



From the Lazarus  
Centre Chaplain

In this issue:

- St Peter's pastoral care team member, Sarah Dowe speaks with Joyce Newton, OAM about the beginnings of the Lazarus Centre breakfast Program
- Friday Homilies: Our prejudices, the temptation of first impression and the expectations of culture can become the logs in our eyes that blind us to the real value of others as God's children.
- Now on Friday mornings participants of the breakfast program and barbeque lunch can have a shower courtesy of the on-voice homeless shower bus. The bus parks in Gisborne Street each Friday from 7.30 until 12.30.
- Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy is funded by the St Peter's Charitable Foundation. Find out how to support this ministry at [spehcf.com.au/lazarus](http://spehcf.com.au/lazarus)

Fr Philip Gill

# Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy News

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## In the Beginning: Foundations of the Lazarus Centre and the Breakfast Program from one who was there

In conversation with St Peter's pastoral care team member, Sarah Dowe, one of the founding members of the breakfast program, Joyce Newton (pictured) remembers the breakfast program started some time after she retired from being the director of nursing of PANCH hospital (Preston and Northcote Hospital). In October 1990, she went on holiday to see her best

friend, the late Jean Henderson MBE, then returned to Melbourne and St Peter's Church.

Joyce attended morning Mass on a daily basis and served at that Mass, she also attended High Mass on Sunday, this was a saviour after being in the workforce for many years. After morning Mass, some of the congregation gathered for a cuppa and a bit of a snack in what was the old Guild room, which is now the downstairs flat where the CHN sisters used to reside.

One morning a disheveled man appeared at the door of the Guild room wanting a cup of tea, Joyce doesn't remember his name but he looked as though he was wearing sack cloth. He was tall and ragged and reminded her of a shepherd. He came the next week and kept coming. Anyway it started to grow and more people were turning up, this was during Fr David Farrer's time as Vicar. Joyce and her crew provided toast as well as tea. To cater for the need breakfast was soon offered every day.

Due to development of the Guild room breakfast was relocated to its present base, the Hughes Room with Joyce providing milk, bread, butter and marmalade. Joyce and Jean approached the Vicar, approached the parish through Vicar, Fr John Davis, and requested help to pay for all the food. Assistance was also sought from the Cathedral and subsequently Anglicare Victoria and a coordinator was appointed to manage the program. Even more people started coming as word got around— St Peter's was one of the first church-based breakfast and/or food support programs for the homeless in Melbourne.



The Order of St Lazarus was also helping out with funds and that's when it became the Lazarus Centre. The Centre

also helped some of the homeless find accommodation as there was a housing commission office that happened to be located in the parish office upstairs.

Joyce said the program was busy because as well as preparing the breakfasts, there was all the cleaning and washing up to do. She remembers the vast number of plates and cups needing to be hand washed.

Joyce couldn't remember when she retired from assisting with the program, but she was the one that originally helped the 'bedraggled shepherd' in early 1991 and continued that assistance enabling the program to grow into what it is today.

## Friday homilies: The richest man in the valley

They say that first impressions are lasting and hard to shake but these first impressions are shallow and can be sometimes down right wrong. Jesus tells us to look for the log in own eye before we judge others. Hypocrisy was something he detested. When I reflect on Jesus' condemnation of hypocrisy I am reminded of a story of a wealthy Scottish lord.

The lord's household was woken early one morning by his manager, John. John was loyal, hard-working, much loved and faithful and it very unusual that he should disturb the lord in this way. John was insistent and so his master came to the door. "Pardon me my lord, but last night I had a dream. An angel came to me and told me that the richest man in the valley would die tonight at midnight." The Scottish lord was by far the richest man in the valley, but he was dismissive: "Go home John. I appreciate your concern, but it was just a dream. I'm sure it will come to nothing."

**They say that first impressions are lasting and hard to shake but these first impressions are shallow and can be sometimes down right wrong.**

So John went home and all went about their business. As the day passed things fell quiet on the estate. Though still ceptical of John's warning the lord sat in his big chair with his whiskey and pipe and began to notice more intently the ticking of the large grandfather clock. He watched, mesmerised by the hands of the clock as the minutes passed until he eventually fell asleep. The clock struck twelve midnight and the lord sat up with a start, but soon his heart settled and the minutes passed. He rebuked himself for even briefly entertaining John's dream. Then the phone rang. It was John's daughter. John died at precisely midnight. Then reality struck the lord: John with his simple, devout life, always putting himself before others, was truly the richest man in the valley.

Our prejudices, the temptation of first impressions and the expectations of culture can become the logs in our eyes that blind us to the real value of others as God's children.

## It's often the simple things: The onevoice homeless shower

St Peter's breakfast program has a reputation as a place where those in need can get a substantial meal. As important as filling this need is there is much more to helping people recover from the things that lead to homelessness. The staff at St Peter's partner with other services to provide more all-round support. On Friday mornings participants of the breakfast program and barbeque lunch can have a shower courtesy of the onevoice homeless shower bus. The bus parks in Gisborne Street each Friday from 7.30am until 12.30pm.

Those who would like to freshen up need only make contact with one of the staff who will give them access to one of the two self contained shower rooms at the rear of the bus. Towels and toiletries are available as are essential clothing and food.

Onevoice is a group providing assistance for those in need and is the vision of Josh Wilkins. Josh was awakened to the plight of those who live rough when he encountered a teenager singing on the street in the early hours of the morning. He asked why she was out so late. She told Josh that things were impossible for her at home so she lived on the street. So moved was he by this experience that he began researching homelessness



and voluntarily spent some time on the street himself. He became aware of the many facets that can coalesce to make a person homeless such as addiction, mental illness, relationship breakdown and so on. He was led to create onevoice and sought to offer something he saw as vital yet often over-looked. He sought to help raise people's self image by offering a place to shower.

The onevoice homeless shower bus driver, Paul Daly (pictured) says the bus seeks to meet the crucial need of cleanliness but also offers a point from which community can develop. The bus is based in Tottenham and will soon be offering services five days per week at centres such as Enterprise Park, Hosier Lane as well as St Peter's.

The bus is totally self contained with capacity to provide up to forty showers while storing its own grey water. Onevoice receives no government funding and is reliant on sponsors and donations. The homeless shower bus is a great example of people offering nonjudgmental support to others. We welcome onevoice as a partner in caring for the homeless, those in danger of becoming homeless and those recovering from homelessness in our city.

The Lazarus Centre Chaplaincy is funded by the St Peter's Charitable Foundation. Find out about this ministry at the Foundation website; [www.spehcf.com.au/lazarus](http://www.spehcf.com.au/lazarus). Donations can also be made at : [www.spehcf.com.au/donations](http://www.spehcf.com.au/donations)