

# I N F O R M

*Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney  
August/September 2021*



# *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

Unfortunately, we are no closer to a gathering than we were when we published the last Inform, so keep up your prayers that our Medicos and Government will soon succeed in bringing COVID under some manageable level of control and free us from lockdown.

I hope all our members are well, free from the virus, and not too bored. As I sat wondering what to write I decided to find some positive news, so here goes.

Due to COVID we have time and the privilege to watch Mass on Demand every day if we wish, from Churches we may never have the opportunity to visit. At 11.00am each day we settle down with a cuppa and a slice we baked because we had nothing else to do, to hear our Gladys give her update that never seems to offer imminent good news. Then there are the cupboards crying out to be tidied, but there are only two chapters left to read in a really good book so to hell with the cupboards. Make-up is no longer required except on the forehead that is the only body part exposed. The elegant jacket or jumper bought for this winter; well it has been worn just once. With Fathers' Day advertisements urging us to buy buy buy, we think of our unworn jacket/jumper and conclude it is all too hard, he will have to wait until next year.

We pray for all the Fathers who are still with us, and those who are now with Our Lord, and offer them our sincere thanks for all they have given to enrich our lives. We pray especially for those Fathers who are suffering health problems caused by the lockdown, and for those who are otherwise unwell.



Thank you to Helen Cook, a long-time member of CWL Sydney who held executive positions and is a past President, for all her work for CWL over many years. Helen has resigned from Council due to failing health. We greatly appreciate Helen's contribution and wish her all the best for the future.

On a sad note, our dear Vice President Margaret Burke died on 11 July after only a short illness. Also, Brian McNally, husband of Patricia who was a member of CWL for many years, died on 30 August after a long illness. Brian was very involved over many years in the Marian Court community holding executive positions including President of the Residents Committee. Both Margaret and Brian will be sadly missed. Please keep them in your prayers. We complain about lockdown, but keep in mind and in your prayers the poor people of Afghanistan, Haiti and many other countries around the world, whose lives are impacted so greatly by events that for us are so difficult to comprehend.

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As we come into Spring let us pray for each and every one of us that we be kept safe from the virus, and that we may before years end be able to again meet in person as a CWL community.

God bless you all. Mary Help of Christians pray for us.

Margaret Blomfield

President

## St Thomas More: A Father First

One of my great heroes in heaven is Saint Thomas More (1478-1535). He is and was many things to many people – a learned lawyer; a sharp thinker; a prolific writer; an illustrious statesman; a devoted humanist; a champion of Catholicism; and, ultimately, a courageous martyr and canonised saint. Yet, despite the nobility and grandeur of all these qualities and achievements, it is worth us remembering that Thomas More was, first and foremost, a father. His vocation, that is to say, his calling to holiness, was, first and foremost, to be a loving and committed husband and dad. And this, indeed, he was and did. (He had four daughters – one was adopted – and a son.) Perhaps, thence, he is a particularly piquant model – besides St Joseph – for us to uphold as we celebrate Father’s Day.

One of the best ways to get to know Thomas More is to read the letters he wrote to his wife and children whenever he was away from the family home; including his time in prison at the Tower of London. Every letter bespeaks of the tender love and the paternal affection that he had for each of them; but a love and affection that was founded upon, and derived from, his own experience of God’s mercy and the singular strength that comes from practicing the Catholic faith. It is often commented upon in historical biographies that More only ever chastised his children with “peacock feathers”. Nevertheless, he bequeathed to them – first through his words but most of all through his witness – that to be fully alive as a human being is to be fully alive in Christ. The two are not mutually exclusive. To be a committed Catholic is to be a committed human being; a real family man; a true lover. There is nothing more manly or fatherly than to kneel down before Christ in the tabernacle and pray earnestly to God – ‘Our Father’ – for one’s wife and children. This is the witness the world so desperately needs today; it is the witness our parishes also so desperately need too! (I remember as a teenager being very moved and inspired when I went into the school chapel to make a visit and saw the chaplain kneeling alone in his cassock before the Blessed Sacrament praying his breviary. Simply by seeing that act of piety, I thought to myself: ‘That man really loves God and I want to love God like him’.)

More had a tremendous intellect which he put to good use in defending the Catholic faith, especially on the precipice of the Protestant reformation. But he was also insistent that women should also be educated in the world of ideas just as much as men. In a letter written to William Gonnell, his children’s tutor, he instructed him saying: “I do not have to tell you that both men and women can be successful in the sciences for they speak the common language of men...Both men and women have the same right to study, given that they have the understanding to do so...Cultured persons and saints long ago shared the same opinion as I.” Such progressive sentiments were certainly provocative given the age in which More lived. Yet, he never shied away from encouraging his daughters to develop a keen interest in the life of the mind. His eldest daughter, Margaret, was said to have been especially brilliant.

This propensity for forthright and courageous thinking never faltered. More was a man of unwavering integrity and refused to sacrifice the truth for the sake of securing his own (worldly) comfort. By refusing to acknowledge King Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, an act which no doubt pricked the moral conscience of the King (especially since More was always greatly admired and loved by King Henry), he was executed for treason — a testament to the valiance of More's own faith-filled conscience, on the one hand, and a palpable example of the insecurity that sin can breed when we depart from the natural moral law, on the other. This is the witness of a Catholic father that undoubtedly inspired not only his children, but generations of children ever since and, no doubt, will continue to do so long into the future.

Love for God must come first in everything and despite everything. More lived this fact throughout his life. Even when he was Lord Chancellor of England and would don the splendid robes of his exalted office, he would continue to wear a hair-shirt underneath (a garment made of bristly animal hair worn for penitential reasons); a poignant sign that it was Christ who was closest to his heart. For the fortitude of faith always begins to atrophy when we, along with society, become too comfortable in the pursuit of worldly endeavours.

In the lead-up to his execution, the King communicated to More that “[at] your execution, you shall not use many words” (referring to the last words traditionally offered by the condemned). Indeed, More's words were brief, culminating in his famous remark: "I die the King's good servant, but God's first". Such brevity was certainly in keeping with the spirit of St. Francis who once said: “Preach the Gospel and if necessary, use words.” More's martyrdom was the perfect homily on what faith and fatherhood are really all about.

Let us pray for all fathers during this time, but especially all the fathers – biological and spiritual – in our Church: that, following the illuminating example of St Thomas More, they may grow in their commitment to God above all else and, in so doing, grow in their commitment to their wives and children. May we never compromise Christ for comfort; for comfort, no matter how attractive, can never set us free.

## Fr Greg Morgan Chaplain





## THE SPANISH FLU SUBMITTED BY JAY TURNER

In the 15th. century, ancient physicians in Italy, became convinced, that upper respiratory infections were influenced by the stars. So when relatively modern physicians, discovered a highly infectious respiratory disease, caused by a virus, they named it Influenza or Flu.

Early in the 20th. century, the Spanish Flu, spread throughout the world and killed more than 50,000,000 people. Although no one knew what it was, or how to cure or prevent it, one of the few things known for certain was, that it didn't originate in Spain. During the last few months of World War I, the King of Spain became infected and although the disease had already appeared in England and Europe, wartime censorship prevented news of the outbreak spreading beyond Spain, so the disease became known as the Spanish Flu.

New South Wales was the first state to officially proclaim an outbreak of Spanish Flu on 27th. January 1919. It affected healthy young adults rather than children or the elderly and mortality rates were highest for people aged 25-39.

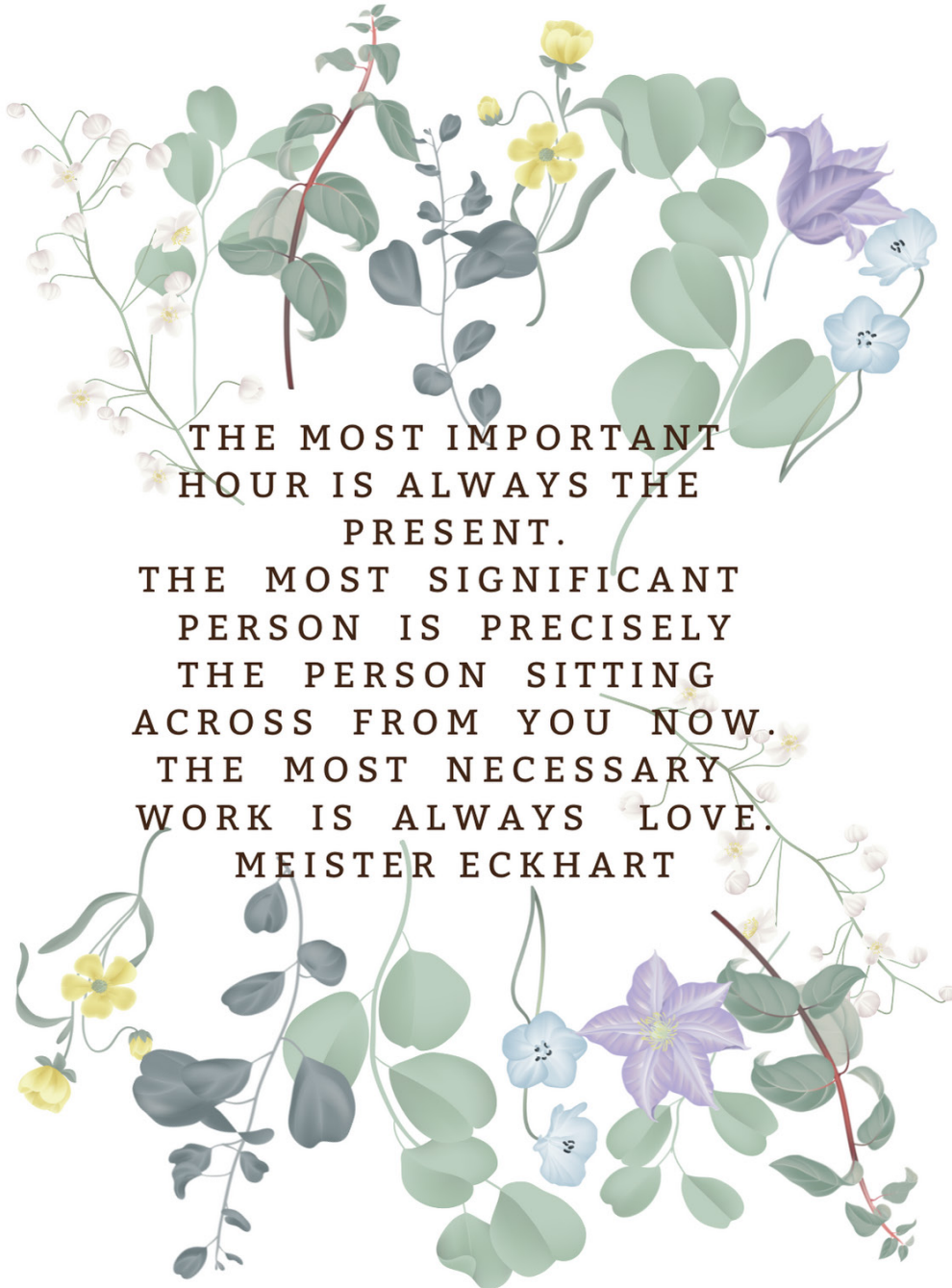
Before the internet, on-line Masses and daily television updates, newspapers provided most of the often dodgy, advice. Almost every advertiser discovered preventative powers in his product - eating Arnotts Shredded Wheatmeal biscuits, or raw minced liver, as well as a dose of turpentine and gargling Condy's crystals twice a day was recommended. Ads advised that Aspro tablets could "shift influenza out in 24 hours" and a man sitting next to a sick man on a train "had no reason to fear, because he was smoking a pipe of tobacco"

In January, libraries, schools churches, theatres, public halls and places of indoor entertainment were closed and people were required to wear masks covering nose and mouth. Travel was restricted, but each state went its own way and eventually the Commonwealth government, with few powers and little money effectively left them to it.

Then as now, there were objections to mask wearing, fines of \$40 for noncompliance and complaints from theatre owners and churches, when people were allowed to ride in crowded public transport and visit thronged beaches, but masked churchgoers, observing physical distancing, were forbidden to assemble outside for worship.

By May, Sydney had experienced three outbreaks and after two unsuccessful attempts to defeat the epidemic, the government decided to go for "burn out" and let it take its course. In August the epidemic was officially declared over

The N.S.W. government's decision not to restore restrictions, saw the epidemic "burn out" but at the terrible cost in lives. Of the 12,000 Australians who died, 6,000 were from NSW. The decision not to restore restrictions, didn't cause a ripple of objections. At the state election in March 1920 Spanish Flu was not even a campaign issue.



THE MOST IMPORTANT  
HOUR IS ALWAYS THE  
PRESENT.  
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
PERSON IS PRECISELY  
THE PERSON SITTING  
ACROSS FROM YOU NOW.  
THE MOST NECESSARY  
WORK IS ALWAYS LOVE.  
MEISTER ECKHART

SUBMITTED BY  
MARLENE  
WALLACE

## The History of "Aprons"

I don't think most kids today know what an apron is. The principle use of Mom's or Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material.

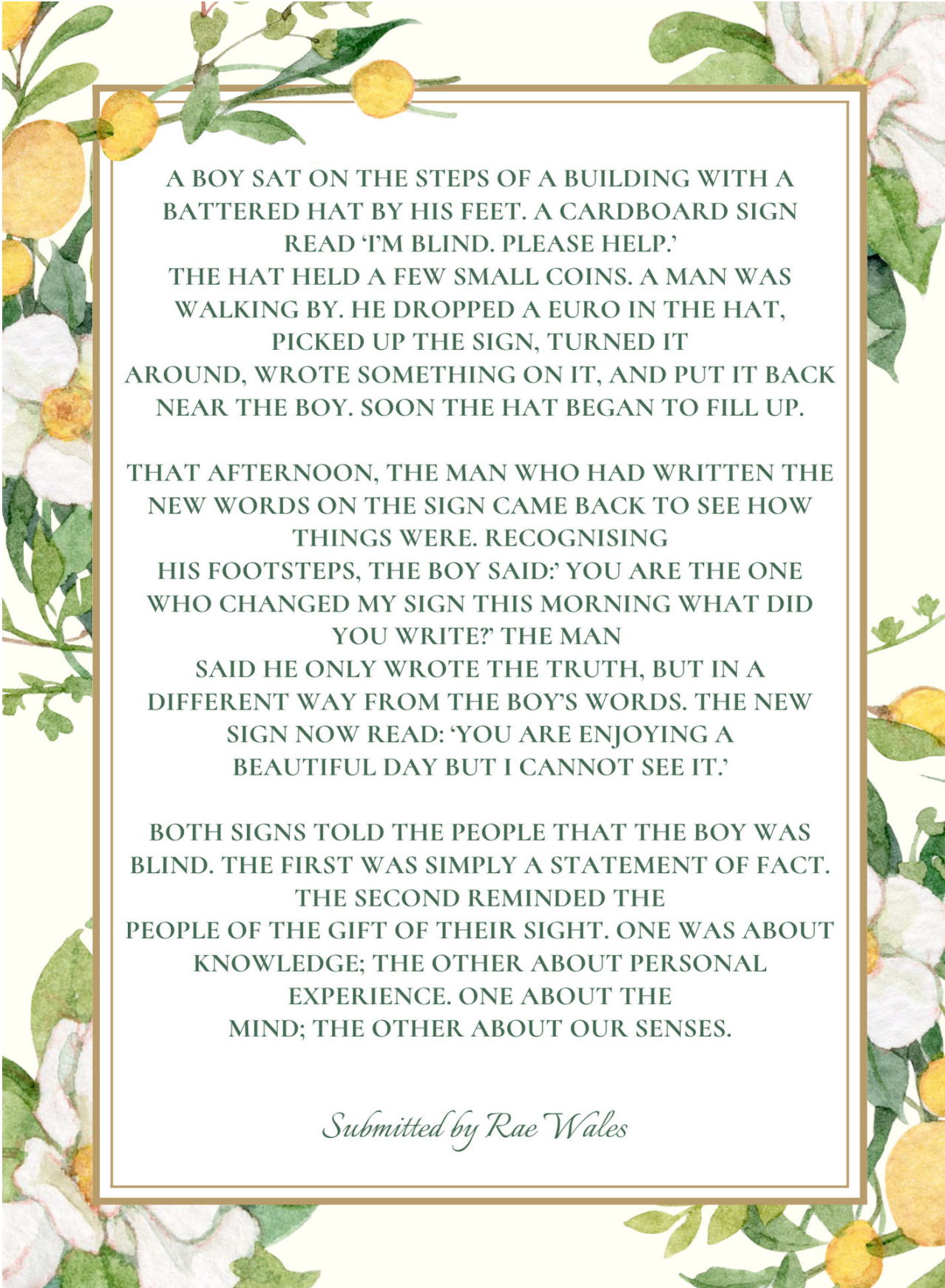
But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven. It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears. From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven. When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids... And when the weather was cold, she wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron. From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees. When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds. When dinner was ready, she walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes. Send this to those who would know (and love) the story about aprons.

**REMEMBER:** Mom's and Grandma's used to set hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw. They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron – but love...





A BOY SAT ON THE STEPS OF A BUILDING WITH A BATTERED HAT BY HIS FEET. A CARDBOARD SIGN READ 'I'M BLIND. PLEASE HELP.' THE HAT HELD A FEW SMALL COINS. A MAN WAS WALKING BY. HE DROPPED A EURO IN THE HAT, PICKED UP THE SIGN, TURNED IT AROUND, WROTE SOMETHING ON IT, AND PUT IT BACK NEAR THE BOY. SOON THE HAT BEGAN TO FILL UP.

THAT AFTERNOON, THE MAN WHO HAD WRITTEN THE NEW WORDS ON THE SIGN CAME BACK TO SEE HOW THINGS WERE. RECOGNISING HIS FOOTSTEPS, THE BOY SAID: 'YOU ARE THE ONE WHO CHANGED MY SIGN THIS MORNING WHAT DID YOU WRITE?' THE MAN SAID HE ONLY WROTE THE TRUTH, BUT IN A DIFFERENT WAY FROM THE BOY'S WORDS. THE NEW SIGN NOW READ: 'YOU ARE ENJOYING A BEAUTIFUL DAY BUT I CANNOT SEE IT.'

BOTH SIGNS TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT THE BOY WAS BLIND. THE FIRST WAS SIMPLY A STATEMENT OF FACT. THE SECOND REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF THE GIFT OF THEIR SIGHT. ONE WAS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE; THE OTHER ABOUT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. ONE ABOUT THE MIND; THE OTHER ABOUT OUR SENSES.

*Submitted by Rae Wales*



ALONG THE ROAD

I WALKED A MILE WITH PLEASURE;  
SHE CHATTERED ALL THE WAY,  
BUT LEFT ME NONE THE WISER  
FOR ALL SHE HAD TO SAY

I WALKED A MILE WITH SORROW  
AND NE'ER A WORD SAID SHE;  
BUT OH, THE THINGS I LEARNED FROM HER  
WHEN SORROW WALKED WITH ME

*by Robert Browning*

**SUBMITTED BY RAE WALES**



## THE ORIGIN OF FATHER'S DAY

Father's Day a special day honouring fathers, fatherhood, and the impact of fathers in society, has been celebrated in Catholic countries in Europe since the early 1500's.

It was influenced by the Eastern Orthodox Church's custom of celebrating the Sunday of the Forefathers, on the Sunday between 11th. and 17th. December. This day was established to commemorate the ancestors of Jesus as man, starting with Adam, Abraham and the forebears of his mother Mary, Joseph and various prophets.

In the middle ages, the Catholic Church chose the 19th. March, the feast day of St. Joseph, the assumed father of Jesus, to pay tribute to fatherhood and the celebration was brought to the Americas by the Spanish and Portuguese explorers.

Today, Father's Day is celebrated in more than one hundred and eleven countries throughout the world, though the date varies by country. The most common choice, followed in seventy countries worldwide, is the third Sunday in June.

Australia however, is one of the four countries in the Pacific where Father's Day is celebrated in September

Jay Turner  
Concord West Branch



# SERIOUS LOCKDOWN ADVICE

*submitted by Margaret Blomfield (President)*

Everyone PLEASE be careful because people are going crazy from being locked down at home!

I was just talking about this with my microwave and the toaster while drinking Pepsi, and we all agreed that things are getting bad.

I didn't mention any of this to the washing machine, because she puts a spin on EVERYTHING!!

Certainly couldn't share it with the fridge cause he's been acting cold and distant!

In the end the iron straightened me out! She said the situation isn't all that pressing and all the wrinkles will soon get ironed out!

The Vacuum cleaner however, was very unsympathetic ....told me to just suck it up! BUT the fan was very optimistic and gave me hope that it will all blow over soon.

The toilet looked a bit flushed but didn't say anything when I asked it's opinion.

The front door said I was becoming unhinged and the doornob told me to get a grip! You can just guess what the curtains told me. They told me to "pull myself together"! We will survive!!



"Can I offer some help to Richard Stewart about not knowing what day it is?" "A friend shared the following with me during our first lockdown: "Until further notice, the days of the week are now called Thisday, Thatday, otherday, Someday, Yesterday, Today and Nextday." Nola Tucker, however, has no such problems: "we simply check the masthead of the Herald when it arrives."

## The Green thing! (Continued on page 14)

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment,. The woman apologized to the young girl and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days." The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

The older lady said that she was right our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day. The older lady went on to explain: Back then, we returned milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day. Grocery stores bagged our groceries in brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable besides household garbage bags was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our school books. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school) was not defaced by our scribblings. Then we were able to personalise our books on the brown paper bags.

But, too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then. We walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But she was right.

We didn't have the "green thing" in our day. Back then we washed the baby's diapers because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days.

Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one TV, or radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of Montana.

In the kitchen we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blade in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's \$45,000 SUV or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing."

We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest burger joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

Please forward this on to another selfish old person who needs a lesson in conservation from a smart pants young person. We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to cheese us off... Especially from a tattooed, multiple pierced smarty pants who can't make change without the cash register telling HER how much. **Submitted by Vickii Pompor**



# BRANCH NEWS AND DIARY DATES

*We love hearing about the happenings of our Branches.  
If your branch has an upcoming event or any exciting news to  
share, please let us know!*

## Branch Birthdays:

- Patricia Toohey from Concord West Branch turned 100 years old!
- Elizabeth Santatello from Denistone Branch turned 90 years old!

Congratulations to these wonderful women. Please keep  
them in your prayers.

*Become a Member of Catholic Women's  
League  
Archdiocese of Sydney Today!*

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Cost: \$30 for Branch Members, \$35 for Diocesan Members

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm joining \_\_\_\_\_ branch

OR

I'm joining as a Diocesan member

I am willing to receive information by email: YES/NO

Please return with remittance of \$30 or \$35 to:

Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney  
133 Liverpool St, Sydney 2000

Ph: 9307 8383

Email: [cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org)

*Thank you!*

*If you have news from your branch, upcoming events, or interesting articles you'd like to share, please let us know - [cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org)*