



Knights of the Southern Cross - Australia

FORMATION PROGRAM for 2006

THE SAINTS IN OUR LIVES

Catholic saints are holy people and human people who lived extraordinary lives. Each saint the Church honours responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gifts. God calls each one of us to be a saint.

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERNCROSS - AUSTRALIA

FORMATION PROGRAMME 2006

FOREWORD

When discussing the Formation Programme for 2006, members of the National Executive proposed as the topic "The Lives of the Saints". They expressed the wish to see what influence the saints should have on our lives.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of canonised saints in the last quarter of a century. Pope John Paul II made a conscious effort to show that holiness should not be regarded as a rare thing, available only to a few, but is something demanded of each of us. He canonised a great number from different walks of life to show that holiness is achievable in many and varied ways.

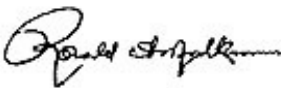
It is my hope that, in reflecting on the lives and activities of some whose holiness has been recognised by the Church, we will come to appreciate that we are all called to be saints. We can and should make a difference to the world in which we live and to the communities of which we are a part.

Our primary aim should be to love God and to love our neighbours. Our thoughts about some saints, in different vocations, from different backgrounds, with different talents and responding to different needs, should spur us on.

A hymn in the Prayer of the Church for the Feast of All Saints (November 1st) says:

"May all that splendid company,
Whom Christ came in glory to meet,
Help us on our uneven road
Made smoother by their passing feet."

I would like to express my thanks to Sister Anne McMillan RSM, Director of the Ballarat Diocesan Pastoral Ministry Office, for once again giving generously of her time and expertise in the preparation of this Program.

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+ Ronald A Mulkeams
National Chaplain.

FORMAT OF PRAYER SEGMENTS

(20 MINS)

1. OPENING PRAYERS

- ❖ Opening Prayers according to meeting procedure.

2. INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Each time of formation will begin with an introductory reflection which presents the session focus.

3. THE WORD

- ❖ The Word of God and related readings are proclaimed. The Scripture is read by the discussion leader or member/s nominated by him and the other readings can be read aloud or silently by members.

4. REFLECTION

- ❖ Silent reflection on the Word of God and other readings. (5 mins.)

5. THE SHARING

- ❖ Members share their reflection on the Word and responses to discussion points. (10 mins.)

6. CONCLUDING PRAYER

- ❖ Concluding Prayer introduced by the Leader and prayed by all.

Acknowledgements:

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Material on the Saints taken from the website of the Holy See.

“THE SAINTS IN OUR LIVES”
Formation Program for 2006

“Father.....You renew the Church in every age by raising up men and women outstanding in holiness, living witnesses of your unchanging love. They inspire us by their heroic lives and help us by their constant prayers to be the living sign of your saving power” *Preface for Holy Men and Women II – Masses of all saints.*

Segments

- 1 The Making of a Saint
The intent of the Church in ‘the making of Saints’
- 2 Padre Pio
Capuchin Priest, Mystic, Confessor, Stigmatic. For 50 years he suffered the five wounds of the crucifixion..
- 3 Mary MacKillop
Founder of Religious Order, Australian saint and educator
- 4 John XXIII
The first Pope of the Second Vatican Council.
- 5 Eurosa Fabris
A wife and mother presenting a model of sanctity accessible to all.
- 6 Matt Talbot
A layman who turned his life around.
- 7 Damian of Molokai
The priest of Molokai, saint of the lepers.
- 8 Communion of Saints
We are all able to be ‘saints’

POINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL FORMATION PROGRAMMES

1. Choose a formation leader for the year so that someone is responsible for the facilitation of the segment.
2. These formation segments require each participant to ideally have his own copy of the readings, therefore a copy of the Session should be provided for each member at the each meeting.
2. Abide strictly to the allotted time; not less than twenty nor more than thirty minutes.

SESSION NO 1

TOPIC: ***“THE MAKING OF A SAINT”***

The intent of the Church

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION

The Church does not make a saint – It recognises a saint.

What does the Church look at in declaring a saint? The Church looks at the life of a person:

- what she/he did;
- how she/he reacted to the events of life;
- what people wrote and said about the person;
- what she or he wrote or said.

The Church also looks at the question of continuing devotion. In other words, after the person died, did the people keep the memory alive? Is it still alive in the faith of the people? Is that person’s life continuing in the faith of the people?

Taken from the Beatification & Canonisation Leaflet of Blessed Mary MacKillop. Used with permission – Sisters of St. Joseph, North Sydney.

WORD OF GOD



A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans 1: 7-11, 16, 17.

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

To all God's beloved . . . who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you--or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

❶ Becoming a Saint

The Catholic Church has been formally recognizing saints since the second century. At that time, individuals became saints based more on popular demand than any sort of formal process. Because of this, the list of saints grew quickly. Reforms instituted at Vatican II pared down the list of saints celebrated worldwide in the liturgy. The “saint-making” process, overseen by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, has also been revised.

There are three steps necessary for a person to become a saint. First, the person must be named Venerable, which means he or she exhibited heroic virtues in life. Before moving

on to beatification, the person must have a miracle attributed to him or her. Once such a miracle is confirmed, the person is known as Blessed. For the final step before canonization, the individual must have yet another miracle attributed to his or her intercession—unless he or she was a martyr for the faith. Only then is a person canonized and added to the list of saints. Often people will say Catholics worship saints. Actually, it's more of a "looking up to" them as examples of how we should live. Paintings or statues of these saints serve as visual reminders for us to emulate the saints in our own lives. We pray to saints for their intercession, which is like asking a friend of God to ask God for a favour.

② One man

"My father died several years ago at the age of 91. He did nothing that the world would call special in his life. He was the father of a large family. He worked hard and endured a loss of hearing for many years. And he always tried to follow the straight and narrow path as he saw it. My father found real joy in going to Mass and celebrating the festivals of the Church. He was always the one who was there for us, saying the kind and understanding word, offering help when needed and knowing when to let go. God was very real in his life. His faith was always strong, and people said of him the most important thing one can say of a man, "He was a good man." I doubt if my father ever thought about being a saint. I do know that in his own way, he was one. And he, more than any priest or bishop or canonized saint, taught me what it means to live the humble, simple life of faith.

We laypersons must recognize our call to holiness. There are no class distinctions in the Church or in the Christian life. Nor are there any obstacles in the lay life that prevent one from striving and achieving a deep spiritual life. There are enough opportunities, enough suffering, enough challenges and, above all, enough grace for all of us to be as passionate about God as the saints are.

to be Saints" by Lucy Fuchs

From "All Called



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What is the most important point in the readings for you and why?
- ❖ What value do you see in devotion to the Saints for yourselves as Knights of the Southern Cross?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, we pray:

All: Lord God,
As we reflect on the lives of your Saints help us to learn from them and follow you more fully. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SESSION NO 2

TOPIC: "PADRE PIO"

Capuchin Priest, Mystic, Confessor, Stigmatic.

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

At Padre Pio's canonization Mass in 2002, Pope John Paul II referred to that day's Gospel (Matthew 11:25-30) and said: "The Gospel image of 'yoke' evokes the many trials that the humble Capuchin of San Giovanni Rotondo endured. Today we contemplate in him how sweet is the 'yoke' of Christ and indeed how light the burden are whenever someone carries these with faithful love. The life and mission of Padre Pio testify that difficulties and sorrows, if accepted with love, transform themselves into a privileged journey of holiness, which opens the person toward a greater good, known only to the Lord."

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Matthew 5: 1-12

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

ST. PADRE PIO DA PIETRELCINA (1887-1968)

Feastday - September 23

Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on June 16, 2002. He praised the new saint for his prayer and charity, also stressing Padre Pio's witness to the power of suffering. If accepted with love, the Holy Father said, such suffering can lead to "a privileged path of sanctity."


Born Francesco Forgione, Padre Pio grew up in a family of farmers in southern Italy. Twice (1898-1903 and 1910-17) his father worked in Jamaica, New York, to provide the family income. At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was ordained in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have tuberculosis, he was discharged. In 1917 he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, 75 miles from the city of Bari on the Adriatic. On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet and side.

Life became more complicated after that. Medical doctors, Church authorities and curiosity seekers came to see Padre Pio. In 1924 and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned; Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed. However, he wrote no letters after 1924. His only other writing, a pamphlet on the agony of Jesus, was done before 1924.

Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. Each morning after a 5 a.m. Mass in a crowded church, he heard confessions until noon. He took a mid-morning break to bless the sick and all who came to see him. Every afternoon he also heard confessions. In time his confessional ministry would take 10 hours a day; penitents had to take a number so that the situation could be handled. Many of them have said that Padre Pio knew details of their lives that they had never mentioned.

Padre Pio saw Jesus in all the sick and suffering. At his urging, a fine hospital was built on nearby Mount Gargano. The idea arose in 1940; a committee began to collect money. Ground was broken in 1946. Building the hospital was a technical wonder because of the difficulty of getting water there and of hauling up the building supplies. This "House for the Alleviation of Suffering" has 350 beds. A number of people have reported cures they believe were received through the intercession of Padre Pio. Those who assisted at his Masses came away edified; several curiosity seekers were deeply moved. Like St. Francis, Padre Pio sometimes had his habit torn or cut by souvenir hunters.

One of Padre Pio's sufferings was that unscrupulous people several times circulated prophecies that they claimed originated from him. He never made prophecies about world events and never gave an opinion on matters that he felt belonged to Church authorities to decide. He died on September 23, 1968, and was beatified in 1999.

 *For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What struck you most strongly in the readings?
- ❖ What lesson does Padre Pio give us for ourselves and our world?

CONCLUSION

Leader: One of Padre Pio's sayings is:

"The life of a Christian is nothing but a perpetual struggle against self; there is no flowering of the soul to the beauty of its perfection except at the price of pain",
and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
Help us to always strive to overcome self-interest and seek to be all you call
us to be. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 3

TOPIC: "**MARY MACKILLOP**"

Founder of Religious Order, Australian Saint & Educator.

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

Mary MacKillop, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart is the first Australian Saint. This great Australian woman inspired great dedication to God's work in the then new colonies. In today's world, she stands as an example of great courage and trust in her living out of God's loving and compassionate care of those in need.

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Mark 10: 13-16

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

BLESSED MARY MACKILLOP (1842 – 1909)

Feastday – August 8

On January 15, 1842 Mary MacKillop was born of Scottish parents, Alexander MacKillop and Flora MacDonald in Fitzroy, Victoria. Mary, the eldest of eight children, was well educated by her father who spent some years studying for the priesthood in Rome but through ill health had returned to his native Scotland until 1835 when he migrated to Australia with his parents. Unfortunately, he lacked financial awareness, so the family was often without a home of their own, depending on friends and relatives and frequently separated from one another.

From the age of sixteen, Mary earned her living and greatly supported her family, as a governess, as a clerk and as a teacher at the Portland school. While acting as a governess to her uncle's children at Penola, Mary met Father Julian Tenison Woods who, with a parish of 22,000 square miles/56,000 square kilometres, needed help in the religious education of children in the outback. At the time Mary's family depended on her income so she was not free to follow her dream. However, in 1866, greatly inspired and encouraged by Father Woods, Mary opened the first Saint Joseph's School in a disused stable in Penola.

Young women came to join Mary, and so the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph was begun. In 1867, Mary was asked by Bishop Shiel to come to Adelaide to start a school. From

there, the Sisters spread, in groups to small outback settlements and large cities around Australia, New Zealand, and now in Peru, Brazil and refugee camps of Uganda and Thailand. Mary and these early Sisters, together with other Religious Orders and Lay Teachers of the time, had a profound influence on the forming of Catholic Education as we have come to know and experience it today. She also opened Orphanages, Providences to care for the homeless and destitute both young and old, and Refuges for ex-prisoners and ex-prostitutes who wished to make a fresh start in life.

Throughout her life, Mary met with opposition from people outside the Church and even from some of those within it. In the most difficult of times she consistently refused to attack those who wrongly accused her and undermined her work, but continued in the way she believed God was calling her and was always ready to forgive those who wronged her.

Mary suffered much ill health during her life. She died on August 8, 1909 in the convent in Mount Street, North Sydney where her tomb is now enshrined. Since then the Congregation has grown and now numbers about 1200, working mainly in Australia and New Zealand but also scattered singly or in small groups around the world. The "Brown Joeys" may be seen in big city schools, on dusty bush tracks, in modern hospitals, in caravans, working with the "little ones" of God - the homeless, the new migrant, the Aboriginal, the lonely and the unwanted, in direct care and in advocacy, in standing with and in speaking with. In their endeavours to reverence the human dignity of others and to change unjust structures, the Sisters and those many others who also share the Mary MacKillop spirit continue the work which she began. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 19th January, 1995.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What struck you most strongly in the readings?
- ❖ What legacy has Mary MacKillop left for us as Australian Catholics?

CONCLUSION

Leader: One of Mary MacKillop's sayings is:
"We must teach more by example than by word" and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
Help us to be doers of the Word and in this way teach of your goodness and love for all. Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 4

TOPIC: **"POPE JOHN XXIII"**

The first Pope of the Second Vatican Council

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

In the sometimes noisy crypt of St. Peter's Basilica, many people become silent on seeing the simple tomb of Pope John XXIII, grateful for the gift of his life and holiness. Throughout his life, Angelo Roncalli cooperated with God's grace, believing that the job at hand was worthy of his best efforts. Today, the holiness of "good Pope John" is universally recognized. Of poor peasant background, he became a professor of Church history before assuming diverse tasks of Vatican diplomacy. Known for his human warmth and humour and a heart that embraced all peoples, his concern for social justice and for peace on earth came to expression in his encyclicals. His gift to the Church was his confidence in the Spirit, evidenced by his calling the Second Vatican Council.

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Matthew 16: 13-19

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

BLESSED JOHN XXIII (1881-1963)

Feastday – October 11

Although few people had as great an impact on the 20th century as Pope John XXIII, he avoided the limelight as much as possible. Indeed, one writer has noted that his "ordinariness" seems one of his most remarkable qualities.

The firstborn son of a farming family in Sotto il Monte, near Bergamo in northern Italy, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was always proud of his down-to-earth roots. In Bergamo's diocesan seminary, he joined the Secular Franciscan Order. After his ordination in 1904, Angelo returned to Rome for canon law studies. He soon worked as his bishop's secretary, Church history teacher in the seminary and as publisher of the diocesan paper. His service as a stretcher-bearer for the Italian army during World War I gave him a firsthand knowledge

of war. In 1921 he was made national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith; he found time to teach patristics at a seminary in the Eternal City. In 1925 he became a papal diplomat, serving first in Bulgaria, then in Turkey and finally in France (1944-53). During World War II, he became well acquainted with Orthodox Church leaders and with the help of Germany's ambassador to Turkey, Archbishop Roncalli helped save an estimated 24,000 Jewish people.

Named a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice in 1953, he was finally a residential bishop. A month short of entering his 78th year, he was elected pope, taking the name John, his father's name and the two patrons of Rome's cathedral, St. John Lateran. He took his work very seriously but not himself. His wit soon became proverbial and he began meeting with political and religious leaders from around the world. In 1962 he was deeply involved in efforts to resolve the Cuban missile crisis.

His most famous encyclicals were *Mother and Teacher* (1961) and *Peace on Earth* (1963). At his address at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, he criticized the "prophets of doom" who "in these modern times see nothing but prevarication and ruin." Pope John XXIII set a tone for the Council when he said, "The Church has always opposed... errors. Nowadays, however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity."

On his deathbed he said: "It is not that the gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better. Those who have lived as long as I have... were enabled to compare different cultures and traditions, and know that the moment has come to discern the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and to look far ahead." Pope John Paul II beatified him on September 3, 2000, and assigned as his feast day October 11, the day that Vatican II's first session opened.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What struck you most strongly about the life and role of John XIII from the readings?
- ❖ How can we, as Knights of the Southern Cross, live in the spirit of Pope John XXIII?

CONCLUSION

Leader: In his biography *Journal of a Soul* John XXIII says:

"From the saints I must take the substance, not the accidents of their virtues. I am not St. Aloysius, nor must I seek holiness in his particular way, but according to the requirements of my own nature, my own character and the different conditions of my life. I must not be the dry, bloodless reproduction of a model, however perfect. God desires us to follow the examples of the saints by absorbing the vital sap of their virtues and turning it into our own life-blood, adapting it to our own individual capacities and particular circumstances" and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
Help us to seek holiness through our individual personalities and gifts and in the everyday events of our lives. Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 5

TOPIC: "EUROSA FABRIS"

Wife and mother – sanctity for all

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

Eurosia Fabris - "Mamma Rosa", was a model of holiness in what should be the daily life of a Catholic family. She was an apostle of good will in her family, among her friends, and in her parish, where she taught catechism to the children and sewing to the girls who came to her home. Her three sons who became priests were encouraged in their vocation by her example of holiness. She was proclaimed *Venerable* on the 7th of July, 2003, by Pope John Paul II who recognized the testimony of her heroic and singular virtues. It was the wish of Pope Pius XII that the life of this marvellous woman be known among all Christian families of our day.

WORD OF GOD



A Reading from the Book of Proverbs 31: 10-28

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

When one finds a valiant woman, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skilful hands. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her mouth is kindly counsel. Her children stand up and proclaim her blessed. Many women have done admirable things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labours, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

EUROSIA FABRIS (1866 - 1932)

Eurosia Fabris was born in an agricultural area, some kilometres from Vicenza in Italy, on the 27th of September, 1866. Her parents, Luigi and Maria Fabris, were farmers. In 1870, at the age of four, Eurosia moved with her family to Marola, a village in the municipality of Torri di Quartesolo (Vicenza). She lived there for the rest of her life. She attended only the first two years of elementary school between 1872 and 1874 because even at such a young age, she was forced to help her parents with farm work and her mother in particular with the household chores. It was enough, however, for her to learn to read and write. Besides her domestic tasks, she helped her mother in her work as a dressmaker, a practice which Eurosia would also take on later. Even as a child, she was rich in virtue and spirituality, always very careful in providing for the needs of her family. She was twelve years old when she made her First Holy Communion. From then on, she received Holy Eucharist on all religious feasts, since at that time daily communion was not the practice. At the age of eighteen, Eurosia was a dedicated, pious and hardworking young lady.

In 1885, Rosina, as she was called by her family, was affected by a tragic event. A young married woman near her home died leaving three very young daughters. The first of them died shortly after her mother. The other two girls, Chiara Angela and Italia were only 20 months old, and 2 months old, respectively. The father of these girls was away, living with his uncle and a grandfather who suffered from a chronic disease. For six months, every morning, Rosina would go to care for the children and take care of their home. Later, following the advice of her relatives and that of the parish priest, and after praying about this turn of events, she decided to marry and wed Carlo Barban in 1886. In addition to the two orphaned babies, they were blessed with nine other children. Her home was always opened to other children as well. To all these children, “Mamma Rosa”, as she was called since her marriage, offered affection and care, sacrificing her own needs to provide for them a solid Christian formation. She showed the greatest love and respect for her husband, becoming his confidant and adviser. She had a tender love for all her children. She was a hard worker and a person who could be counted on to fulfil her duties.

Mamma Rosa lived an intense life of prayer, which was evident by her great devotion to God, to the Holy Eucharist and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Like the strong woman in Sacred Scripture, she became a real treasure to her family. She knew how to balance the family budget and at the same time exercised great charity towards the poor, sharing her daily bread also with them. She cared for the sick and gave them continuous assistance, showing heroic strength during the final illness of her husband Carlo, who died in 1930.

Mama Rosa’s family home was an ideal Christian community where her children were taught to pray, to obey, to respect the will of God, and to practice Christian virtues. In her vocation as a Christian mother, Mamma Rosa sacrificed and consumed herself day by day like a lamp burning brightly on the altar of charity. She died on the 8th of January 1932 and was buried, with the hope of final resurrection, in the church of Marola. The canonical process of beatification and canonization was initiated on the 3rd of February 2005.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What struck you most strongly about the life and role of Eurosa Fabris?
- ❖ How can we, as Knights of the Southern Cross, contribute to the strengthening of Christian families in today’s world?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As a wife and mother Eurosa lived, with evangelical simplicity, a daily family life, accepting its pains and suffering in the constant search for the will of God. and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
Bless and strengthen all wives and mothers that they may always remain close to you and build Christian families for the future. Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 6

TOPIC: "MATT TALBOT"

A layman who turned his life around

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

In looking at the life of Matt Talbot, we may easily focus on the later years when he had stopped drinking for some time and was leading a penitential life. Only alcoholic men and women who have stopped drinking can fully appreciate how difficult the earliest years of sobriety were for Matt. He had to take one day at a time. So do the rest of us.

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Matthew 5: 1-12

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

VENERABLE MATT TALBOT (1856-1925)

Feastday – June 19

Matt was born in the poverty of Dublin's inner city, where his father worked on the docks and had a difficult time supporting his family. After a few years of schooling, Matt obtained work as a messenger for some liquor merchants; there he began to drink excessively. For 15 years—until he was 30—Matt was an active alcoholic. This was the drug culture of the 19th century. Matt was an addict.

One day he decided to take "the pledge" for three months, make a general confession and begin to attend daily Mass. A priest helped him, giving him a rehabilitation programme, which providentially incorporated the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. That was fifty years

before AA was founded. There is evidence that Matt's first seven years after taking the pledge were especially difficult. Avoiding his former drinking places was hard. He began to pray as intensely as he used to drink. He also tried to pay back people from whom he had borrowed or stolen money while he was drinking.

Most of his life Matt worked as a builder's labourer. He joined the Secular Franciscan Order and began a life of strict penance; he abstained from meat nine months a year. Matt spent hours every night avidly reading Scripture and the lives of the saints. With the help of his priest friend, Matt modelled his life on that of the monks, who lived in Ireland in the 6th and 7th centuries. It was a tough programme of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. To his neighbours and his work mates in the timber yards, he was a cheerful, happy friend. Though his job did not make him rich, Matt gave away most of his wages every week to the poor at home and abroad. "Matt had no time for money", his sister remarked. He was keenly aware of his fellow workers struggle for social justice. A loyal member of Ireland's Transport and General Workers Union, a Union leader, Stephen McGonagle, described him as "a beacon of light to Irish workers".

After a life of heroic perseverance, his health failed and Matt was forced to quit work. He died suddenly on his way to church on Trinity Sunday. Fifty years later Pope Paul VI gave him the title Venerable. Matt can be considered the patron of men and women struggling with alcoholism. He remained sober for forty years until his death. His life story has been an inspiration for alcoholics and addicts throughout the world.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What are some of the addictions which can take you away from the Christian life?
- ❖ How can we, as Knights of the Southern Cross, assist those struggling with addiction in our communities?

CONCLUSION

Leader: Matt's programme of recovery was built around devotion to the Eucharist, love of Mary, Mother of God, spiritual reading, self-discipline and manual work. But he never forgot his struggle with his addiction. Some day he may be declared the patron saint for addicts; and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
May Matt Talbot's triumph over addiction, bring hope to our community and strength to our hearts, through Christ Our Lord. Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 7

TOPIC: "**DAMIAN OF MOLOKAI**"

Priest of Molokai, Saint of the lepers.

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

On May 11, 1873, the steamer Kilauea deposited thirty-three-year-old Father Joseph Damien de Veuster on the landing at Molokai. Bishop Maigret told the disease-ridden crowd gathered there that he had brought them "one who will be a father to you, and who loves you so much that . . . he does not hesitate to become one of you; to live and die with you."

Some people thought Damien was a hero for going to Molokai and others thought he was crazy. When a Protestant clergyman wrote that Damien was guilty of immoral behaviour, Robert Louis Stevenson vigorously defended him in an "Open Letter to Dr. Hyde." During the beatification homily, Pope John Paul II said: "Holiness is not perfection according to human criteria; it is not reserved for a small number of exceptional persons. It is for everyone; it is the Lord who brings us to holiness, when we are willing to collaborate in the salvation of the world for the glory of God, despite our sin and our sometimes rebellious temperament."

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Luke 17: 12-19

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

BLESSED DAMIEN OF MOLOKAI (1840-1889)

Feastday – May 10

When Joseph de Veuster was born in Tremelo, Belgium, in 1840, few people in Europe had any firsthand knowledge of leprosy (Hansen's disease). By the time he died at the age of 49, people all over the world knew about this disease because of him. They knew that human compassion could soften the ravages of this disease.


Forced to quit school at age 13 to work on the family farm, six years later Joseph entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, taking the name of a fourth-century physician and martyr. When his brother Pamphile, a priest in the same congregation, fell ill and was unable to go to the Hawaiian Islands as assigned, Damien quickly volunteered in his

place. In May 1864, two months after arriving in his new mission, Damien was ordained a priest in Honolulu and assigned to the island of Hawaii.

In 1873, he went to the Hawaiian government's leper colony on the island of Molokai, set up seven years earlier. Part of a team of four chaplains taking that assignment for three months each year, Damien soon volunteered to remain permanently, caring for the people's physical, medical and spiritual needs. In time, he became their most effective advocate to obtain promised government support.

Soon the settlement had new houses and a new church, school and orphanage. Morale improved considerably. A few years later he succeeded in getting the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse, led by Mother Marianne Kope, to help staff this colony in Kalaupapa.

Damien contracted Hansen's disease and died of its complications. As requested, he was buried in Kalaupapa, but in 1936 the Belgian government succeeded in having his body moved to Belgium. Part of Damien's body was returned to his beloved Hawaiian brothers and sisters after his beatification in 1995. When Hawaii became a state in 1959, it selected Damien as one of its two representatives in the Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol.

 *For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ Who are the 'lepers' in your world and how do you relate to them?
- ❖ As a group of Knights, how do we reach out to people from other cultures?

CONCLUSION

Leader: Eighty years after Damien's death, Pope Paul VI said of him: "Love expresses itself in giving. Saints have not only given of themselves, but they have given of themselves in the service of God and their brethren. Father Damien is certainly in that category. He lived his life of love and dedication in the most heroic yet unassuming way. He lived for others: those whose needs were the greatest" and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
May our service in your name reach all who need to know of your love. Help us to serve with generosity and joy. Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting

SESSION NO 8

TOPIC: ***“THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”***

Despite our flaws, each of us is a saint in the making..

OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

INTRODUCTION:

Being in communion is the heart of Catholicism. We become one body in Christ at Baptism and we continue sharing that common life forever, beyond death. We are aware of this connectedness with one another every time we say in the creed: "I believe in the communion of saints." We speak of this community each time we pray at Mass when we pray for the living and recall "those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith."

Communal living was the norm in the Jerusalem church. They saw themselves as establishing the reign of God in the world. They cared for each other, worked for each other, died for each other. They were one community. It was understood that all Christians were bonded together and had obligations to each other. As people died, they had not left the community, but had entered another state, just as Jesus had at the resurrection.

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Mark 13: 26-33

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come"

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then read the following:

word of reflection

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Feastday – November 1

How Does It Work?

All the saints—those on earth, those in heaven and those in purgatory—were seen as belonging to the one body of Christ.

There was much emphasis placed on this idea of a saintly community in the early church. Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote that Christians are united by one same Holy Spirit through Baptism and must "cleave together," forming one body and one spirit.

This interconnectedness is a dogma that has been observed and loved by the church through the centuries. It brings us all together as one family. It includes not only canonized saints but also all those who have died. It keeps us connected to our beloved dead. We pray for them, for whatever obligations they left unfinished, and we ask them to pray for us. We pray for each other. We pray for our friends scattered far and wide and feel a bonding with them. We pray for those in missionary work, for those who are sick, for those being persecuted for the faith, for our pope, bishops, priests and sisters. We pray for our enemies and are thus enabled to forgive and to change our attitude.

It is in the celebration of the Eucharist that this communion is most manifest. Here the whole church is united. The Eucharist binds Christians with the entire Christian community, living and dead, through those physically present at the celebration and those absent.

The Third Eucharistic Prayer prays that those who are nourished by the Lord's body and blood may be "filled with the Holy Spirit and become one body, one Spirit in Christ."

This common fellowship makes up the body of Christ who is the ultimate holiness: the blessed in heaven, the suffering in purgatory and the militant on earth. There is an exchange of graces and blessings among them.

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Credo of the People of God*, states: "The union of the pilgrims with the brethren who have gone to sleep in the peace of Christ is not in the least interrupted....Those in heaven place their merits at our disposal." This has been a most cherished and consoling teaching for Catholics.

The communion of saints brings together the present, past and future and makes sense of life. We have not lost those who have gone on before us. They are still there, though in a different form, and we still communicate with them.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

the sharing



Share your insights in discussion of the following:

(10 mins)

- ❖ What are the important points in the readings??
- ❖ What does the doctrine of the Communion of Saints teach us?

CONCLUSION

Leader: None of us can make ourselves saints. None of us can even say the name of Jesus in faith without his grace. It is God who reaches out to us, not we who first choose God. God reaches out to us every day in a million ways, so grace is always there. It all starts with God and it ends with God, and in between there are nothing but God-laden moments, although we may not always recognize them as such and so we pray:

All: Lord God,
Strengthen us that we may always be open to your grace and respond to your call to be your saints in the world. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting