

PARISH LIFE IN ISO

This week we speak with Pauline Kennedy who, for many years, has been the driving force behind our parish involvement in justice and equality for Australia's first people. It is timely to speak with Pauline on the weekend of our Opening the Doors Foundation Appeal but it is a reminder of her time as a younger woman in Italy which prompted Pauline to contact us after reading last week's Parish Life In ISO.

'The Limoncello recipe brought back memories of a funny faux pas I once made.' Pauline and some friends were at a café in the beautiful city of Florence, celebrating their time together at Language School. A waiter, as a kind gesture, gifted their table with what Pauline thought was a large bottle of lemon soft drink. 'As a virtual non-drinker but designated 'mother', I proceeded to pour large, full glasses of this attractive looking drink...Didn't get far when I saw the looks of astonishment on their faces!' It's not Pauline's only run in with unexpected alcohol. 'Won't tell you what happened then, and long before that, in Convent days, when I took to some great punch at a parish function, not knowing it contained a bottle of vodka!!'



*Bernadette with Joan (seated front)
Helen and Pauline (standing)*

Many years later, during lockdown, Pauline is heavily into drinking water and lots of cups of tea. She is also helping to care for her frail but feisty mother Joan who still lives in her home as she nears 98 years of age.

This is a task she has shared for many years with her sisters Annie, Bernadette (until her death in 2018), Cathy and Helen with their rotating roster keeping someone with Joan always. 'When not with mum, I am creating units of study about the awe-inspiring history, achievements, and some of the terrible afflictions of First nations people,' she explains.

In May this year Pauline launched her Awareness With Education (AWE) program after deciding to step back from her role as parish 'ambassador' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The aim of the program is to hand over her ambassador role to a group

rather than an individual. 'New people, fresh ideas.' She believes that in the past few years, there has been a growing support for and understanding of the terrible injustices experienced by our Indigenous people, and there is a great need for basic education about the ways we can support them in their struggle for justice.

An online course put together for a few keen parishioners has grown into something much larger. 'Twenty of us, plus some Victorian school students, are more than halfway through the 14 units of AWE. After walking alongside Aboriginal peoples for 40 years, it gives me great joy and some awful sadness, to share their stories.'

Pauline has developed AWE from her decades of collected research, with the help of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, and the writings of Aboriginal Professor Marcia Langton. The main reading material being Professor Langton's Welcome to Country. 'Our little program touches on some Indigenous knowledge systems, their many heroes, and their inspiring Spirituality, and resilience, in the years since non-Indigenous took their land, and in too many cases, their lives...'



AWE member Frances Ashby with her daughter on a visit to the Jarlmadangah community near Broome WA in 2012(ish)

Pauline sends a message to our parishioners who have supported previous appeals, 'Trust this Assumption feast weekend our parishioners will be their very generous selves, as they contribute to our annual appeal for Aboriginal students of Victoria. Thank you...Pauline' *And thank you Pauline for contributing this week to Parish Life in ISO.*

Stories, recipes, ideas or photos to share? We'd love to hear what you've been up to in ISO. Email jac.radcliffe@cam.org.au to contribute to Parish Life in ISO