

# Newsletter of the Right to Life Association Western Australia



April 2024



## Welcome development in controversy over Catholic girls high school pro-death alumni magazine

Readers of our January newsletter will recall the article about the horrible anti-life, anti-Catholic articles in a Catholic girls School alumni magazine. The Right to Life Association of WA protested loudly, as did many parents of children at the school, and others. Our protests did not fall on deaf ears. Thankfully the Mercy Education board saw fit to work with the School to address the problem and put guidelines in place to prevent another such event happening in the future. Their response letter is on Page 7. The Mercy Education board has gone even further than the letter outlines; the School has issued a retraction to parents and others.

The Right to Life Association of WA would like to acknowledge the work of the new Vicar General of the Catholic diocese of Perth, the very Rev Father Vincent Glynn, on this issue.

## Our first Protest walk was a great success!

Our first protest walk was a great success. Around 30 people participated on the two routes: Canning Highway and Shepperton Road. It was an easy 2km walk in each case, and we walked in single file to allow passing drivers plenty of time to read our t-shirt slogans. Afterwards many of the walkers met for a cuppa at the Dome in Victoria Park. The walk was held on March 22nd, as close as we could make it to the International Day of the Unborn on 25th March and the horrible new abortion law which went into effect on March 27th 2024. Want to participate in the next walk on May 24th? See page 5 for details.

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Ready to go: some of the walkers on the Canning Highway Route

# Peter O'Meara has gone home

The first President and founder of the Right to Life Association of Western Australia has passed away.

He went to God on Good Friday morning, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at about 7.30AM.

Peter was passionate about the first gift from God – the gift of life. It was his inspired mission to fight against all attacks on life, particularly abortion and Euthanasia. Peter was a Christian (a Catholic) first, and then, motivated by his faith, a defender of life.

Peter made many friends and inspired many people during his life, but also made some enemies.

Perhaps this was because he followed the fight for life wherever it led. He was not shy of taking on the government at any level, MPs of all persuasions and even the Catholic and the Anglican Church hierarchies on occasions. And he never gave up, even when threatened with legal action.

And he never stopped. He incorporated the Right to Life Association of WA in 1979 after it was founded in 1976 but in truth the work began at the start of that decade in Karratha where Peter worked for the Federated Clerks Union. It was indeed a lifelong commitment.



Of course, in the 70s, 80s and 90s it was easier for him to galvanise people into action on life issues because there were more people who practiced their Christian faith and who saw the link between faith and life. Peter had to work harder than ever in the later years of his Presidency – but he was never daunted, and he always led by example.

Peter O'Meara was a simple man. He had very few possessions and very little money and lived for at least thirty years in a small flat below the Mackay family home in Mt Lawley.

First trained as a Redemptorist, he was a lay brother and ultimately spent eighteen years with that order. Peter worked in a number of industries and for the Post Office and even had his own courier business at one stage.

His ability to fundraise was legendary. His efforts through raffles, dinners, quiz nights and sponsorships allowed the Association to flourish. Many of our readers will remember those quiz nights fondly. Nobody ever went home empty-handed!

Peter was also an eloquent public speaker. He didn't just speak to the faithful however; he spoke whenever the opportunity arose. Perhaps not every opportunity was good for the cause though; there were some legendary debates with feminists in wine bars around Perth that may not have been as successful as Peter had hoped. There is no point in giving a person a message when they are not ready to receive it.

*Continued on page 3*



First meeting of Right to Life Federation of Australia. Unity is hard!

...continued from page two

## Peter O'Meara has gone home

He was also famous, or perhaps notorious, for his writing. In his early time in Perth (Peter was originally from Victoria) he spent a lot of time writing letters opposing the spread of communism in the union movement. This led to his work with the Federated Clerks Union which was a right wing organisation at the time. And Peter's newsletters were inspiring.

In the early 80s Peter convinced Mother Teresa to visit Perth for the pro-Life cause. She flew over with just a little box of possessions on her lap yet managed to fill the Perth Entertainment Centre with her message before going on to the Eastern States to spread the message there. It was an opportune time for her to come as Peter was wondering if he should continue his pro-life work full time. Mother Theresa asked him a simple question that pushed him in the pro-life direction: What is the most important issue to you and the Lord?



Birthday boy, 2023



Mother Teresa visiting our then Victoria Park office

Never seeking personal fame, Peter's work was recognised by the West Australian when Journalist Norman Aisbett's article about him was published on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2006.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 Peter's work was again recognised when he was given the VON GALEN-BONHOEFFER award by the then President of the Coalition for the Defence of Human Life - Mr Dwight Randall -at the annual Rally for Life at Parliament House. Named after the World War Two Catholic Bishop and the Lutheran Pastor (respectively) who were condemned to death for opposing the Nazis during World War Two the award was a fitting recognition of Peter's life-long defence of the first gift from the Lord – Life.

Peter was a confidant of (now Emeritus) Archbishop Barry Hickey, and his Grace saw fit to praise Peter's work in his recently published memoirs *My Spirit Land*. In that book his Grace also touched on the need for unity amongst pro-life groups, an issue that was also very important to Peter.

Well done Good and Faithful Servant.! Enter into the joy of your Master (Matthew 25:21). Rest now.  
Peter O'Meara 24<sup>th</sup> June 1935 - March 29<sup>th</sup> 2024

- There will be a Mass for Peter at Saint Pauls Catholic Church in Rookwood Street Mount Lawley and a Rosary at the office, both in early May. Contact the Right to Life Association of WA office for more details.

## Anouska to speak at the March for Life in Brisbane

Many of you will know our very own Anouska Firth – she is our Education Director and also runs our Social Media sites for us.

Anouska was the recipient of a Lachlan Macquarie Institute scholarship in 2023 and spent three months studying there and also gaining work experience in the political sphere. She is currently in New Zealand where she has been volunteering at the political party VisionNZ.

In the latest development in her career Anouska has been asked to speak at the March for Life event in Brisbane on Saturday June 8<sup>th</sup>. The event is run by our sister organisation Cherish Life Queensland.

Other speakers at this event are Joanna Howe, Michelle Pearse (Australian Christian Lobby) and MP Robbie Katter



## Margaret's grandchildren and Emily shine as pro life examples

Margaret handed in an envelope during the recent Parliament House Prayer Vigil. She said it was from some of her 31 grandchildren, who wanted to use their pocket money to help save the children. Inside was a welcome \$10. They gave what they had, not what they could spare.

And 12 year old Emily ran a raffle during Easter and made \$35 for our pro-Life cause. What a legend!

## 40 Days for Life Conference in Rome Italy

The Right to Life Association of Western Australia was invited to the annual 40 Days for Life conference which this year was held in Rome. Carla attended on our behalf and she reported that it was a wonderful time to connect with other pro-life people from around the world and to share experiences from the front line. It was also particularly important for us to connect with the Christian pro-lifers in Taiwan, particularly Sister Maria Fidelis (pictured right) who is the driving force in that country, because of our plans to work with them. Taiwan has the worst known abortion level in the world; they have more abortions than live births. • Carla's attendance at the conference was funded by private donations. There was no cost to RTLAWA. Our thanks to all donors.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Protest Walk 2024



The Right to Life Association of WA

Will hold its second Protest Walk on

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**at 8AM**



**Meet at Saint Benedict's Church, Ardross at 7.45AM**

There is Mass followed by Rosary starting at 7AM

*Ring the office to let us know your tee shirt size and to choose your logo*

***More than ever, Christianity and the defence of human life relies on us***

*Love them both*



RSVP by 17<sup>th</sup> May to Steve on 0417184789



**Volunteers** are always needed.

Give the office a call on 92217117 if you can help.

We are currently need a carpenter, painter, cleaner and an electrician. (James 2:26). Thank you in advance!

**Donations** are also always needed!

We always seem to be experiencing high cost times. Please consider offering us a donation or renewing your membership. It is one positive way you can fight for life. You can donate through the website [www.righttolifewa.co](http://www.righttolifewa.co) (click on the 'donate' tab) or you can post a cheque or, well, any way you like really!

We also accept donations of food, children's clothing, baby furniture and other items. Call the office if you have any of these items to give away.

**Containers for Change still netting us much needed funds**

**CI0462706**

If you have refundable drink containers please consider donating the ten cents to us. Use our code (above) or ask the attendant to find us on their fund recipient list. There are receiving stations in lots of places now.



# Thank you morning tea!!



## The Right to Life Association of WA

invites all participants in the 40 Days for Life prayer vigil at Parliament House this past Lent o a morning tea on

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**at 10AM**

in the office at



**138 Bennett Street East Perth**

*Street parking is free Please bring a plate if you can*

***More than ever, Christianity and the defence of human life relies on us***



*Love them both*



**RSVP by 8<sup>th</sup> May to Steve on 0417184789**

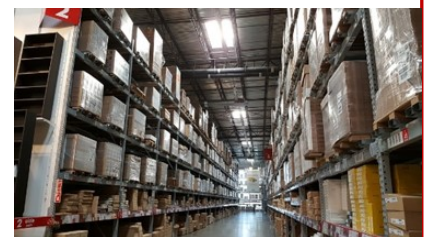
## RTLAWA needs to buy storage space

We get a lot of donations at the office! Everything from baby clothes and baby furniture to Pregnancy pillows and adult hygiene products. Everything from comfort packs for people living on the streets to items for our Annual dinner auction. And of course we also store the items for rallies and marches. And when we get donations they usually come in large quantities!

Our office simply does not have the room to accommodate this generosity, so we are looking to raise money to buy our own storage space. We cannot afford to rent space as the prices are prohibitive and the ongoing costs would be fiscally irresponsible, so a purchase is the best option.

The space needs to be reasonably close to the office, perhaps 30m<sup>2</sup> as a minimum, low maintenance and secure with easy access and loading. This will cost us about \$200,000 and we are relying on donations to raise the money.

We are currently exploring options for fundraising like a 'go fund me' page and other initiatives. In the meantime if you would like to donate please use our website or deposit directly into our website. Make sure you say 'Storage donation' or similar in the description. Thank you all in advance!



12 February 2024

Mr Steve Klomp  
Right to Life Association of WA  
138 Bennet St  
East Perth WA 6004

Dear Steve

Thank you for your letter of 30 January 2024. Mrs Smith, Board Chair, has asked me to respond as I have been working with Ms Oaten to address identified concerns from the published 2023 'Catherine' Magazine.

I want to assure you that Ms Oaten and the Mercy Education Board are committed through its schools to upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church.

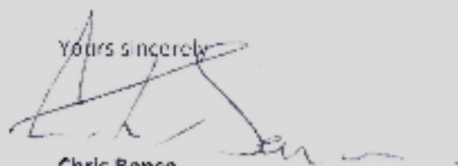
The aim of the publication, which is intended for the alumni, was to promote Merry and Gospel values on how we should treat people, created in the image and likeness of God, equally and fairly which is aligned with Catholic Church doctrine, and the unintended focus should not have been promoting a counter-Catholic lifestyle.

In keeping with the College's commitment to upholding the Catholic Church's teaching, the school has accepted that it should have edited the publication and also acknowledged that the views of the authors in specific reference to the Church's teachings as expressed in the article were not of the schools. On behalf of the school and Mercy Education, I regret any misunderstanding that has come of it.

In response, I requested that the magazine be withdrawn from the website as well and that has been done. In addition, I met with the Very Rev Fr Vincent Glynn, Episcopal Vicar for Education and Faith Formation to discuss this matter and he was supportive of our response and of the school's teaching programme for its students in moral and Christian education.

Fr Vincent has offered his ongoing guidance on this matter as a support to Ms Oaten and Mercy Education as well as Fr Joe Parkinson from Catholic Bioethics Perth. We will continue to avail of this guidance to ensure that all future promotional material and College publications are reviewed before distribution and ensure content is faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Yours sincerely,



**Chris Bence**  
Head of School Engagement  
Mercy Education Ltd

## 40 Days for Life Campaign continues despite heat and protesters

Our 40 Days for Life campaign has been another great success at Western Australia's Parliament House. It has been well attended, reverent and prayer-filled. This despite the unusually hot weather we have experienced during this Lenten period.

Admittedly there have been four days when the decision was made to cancel the vigil as the temperature climbed to 43C, and another day of similar temperature when we arguably should have cancelled to protect our people, particularly given the lack of shade.

Admittedly the groundspeople have insisted we finish early on two occasions so they could carry out grounds maintenance work.



*Prayer goes on, despite the heat, at least the shade is still there*



And admittedly Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March was International Womens Day, which meant there was a demonstration on the steps of Parliament House, which also meant our vigil was adversely affected. One International Womens Day supporter wearing a hat and a mask and carrying a square, red flag decided to harass our people and pull down all our banners. 'How dare you' he screamed, whilst literally standing nose to nose with people half his size. He was a coward of course. The police were called and they came very quickly, but not before three of our people were quite traumatised, and not before this coward had made his escape into Kings Park.

*Evil on my mind: Protester taking our signs down*

We forgive this misinformed soul. Unfortunately our three supporters could not bring themselves to attend their rostered time the following week. We hope they resolve to be back at the vigil next Lent after they have had time to gather their thoughts. Matthew 5: 10-11

- Feeling generous? We need a new picnic blanket for our Prayer Vigils. And it would be great to have a small, wheeled esky too...



*Signs down, but we had them back up ten minutes later*



RALLY  
for LIFE

2024

# EVERY LIFE IS A GIFT

**Wed. 15th May 2024, 7pm**

@ WA Parliament

Harvest Tce, West Perth

*We raise our voice for the voiceless*

**Coalition  
for life**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



**Arrive at 6PM for prayer**



**Guest Speaker Josiah Kappert**

## Mum The courage of the Christian midwife

Mum was a 'double certificate' hospital trained nurse which meant that she spent a lot of her career delivering babies at various hospitals around Perth.

She originally trained in Melbourne (training was not available in Perth in the early 50s), leaving family behind to travel by ship from Fremantle for her big adventure. She was barely out of school.

Mum always found great joy in her work even though most of her shifts were 'frantically busy'. In those days there were no 'university trained' nurses and the patient /nurse ratio was much higher than it is today. In those days too nurses did everything, from the most mundane drudgery to the most involved deliveries and helping in surgery. And nurses did not offer opinions, nor did they ever dare challenge matron. Mum often regaled us with stories about performing difficult deliveries because the doctor didn't arrive in time, or, on occasions, did not know what to do.

There were many times in her career that Mum's faith was tested.

Sometimes still births happened, or a child would die soon after birth. It takes an emotionally strong nurse to handle that, and still offer comfort to the mother and family. But always in that situation Mum would ask if she could baptise the child. Sometimes the answer was a relieved yes, other times it was a very definite no. In the latter cases Mum wouldn't say anything but would remove the child to another room and carry out a baptism anyway. Was she wrong in doing so? I think not.

In the 1970s abortion was commonplace in Perth. It was illegal of course, but the medical fraternity ignored the law to routinely carry out abortions in many hospitals (the law didn't change until 1997). They would sometimes call it a 'curette' to ease consciences, at other times they would simply book the procedure and talk about it openly.

At these times my Mother, a quietly spoken woman of Scottish / Irish descent who had great Christian faith even from an early age, would rail angrily against the plan. And she made it very plain she would never assist in this killing. It got to the point that the hospital would only book abortions when Mum was not rostered on. At other times they would refer the woman to a female doctor in Kalamunda who was notorious for her disdain for life.

Mum had great courage. Today, nurses who want to defend faith are told that they must assist in abortions or find another career, which means today's maternity nurses must be even more courageous. For many it seems an impossibility to defend their faith and still be able to work.

Mum also told me about children born alive who had no chance of surviving. What was she to do with these little ones? Sometimes the mother and father would want to comfort the child until it passed away, so that the baby knew it was loved. At other times Mum would wrap the baby and comfort it for as long as it was alive, even attempting to feed the baby if it was appropriate to do so, and always giving the child priority over her other nursing duties. And she always baptised the child. To be a nurse is to help and to comfort. To the best of my recollection none of these babies ever survived, but they all had the love of at least one wonderful mother whilst they were on this mortal coil. If Mum were alive today she would not be able to understand the born alive after an abortion should not. Such disregard for life would never have

I have my mother to thank for my own to the defence of life.. And there are already with Christ who also have her to faith. Blessed be the Christian midwife.



current thinking that a child be given any help or comfort. entered her head.

faith and for my commitment many children alive today or thank for their gift of life, and

## Holy Trinity Embleton now a pro-life church!

Early April saw Holy Trinity in Embleton get their 'Sanctity of Human Life' plaque. Father Patrick Toohey is transforming the church, with an emphasis on the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation or Confession) and he approved the plaque to be installed on the wall between the new confessional and the baptismal area. It was a fitting decision.

Holy Trinity also have an I AM Sunday Mass as part of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. The congregation were appreciative of the emphasis on the defence of the first gift of the Lord – the gift of life. Aboriginal people revere their elders and have a great love of children.

● If your church would like to declare itself pro-life please contact Suzanne in the office. We arrange installation and can make a short presentation at any Christian service on most weekends throughout the year.



Father Patrick Toohey and some of his flock next to the plaque, installed on the new confessional and baptismal area.

## Blast from the past!



Back in 1981 the Right to Life Association of Western Australia sponsored Mother Teresa of Calcutta to visit Perth. As part of the fundraising for that amazing happening we raffled a car! The winner was Maria who was having her fourth child that year. Her own car was busy turning into an oversized door stop at the time so she was very grateful the Lord smiled on her back then. And where does Maria go to church each week? Why Holy Trinity Church, 8 Burnett Street, Embleton of course!

# Right to Life Association of WA Membership Application and Donation form

Please complete this form and return it to:

Right to Life Association, PO Box 6087, East Perth WA 6892.

You could also scan and email to [admin@righttolifewa.co](mailto:admin@righttolifewa.co)



My name \_\_\_\_\_

My address \_\_\_\_\_

My email address \_\_\_\_\_

Home number \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to receive information from the Right to Life Association of WA by (please tick):

Email  Post  Phone

Please accept my membership fee for 2024 (please tick)

\$10 (pensioners)      \$20 (individuals)      \$30 (married couples)

Please accept my donation of (please tick):

\$5       \$20       \$100       \$500       Other donation \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to donate this amount monthly

I would like to pay by Cheque (payable to Right to Life Association WA)

Visa       Mastercard

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_      CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Direct Deposit

Bank: Commonwealth      Account Name: Right to Life Association Western Australia

BSB 066110      Account number: 00902168

I can help the Right to Life Association in lots of practical ways too! Please call me for help with

Maintenance /cleaning       Prayer Intercession       Phones       Admin

Vigils       Annual Dinner       Lifehouse       Other \_\_\_\_\_