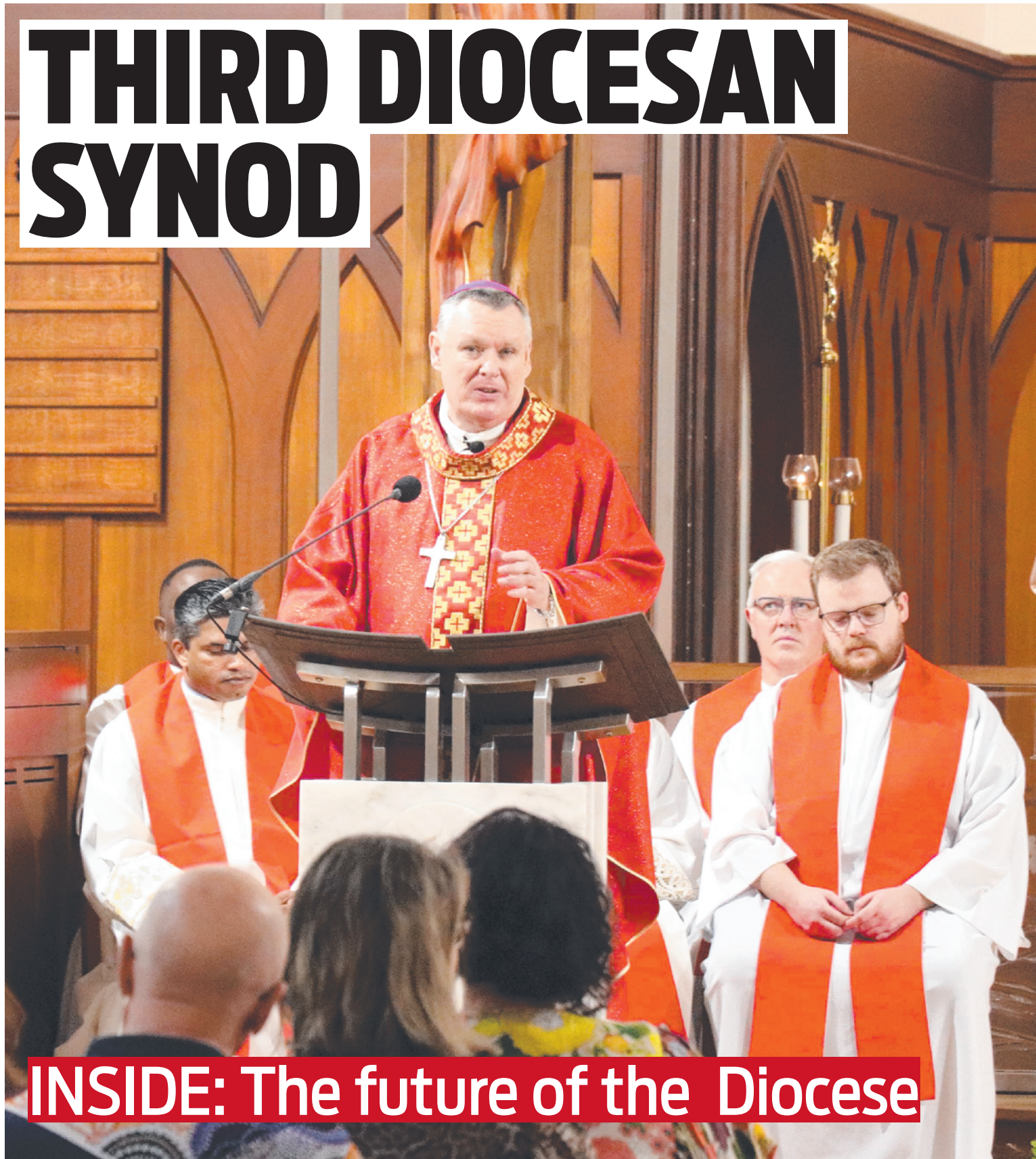




Appeal supports vital Ministries

The annual Bishops Appeal is once again inviting the faithful across the Diocese of Townsville to support the vital ministries and services that strengthen communities, nurture faith, and provide care to those in need.

For many years, the Bishops Appeal has played an important role in supporting diocesan ministries across the vast Diocese of Townsville, which spans more than 434,000 square kilometres.

Through the generosity of parishioners, schools, and communities, the Appeal helps ensure the Church can continue its mission of teaching, healing, and serving all people.

Funds raised through the Appeal support a range of ministries, including youth and young adult outreach programs, parish renewal and formation initiatives, social justice and cultural diversity programs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry, chaplaincy services in hospitals and prisons, vocational discernment, Marriage Tribunal, and ecumenical and interfaith activities.

Bishop Tim Harris said the Appeal is an opportunity for Catholics to actively participate in the mission of the Church.

“The Bishops Appeal is a tangible way for us to share in Christ’s mission and support the ministries that bring hope, faith and compassion to people across our diocese,” Bishop Harris said.

“Every gift, regardless of its size, helps us continue serving our communities, supporting those most in need, and ensuring the Catholic faith remains alive and flourishing in our homes, schools and parishes.”

Bishop Harris encouraged all members of the diocesan community to prayerfully consider supporting this year’s Appeal.

Donations can be made through the second collection at Mass or via the online donation portal available through the Diocese of Townsville website.

Together, through generosity and faith, the Diocese can continue to reconnect with God’s mission and become new in Christ.

Magnificent humanity

Pope Leo’s new encyclical Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity) is all about remaining truly human in an age of Artificial Intelligence and digital power.

The encyclical insists that people – human beings – must never be reduced to data, consumers, workers or machines.

The dignity of every single person has an inherent human worth and an inherent dignity that does not depend on intelligence, productivity, wealth, usefulness or social status. People cannot be judged by what they produce or achieve. Human beings are

MOST REVEREND

Timothy Harris

BISHOP OF TOWNSVILLE



not resources to be exploited or discarded.

Modern society has a mentality at times to indeed discard a fellow human being. In an age of Artificial Intelligence, we must ensure that it serves humanity rather than dominate it. The Pope fears, and rightly so, that unchecked technology could

actually deepen inequality and destroy meaningful work, spread misinformation and even create new forms of inequality.

Another significant contribution of Magnifica Humanitas is its defence of solidarity and the common good. The Pope calls for a fairer society in which

everyone matters (workers, minorities, women).

Rather than condemning technology completely, Pope Leo XIV encourages humanity to guide innovation ethically and spiritually.

He believes that human beings can with their God-given gifts build a society shaped by truth, wisdom and love.

This is a vision for humanity and reintroduces the social doctrine of the Church in a new age of challenge.

As I reflect on this wonderful encyclical I am very conscious of some social unrest in Australia with certain

politicians and individuals who are espousing views that drive us apart and create barriers between us that leads to fear.

Even a ‘false narrative’ has been created at times to win the populist vote. My sense is that extremist political parties or populist movements thrive at times of uncertainty and in the process we all suffer.

We can even turn on each other resulting in the kinds of outcomes that Pope Leo is warning against in his encyclical.

I pray for a world and community where peace and justice reign – a community made up from people of every

land that is indeed the Australia that I know.

Thank God for unity in diversity and for the inherent goodness in our shared humanity.

Of course, there are areas for improvement but surely, we all hope for a flourishing society and a cohesion that underpins the foundation of social life.

MOST REV TIMOTHY J HARRIS
Bishop of Townsville

>> To read Pope Leo XIV’s encyclical Magnifica Humanitas in full, visit tsv.catholic.org.au and navigate to News & Events > Catholic News.

Townsville welcomes new priests

The Townsville Diocese has welcomed two new priests to the region, marking a joyful moment for parish communities across the diocese.

As they begin their ministry in North Queensland, both priests bring with them unique journeys of faith, diverse pastoral experience and a shared commitment to serving the people of God.

We asked them a few questions to help our community get to know them as they settled into life and ministry within the Catholic Diocese of Townsville.

Fr Alex Thomas
1. Can you briefly share your journey to the priesthood?

I am grateful to God for the gift of my vocation. From a young age, I felt a desire to serve God and His people. After years of prayer, discernment, and formation in the seminary, I was ordained a priest. It has been a journey of faith, learning, and trust in God’s guidance, and I continue to be thankful for the opportunity to serve the Church.

2. What are you most

looking forward to in the Townsville Diocese?

I am very much looking forward to meeting the people of the Townsville Diocese and becoming part of the local faith community. I hope to accompany people in their spiritual journey, share in their joys and challenges, and contribute in whatever way I can to the life and mission of the Diocese.

3. What has your first impression of the community been like?

My first impression has been extremely positive. I have experienced great warmth, kindness, and hospitality from the people I have met. The welcoming spirit of the community has made me feel very much at home, and I am deeply grateful for that.

4. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time, I enjoy reading, prayer, and spending quiet moments in reflection. I also enjoy walking, meeting people, and learning about different cultures and experiences. These activities help me to relax, grow, and remain connected with the people I serve.



Fr Alex Thomas.

Fr Eziamauche
1. Can you briefly share your journey to the priesthood?

My journey to the Catholic priesthood began just after my primary school studies. In 1997, I got enrolled into our Archdiocesan junior seminary where I did my secondary school and afterwards the provincial major seminary from 2006 till 2015. The journey was a nice and well enriching one. After my pastoral internship, on the 6th day of Feb 2016, I was ordained a deacon and six months after, on the 6th day of August 2016, I was ordained a priest. For close to 10 years, I have worked in many parishes as associate pastor before I was made a pastor of the last parish where I worked before my journey to the diocese of Townsville.



Fr Eziamauche.

2. What are you most looking forward to in the Townsville Diocese?

I joyfully look forward to positively contributing to the pastoral and spiritual life of the diocese of Townsville.

3. What has your first impression of the community been like?

Honestly, I have had wonderful impressions of a people that is welcoming and richly accommodating. Bishop Tim and the entire presbyterium of Townsville with the parishioners are awesome and top notch. I remain ever grateful.

4. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

My spare time is very precious to me because it involves my most productive moments.



Denise with Bishop Tim in St Mary’s Church.

Joyful celebrations across the Diocese of Townsville

The Diocese recently celebrated several joyful and significant occasions across the community.

Bishop Tim joined parishioners and supporters for the opening of the new St Vincent de Paul store at Domain, marking another important step in supporting those in need throughout the region.

The celebration of the Mary Help of Christians Mass at St Mary’s Church, West End, was made even more special with a

remarkable family milestone shared during the liturgy.

Parishioner Denise was overcome with emotion as Bishop Tim acknowledged that the day marked exactly 80 years since her parents, Irene Hansen and Jim MacKenzie, were married in St Mary’s Church by Fr Vince in 1946. The touching moment brought great joy to the congregation, as the parish reflected on faith, family, and the enduring history of the Church community at West End.

Parish spirit soars



Our parish community continues to flourish with joyful celebrations, strong participation, and vibrant faith-filled gatherings.

Recently, parishioners travelled to Magnetic Island to celebrate our Patron Saint, Joan of Arc, with Mass followed by a Barbecue and an unforgettable spread of desserts, which everyone may return for the sweets alone!

Mother's Day Mass was a highlight, with Fr Sylvester inviting all mothers to dance and sing in a variety of musical styles, creating a joyful and uplifting celebration for all present.

Our parish music ministry continues to grow, with new cantors and musicians generously sharing their gifts and talents across the parish.

Owen was a standout during the Cathedral's Pentecost Sunday celebrations, contributing to the spirit and energy of the liturgy.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart was marked with a massive celebration of Mass, followed by food, dancing, and fellowship. Across all our celebrations, the Cathedral has been filled with strong choir participation, vibrant music, and joyful community spirit, especially with Fr Sylvester often leading the dancing!

Meanwhile, Cathedral renovations continue, including repainting, wall repairs, and a full cleaning of the Cathedral ceiling. The RCIA program is also well underway with Fr Will, as more people journey in faith within our parish community.



Fruits of the Diocesan Synod

Hope, collaboration and a renewed commitment to shared mission emerged as some of the strongest fruits of the Diocese of Townsville's Third Diocesan Synod, which brought together more than 150 clergy, religious and lay faithful from across North Queensland.

Held from 11-13 June, the Synod gathered representatives from parishes, Catholic schools, diocesan agencies, ministries and organisations across the Diocese to discern how God is calling the local Church forward.

The gathering marked the culmination of a six-month listening and consultation process that engaged hundreds of people through parish conversations, school communities, mission and pastoral councils, diocesan agencies and online submissions. Grounded in the lived experiences of the People of God, the Synod sought to discern a faithful and practical path forward for the Diocese.

Speaking at the Opening Mass, Bishop Timothy Harris emphasised that the future of

the Diocese would depend on a shared commitment to Christ's mission. "The future of the Diocese will not be built through isolated efforts. It will be built through collaboration, shared vision and a renewed sense of common purpose," Bishop Harris said.

"We need each other; we need to work together as one diocesan family."

The Synod discerned three priorities that will help shape the Diocese's pastoral direction in the years ahead: towards a culture of formation and spiritual growth, towards a culture of accompanying families with young children, and towards a culture of synodality.

Together, they reflect a desire to nurture discipleship, strengthen family life and build a Church marked by shared responsibility for mission. Importantly, Synod members were not asked simply to endorse these priorities. Having identified them through the listening phase, participants were invited to prayerfully consider recommendations and share wisdom about how they might

be implemented within the practical realities of parish, school, agency and community life.

The atmosphere throughout the gathering was marked by hope and a recognition that the priorities emerged not from a strategic planning exercise, but from the lived experiences of the People of God and a shared commitment to discern God's call for the Diocese.

The work of the Synod now moves into a new phase. A final document will be prepared in the coming weeks, bringing together the recommendations and insights shared during the gathering.

These recommendations will help inform the Diocese's pastoral planning and provide a framework for collaboration across the Diocese.

For many participants, the Synod demonstrated that the future of the Church is not the responsibility of a few, but of the whole People of God.

The gathering concluded not with a sense of completion, but with a shared commitment to carry the work of discernment into parishes,

schools, ministries and everyday life.

The Synod may have concluded, but the journey it began is only just unfolding.

Conversations in the Spirit *Listening for the Voice of God*

At the heart of the 2026 Townsville Diocesan Synod was a process unfamiliar to many members but one that quickly became a defining feature of the gathering: Conversation in the Spirit.

Used throughout the Church's Synod on Synodality, Conversation in the Spirit is a method of communal discernment.

Rather than debating ideas or seeking consensus through discussion alone, participants are invited to listen prayerfully for the movement of the Holy Spirit through the contributions of others.

Each conversation began with Scripture, prayer and silence before members gathered around tables of six. Guided by a structured process, participants were encouraged to speak from their own experience and listen attentively to one

another.

The first round invited each person to respond to a guiding question without interruption. Following a period of silence, participants entered a second round focused on a different question: "What did you hear?"

This encouraged members to reflect on what had resonated in the contributions of others rather than simply returning to their own ideas.

After a further moment of silence, the group moved into an open conversation. Drawing on what had emerged in the earlier rounds, participants explored areas of convergence, questions and insights that might help shape the Diocese's future direction.

This process was used throughout the Synod as members reflected on the Diocese's three pastoral priorities.

By creating space for prayer, listening and reflection, Conversation in the Spirit helped members move beyond individual opinions and seek together what God may be asking of the Diocese of Townsville at this time.

25 years of priesthood

Rev. Fr. Manoj Kunnath, C.Ss.R., marked a significant milestone in his priestly life on May 2, celebrating the Silver Jubilee of his ordination with thanksgiving, reflection, and gratitude for the many people who have accompanied him throughout his twenty-five years of ministry.

The Jubilee celebrations were held at his home parish, St Michael's Kavil, where family members, fellow Redemptorists, parishioners, and friends gathered for a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by a family gathering.

Reflecting on the occasion, Fr Manoj expressed deep appreciation for the overwhelming support and presence of so many who travelled to celebrate with him.

A highlight of the celebration was a video message from Bishop Tim Harris, Bishop of the Diocese of Townsville. In his message, Bishop Harris highlighted the breadth of Fr Manoj's current ministry in the Burdekin Catholic Parish, which includes four churches, three Catholic schools, state schools, two nursing homes, and two hospitals.

Describing him as a

"genuine article," the Bishop praised his versatility and dedication in serving the diverse needs of the community.

Fr John Hodgson, Provincial Superior of the Oceania Province, also paid tribute to Fr. Manoj's missionary spirit.

He spoke of the courage required to leave the familiarity and comfort of India to serve in a remote region of Australia and commended him for strengthening and uplifting the faith of so many people through his ministry.

Fr Poly Kannampuzha, Provincial Superior of the Liguori Province, reflected on his years with Fr Manoj during their seminary formation. He recalled Fr Manoj's cheerful personality and his ability to bring joy to those around him, qualities that continue to be evident in his ministry today.

Fr Manoj's vocation journey began in 1991 when he joined the Redemptorist Pre-Novitiate program in Bangalore after completing his higher secondary education in Alappuzha, Kerala. Together with twenty-three other young men from different parts of India, he embarked on a



Fr Manoj Kunnath celebrates his Silver Jubilee.

formation journey that would take him through Sadupadesa College, Bangalore; Mt. St Joseph's, Kotagiri; and Mt. St Alphonsus, Bangalore.

The path to priesthood, however, was not without challenges. Of the original twenty-four candidates who began formation together, only five reached ordination.

Twenty-five years later, only three continue in active ministry. Reflecting on this reality, Fr Manoj noted that every vocation journey experiences changes, setbacks, and unexpected turns, yet each stage of life offers valuable lessons and opportunities for growth. Throughout his priesthood, Fr Manoj has been widely known as a missionary

preacher. Over the years, he has preached hundreds of Redemptorist Missions in parishes, schools, convents, hostels, and formation houses across India.

"Ministry is not only about giving," he reflected, "it is also about receiving." Today, he serves as Parish Priest of the Burdekin Catholic Parish in the Diocese of Townsville.

Although he fondly remembers the years spent conducting parish missions and retreats, Fr Manoj remains deeply committed to the ministry entrusted to him today. His words reflected both humility and gratitude as he spoke of serving wherever God and the Redemptorist Congregation call him.



The historic desk in its new home



Fr William Mason Walsh.

A priest's tale

A magnificent desk has recently found its way to the Diocesan Archives and Record Management Service - a quiet, dignified home for a piece of furniture that once held the weight of a priest's hopes, letters, decisions, and daily labour. It belonged to Fr William Mason Walsh, one of the great early builders of the Church in North Queensland.

For many years the desk sat in the Bishop's House; during renovations it was rescued by a parishioner, Filmer Desailly, who understood its significance and kept it safe until it could be entrusted to the Archives.

Fr Walsh arrived in Townsville — then still part of the Rockhampton Diocese — in 1878, replacing Fr Connolly. Born in Ardfinnan, Ireland, on 27 April 1842, he studied for the priesthood at All Hallows College in Ireland and was ordained in Brisbane in 1864.

One of his first tasks was to enlarge St Joseph's Church, North Ward not once but twice, in 1878 and again in 1880, as the Catholic population swelled. He was deeply committed to the education of children and worked tirelessly to establish another convent. That same year, the Sisters of Mercy arrived, an event that transformed the pastoral and educational life of the region.

His church on the Strand became a landmark but in 1892, a cyclone tore the church from its foundations and washed it into the sea.

The loss was devastating — two thousand pounds' worth of building and precious artworks gone in a single night. Yet Fr Walsh did not falter. With his people beside him, he began again. It was not until 1921 that the new St Joseph's Church was completed.

Meanwhile, the primary school at St Joseph's was adapted for use as the Sunday Mass centre.

Although the Bishop resided in Rockhampton, Fr Walsh's leadership was unmistakable.

Twice he stepped into diocesan administration — after the death of Bishop Cani, and again when Bishop Higgins was transferred to Ballarat.

When Dr James Duhig became Bishop of Rockhampton in 1905, he appointed Fr Walsh as Vicar General, a sign of profound trust and respect.

Under his guidance, churches rose in Ingham, Ayr, West End, South Townsville, and Stewart's Creek. On 7 October 1900, the foundation stone was laid for the church that would one day become the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

By 1907, Fr Walsh's health was failing. In 1908 he travelled to Sydney with his sister, Mrs T. Dalton, hoping for rest. He died there on 16 February.

Fr Walsh was laid to rest in a specially prepared vault in the Sacred Heart Church.

The press estimated that two thousand people attended the funeral of "a Spiritual Father, a Churchman, and a Citizen."

What Does it mean to be human in the age of AI?

Around 25 people from across Townsville gathered at St Joseph the Worker Church, Wulguru, on Tuesday, June 9, for a presentation on Pope Leo XIV's new encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas.

Presented by Fr Damian McGrath, Parish Priest of St Brigid's Parish, the evening explored the Holy Father's reflections on artificial intelligence and the challenges of remaining fully human in an increasingly technological age.

While often described as an encyclical on artificial intelligence, Magnifica Humanitas is fundamentally concerned with the human person. Drawing on Scripture,

Catholic social teaching and the Church's long tradition of reflection on human dignity, the presentation examined questions of truth, work, freedom, community and the common good.

Participants were invited to consider Pope Leo's striking contrast between the Tower of Babel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. Rather than seeking technological solutions to every problem, the encyclical challenges Christians to rebuild the human communities entrusted to them: their families, neighbourhoods, schools and parishes.

The evening formed part of an ongoing series of faith formation opportunities hosted by St Brigid's Parish for parishioners and the wider Diocese.

Recent offerings have included a four-week Lenten series on the death of Jesus in the four Gospels and two evenings of reflection on Mary in Scripture.

Faith formation has been identified as a priority by the Parish Mission Council and was also highlighted as an important area of focus during the recent Diocesan Synod.

Although time for discussion was limited, the presentation generated

considerable interest and many questions for further reflection.

In the final portion of the evening, Fr McGrath returned to what he described as the central message of the encyclical: the dignity of the human person.

Addressing those present, he reminded them of the words of Psalm 139, "I thank you, Lord, for I am awesomely and wonderfully made," and of Pope Leo's conviction that every person possesses a God-given dignity that no technology can create and no technology can diminish.

"You are magnificent," he told participants.

Reconciliation Action Plan



Townsville Catholic Education officially launched its Reconciliation Action Plan during a special Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Friday, 29 May, as part of National Reconciliation Week.

The Mass brought together staff from across the Diocese in a meaningful celebration of reflection, connection and commitment to reconciliation. Attendees were welcomed to Country and enjoyed cultural performances by students from St Margaret Mary's College, highlighting the richness and significance of First Nations culture.

A key moment of the event was the unveiling of a commissioned artwork by Cungelella Art, which will serve as a lasting symbol of TCE's commitment to walking together in reconciliation.

Presiding over the Mass, Fr Sylvester Emetuche reflected on the importance of reconciliation as a core expression of faith.

"Reconciliation is not merely social work or policy. Reconciliation is Gospel work," Fr Sylvester said.

"This Reconciliation Action Plan is not simply a document to be filed away. It is an invitation to conversion. It is a call for us to deepen relationships, foster understanding, and ensure that our schools, parishes and workplaces become places where all people feel welcomed, valued and heard."

Fr Sylvester encouraged those present to continue the journey of reconciliation with "integrity, humility and courage", recognising that meaningful reconciliation is built through listening, learning and walking together.



Article by Kate Garrone from Mercy Partners, the proud sponsor of Passing the Flame.

Passing the Flame

As Reconciliation Week 2026 drew to a close under the national theme "I'm in", the Passing the Flame gathering at St Teresa's in Townsville offered a compelling expression of what reconciliation can look like when it is lived in community.

Warm, grounded and deeply relational, the day brought together elders, leaders, families and people with lived experience to share stories of truth, healing and hope.

Held in the newly established St Teresa's parish and coinciding with the feast of Pentecost, the event carried a strong sense of spiritual significance.

Just as Pentecost speaks of courage, renewal and being sent out in hope, Passing the Flame reflected a community being strengthened to listen deeply, lead locally and carry forward a more life-giving future.

At a time when Australia is being invited to consider what it means to say "I'm in" for reconciliation, the gathering offered more than a slogan.

It revealed reconciliation as relationship, responsibility and shared commitment, expressed not only in words but in the courage of those willing to speak honestly about their lives and in the willingness of others to listen.

Bishop Tim Harris joined the community to mark the significance of St Teresa's becoming a personal parish in its own right, speaking about the greater authority and responsibility that comes with local leadership.

His presence underscored the importance of listening deeply to community realities and building a future shaped by trust, participation and shared purpose. The gathering was a demonstration of synodality – walking together and listening to one another.

At the heart of the day was the men's healing group, led by Karl Lymburner, whose members shared powerful accounts of hardship, healing and change. Karl spoke of leadership grounded in culture, legacy and responsibility, and of a long commitment to strengthening families and creating safer, community-led pathways. Jerrad Hoffmann, a Juru-Jirrbil man with South Sea Islander and Australian heritage, spoke as a father and victim-survivor whose story reflected both the reality of harm and the strength found in accountability, identity and healing.

Chaston Nicholas, a proud young Bwgcolman man from Palm Island, shared a story of reconnection, describing how

support through Passing the Knowledge, headspace and HOME helped him rebuild his sense of self, reconnect with his son, and embrace a healthier vision of fatherhood.

Other speakers extended that story of healing and responsibility. Doug Wong reflected on the importance of being heard and accepted. Kassandra Brown, Social Inclusion Coordinator at headspace Townsville, brought the perspective of grassroots advocacy for young people, speaking to the power of genuine connection, social inclusion and community-led support in helping people make positive change. Krista Hobbs, a proud Kalkadoon woman and First Nations Education Adviser, spoke about culture, truth-telling and the role of education in strengthening identity and opportunity for young people.

As the Church in Australia continues its journey of reconciliation, gatherings such as Passing the Flame offer a reminder that grace often takes shape in local, grounded acts of hospitality, listening and courage. In Townsville, that flame was carried in stories of survival, fatherhood, culture and care — and in the invitation for others to step forward, join the work and help keep it burning.

Migrant Jubilee Cross pilgrimage

The Migrant Jubilee Cross is a sacred symbol commissioned for the Jubilee Year 2025–2026 by the Catholic Church in Australia to celebrate the Jubilee of Migrants and to honour the faith, witness, and contributions of migrant and refugee communities across the nation.

The Cross was commissioned by the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference as a visible sign of hope, welcome, and unity within the Church.

As part of its national pilgrimage, the Migrant Jubilee Cross will travel throughout the Diocese of Townsville from 4 -17 July, providing parish and school communities with a unique opportunity to pray, reflect and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the Church.

The Migrant Jubilee Cross is a symbol of God's enduring love for all people, particularly migrants, refugees and those forced to leave their homes in search of safety, peace and a new beginning.

Throughout the pilgrimage, the Cross will invite the faithful to reflect on the Gospel call to welcome the stranger and accompany those who journey in hope.

Crafted from Australian timber and mounted on a boat-shaped base, the Cross reflects the lived experience of countless migrants who have travelled across oceans and borders seeking a place to belong.

It also symbolises the Church's mission to be a refuge, a home and a source of compassion for all.

Emblazoned on the Cross is the Southern Cross constellation, a familiar symbol in Australian skies that has guided travellers for generations and serves as a reminder of God's presence along life's journey.

Adding to its spiritual significance are two sacred



relics embedded within the Cross. One relic honours the Holy Family -Jesus, Mary and Joseph and contains fragments associated with the manger, veil and cloak respectively, on loan from the Order of the Discalced Augustinians.

The second relic is that of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, whose life of service and care for those in need continues to inspire Catholics throughout the nation.

As the Migrant Jubilee Cross travels from parish to parish and diocese to diocese, it is expected to become a focal point for prayer, celebration and reflection during the Jubilee Year.

The pilgrimage will offer an opportunity for communities to recognise the gifts and contributions of migrants and refugees while renewing their commitment to building a Church where all people feel welcomed, valued and at home.

The nationwide pilgrimage stands as a visible reminder that the journey of faith is one shared by all God's people - a journey marked by hope, guided by Christ and enriched by the diversity of cultures that make up the Church in Australia.

For more information about the Townsville Diocese pilgrimage schedule, visit the Townsville Diocese website.

A life of service

For more than seven decades, Sr Nina has dedicated her life to serving God and others.

Whether teaching in Catholic schools, undertaking missionary work in Papua New Guinea or visiting people in their homes, hospitals and aged care facilities, her ministry has been defined by compassion, faith and an unwavering commitment to people.

Earlier this year, the beloved Sister of Mercy celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by the parish community she has served so faithfully.

Reflecting on her life and vocation, Sr Nina speaks with characteristic humility, gratitude and joy.

Her journey began in childhood. “My mother was very religious and she inspired me,” Sr Nina recalls.

“I was taught at a Mercy school and there was one sister who was so kind and lovely to me. I thought, one day I’d like to become like her.”

Remarkably, she was only in Grade 2 when she first felt called to religious life.

That early inspiration grew into vocation that has now spanned more than 70 years.

After entering the Sisters of Mercy, Sr Nina chose teaching over nursing and spent 40 years working in Catholic education.

One of the most significant chapters of her ministry was serving as a missionary in Papua New Guinea for almost a decade.

“I had volunteered to go to PNG and was there for nearly 10 years,” she said.

“That was certainly a standout experience.”

Yet when asked about the highlights of her ministry, Sr Nina finds it difficult to single out any one moment.

“I’ve been in various places, and the people have been so wonderful. I have such beautiful memories.”

Following her retirement from teaching, Sr Nina transitioned into parish

ministry, a role she continues to embrace with enthusiasm today. Much of her time is spent visiting people who are housebound, living in aged care or receiving treatment in hospital. It is a ministry she treasures deeply.

“What motivates me to keep going is that some of these people can be so lonely and they really need a listening heart,” she said.

“I hope that I can make a difference for them.”

During her visits, Sr Nina brings Holy Communion, prays with people and spends time listening. “Everyone likes to be loved and to know they are loved,” she said.

Her ministry extends beyond denominational boundaries. “I visit anyone, not just Catholics. We establish great friendships. The important thing is that people know they are cared for.”

Through these simple but meaningful encounters, Sr Nina hopes people experience companionship, understanding and genuine connection. “I hope that people feel heard,” she said. “You establish a great bond with them and they look forward to seeing you.”

The parish community has also played a significant role in her life, particularly in her hometown of Ingham.

“The people are tremendous. They’ll do anything for you and they appreciate you.”

That support was evident when the priests and parishioners gathered to celebrate her 90th birthday.

“We had a beautiful Mass, with such a lovely crowd and then went to Mercy Hall to celebrate. It was just fantastic.”

The occasion left her deeply touched, with Sr Nina saying how grateful she is to the people of Ingham. “They’ve been so good to me. It fills me with gratitude. If I need anything, they’re always there.” She also expressed special thanks to the priests



who helped make the celebration possible.

Looking back on her vocation, Sr Nina offer simple but profound advice to young people discerning their future.

“If God is really calling you, you’ll eventually answer His call,” she said. She remembers trying at times to push aside the thoughts of becoming a sister, only for the calling to continually return.

“There were times when I said, ‘I’m not going,’ but it always came back to me.”

Her advice is to remain close to God and trust His guidance.

“Stay close to the Lord and be prepared. I’ve been very, very blessed. With everything that I do, I don’t do it alone. I always do it with the grace of God.”

At 90 years of age, Sr Nina continues to find joy in the people she encounters each day. “Visiting people, talking to people and being out and about brings me a lot of joy,” she said. Seeing the difference a visit can make is particularly rewarding. “When you’ve been there for a while and had a chat, and you can see a big difference, that makes me so happy.”

Yet she is quick to point out that ministry is never a one-way exchange. “It’s not what I give to them, but also what I get from them in return. They are so grateful and happy to see me, and that makes me feel really good.”



St Pat’s Mercy Girls in Action

The 2026 Vinnies Winter Appeal was a resounding success at St Patrick’s College Townsville, once again showcasing the generosity and initiative of the Mercy Girls in Action group.

Across one bustling lunch break, students raised hundreds of dollars in support of vulnerable individuals and families within the local community, highlighting a strong commitment to service while also assisting fellow students in preparing for Camp Week with essential warm clothing.

In the lead-up to the fundraiser, a group of 30 Mercy Girls took a hands-on approach, visiting the St Vincent de Paul warehouse to carefully select high-quality,

pre-loved winter clothing. From warm jumpers to durable jeans, each item was thoughtfully chosen and later sold at a lunchtime market stall in the College Sport Complex.

The atmosphere on the day was vibrant and energetic, with students and staff eagerly supporting the initiative.

Many were keen to purchase affordable camp essentials, priced between \$2 and \$5, while contributing to a meaningful cause.

The stall sold out within the hour, demonstrating both the high demand for winter clothing and the strong culture of generosity within the community.

All funds raised will be donated directly to St Vincent

de Paul, supporting people experiencing hardship and homelessness.

Contributions will assist in providing essential items such as food, warm clothing, blankets, and financial support for basic living expenses, offering dignity and hope during the colder months.

At its heart, this initiative highlights St Patrick’s College Townsville’s enduring commitment to compassion, service, and sustainability.

By transforming a simple market stall into an opportunity for outreach, the St Patrick’s Mercy Girls in Action group is making a tangible difference while developing values that will guide them well beyond their time at the College.

Church launches appeal for its retired priests

Retired Diocesan Priests are very valued and much loved members of the Diocese of Townsville.

They have walked alongside many people experiencing joy and sadness, challenges and successes.

It is now our time to care for them in their retirement.

With the help of our

community, we will continue to look after our retired priest into the future.

As the end of the financial year draws near, please consider donating to the Clergy Appeal.

Donations above \$2 are tax deductible.

>> Scan to donate.



Education nominees

A spirit of pride and celebration is sweeping through Catholic school communities as the nominees for the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards are unveiled for 2026.

This year's honours highlight individuals and teams whose dedication, compassion and commitment reflect the very heart of Catholic education. Individual nominees include:

- Ben Naughton – Columba Catholic College, Charters Towers
- Sandra La Rosa – Gilroy Santa Maria College, Ingham
- Veronica Feliciano – Good Shepherd Catholic College, Rasmussen
- Peta Borg – Good Shepherd Catholic School, Mount Isa
- Paul Martin – Holy Spirit Catholic School, Cranbrook
- Michelle Boorer – Marian Catholic School, Currajong
- Graham Joseph – Mary Help of Christians Catholic College, Shaw
- Robin Tomba – Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Ingham
- Matt Lobegeiger – Ryan Catholic College, Kirwan
- Mikayla Ten Dam – Southern Cross Catholic College, Annandale
- Sarah Pugh – St Benedict's Catholic School, Shaw
- Donna Jack – St Clare's Catholic School, Burdell
- Sonia Dabelstein – St Francis' School, Ayr
- Jillian Wilson – St John Bosco Catholic School, Collinsville
- Therese Lane – St Joseph's Catholic School, Mundingburra
- Justine Lyons – St Margaret Mary's College, Hyde Park
- Rachael Young – St Mary's Catholic School, Bowen.

Two outstanding teams have also been acknowledged: the Inclusive Practice Team at Holy Spirit Catholic School, and the Primary Inclusive Practices Team at Ryan Catholic College, Kirwan.



St Mary MacKillop Early Learning Centre in Kirwan opens its newly transformed learning environment.



New chapter

St Mary MacKillop Early Learning Centre, Kirwan is preparing to welcome children and families back into a beautifully transformed learning environment following a significant refurbishment of the service.

Originally opened in 2004, the centre was established as part of the Diocese of Townsville's commitment to supporting family life through the provision of Catholic early childhood education and care services.

Under the patronage of Saint Mary MacKillop, renowned for her dedication to children, families and those most in need, the centre has continued to provide nurturing, faith-filled education and care for local families for more than two decades.

The refurbishment reflects Mary MacKillop Childcare North Queensland's ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality care and education to the youngest members of our community.

The centre has undergone a complete transformation from floor to ceiling, including new flooring, cabinetry, refreshed learning environments, upgraded amenities and a fully landscaped outdoor environment designed to inspire exploration, creativity

and play. One of the key improvements includes an extension to the Nursery outdoor play area, providing additional space for the centre's youngest learners to safely discover and engage with the world around them.

Executive Director Jo Goodrick said the refurbishment represented an important investment in children, families and the future of Catholic early childhood education in the region. "Our goal has always been to provide environments where children feel safe, valued and inspired to learn," Ms Goodrick said.

"This refurbishment has allowed us to create contemporary, engaging spaces that support high-quality educational experiences while maintaining the warm and welcoming community that families know and love."

Importantly, families have continued to receive uninterrupted care throughout the refurbishment period, with children temporarily accommodated at another MMCNQ early learning service that ceased operation late last year.

"We are incredibly grateful to our families for their patience, flexibility and support during this transition,"

Ms Goodrick said.

"The co-operation shown by families and educators throughout the process has been exceptional and reflects the strong sense of community that exists within our services."

Children and families are expected to return to the newly refurbished centre from 29 June, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the Kirwan community.

The refurbishment has also created opportunities to introduce new inclusions for families, with a fully operational kitchen now installed onsite. In the coming months, the centre will commence providing freshly prepared meals for children as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting children's health, wellbeing and daily learning experiences.

Ms Goodrick said the new additions would further enhance the experience for families.

"The addition of onsite meal provision is another exciting step forward as we continue to invest in high-quality environments, experiences and care for children across our communities."

>> St Mary MacKillop Early Learning Centre will host a Community Open Day on August 1st, from 10am to 1pm.

Mater's mission to keep Townsville warm



Mater staff have dug deep for those doing it tough as part of this year's Mercy in Action activities.

With a focus on the Gift of Warmth, dozens of donations have been collected during the past month to distribute to members of the community experiencing homelessness.

Guided by the Mater Mission in Action, the initiative reflects Mater's commitment to serve those most in need with compassion, dignity, and respect.

Essential items including blankets and sleeping bags, warm clothing, basic toiletries, non-perishable food and bottled water have been thoughtfully assembled into care bundles to provide comfort and practical support during the upcoming colder months.

While many of us can enjoy a warm meal or a cold blanket on a winter's night, we are reminded that not everyone shares the same warmth and security.

Across Australia and around the world, many people are going without stable housing, adequate clothing, or basic necessities, and others continue to endure the challenges of war, displacement, illness and hardship.

For many this season can deepen vulnerability rather than provide rest or renewal.

Mater Townsville's Mission Integration Manager, Fina Jose Palathingal, said in these

moments we are gently called to notice, to care, and to respond.

"This is a call that reflects the spirit and legacy of Catherine McAuley, whose life was grounded in attentiveness to those experiencing hardship and exclusion," said Ms Palathingal.

"Catherine reminded us that mercy is not passive - it is active, intentional, and compassionate.

"She encouraged us to open our eyes and hearts to those who may otherwise go unseen and to respond in ways that restore dignity, hope, and belonging. The staff and leadership team have responded extremely positively to the donation drive, and I couldn't be prouder of what we are achieving together."

Around 20 care packs have currently been put together and will be handed out during the coming days.

Mater Private Hospital Townsville Acting General Manager, Anna Olson said the donation drive is part of a shared expression of mercy that can bring warmth, hope, and comfort to another person.

"This small act of kindness is a meaningful opportunity for us as a community at Mater to make a practical difference in the lives of others," said Ms Olson. "Every contribution, big or small, helps us support individuals facing challenging circumstances this winter and provide a bit of warmth."

Joyful celebration of faith at Good Shepherd



Good Shepherd Parish, Townsville, celebrated a significant milestone in the faith journey of its young parishioners on Sunday, June 7, as 63 children received the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Eucharist.

Due to the large number of candidates and their families attending, the celebration was held in the Emmaus Hall at Ryan Catholic College.

The venue was transformed into a sacred and welcoming worship space through the dedication of numerous volunteers who spent countless hours preparing and decorating the hall.

Students from Ryan Catholic College, together with Assistant Principal Religious Education Co-ordinators

(APREs) and staff from the four schools (Ryan, Good Shepherd, St. Benedict's and Mary Help of Christians College) within the parish, made valuable contributions to the success of the celebration.

In his opening address, the Parish Priest Fr Joseph Reddy SVD commended the perseverance and commitment of parents and carers throughout the sacramental program. He thanked them for continuing to sow the seeds of faith in their children amidst the challenges of modern life.

"The Church acknowledges parents as the first teachers of faith of their Children," Fr Joseph said. "As priests and as a parish team, we are here to support you in this mission. Thank you for nurturing your children's spiritual lives.

Never see the sacraments as a burden. Jesus only ever brings life and always offers what is good, true and beautiful."

The Sacraments were conferred by Bishop Tim Harris, who, during his homily, highlighted the importance of continuing to live out the graces received through Confirmation and the Eucharist. He encouraged families to remain active in their faith and reminded parents that the completion of the Sacraments of Initiation is only the beginning of a lifelong journey with Christ.

The parish community extends its heartfelt congratulations to all 63 children and their families on this special occasion and assures them of continued prayers and support as they grow in faith.



Co-curricular excellence

Ignatius Park College's vibrant co-curricular program is thriving in 2026, offering students dynamic opportunities to discover their talents, build resilient character, and deepen their connection to the community.

Far from being just "extracurricular" these programs are a vital pillar of the school's identity.

A recent highlight for the arts program was the College's involvement in the combined schools musical, *All Shook Up*. Taking centre stage at the Townsville Civic Theatre for three packed performances, the production was a resounding success.

The season showcased the remarkable dedication and creative talents of Ignatius Park students, both in the spotlight and behind the scenes in technical crew and production roles.

The College also continues to build upon its longstanding tradition of sporting excellence.

The Aaron Payne Cup and Cowboys Challenge rugby league teams are delivering strong performances in their respective competitions. These achievements are a testament to the commitment and determination of our players, coaches and support staff,

whose collective efforts continue to drive excellence within the College's sporting pathways.

At Ignatius Park College, co-curricular involvement forms an essential part of a holistic Catholic education.

Guided by the Gospel and the Edmund Rice touchstones, students are challenged to live out these core values daily:

- **Liberating Education:** Developing confidence and life skills beyond the desk.

- **Gospel Spirituality:** Using God-given gifts to their fullest potential.

- **Inclusive Community:** Building a strong, welcoming sense of belonging.

- **Justice and Solidarity:** Supporting peers and serving the wider community.

At Ignatius Park College, we recognise that true education extends beyond the classroom.

Rather than detracting from academic pursuits, participation in our co-curricular program complements classroom learning by helping students develop heightened self-confidence, a deeper sense of accountability, and time-management skills, all which contribute to stronger academic outcomes and a well-rounded approach to learning.

Sacred gifts and books

The month of June in The Catholic Church is traditionally devoted to The Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it is one of the most popular Catholic devotions.

In 1673, Jesus appeared to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, showing her a vision of the now famous image of His Sacred Heart, surrounded by flames and she was given the special mission to spread devotion to His Sacred Heart throughout the Church.

Jesus also gave St Margaret Mary many promises associated with this devotion and requested that a feast day in honour of His Sacred Heart be instituted on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi.

Here at St Vincent de Paul Book and Gift Shop, we like to honour The Sacred Heart of Our Lord in a special way throughout June, with an array of merchandise we have available to our discerning customers.

There are a variety of

Plaques and Holy Pictures of The Sacred Heart which can be used to display in your home or prayer space, along with a selection of statues in various sizes also dedicated to The Sacred Heart.

The collection includes hand painted statues from St Joseph's Studio together with medals and Rosary Beads depicting The Sacred Heart.

For those wanting to delve deeper into this devotion there is an array of books on The Sacred Heart. Behold This Heart by St Francis de Sales is a perennial favourite along with Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary.

We offer an array of gifts and books for every special occasion, from Births, Baptisms, Communion, Confirmation and Weddings to Birthdays and Memorials.

Our wide range includes Rosary Beads, Bracelets, Cards, Inspirational and Devotional Books, Sterling Silver and Gold Jewellery, Bookmarks, Holy Pictures, Crosses, Crucifixes, Statues and much more.

Every gift reflects life's most meaningful moments, and each one is chosen to bring comfort, joy, or hope to whoever receives it.

We also stock a delightful selection of children's books



Denise Raffaldi, Maree Churchand Barbara Kummer at the gift shop.

with engaging stories to read to children, by acclaimed authors such as Anthony De Stefano, Tomie de Paola, and Max Lucado. Colourful activity and sticker books are also popular.

Our great range of reading materials caters to every age group and include autobiographies, books written by the Saints and about the Saints, self-help/personal development books and much more.

There are also many unique

items ranging from devotional books which inspire and give a sense of peace, bring joy and deepen one's faith, in addition to small pocket cards for those moments when just a few words are enough.

Come in, browse, and visit us at The St Vincent de Paul Book and Gift Shop located at 1 Woodman Court, West End.

We welcome you to come in anytime from Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm and Saturday from 9am to 1pm, phone 4725 2380.

Emerging leaders

Townsville Catholic Education celebrated the achievements of First Nations students at its Emerging Leaders Showcase last month, highlighting the impact of a program grounded in culture, connection and community.

The event brought together students, families, mentors and staff to recognise the leadership journeys of participants in the First Peoples Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme.

Since commencing in 2018, the program has supported more than 5,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the Diocese through mentoring, goal setting, leadership development and culturally responsive support.

Townsville Catholic Education Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme Project Coordinator Tammi Webber said the Showcase reflected

the strength of students and the communities supporting them.

"The Showcase was a celebration of the growth, determination and leadership shown by our students and a reminder of what is possible when culture and identity are placed at the centre of educational success," Ms Webber said.

Townsville Catholic Education Executive Director Jacqui Francis said the program continued to create meaningful opportunities for First Nations students and families.

"We have seen students strengthen their confidence, connection and aspirations through Emerging Leaders, and we hope to see opportunities like this continue into the future so more young people can experience the same impact," Ms Francis said.