



## From the Lazarus Centre Chaplain

### In this issue:

- Pete Burns, friend of the Lazarus Centre, tells of his struggle to re-establish his life following homelessness
- The Lazarus Centre Breakfast Program co-ordinator, Louise Lang, reflects on her experiences working with the homeless
- I reflect on conversations with Lazarus Centre staff, volunteers and participants and the importance of Edward Wimberly's approach to pastoral care: essentially that carers need to engage in story-listening before story-telling
- The St Peter's Charitable Foundation Committee is moving towards the formation of a social enterprise to assist those experiencing homelessness towards meaningful work
- Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy is funded by the St Peter's Charitable Foundation. Find out how to support this ministry at [www.spehcf.com.au/donations](http://www.spehcf.com.au/donations)

*Fr Philip Gill*

# Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy News

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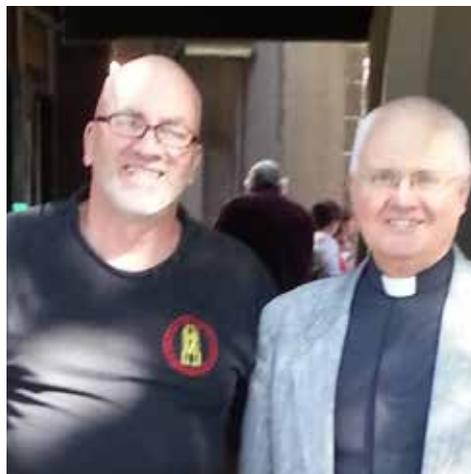
Easter, 2015

## Pete's Story

Hello my name is Pete Burns. I have experienced being homeless and marginalized – it is not a great feeling. Here you are one day sailing along having a very good lifestyle – I had my own business in the building and construction industry and was successful in my own right. I had a house, finance for a holiday, pretty much freedom second to none. Back in 2011 there was a financial global downturn in the building industry and the company which I built hit the ground faster than it went up! All the things I took for granted were gone – house, money – everything. I was left with the clothes on my back.

Imagine having to flee the situation and find yourself sleeping in the streets or under bridges not knowing where to access food, blankets, shower

even assistance. This is a situation which is completely new. We are not trained to get ready for being homeless. That is why I cannot speak



Pete Burns and Fr Philip

highly enough of the wonderful programs that Anglicare provide, not only at St Peter's but also St Mark's. See, what it gives you as a person living homeless and marginalized is a connection point and access

to the basic essentials needed to survive. It is very important to have a place to access support and get some direction to help rebuild your life. This wonderful program is all about building a community where people can come to and feel like they belong - somewhere with a sense of empathy, care, and someone to trust. In my opinion this is the best breakfast program in town.

St Mark's is great too, with a wonderful lunch program and access to food parcels, a shower, and facilities to wash your clothes. Also very important is assistance from staff. Ongoing support of the Lazarus Centre is paramount to keeping the programs running. I am evidence of the good these programs achieve. St Peter's and St Mark's played a big part in my being able to move forward.

## From Louise Lang, Coordinator of the Breakfast Program

The work of Homeless Support Services continues to be busy in 2015! We regularly feed anywhere between forty five and eighty guests at breakfast and sixty or so at St Mark's Community Centre at lunch time. It doesn't seem that long since we had our Christmas Luncheon at St Peter's and distributed over 150 hampers to our regular clients. We have now moved from Summer into Autumn and are looking towards Winter. We are now wanting to stock up on good second-hand clothing, coats and shoes for distribution as the weather starts to cool. Over Summer we participated in the City of Melbourne's Heatwave and

Extreme Weather Planning for people experiencing homelessness. The Council provided us with pool passes and cinema tickets to be distributed and used on particularly hot days, so that those sleeping rough had an opportunity to cool their core temperature. Fortunately there were only three or so hot days this Summer so there was not the anticipated demand. Late last year the Health Time Report was launched, it was compiled by Vincentcare working with a number of the agencies delivering Health Times services to various marginalised communities. Our Friday BBQ is included in this

report and it as well as one of our clients feature in the report DVD. Our work is also highlighted in the Anglicare Victoria Annual Report, this includes an article and a few photos about our Breakfast Program. We have a great team who work together - good staff and great volunteers! There are currently six paid staff and a team of around 25 volunteers who help out at various times in the week. Philip Gill continues to provide outstanding support to the clients and the staff and willingly follows up a number of enquiries. We were very sad to hear of Pauline Oakley's death, a Sunday morning volunteer who kept us on our toes!

## Lessons in Pastoral Care: Story-listening Before Story-telling

In this issue of the Newsletter Pete Burns has graciously agreed to share something of his story. I have known Pete for two years. I am always impressed by his willingness to accompany others through the journey he himself has traveled, offering hope to members of the community that is the Lazarus Centre Breakfast Program. Pete and I, with others, have shared often about solutions to homelessness and canvassed topics from personal motivation and affordable housing to policy change.

Engaging in conversation with Lazarus Centre staff, volunteers and participants continues to be a deeply humbling experience and has heightened for me the importance of listening carefully to the needs of the others before making judgments about what is good or helpful for them. We all need to learn lessons of humility in the practice reaching out to others. A good way to begin is to simply be there in a way that is open and approachable. As I reflect on my work at the Lazarus Centre I am reminded of the work of a writer on pastoral care, Edward Wimberly. Wimberly emphasises the importance of story-telling and story-listening.

I became aware of his work through one of my favourite books on Pastoral Care, *Images of Pastoral Care*, by Princeton Theological Seminary Professor, Robert Dykstra. According to Wimberly, story-listening involves listening with empathy seeking to understand the troubled person's perspective. The listener needs also to acknowledge the feelings of the person as they emerge. "It is only when the story has been fully expressed", writes Wimberly, "and the caregiver has attended to it with empathy that the foundation is laid for story telling". [Dykstra, 2005:185].

It is only when we have taken the time and the effort to listen to the story of another that the time is right for story-telling. Christians have a healing story to tell but Wimberly rightly points out that launching too quickly into what we might believe is the cure is at least insensitive, but may, even unconsciously, be manipulative. Keeping what Wimberly says in mind, I give thanks for the times I have been able to share stories of faith and life with those who are the Lazarus Centre Breakfast Program community.

Fr Philip Gill

## Lazarus Centre Social Enterprise Project

The St Peter's Social Enterprise Committee has been working hard to establish pathways for those who are homeless to engage in meaningful work. The committee has settled on the idea of

a Coffee Barrow, inspired by a similar project operating from St Giles-in-the-Fields London (pictured). It was decided that the best way forward was to lodge an application to become an incorporated association. The committee is very grateful for the work of parishioner Michael Gronow who assisted the committee in drawing up a set of rules necessary for the application.

There are two phases to the project. The first is to train a small group of Lazarus Centre participants to make coffees for congregation members following the

Sunday morning Masses at St Peter's. The second phase will be to purchase a Coffee Barrow enabling our barristas to offer coffee to passers-by five days a week.



Barrow operating from St Giles-in-the-Fields London

Support for the project has been strong. A start-up donation of \$20,000 was given through the 2014 Foundation Appeal, and Anglicare CEO, Paul McDonald has pledged \$5,000 towards the project. The funds will be used to purchase a high quality coffee machine and provide training for the participants.

Bishop Stephen Cottrell will help to launch the project during the St Peter's Parish Mission on Sunday 26th July, 2015.