



St Luke's Script

Christmas 2022

Welcome to the first issue of the National Catholic Medical Association (CMA) Newsletter: St Luke's Script!

This year has seen a lot of rebuilding since all the disruptions of COVID. So many of our doctors and nurses are just battling on every day with projects that don't get much notice. Each and every one of them however, are inspired by a deep sense of devotion and reverence for God's love for all of us. Weather it be research, missionary work, political lobbying or the daily work of just trying to do the best for our families and patients; it is the example of Christ and His Apostles that inspires us all. In this first issue of St Luke's Script we thought we would highlight some of the projects the CMA and its members have been involved with, as well as look back on the year that has been.

Queensland

Queensland ACMA member, **Dr Chrys Pulle** (Geriatrics), has been involved with the Queensland Care Alliance, a Palliative Care Advocacy group:
(insert photo?)

The Queensland Care Alliance are a non-religious volunteer group that has been formed to educate health professionals on the dangers of Euthanasia. We have members of diverse religious faiths, and members with no religious faith. Current members are mostly experienced Doctors and palliative care nurses. Unless we take action, we think it is inevitable that VAD will reduce the quality of palliative and other care in relieving the suffering of most dying people.

Queensland Care Alliance is working towards the vision, *"That every Queenslanders with a life-limiting illness will be valued, protected and able to receive high quality palliative care to relieve suffering."*

The Qld Care Alliance will be posting a short video that will be available to all Brisbane Churches to educate parishioners on the VAD Scheme which will be implemented In 2023.

If you're interested to help the Queensland Care Alliance, or you know of anyone who may be interested, please contact us on secretaryqldcarealliance@gmail.com.

Also in Queensland, **Dr Luke McLindon** (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) has been working steadily in the restorative reproductive medicine space with the [Australian Institute of Restorative Reproductive Medicine](#) (AIRRM). This has always been a challenging and creative area of medicine especially as it has always endeavoured to remain ethical and respectful of the lives in their hands. Luke and his team at the Mater in Brisbane have demonstrated good success in achieving pregnancies with couples who have previously had trouble. A part of the good news in this domain is that restorative reproductive medicine has a growing network here in Australia. Studies and trials evaluating pharmacological and procedural interventions are ongoing. For more information check out their website at:

Dr Luke McLindon and others have also been involved in the **Primary Care Australian COVID-19 Therapeutics Trial** or the 'PAC Trial'. It examines the antihistamine effects of Famotidine (Zantac 360) in the setting of the inflammatory phase of the COVID 19 disease.

The PAC trial is a national, multi-centre, randomised trial of various therapies aimed at preventing the progression of COVID-19, including Ivermectin, Doxycycline, Zinc, Vitamin D, Vitamin C with or without Famotidine.

In this ethics-approved randomised trial the aim is to assess the effectiveness of adding Famotidine to potential treatment protocols in the early phases of COVID-19, for people at home, to avoid needing to go to hospital.

Any patient over 40 years of age and within 4 days of onset of symptoms is eligible to enrol online at: www.pactrial.com.au

All participants receive 10 days of therapy and a pulse oximeter. Therapy delivery is limited to Capital and Regional cities of the Eastern States and South Australia.

The PAC trial is being undertaken by Lumina Medical Research, an Australian company developed to undertake ethical and objective research in the COVID-

19 landscape. Tax deductible donations can be made at www.luminamedicalresearch.org

Victoria

After many difficulties faced in the COVID era of the state of Victoria, the CMAV made a tentative 'restart' with the commencement of Coffee and Mass Saturday morning

The CMAV with the leadership of its chaplain Fr Paschal Corby, also led a national online weekly prayer session and reflection through much of 2022. The CMAV have set a new meeting calendar for 2023 with regular Mass and Coffee events scheduled which will be held every second month on Saturday mornings at St Patrick's Cathedral with coffee at the Psark Hyatt. The first M&C event for 2023 will be held on Saturday 11th February.

The CMAV is planning a dinner and presentation for Friday evening May 19th. **Professor John Whitehall** will be the guest speaker and will discuss the medical, legal and political implications of the local and international Transgender Movement in light of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's recent document: [Created and Loved](#). A Guide for Catholic Schools on Gender and Identity.

New South Wales

The CMA NSW has been busy in 2022. Due to the good response we received from **Dr Simon McCaffery's** talk at our end of year Christmas Mass and Lunch in 2022, we thought continuing on with the theme: "My life as a Catholic Doctor" would be appropriate.

Dr Lynn Lim, a Palliative care consultant at RPA, told us her story of how she journeyed into medicine and more importantly, how she arrived at being a committed Catholic and how that impacts her practice. Personal journey stories are always inspirational as well as instructive.

This year, despite tireless lobbying from senior CMA members and a large group of over 50 stakeholders, Euthanasia legislation was passed in NSW. It was heartbreaking to know that equal time was not given to state our case and that many of the information gathering sessions held in Government came across as merely a tick the box exercise on the way to a pre-set conclusion.

We felt it appropriate to convene a debrief session entitled “*Euthanasia in NSW- What is the future for end-of-life care*”. Our friends at the Knights of Malta were very generous in their support of our livestreamed event. The Audio-visual expertise was provided by *Angelstream Sydney* who set a very professional standard.

As one of the keynote speakers, **Dr John Obeid**, pointed out that we should be heartened by the overthrow of *Roe vs Wade* in the United States; this battle is not over. It’s time to regroup and look at the next step forward.

Dr Deirdre Little is currently updating her recently peer reviewed article “*COVID-19 Vaccination: Guidance for Ethical, Informed Consent in a National Context*”. See: <https://catholicmedicine.org/publication> She has also published another article in *The Journal for Clinical Toxicology* entitled: “*Abnormal Menstruation Following COVID-19 Vaccines: A Toxicologic Consideration*” See: <https://catholicmedicine.org/publication> .

Her research in this area has been hampered by repeated refusals from the TGA under Freedom of Information to provide access to the reproductive histology findings related to the current Covid vaccines. The TGA response to FOI requests is also available for viewing. See: <https://catholicmedicine.org/publication> Deirdre’s response to this is most enlightening. If you want a copy just let us know.

Dr Charbel Sandroussi, presented the second instalment in the CMA’s “My life as a Catholic Doctor” series. He is an Upper GIT and transplant surgeon and head of upper GIT at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, told us about his journey as a lifelong Catholic in medicine. Charbel has always believed that we need to be ready to give a sound and reasoned account of our Faith. Charbel encouraged us to always have the courage of our convictions and to act accordingly.

In August three CMA members, **Dr’s Dani Abosh, Natalie Ong and Michael McHugh** RN presented a Health Professional’s career evening at Campion College Toongabbie. This, we hope, will become yearly event.

In October we held the first of what we hope will be regular CMA social dinners. Fifteen of us gathered for pizza, medical trivia and just good fun at West Ryde. A great night was had by all.

The end of year retreat was facilitated by Deacon Dr Michael Tan who presented what is the soft launch of a formation program about what it means to be in Mission as a Catholic Healthcare professional. It was a good reflection on what it means to accompany and journey with our patient. An important

distinction that needs to be made is that we are partaking in a vocation, not a 'state in life'. A 'state in life' is a permanent position like Marriage, Priesthood/Religious life and Consecrated single life. A vocation can change. A doctor can become a bricklayer if they wanted to but their 'state in life' (married) will always be the same. The program is aimed for those who are already in the Healthcare professions but also for those who may be journeying towards a career in this area. Deacon Michael is hoping to run another four sessions over 2023. We encourage everyone to include this program in your 2023 plans.

The end of year Mass and dinner was a small but very warm gathering this year. We had the added pleasure of having **Fr Anthony Bernard** return from his extended sabbatical and **Chrys and Neisha Pulle** from the Qld CMA, who were on holidays in NSW, joined us as special guests. It was a shame that so many were unable to attend but being present with such a great bunch of Catholic doctors was indeed special.



South Australia

Dr Elvis Seman has recently stepped down as the South Australian president. Elvis has just been appointed as the medical director of [Mater Care International](#), a huge honour but, no doubt, a big responsibility. **Dr Randy Juanta** is now the South Australian president and Elvis has moved to the role of Treasurer. We congratulate Elvis on the honour he has received and welcome Randy to his new role in the ACMA.

SA CMA continues with its regular monthly meetings and is now making ready for its Christmas choir commitments.



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A Universal Mission



"From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the LORD be praised" [Ps: 113:3]. The Catholic Church is truly universal. During the Easter Season many of the readings at daily Mass focused on the early Church and how it grew and began to branch out into other lands and countries. Selfless missionaries brought the faith East, to India and the Jesuits even further to the Far East. Through the witness of holy men and women, the faith began to take root in the Philippines. St. Lorenzo Ruiz was a catechist from the Philippines and laid down his life as a martyr for the faith and because of his example many others did the same. As a result, the faith continues to grow and prosper to this day. The work of evangelization continues, through our generous medical missionaries who travel thousands of miles to bring the holy faith to the poor. I hope you enjoy reading about Randy. He was born in the Philippines, but currently lives in Australia. HHMM is a charity founded and based in the United States, but by the grace of God and the universality of the Church we are able to reach to "ends of the earth", thanks to a great network of doctors, nurses, medical and non-medical personnel. If you are interested in attending a mission and are from the U.S. or Australia, please contact our international headquarters in Irving, Texas or visit our new website, HHMM.org. Be assured of my continued prayers and I hope to see you soon, on a mission!

Lupita Assad, RN
Lupita Assad
International Missions Coordinator Volunteer

Meet the Missionary Randy Juanta, MD

Home Country: Edwardstown, South Australia
Parish: St. Adelaide Catholic Church,
Mission: Second



The mission was a wonderful experience that allowed me to concretely put into practice Christ's call to love our neighbor. It was a great opportunity for me to use the skills and talents that God has blessed me with plenty for the benefit of those people who have so little. Coming from a country and environment of plenty this mission reminds me how truly blessed I am to be fortunate enough to be given abundance, and it is only fair and charitable that I give from my abundance to those whose circumstances leave them with scarcity.

What motivates me to volunteer is the opportunity to serve others who most need medical care and assistance from my country of birth. My favorite moment is seeing the smiles on the faces of those I serve and seeing their gratitude for the HHMM team's efforts to help them.

Are you interested in serving on a mission? Please contact Gloria Madrigal at the international headquarters of HHMM in Dallas, Texas at (972) 253-1800

Serve with us on a mission. Learn more at www.hhmm.org.

Northern Territory

Our friends in the Territory started the year well with the launch of Dr Franco Serafini's English translation of "A Cardiologist Examines Jesus". **Dr Umberto Villa**, the Northern Territory CMA President, along with Fr Brendan Purcell of Sydney oversaw the English translation and was published by Sophia Institute Press. The book has done well and you can see the link to this book on our website. Worth a read!

Umberto reports, however, that the year took a demoralising turn when the "Abortion-up-until Birth" legislation was introduced in the Northern Territory parliament. The NT CMA leapt into action and wrote a letter to the Minister and produced a pro-life pregnancy support guide which was distributed. A special Mass was also organised and much prayer surrounded this issue.

It wasn't long before the next battle reared its ugly head: Euthanasia. The NT CMA organised a petition but there was little resistance against this legislation, many in the Territory viewing the arrival of this legislation as inevitable.

As depressing as this is, Umberto and the team have organised a seminar to show case the pro-life Lily-Rose antenatal clinic next February. Our own **Dr Deirdre Little** is currently the Medical Director of the clinic in Coffs Harbour NSW. The NT CMA are planning to set up a similar clinic in the Northern Territory as a positive response to recent developments in the NT. It is hoped that the Lily Rose project will establish itself in all the states that the CMA is present at some time in the future. Please commend this project to your prayers. With God's grace, all is possible.

The New Catholic Psychologists Network

On the 3rd December the newly formed network of Catholic Psychologists gathered for their end of year Christmas party.

Clearly this is a moment of Divine providence. **Francine Pirola**, who has been involved in the Catholic Marriage scene with her husband, Byron, for many years now, saw the need for a network of good Catholic counsellors and psychologists so that the couples she speaks to would have a professional they could speak to. This was when she and others began the Raphael network.

Not far away a student of counselling was thinking along similar lines. **Anthony Kendrick** sought allegiance with other like-minded Catholics and

thus began the St Dymphna's network. You'll be glad to know that they found each other and the combined network continues to grow.

For many years, trying to find a Catholic psychologist has been a very difficult task and many Catholic psychologists didn't even know who else they could lean on in fellowship. This is certainly good news that this situation may soon become a thing of the past.

One conversation took my interest that night: even in Catholic Institutions, practicing Catholics can feel isolated. Some of these psychologists work in places that have the word "Catholic" on the shingle but they are the only practicing Catholic on staff and the rest are, in varying degrees, contradicting and undermining the ethos that they said they would uphold. This problem is painfully common; it's in education and in health. In our parishes we see that those who present their children for Baptism openly admit they are only getting Baptised to get "a ticket" into the Catholic school. It reveals something about the "largest Christian Church"- the number of practicing Catholics is actually smaller than we realise.

We're glad the Catholic psychologist network has arrived. We'll all be leaning on them to help us through these troubling times. Look for their link on our website.



Anthony Kendrick and Francine Pirola

News From Around the Globe

FIAMC- The International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations

As a member of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, the ACMA was fortunate enough to have three Australian members attend the XXVI World Congress for Catholic Physicians in Rome, September 15 – 17th, 2022.

Medicine: Restorative or Transformative? The Mission of the Christian Physician.

Drs **Elvis Séman, Johnny Khoury and Danielle Li** were amongst representatives from all over the world. They reported back discussions about the alarming international phenomenon of transgenderism especially among the young and, in many countries, the coercive laws that insist on a ‘gender affirming’ approach, which is the facilitation of transition for all who are applying, and the related movement towards Transhumanism.

Many in our culture are unaware of the issue of Transhumanism. In what may seem to be an obscure fringe movement, in fact this movement has considerable influence worldwide, [Yuval Noah Harari](#) is one of the thought leaders in this movement and the World Economic Forum is one of many organisations championing this movement. The implications for future Healthcare policy is significant.

FEAMC- The Federation of European Catholic Medical Associations

FEAMC produces many interesting articles and documents at their website. Dr Bernard Ars, who is President of FIAMC the International Association, recently wrote on the [Education of Catholic Physicians](#). Professor Dominique Baron Lambert wrote a summary of the [World Congress theme](#).

And the organisation wrote an [open letter to the World Medical Association](#) on the contested issue of Conscientious Objection.

It's been a big and eventful year for all of us. We've looked back so we can assess the year that has been and learn from our successes as well as our failures. We move ahead regardless as we have the certainty of Faith and the knowledge that every day, please God, is a deeper walk with Christ.

Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.
God bless from the ACMA team