

# The Catholic Weekly

VOCATIONS  
Seminarian the answer to  
Chinese Catholics' prayers  
Page 5



PROPERTY  
When families get priced  
out of the parish  
Page 12-13

www.catholicweekly.com.au

THE CHURCH. ALL OF IT.

SUNDAY 23 June 2024 | \$2.00



## New habits, old roots

■ George Al-Akiki

WITH THEIR unusual habits, green rosary beads and "crown of thorns" tonsures, the Little Friars and Little Nuns of Jesus and Mary are *not your ordinary religious community*.

"At a religious conference I attended before joining, people were asking me if I had seen the 'Jedi sand people,'" laughed Friar John Paul Tsatsoulas.

"What were they talking about? Sand people? Then I saw this community going up the escalator and thought, 'Oh, that's who they mean.' I just had to figure out who they were and so I went up to Sr Caterina Curth and she explained."

Now visiting Sydney from the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana, Fr Antonio Farrugia along with Sr Caterina and Friar John are at St Catherine Labouré in Gymea for a series of talks and a spiritual retreat for Catholics in Sydney.

The friars' and nuns' habits might remind passersby of space monks from a galaxy far, far away, but their spirituality draws deeply from the first Carmelites and early Franciscans.

CONTINUED P2

Donate this tax time to help  
farmers like Chiquito feed  
their children.

DONATE NOW

Caritas AUSTRALIA 60 YEARS 1964-2024

www.caritas.org.au  
1800 024 413





THIS EDITION

News	1-9
Archbishop	10-11
Feature	12-13
Marriage & Family	15
Editorial & Letters	16
Monica Doumit	17
Comments	18-19
Arts & Culture	21
Marketplace	22-23
Sport	24

# Have you heard of the Little Friars and Little Nuns of Jesus and Mary?

FROM PI

From the former, they take a dedication to contemplative prayer. From the latter, a spirit of evangelisation. All through a devotion to simplicity, poverty and competence.

"Our morning prayer is perhaps the most sacred time of contemplation we have, then along with our formation, other prayer and homily preparations," said Fr Antonio.

One of the more unique ways they fulfill their evangelising mission is by hitchhiking.

"We don't have our own cars, a part of our vows of poverty, so it's a significant part of our charism that finds us out on the streets," Fr Antonio said.

"In a simple half-hour ride you can connect with people that have been Catholic and help them to come back again or even those who aren't Catholic but want to find out more and go to RCIA."

The community was founded 25 years ago by Sicilian Friar Volantino Verde, a former night club manager, building contractor and avid motorbike enthusiast.

After trouble with the "mafia" he planned to take justice into his own hands when a radical conversion stopped him.

Torn between two paths, Christ appeared to Volantino in a dream and revealed what his future would look like if he took up the call, which he did soon after in Sicily.

Now the US community live "down the bayou," a tributary off the Mississippi populated by a mix of Native Americans, local Cajuns and wealthy summer house owners.



Fr Antonio Farrugia, Sr Caterina and Friar John from the Little Friars and Little Nuns of Jesus and Mary with Fr Greg Morgan and Fr Noel Custodio at St Catherine Laboure in Gympie.

“As the culture becomes more disillusioned, people are naturally disappointed ... That’s why this robust witness is so prophetic.”  
- Fr Greg Morgan

"We've had a lot of difficulties, as religious communities often do. It's the labour pains of giving birth to a new reality—we've been through a lot of them over the last 25 years," Fr Antonio said.

"But we think in the last five years, the child well and truly has been born and is growing healthy."

The Little Friars were canonically approved by the Catholic church in May 2019 and now include more than

50 members across seven different dioceses in Italy, USA, Mexico and Brazil.

That includes Louisiana-born Sr Caterina, who wanted to be a nun for as long as she could remember. Rather than "why," it was only a matter of which community.

"I think my parents figured out my vocation before I even did," she said.

"I originally didn't want to stay in Houma-Thibodaux. I didn't like the swamp, with

the mud, the humidity, the mosquitos.

"I wanted to get out and was looking perhaps in England or other parts of the US, but as the Lord would have it, he ended up calling me right back to my hometown."

The trip is a happy return for Fr Antonio, who was born and raised in Adelaide, before he had a chance encounter with the founder while on an overseas trip after graduating from art school.

"When I left Australia, I remember that there wasn't a lot going on in faith-based areas and so it's great to see this thirst now reignited in the culture," Fr Antonio said.

Parish priest Fr Greg Mor-

gan said their trip is a welcome visit to the youth of the Shire.

"You might be familiar with seeing a priest, but you definitely don't see nuns and friars," he said.

"As the culture becomes more disillusioned, people are naturally disappointed. The chaos of trying to live in a truthless society and in a state of contradiction, human beings can't live like that. The anxiety is too overwhelming."

"That's why this robust witness is so prophetic. Just to see friars and nuns like this is the kind of radical witness we need. The culture responds to it, people are hungry for it."

**The Catholic Weekly**

COMMUNICATIONS & NEWS MEDIA  
Marcus Middleton, Director  
Darren Ally, Manager  
EDITOR  
Adam Wesselinoff  
(02) 9390 5400  
ONLINE EDITOR  
Christina Guzman  
(02) 9390 5409  
REPORTERS  
Marilyn Rodrigues  
(02) 9390 5410  
George Al-Akiki  
(02) 9390 5396  
SUBSCRIPTIONS  
Heidi Haryono  
(02) 9390 5411  
ADVERTISING AND MARKETING  
Steve Richards  
(02) 9390 5404  
Katie Clarke  
(02) 9390 5402  
DESIGNERS  
Renate Cassis  
Mathew De Sousa

Our story begins in 1979 with the Aceto Bros in Chicago, continuing with the Freeman's Journal in NSW, Levent Printing Centre, 111 Liverpool Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. Phone (02) 5200 1400. We are 13, No 1343 The Catholic Weekly is published by The Freeman Catholic Publications at Sydney NSW 151 421 552 547 and is printed by Sydney Press Pty Ltd, 24-261 East Coast Road, Manly NSW 1509.



**Celebrating loved ones for over 90 years**

**TREVOR LEE & SON**  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Trevor Lee & Son is a family business that has helped families celebrate and remember their loved ones for over 90 years.

- Intimate and personal funeral services
- Professional, compassionate staff, available 24 hours a day
- On site or in the comfort of your own home
- Serving all areas of Metropolitan Sydney and Country NSW
- Pre-Paid funerals available

Contact Bernadette (nee O'Hare), Trevor or Darren Lee on **9746 2949** to arrange an appointment.



**CATHOLIC JOBS ONLINE**

**Find the right candidate**

To advertise call Katie on (02) 9390 5402  
[www.catholicjobsonline.com.au](http://www.catholicjobsonline.com.au)



DIVINE MERCY SHRINE

**DONATE**

**ORGAN APPEAL**



**Restoration and Installation of an Historic Pipe Organ**

Please send your kind donation via Direct Deposit, by cheque or by Credit Card through PayPal.

**DIRECT DEPOSIT OR TRANSFER**  
ACCOUNT NAME: OHTA Trust Account  
BSB: ANZ 013-035 ACCOUNT: 2940 70724

Write your name and "Chattering Appeal" so we can clearly identify you. Also, please complete the form in the brochure and return to: Pipe Organ Appeal, PO Box 11, BULLSHROOK WA 6064

Fully tax-deductible through OHTA (Organ Historical Trust of Australia)

Go to [divinemercyshrine.com.au/organappeal](http://divinemercyshrine.com.au/organappeal) for more details

PAYPAL, CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD

Scan the QR Code

