in the rebuilding of the church, retaining much of its external appearance.

World Day of Prayer focuses on Egypt

❑ Cathedral parish hosts ecumenical event.

With over 50 people attending the service held in the Chapter House, many came from outlying churches such as Wattle Flat and Oberon, with most denominations represented.

Tania Harvey, a Cathedral LLM, led the service with lots of help from others and the theme this year was Egypt - a timely reminder to hold that nation in our prayers and to especially remember the women and the struggles they face.

The same day was International Women's Day when each year the Walshaw Hall is taken over with stalls from the many women's health and well-being organizations. It is a great gathering and several hundred attend the event.

ECUMENICAL: *Some of the participants at the recent World Day of Prayer. Most of Bathurst's Christian churches were represented.*



30th anniversary of Cursillo in Bathurst Diocese

The Cursillo Movement in Bathurst Diocese is planning a celebratory weekend gathering from May 1-3 next year, to mark the 30th anniversary of the first Cursillo retreat in the diocese.

A team from the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn brought the Cursillo experience to Bathurst in 1985, on the invitation of Bishop Howell Witt.

Since then well over a thousand lay people and clergy have shared in the experience of a three-day Cursillo weekend.

The Cursillo movement started in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain during the 1940s, and has brought renewal and encouragement to individuals and church communities in many countries and various Christian denominations.

The word 'Cursillo' (technically, it should be pronounced cur-SEE-yo) is Spanish for a short course, and the weekend retreat offers a short course in Christian living. However, the Cursillo method also encourages people to continue their journey in company with others, by meeting together regularly with a small group of fellow pilgrims.

To help mark the 30th anniversary, the Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat is planning to produce a booklet of testimonies or stories from people who have had a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ, either through their Cursillo experience or in some other way. Contributions for this booklet should be submitted by the end of this year.

Harvest Festival at Fitz's Valley



Every year the small church at Fitzgerald's Valley, perched on a hill almost half-way from Bathurst to Blayney, celebrates the harvest with a thanksgiving service followed by a magnificent auction of vegetables, fruits, plants and jams.

It is their major fund-raiser and helps keep the church community vibrant and self-sustaining.

Following the pattern of recent years, a number from the cathedral congregation made the trip out to Fitzgerald's Valley to enjoy the festival, and cathedral parishioner Paul Chapman, a former auctioneer, led the way in encouraging all to bid and join in the fun. One of the younger members of the congregation got into the way of it and stepped up to help.