Welcome to the Winter Edition of our Victorian Newsletter

Lots have happened since the Summer 2016 edition of our newsletter. We thank all CLC members who have put pen to paper to share their stories, news and reflections on the events that had taken place. These stories reflect CLC’s strong and continued commitment to our national priorities: To act against poverty and marginalisation; To care for all creation.

In the wake of the recently release census data, Andy offers us his insights on the ways in which we could respond to this new world in which we live in.

We also remember John Nolan who passed away on 23 February 2017. He was one of our wisdom figures who was loved by all who knew him.

Enjoy the stories - don’t keep them to yourself, share them with others!

Palm Sunday Walk for Refugees

Janine Hellard

A few members of CLC turned up on a bleak Sunday morning for the Palm Sunday March for Justice with our home-made banner.

With the forecast for teaming rain we gathered in front of the State Library with a good crowd to hear speeches of encouragement. We marched around a couple of City blocks and just as the march concluded the heavens emptied. It was good to be part of the occasion with a friendly caring group of people. The only disappointing part was the meagre publicity the march received in news reports. (A few weeks later people walked their dogs around Albert Park Lake and managed to get in very significant news-time. Something is very sadly amiss). I hope we have more CLCers supporting the Justice walk next year.

Palm Sunday “Walk for Justice for Refugees”

Doreen Roache, Ballarat RAR and CLC member

On Palm Sunday, Ballarat Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) of which I am a member, travelled by train to join in the Walk for Justice for Refugees, “BRING THEM HERE” and meet with others at the State Library in Swanston Street, including local Melbourne CLCers. The day was wet and cold but it didn’t dampen the spirit of thousands of people who gathered to share the company of others who are appalled by what is being done in our name.

We listened to some inspiring refugee stories by refugee advocates, an Afghan Refugee and Vice-President of the Victorian Afghan Association Network, a Refugee and Sudanese Community
Leader from Darfur, Members of Various Faiths, A Human Rights Lawyer, a former Teacher on Nauru, a Representative of the Refugee Advocacy Network and a speaker from RISE (Refugees, survivors and ex-detainees.) This walk/rally demanded our Government to:

- close Manus Island and Nauru offshore detention centres
- grant permanent protection for people who are seeking asylum in Australia
- bring them here
- welcome refugees

Then, with banners held high and chanting, we walked in solidarity with all refugees to the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets before disbanding at the end of the walk.

HOW CAN WE RESPOND TO THE CENSUS DATA

Andy Hamilton SJ

Today I have been digesting the findings of last year’s Census, with its indication that the proportion of immigrants has increased and the proportion of people acknowledging Christian faith has decreased.

Nothing surprising there, but it did remind me of the rock on which we shall all stand in coming years: of church congregations declining in numbers and increasing in age, and of a world in which Christian belief and Christian churches will receive less automatic respect.

Those things are simply facts, neither to be denied nor to be lamented. They form the world in which we are invited to live and to spread the joy of the Gospel. Judged by the standards of Jesuit catastrophes through history this one is not particularly severe: we look back with great admiration to Fr Lorenzo Ricci, the Jesuit General when the Jesuits throughout the world were suppressed. Cast into jail and treated brutally, he responded with equanimity knowing that he and the Society remained in God’s hands.

The question that faces us is how we best respond to this new world we find ourselves in. First, we are invited to acknowledge our situation, and to recognise that this is now the terrain that God invites us to walk on, that it is holy ground, and that in it lie losses and opportunities. We should be surprised to find that it will be effective to go on as we did before or to hope that good times past will return. We should expect that we shall be invited to change. And we should expect that as CLC, too, we shall be affected by the changes revealed in the Census.

In times of diminishment the normal human response is to consolidate – to withdraw from outposts, strengthen central offices, and focus on how to keep business going as usual. That is human wisdom. It will be part of our response to God’s invitation, too. But perhaps a better way of describing our response is to see it as a challenge to simplify. How can we do what God calls us to do more simply? What forms of leadership, communication and organisation will enable energies and not sap them? What letting go of burdens will free the heart?

The second part of our response will be to focus single-mindedly on encouragement. The natural human response to diminishment is to sigh and have a moan. Once we have done that quietly...
without sharing too widely our gloom, God’s invitation is to encourage one another: to tell one another of the blades of grass growing up through tar, to thank one another for kindnesses normally not noticed, to share our bright ideas instead of sitting on them, to offer to help people who are clearly overburdened rather than let them sink, and so forth.

The third part of our response will be to let go of burdens: the burdens placed on us by our memory of giants who have ploughed the fields in more fertile times, and of the bustling congregations and dynamic groups of former years. We must let go of the burdens laid on us by constitutions, exhortations and regulations written for different times.

Once these things cease to be burdens they become available to us as stories – not as whips for our backs but as people for our encouragement. Their ingenuity and persistence can enliven us in our day. Such stories can turn tears into laughter, and weariness into life.

Censuses are a notoriously flawed instrument to describe a flawed nation. Provided we recognise that we are flawed human beings the chastening numbers they reveal can be the springboard for a fresh and joyful response to Jesus’ invitation.

The Tertianship - CLC Retreat in Ballarat

Noreen Nicholson, Retreat Co-ordinator

The CLC retreat project in Ballarat was hosted by Fr. Justin Driscoll at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Diocese of Ballarat. It was co-facilitated by Fr. Robbie Sian, the Jesuit Tertian from the Philippine Province and Doreen Roache from CLC Ballarat.

Fr. Robbie’s successful talk at Mass created a flurry of applications for the retreat with 42 retreatants coming along at first and 23 completing the retreat. Some other people who came to two meetings kept in touch with apologies and said they were continuing to do the prayer.

We thank Fr. Justin for his insightful comments about the retreat -

"The retreat has been a moment of grace in the Ballarat area and I’m very grateful for the initial offer of the retreat. Having Fr. Robbie at the Parish for the month was such a positive experience for us and many of the parishioners and parish staff asked if there was any hope that Fr. Robbie could stay longer! I echo these sentiments as he was a joy to have amongst us.

The retreat would not have been the wonderful experience that it was without the work of Doreen Roache and I’m delighted that as both a CLC member and parishioner that she was able to utilise the great skills and formation opportunities she has had through CLC in her "home" parish and that so many could benefit from this. It was also wonderful to hear the other members of CLC were able to facilitate small groups at the weekly gatherings.

I recommend a collaborative approach to the offering of the first spiritual exercises and believe that the team approach worked well and it seemed to me that both Doreen and Fr. Robbie were at home with this collaborative approach".

I’m Roberto Sian from the Philippine Province. You can call me “Robbie.” My first assignment after my 2009 ordination was at a Chinese-Filipino parish community named Sta. Maria Parish in Iloilo City.

I finished my master’s degree in Bioethics last year and taught at our Jesuit-run diocesan seminary at Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao. After tertianship, I will continue teaching in the same school and start teaching at the medical school of Xavier University, also in the same
Doreen advised that the retreat was a really satisfying experience for her and she is so grateful to everyone who participated. There are some people post retreat interested in doing ‘more’ so hopefully CLCers in Ballarat might find some potential new members emerging!

Thank you Doreen for your time, efforts and generosity in facilitating a very successful retreat. Thank you also to Trudie Dickinson who assisted Doreen with the groups and other CLCers who offered to help with the retreat.

Traralgon Big Day Out

Chris Power and Tess Gilles

On Saturday 20th May, the Victorian communities came together at the Comfort Inn Conference Centre on the Princes Highway between Morwell and Traralgon.

Tess Gillies acknowledged the Gunaikurnai, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We paid our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

CLC Bairnsdale, who organised and hosted the day, welcomed 22 CLCers and friends to a day of reflection on Care for Creation based around Pope Francis Encyclical ‘LAUDATO SI’.

CLCers travelled from Melbourne and Bairnsdale and as the day was open to all, particularly those interested in the care of our common home, many of our friends who attended responded to an invitation via parishes across the Diocese of Sale.

By way of explanation for our friends who were not familiar with CLC Chris Power outlined that CLC is a lay international Catholic organisation; a world community lived out in small local communities and that has a common way of life built on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Currently there are 17 groups in Victoria. Many are in Melbourne with regional groups in Geelong, Ballarat, Bairnsdale and Shepparton.

An ‘I Spy’ activity was proposed to pass the time as participant travelled through Gippsland, so in traditional CLC fashion the day started with ‘around the room’ introductions and sharing their ‘I Spy’ list of positives and/or negatives sightings relating to the environment. It was interesting to hear from non-CLC participants how they were working with creation, especially farmers bringing back native grasses and other vegetation. Landcare seems to be of interest, particularly with country members. People often spoke of the recent ABC programme “War on Waste”, especially in light of world hunger and other aspects of our CLC priority.

The theme for the day ‘Care for all Creation’, one of CLC discerned priorities for 2016-2020. Given the environmental crisis and the social teaching of the Church about caring for our common home, we in CLC are committed, individually and communally, to the aim of living out God’s desire for creation by:
• Acknowledging Indigenous wisdom of living in harmony;
• Living a simple lifestyle;
• Valuing our resources;
• Recognising the gift of creation;
• Raising awareness of respect for the sacredness of creation;
• Fostering personal engagement with the environment; and
• Accepting responsibility to repair and restore the health of the Earth.

Guest Speaker -
Sr. Anne Boyd,
EarthSong

Sr Anne Boyd, a Brigidine Sister, spent many years in education and is currently a Coordinator of EarthSong, a project sponsored by six Religious Congregations - The Brigidine Sisters, the Christian Brothers, FCJ, Mercy’s, Presentation Sisters and the Passionist Congregation.

EarthSong presents a world view that is in keeping with current scientific understandings of the nature of the universe and the place of the human in it and develops new ways of honouring and celebrating the sacredness of all creation. Sr Anne is particularly interested in the conversation between ecology and spirituality and exploring avenues for encountering the Divine dwelling amongst us in the whole vibrant community of life.

She enjoys gardening and bush walking and is an avid follower of the Western Bulldogs!

During Sr Anne presentation she offered us many challenges: ‘Is it us who is giving life to creation or is creation giving life to us?’ The concept of ‘up’ ‘down’ theology as misleading as we are hanging off a round earth – stuck to it by gravity.

Reflection
Mel La Brooy

One Bread, One Body
One Blood, One Universe
One Creation
One Kin
One Memory
She referred to the Aboriginal land care methods - before the invasion Aboriginal people created a complex system of land management - engaging their senses, their understanding and their respect of the sacredness of creation, their wisdom regarding the value of water, food etc. (We had several copies of a publication from the Gunaikurnai telling how they are caring for country in Gippsland for people to read.)

As part of her presentation Sr Anne showed a YouTube video ‘Awakening Universe’ (recommended viewing) which delved into a deeper understanding of the cosmos.

Following her presentation Sr Anne presented us with a resourceful ‘take home’ handout “Finding God In All Things” that included quotes from The Awakening Universe; ‘Dadirri’ adapted from the writings of Miriam Rose Ungunmerr OA Ngangiwumirr people Daly River; The Ecological Self adapted from Earth Prayers; and Kinship Elizabeth Johnson Women, Earth and Creator Spirit; and quotes from Laudato Si’.

An important part of the day was personal quiet time to ponder ‘where am I finding God in this evolving unfinished Universe – on planet Earth?’ and ‘what are the implications of how we are to live?’ The venue was most conducive for the personal quiet time as there were gardens to wander in, despite being close to the highway. The morning concluded with sharing our reflections in Small Groups, a plenary of the Small Groups, an evaluation of the day and lots of chatter during lunch of finger-food provided by Comfort Inn.

---

**Are we ready to respond to our priority to Care for all Creation?**

**Act Now**

*Today is the day you can take the next step to care for our common home*

Open your next meeting with the **Laudato Si’ Prayer**

i.e. ‘God, source of all life, we thank you for the great gift of our Earth’.

Read **Laudato Si’**, reflect deeply on the key messages and share them with others.

Watch our video **Laudato Si’** – An urgent appeal for action and reflect on the discussion points.

**Fast for the Climate** and celebrate Meatless Friday to reduce your carbon footprint.

Sign the global Catholic Climate Petition, which is endorsed by Pope Francis.

Use the **Australian Reading Guide to Laudato Si’** and discuss the challenges and opportunities raised in Laudato Si’.

Join our **National Energy Efficiency Network** and cut your energy consumption.

**Start a garden**, in your home, school, parish or office and connect with our common home.

Write to your local Member of Parliament demanding Australian action on climate change.

Move to renewable sources of energy.

Consider where your investments are placed.

Bring your own eco-bag or basket when going to the market or grocery store and **avoid using plastic bags**.

**Vote** based on the values promoted in the **Australian Catholic Bishop’s Election Statement**

**Consume smartly.** The less waste we throw into landfills, the less harmful greenhouse gases are released into the planet’s warming atmosphere.

Avoid increasing your daily carbon (CO2) footprint – the main greenhouse gas contributing to the warming atmosphere. Simple things, like carpooling, biking or walking instead of driving all add up!
Discover an alternative to using traditional wrapping paper for birthday gifts – like scarves, old newspapers, paintings by your children or discarded maps or magazines.

Improve the insulation of your home – it will really help reduce your energy consumption... and greenhouse gas emissions.

Optimize the use of your washing machine – use the cold-wash option and significantly save energy and reduce your daily carbon emissions.

Offset your travel whenever possible – most airlines provide an option to do this when you book your tickets.

Plant a tree or, even better, organise a tree-planting drive on World Environment Day or to celebrate the anniversary of Laudato Si’.

Quantify how much money you’d save each winter if you lowered the temperature inside your home by 2 degrees Celsius. It could reduce your energy consumption by 14 percent!

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. The less waste we throw into landfills, the less harmful greenhouse gases are released into the planet’s atmosphere.

Switch your light bulbs to LEDs. Save energy and money!

Vanquish energy vampires - appliances that suck energy even when not being used– by unplugging them or using power strips and timers.

Watch your water use! Check your home for leaky faucets, take shorter showers and turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

**Cosmas’ Reflections**

*Cosmas Tsao*

Cosmas is a CLC member from Taiwan and belongs to the ‘Grace’ group. He has been a CLC member since 1988 and in 2014, took permanent commitment.

He is currently in Melbourne attending the Arrupe Program, (the formation of spiritual direction) at the Jesuit College of Spirituality. He plans to go back to Taiwan at the end of 2018 and complete the Program by mid-2020.

While in Melbourne, Cosmas attends CLC meetings with the Hawthorn group.

For me, participating in the CLC World Assembly in Lebanon 2013 and having that ‘world community experience’ is one thing, but being a member in a specific CLC group in another country is a very different experience altogether. While there are some challenges in this, it is also ‘grace’.

My first impression when I first attended the Hawthorn Group is one of great welcome and acceptance. Although there were some language barriers for me in comprehending all the sharing in the meetings, the spirituality we share and express, that of openness in sharing and the reflections of our daily life is not new to me.

The most remarkable impression for me is noticing that Australians are very personable and accepting. From the very beginning when I arrived in Melbourne, I was impressed by the kindness, gentleness and hospitality of Australians. I thought all Australians must be angels who live in heaven. But in the CLC gatherings, I found it is not true as time went by. All my members are just human like me with a desire to find the meaning of life, to contribute to our Church, and to love and be loved.

The common humanity we share unites us into a community called by Jesus, to share His humanity and His divinity. The suffering, joy, fear, wonder and hope we share in our gatherings pull us closer to each other. Now, ‘the world community’ brings deeper meaning to me. It shows me that we are ‘one’ community, not because we use the same name, but because we are all called to live a transparent, mutually dependent and Jesus-centred life by the company of our brothers and sisters. This is my community, Christian Life Community, where I am in Melbourne.
Care for Creation Traralgon May 2017 -
My Reflections

Anna Munari

“We are all one, we are all connected, we all come from the very same source.” Drew Dillinger

We were asked to play “I Spy” on the way down to Traralgon, in Gippsland, for our Big Day Out - Care for Creation. We had to find positives and negatives in relation to the environment we were driving through. This was very interesting as on the journey we had to cross Melbourne from west to east to reach Gippsland.

What did I see?

The negatives were: suburban sprawl; new developments; large industrial estates; roadworks; smoke coming from a huge funnel from the power station.

The positives were: glorious green paddocks with cows grazing; gumtrees and flocks of birds; bright sunlight interspersed with fog which lifted to reveal iconic Australian bush covered hills.

We were asked to reflect on our place in creation and how we have affected it. The presentation by Sr. Anne Boyd was simple and affective; we watched a short film on spirituality and creation. We were then encouraged to go outside to reflect, as is our CLC way. I walked into the sunshine, and saw a log, a perfect seat! However, it was on the other side of the fence so I couldn’t get to it. Instead I sat on a concrete slab that housed large pipes coming out of the ground, I think channelling gas or water. As I watched the magpies swooping from tree to tree around the neighbouring golf course, and the blue sky with the huge plume of white smoke from the power station, I was struck by the amazing ability of humans to use what is around them. The ingenuity of humankind in discovering and using the deposits of coal and gas underneath the ground and finding ways to use them for energy sources to better their human lives.

When we came back and shared in small groups and then to the whole meeting, I heard of people being sensitive to ecological ways to restore the land and making links with Indigenous knowledge of the environment, of people making choices in how they live and respond in our 21st century world. I found it wasn’t all doom and gloom! Though the financial and social upheaval of the closure of the coal and power station is enormous, there were plans and projects for renewal of the environment and new energy sources.

I came away with a sense of encouragement and vitality for Creation, and renewed energy in finding God in all things. I took away the words from Laudato Si, that…”that we have an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone.” This was reinforced by the words: “We are all one, we are all connected, we all come from the very same source.” Drew Dillinger.

And especially of the indigenous perspectives of “Dadirri”- that special quality of inner deep listening and quiet still awareness. There are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very spirit, is a sound-the sound of Deep calling to deep.”
Vale John (Jack) Nolan (28.5.1939 to 23.2.2017)

Gerard Winch

I didn’t quite know where Meredith was. I had only heard of the Meredith Music festival venue, the 1100-acre sheep and crop farm run by a family with a passion for hospitality, music and the land. Owned by the Nolan Family since about 1860, where in 1991 Chris Nolan and three mates held the first ‘Meredith Music festival’, a weekend live gig, inviting upcoming local Geelong, Ballarat and Melbourne musicians to play for locals and friends. This grew: the 26th Meredith Music Festival was held in 2016 and the 10th Golden Plains Festival in 2017 which in turn provide opportunities for local community groups and business. Jack, Mary and Chris were founders, supporters and hosts of the festivals, featuring many solo artist and groups including Imelda May, Paul Kelly, Olympia, Jamie Liddell, Cash Savage, Margaret Glaspy, Archie Roache, Neil Finn, Dirty Three, to mention just a few who performed (come heat and flooding rains).

A uniformed member of the festival traffic crew gave directions to follow the drive, atop freshly laid crushed rock to the cars parked. There were hundreds, the first hint this was no ordinary occasion. Walking past the cars at length, old and new farm machinery, and large photos of Jack and family, I approached a massive white Marquee. Therein were seated approximately 1400 people, friends of the Nolan’s from near and far – local, interstate and overseas, from Meredith community organisations, the festivals and CLC attending the Requiem Mass for Jack Nolan. My very first impression was of the freshly mown grass floor, seemingly a beige shag pile carpet with an earthy bouquet.

Mary Nolan movingly gave an insight into the life of her beloved husband of 51 years, loving father of Mary Louise (who planted the pine trees surrounding the paddock ‘Lou Pine’ in 1987 with Jack- the year before she died in a car accident in 1988) and Christopher, the quiet only broken by the calls of Magpies. Starting CLC in 1983 with Mary, Jack is remembered as a long time Wisdom Figure of CLC, and pro-active member of the Meredith Community - most local organisations, 60 years with the CFA and Meredith Hall Committee, parish, the Meredith History Interest group. Much loved friend ‘Jack’ of festival organisers, workers and punters. 'John’ to locals – a man of the land who always had time for others.

Other eulogies given by long-time friends, Greg Peele MMF festival director and Robert Cooke local family farmer, CFA, Hall Committee and organisations.

A story told of the Hall where after much preparation a ball and meal was held. During the meal, Cookie advised Jack there was an issue with the Hall’s septic system. So politely excusing himself, wielding long handled shovels, Jack and a few of other sturdies sans jackets and shirts, dug deep exploring the issue, which when unearthed, was steaming!! Earth works were performed at a discreet distance, surplus pipes and bricks installed to the relief of others. After a thorough wash Jack and colleagues returned to the celebrations, the participants none the wiser.

On the farm one day, a mate noticed Jack had a tear in the rear of his jeans. The next day Jack was seen wearing a newly washed pair of low slung work jeans with a tear in the same place. Turned out Jack’s truck seat had an errant seat spring, which kept tearing a hole in the same place.
At Requiem end, a guard of honour was formed by the Meredith CFA members and many attendees waiting respectfully as the hearse departed, followed by a lengthy cortege. Walking toward the cars parked, I heard the weeping of a young child. Turning, there was a young four-year-old holding onto the lower branches of Lou Pines. Leading the way to the family car he had lost his car and his parents. We walked with each other, back to the crowd. Where an attending Leading senior constable knelt and spoke with the lad. Soon father and weeping son were reunited.

The cortege slowly wound along, the sun reflecting off the leaves of the eucalypts lining the road. Jack Nolan was later laid to rest beside his parents James & Elizabeth at Meredith Cemetery.

Vale John (Jack) Edward Nolan.

With John’s passing, we remember a man who was known and beloved by so many in CLC - not only as a man of great wisdom to CLC but more especially as a dear friend. In every sense, he was family to CLC Victoria and his passing was deeply felt by us all. Members past and present, came from far and wide to pay their respects and to be with Mary, Chris and the rest of the Nolan family as they commemorated John’s rich life. All were deeply moved by the spirit of the occasion and the symbolism of the land and what it held. Below, several CLCers share their memories and experiences of the day.

Nolan Land

Anita Mueller

I was privileged to attend the farewell mass in thanksgiving of John (also known as Jack) Nolan. The Mass and wake were hosted on the Nolan farm in Meredith. From the moment we (my husband Mark and children Matthias and Philippa) arrived and set foot on the land, we were filled with a sense of the Nolan spirit and other. My 7 year old son pointed out the road sign which read "Nolan Rd" and he remarked, "wow, his street has his name on it!" There was no question that we were on Nolan land - inseparable from the man and no better place to celebrate his life.

There were life size photos of John throughout his life journey along the path... photos filled with joy, hard work, cheeky smiles, community centred... all grounded in a rich family life and unwavering love. To the left were John’s ‘farm toys’ - his tractors and trucks over many years of working the land.

We were offered a sprig from a shrub off the farm to be pinned to our clothing - another point of connection to John, Mary, Chris & Lou (RIP) (John’s wife, son and daughter) and the land. The principal celebrant at mass was our very own Fr Andy Hamilton sj. If there was ever a mass that would welcome all, regardless of faith orientation (or not), race, age or class - this was it! I felt John's gentle, interested, humorous, non-judgemental, welcoming presence at every moment of the celebration.

At the end of mass a Guard of Honour was formed by members of the CFA, CLC, Community Emergency Response Team, Meredith Memorial Hall Committee and Meredith Music Festival as John’s Pall Bearers, led by his son Chris and carer Rak, made their way to John’s transport. A convoy followed to the Meredith Cemetery for a simple, reverent burial service rich with symbolism and heartfelt farewells by many who played a special role in John’s life. We all left to the sound of John’s Bagpipes being played.

Upon our return there was unimaginable hospitality - the altar became a stage and a very authentic Johnny Cash impersonator paid tribute to John by singing many of his favourite Johnny Cash songs. Children and adults danced to the music (it was like we were dancing for John).

Oh to be loved, admired and missed as John is. I quote the scripture on John’s mass booklet: ‘The life and death of each of us has its influence on others’ (Romans 14:7). John is testament to this.

Thank you John, Mary and Chris for allowing us and so many to be a part of your circle of life.
A Farewell from the Land and the Sky
Janine Hellard

When the hearse leading the funeral cortage was leaving the farm it stopped at Mary and Jack’s home, for a few minutes so Jack’s old body could bid a last farewell. At the time a huge wedge tail eagle was circling in the sky above the home. It kept circling until the procession of cars moved off and then it followed the procession of cars along the road towards Meredith township. It seemed unbelievable but then, after a few hundred metres, it peeled off.

To me the wedge tail eagle’s behaviour was like a respectful farewell to Jack from the land, and the creatures, and environment of the home that Jack had loved and cared for all his life. It was very moving and something that just could not have been choreographed.

Ever so grateful that I had known him
Eileen McCormack

A funeral quite unique. Held in a paddock on the farm looking west to the Otways on a beautiful sunny day. It was Jack’s place and fitting that this was the place we gathered.

The depth of sadness witnessed at Jack’s funeral reflected the depth of love people had for Jack.

They gathered together proud to be counted as his friend. Over the year they too, as I had felt Jack’s kind and generous nature and his witty and wise counsel.

I too was proud to be present, proud and ever so grateful that I had known him.

A man who touched so many
Katie Sampias

It was an honour and privilege to be part of Jack Nolan’s funeral - most definitely the most lively and vibrant funeral I have experienced. It also will probably be the only one I will ever attend with a Johnny Cash tribute band.

I had not met Jack that many times before but knew him through his strong and beautiful wife Mary, who has added so much to my life. Together in how they have lived what they have endured they have shown defiance and a depth of love and determination that very few people will be ever able to match.

The many and diverse people who attended Jack’s funeral were a testament to how fully and widely he lived his life with generosity and love, and in doing so, how he deeply touched others. His funeral is one that I will never forget!

A smile and a wink
Hyejeong Kim

On the day of John’s funeral, what came to my mind all day was John’s kind smile with a wink, so I just wanted to share a memory I have from last Christmas, the last time I met John.

John and Mary invited me to their Christmas lunch and dinner, so I went to the farm in Meredith. When we were busy preparing a special lunch in the kitchen, Mary asked John to empty one of the bins. Pretending being tired in a joking way, he said “I’m off the hook then”. I knew he was joking because he turned around and winked at me. When he was making his way towards the door with the bin in his hand, he noticed a puzzled expression on my face. He then stopped and explained what “off the hook” meant. I laughed out loud after understanding the meaning. I haven’t met many people like John who are sensitive to what their interlocutor says and understands and to their facial expressions.

When he said grace, he firstly thanked all who had prepared the special meal. It touched me because I could feel that he really meant it. On the train back home I remember me reflecting on “speaking from the heart”.

During the days leading to the funeral, I don’t know how much I regretted not having joined John and Mary for a movie at Nova last January
and having decided to visit John at the hospital on the following day because of the spilled coffee on my shirt. He passed away the next day. If I had joined and visited, I could have had more to add to my recollections of him. He will be always remembered in my hearts as a sweet, kind, good hearted man.

Anna Munari

I met John Nolan in 1983 when he dropped Mary at my place on the day we set off on our first encounter with a CLC Course and Ignatian Retreat in Sydney. I was doing the driving and John brought Mary to my place. After the Course I was invited to the farm, and from there the friendship began!

So many days began by sitting around the kitchen table drinking tea, and later in the day a stronger beverage as the day came to a close: driving with him in the Dodge to feed the sheep and check the paddocks; driving to the furthest point of the farm and the steep walk down to the hut above the creek. He had to check out the new boyfriend I had - Anthony, who got the seal of approval with the comment: “He’s better than the last one you brought along!”

When our first child was born Mary and John were godparents and a fixture in our life. When our second child came along, John stated: “He’s born on God’s Birthday, October 1.” I queried this. The response was that the great Geelong player Gary Ablett Snr had the same birthday, so both children then received Geelong footy jumpers and our family barracks for Geelong to this day. Go Cats!

When Chris fell ill, Mary and John stayed with us and the children delighted in seeing John on the weekends, as he always brought lollies and chocolates, and “that black drink” (Coke) which they weren’t allowed to have, except when John gave it to them!

We had many weekends at the farm, and John always bought the Variety Packs of breakfast cereal for the children. The arguments began on the drive to Meredith about whose turn it was to have the Fruit Loops or Coco Pops first!

I had the privilege of seeing John the day before he died, as I called in to see him in hospital. He was sitting up eating his dinner, being thankful he had a thick neck - like a tree-trunk - and thus the damage from the fall could have been worse! Now it was to be managed in rehab, rather than surgery due to his heart condition.

On the day of his funeral, as I stepped through the pines that Lou had planted, I was stunned to see the large posters arranged along the roadway to the enormous pavilion set up in the paddock for the ceremony, along with a collection of his favourite trucks, farm equipment and his new tractor! What an amazing celebration of a life well lived, for a man so loved by so many, from all walks of life, across all ages, from all situations. I love you Jack Nolan, and I will miss you.

A Mosaic of People

Michael McGann

Words fail to convey the at once serenity and ebullience of Jack’s memorial. The serenity of the paddocks and hills of Meredith, and Lou’s Pines still in the glistening sky. The ebullience of the mosaic of people gathered from so many walks of life, ages, and traditions and the stories and tears they shared of how Jack had come into (and stayed) in their life.

A man who always took care and time to listen to our stories, now it was time for us to listen to Jack’s story – and what a story!

Buy my abiding memory is of Chris’s face, and the grief in his eyes as he processed with his father’s coffin towards the hearse. His eyes spoke more than all the eulogies.