



# Vianney Bulletin

*A Publication of Vianney College, Wagga Wagga*

**THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED TO  
REV. FR. PETER THOMPSON C.M.  
ON HIS RETIREMENT AS SEMINARY RECTOR**



**Rev. Fr. Peter Thompson CM  
Rector of Vianney College  
2004 – 2021**

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## Recent News

On Monday September 27, the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, Fr. Connell Perry celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at the seminary in the presence of the seminarians and priests. Fr. Perry spent time after Mass giving his priestly blessing to those who approached him. Following this, there was a celebratory breakfast during which he was gifted with a copy of the Roman Ritual.



On Tuesday October 19, Fr. Rogelio Delmonte was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Broken Bay. He returned to Vianney College on Tuesday November 9 to celebrate his Mass of Thanksgiving.

This Mass of Thanksgiving was followed by First Blessings and a cooked breakfast.

Thursday, November 11, saw the seminary hold its annual end of year Christmas Lunch. Held in the week before exams started, it was a great opportunity for the staff and students to relax a little before the stress of exams hit. At this lunch, Fr. Thompson farewelled both Fr. Sean Byrnes and Fr. Steven Ledinich. Although they will be leaving the seminary for parish appointments, they will still continue at Vianney College as lecturers. Fr. Byrnes also thanked Fr. Thompson for his many years of dedicated service to the seminary and the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in his role as rector. As usual, the kitchen staff did a great job preparing the lunch and feeding the seminary community.

Over the last few Sundays of the semester, the seminary has been privileged to be asked to send seminarians to the Cathedral to assist in beautifying the Liturgy through their singing. With COVID only allowing a small choir, the positive feedback from parishioners was greatly appreciated. It is a blessing that now everyone can sing and glorify God through the gift of singing and thus lift the celebration of the Mass.



From Monday November 15, until Thursday November 25, the seminarians sat their end of year exams. Most seminarians average 7 exams over the two week period. Once the exam period has finished, the seminarians will be sent out to various parishes in the diocese for pastoral placement until Christmas.

**Seminary Faculty 2021:****Rector:**

Rev. Peter Thompson C.M.

**Vice Rector:**

Rev. Sean Byrnes

**Spiritual Director:**

Rev. Steven Ledinich

**Dean of Studies:**

Dr. Matthew Tan

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**Recent Events:**

27/9/2021:

Term 4 commenced

27/9/2021:

Mass of Thanksgiving of  
Fr. Connell Perry

18/10/2021:

Priestly ordination of Rev.  
Rogelio Delmonte  
(Diocese of Broken Bay)

5/11/2021

Announcement of Fr.  
John-Baptist Pham as the  
new resident Spiritual  
Director

9/11/2021:

Mass of Thanksgiving of  
Fr. Rogelio Delmonte

11/11/2021:

End of year Christmas  
Lunch

15-26/11/2021:

Exam period

27/11/2021:

End of academic year

Fr. Thompson is recognised as being a wise man of learning and is a go to person in the diocese for balanced opinions on liturgy, theology and Church politics. Many people ring him when they face a dilemma, including, in his time, Bishop Hanna.

Fr. Peter has created a wonderful legacy in the seminary and in the priests in the diocese and we are grateful to him for who he is and what he has done.

– Bishop Mark Edwards O.M.I.  
Sixth Bishop of Wagga Wagga

**A Tribute to Fr. Peter Thompson C.M.**

Fr. Peter Thompson was recruited by Bishop Hanna in 2004 from a parish near Mittagong and replaced Fr. Con Croese. When Fr. Peter arrived, there were only four students as well as rumours around the closing of Vianney College.



Fr. Thompson built up the seminary both in structure and numbers and turned it around. He started energetically reaching out for vocations, including to men overseas. He also invited other rural dioceses to send students to Vianney College. He is conscious of the all-round formation of the students.

Organised, diligent and reliable, Fr. Peter consolidated various aspects of the seminary and established other facets. It was well scheduled and things ran like clockwork, year in year out. He contributed openly and helpfully to the recent review of Vianney College so that it will become even better.

Those who studied under Fr. Thompson are very positive about him, almost universally noting that he is a fatherly figure. Warm, encouraging and dependable, he was committed to the students. His discipline was quiet and measured, giving people the benefit of the doubt when issues were contested and until they proved otherwise. His door was usually open indicating that he was ready to receive anyone who wanted a chat. Fr. Peter has been incredibly constant in his presence at the seminary and with his demeanour.



(Source: Diocese of Wagga Wagga)

The Vincentians have seminary formation as a part of their charism, and Fr Peter has lived this aspect consistently and wonderfully for many years. It has been his way of loving and serving the Church for almost two decades now.

**Upcoming Events:**

27/11/2021:

Parish Pastoral  
Placements begin

4-5/12/2021:

Priestly Vocations  
Weekend

8/12/2021:

Priestly ordination of  
Rev. Prodencio Bognay  
(Diocese of Lismore)

21/2/2022:

Term 1, 2022  
commences**A Personal Thanks to Fr. Peter Thompson**

I first met Fr. Peter Thompson in early 2005 through another priest who knew I was looking for a diocese to join. After my interview with him, Fr. Thompson accepted me into the Vianney College Seminary on behalf of Bishop Gerard Hanna, and I was to study under his fatherly guidance and exemplary leadership until my priestly ordination in 2011.



At Vianney College, Fr. Thompson was not only my lecturer but also a father figure. He taught me Latin, Ethics, Spiritual Theology, and Liturgy. He also helped me to learn the rubrics of making the liturgy a beautiful celebration, a 'Feast of Faith' as Benedict XVI would say. It was his inspiration that made me pursue higher studies in Sacred Liturgy. In addition, Fr. Thompson made

the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) an integral part of the seminary formation program. Outside the classroom, Fr. Thompson also assisted me in many ways to meet my personal needs.

When I started at the seminary in July 2005, there were eight of us students and McKillop House was a residential accommodation for CSU students. But due to Fr. Thompson's extraordinary handiwork and holiness of life, the seminary grew tremendously in numbers such that within a few years we ran out of rooms, which necessitated the building of the Brennan Cottages in 2014.

Fr. Thompson made the seminary and the Diocese of Wagga presbyterate truly multicultural as his leadership has given the local church some Nigerian, Vietnamese, and Filipino priests. The Thompson era also witnessed some big structural changes at the seminary, like the erection of the Brennan Cottages, the expansion of the seminary dining hall, the establishment of the Students' Common Room downstairs, the refurbishment of the seminary meeting room, and the newly expanded staff kitchen. Outside the seminary, Fr. Thompson is a repository for pastoral wisdom and liturgical orthodoxy. He always has the right answers for any pastoral or liturgical question that one may have.



Fr. Peter Thompson: honorary chief  
(Source: Diocese of Wagga Wagga)

Fr. Peter Thompson is a man who cares for his seminarians like one's biological children. In January 2007, he visited my hometown in Nigeria to meet my family. He also took the opportunity to visit important ecclesiastical institutions in my home Archdiocese of Owerri. It was during that visit that he met and interviewed some of the men who are now priests in the Wagga Diocese. One of the highlights of the visit was the conferment of an honorary title on Fr. Thompson by the Local Chief in recognition of his love and support for the community. Also, in August 2011, Fr. Thompson came to Nigeria again to witness my ordination to the priesthood.

All things considered, Fr. Peter Thompson has been a huge blessing to Vianney College, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, and all the seminarians he worked with, even those who did not make it to ordination. I thank God for the privilege of meeting and learning from Fr. Peter Thompson, our beloved Rector Magnificus, and I thank Fr. Thompson for everything he has done for the church and for me personally. I wish him the very best in his next assignment. It is the end of an era.

– Fr. Henry Ibe  
Liturgy Lecturer

## From the Vice Rector

Dear Fr Thompson,

For the last 18 years, an army of men have had the privilege of having you as their rector. You've given these men fatherly guidance and care which has helped to shape them into the men they are today, whether they have gone on to become priests or husbands and fathers.

When I was asked to write this piece it was supposed to be a reflection on your last five years here, and so I tried to think of some moments which encapsulated your ministry. However in five years there have been so many moments of kindness and fatherly care that I have found it difficult to narrow it down. You and I have worked together through the soccer competitions, ordinations, anniversaries, crises of various sorts, disagreements, and a multitude of other joys and sorrows.



(Source: Diocese of Wagga Wagga)



Throughout it all, there is one word which summarises your approach to being rector: fatherliness. You've been a father to each seminarian to come through these doors, as well as to many of the teaching staff, including 2 of your vice-rectors. As a father you've given many words of advice which have found their way into our hearts: 'Never make a decision when you're angry' 'Don't change the doormat till you've been there a year' and 'Don't let your prayers fall by the wayside' are three of the bits of advice which stick in my heart, and I know that others – both staff and students, have their own pieces of fatherly wisdom which they've received from you.

But more importantly than advice, are the moments where seminarians or even seminary staff have struggled or endured the difficulties of ministry. Your response was to listen and guide with a fatherly heart, challenging us to place our trust in the Lord.

Thank you for your guidance, care, friendship, and fatherly example. You have left a legacy of faith and hope in this diocese which will not be forgotten.

Be assured of our prayers as you commence your work in Urana!

– Fr. Sean Byrnes  
Vice Rector

## From the Serrans

Fr. Peter Thompson. What can be said of the great man who we Serrans have had as our spiritual director for the last 16 years? For many years he would make himself available every second and fourth Tuesday at 6.15 pm for a meeting, 7pm mass, followed by a 'bring a plate' dinner. The dinner after Mass was the final carrot for getting myself in. Who can resist the magnificent food prepared by the beautiful Serran ladies with those old style recipies? All this was back when our meetings were held in the Calvary hospital board room and chapel.



What special Masses Father says for us Serrans, so 'to the point' and an encouragement to actually live the gospels by our works, deeds and words. His life experiences and the wisdom of human nature have been a total blessing for Serra. He explained in really easy ways how Our Lord went about setting the right example in different situations, so that we are able to make this world a better place. This has been invaluable!

God bless Father Thompson, a real life legend, and, on behalf of the Serrans, thank you

'THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL BUT THE LABOURERS FEW'

– Andrew Kennedy  
Serra Club, Wagga Wagga

## A Tribute to Fr. Steven Ledinich and Fr. Sean Byrnes

The end of the year approaches and with it the end of the terms of some of the faithful residential staff at Vianney College. Frs. Steven Ledinich and Sean Byrnes will finish their terms as residential staff at the Vianney College Seminary this year, 2021. They have been a stable part of the live-in staff of the Seminary since 2016. Each was appointed by Bishop Hanna before his retirement. Their presence has seen the Seminary through the three-and-a-half-year period without a Bishop. In addition, their constant presence during the turbulent times of the pandemic has kept helped keep the Seminary anchored to Christ with the peace that he gives.



Fr. Steven Ledinich (Source: Marg Plane)

he is looking forward to it and said that it will be good to go back there. His relationship with the parish will be different to how it was nine years ago. He will be present as Parish Priest, rather than Administrator.

Fr. Ledinich has lived at the Seminary since 2013 when he started his role as Spiritual Director, appointed by Bishop Hanna. Spiritual Director is a difficult role. It requires either holiness or intelligence. Fr. Ledinich has brought to the role the rare combination of both. During 2015, Fr. Ledinich spent a year in Rome studying to gain some more qualifications for lecturing philosophy and then he returned to his role as Spiritual Director in 2016.

Fr. Ledinich has been appointed as Parish Priest of The Rock Parish, starting in January 2022. This parish includes St. Mary's Church at The Rock, St. Michael's Church at Mangoplah and St. Ignatius' Church at Yerong Creek. Fr. Ledinich has been given permission to perform the Mass according to the 1962 Missal as well as the current Missal. Before his time at the Seminary, Fr. Ledinich was Administrator of The Rock Parish from 2007 – 2012. When asked whether he was happy to be returning to a parish where he had already been placed, he said that



Fr. Byrnes was ordained in 2015 and spent a year as assistant priest at Albury Parish. In 2016, he was appointed as First Year Formator by Bishop Hanna. This role required Fr. Byrnes to move into the Seminary with the delicate task of helping the new first year seminarians discern whether God was calling them to the priesthood. A friend once quipped that since he was given this task so soon after ordination, Fr. Byrnes must be either very talented or the Seminary very stupid. Anyone who knows Fr. Byrnes recognises that it's the former. In 2017, Fr. Byrnes was asked by Archbishop Prowse to take on the role of Acting Vice Rector in addition to First Year Formator, a role which Fr. Byrnes has performed well up to the present day.

Fr. Byrnes has been appointed as Administrator of Narrandera Parish, starting in January 2022. This includes St. Mel's Church at Narrandera, St. Patrick's Church at Grong Grong and St. Kevin's Church at Galore. Narrandera Parish is the home of the poet John O'Brien and Fr. Byrnes has read some of his poetry to prepare for the placement. When asked, Fr. Byrnes said with a large grin that he's very much looking forward to the placement at Narrandera and sees it as a graduation from a long period at the Seminary.



Fr. Sean Byrnes (Source: Marg Plane)

The live-in presence of Frs. Ledinich and Byrnes at the Seminary will be missed by the Seminary community. Their relationship with the Seminary will not completely end, however, as they will continue as lecturers on a part time basis. It is expected that they will bring many blessings to the fortunate communities of The Rock Parish and Narrandera Parish.

– Fr. Damian Jellett  
Theology Lecturer

## Ordination of Fr. Rogelio Delmonte

On Monday, October 18, the feast of St. Luke, Fr. Rogelio Delmonte was ordained at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral for the diocese of Broken Bay, by Bishop Anthony Randazzo. Ordained with him were Frs. Sam French and Aldrin Valdehueza.



(Source: Fr. Rogelio Delmonte)

Fr. Roger studied at Vianney College from late 2012, and, after finishing his studies in 2018, he commenced Pastoral work in the Diocese of Lismore before transferring to the Diocese of Broken Bay.



The ordination was affected by minor COVID regulations and although his family could not attend, the ceremony was livestreamed. A small congregation was able to attend and there were approximately 50 priests concelebrating, including Fr. Thompson who was representing the seminary as well as Bishops David Walker and Geoffrey Jarrett.

In his homily, Bishop Randazzo spoke about St. Luke and the example he sets for priests.

After the ordination, there was a beautiful moment where Fr. Roger was able to Zoom his family.

The First Mass of Fr. Roger was celebrated the next day at the Cathedral with Bishops Randazzo and Jarrett attending in choir. This, too, was livestreamed so that his family could participate.

– Rosan Vettikombil

Vianney College 2014-2020  
Diocese of Broken Bay

### Ordinations: Recent Priestly Ordination:



Rev. Rogelio Delmonte  
Broken Bay Diocese  
Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral  
October 18, 2021

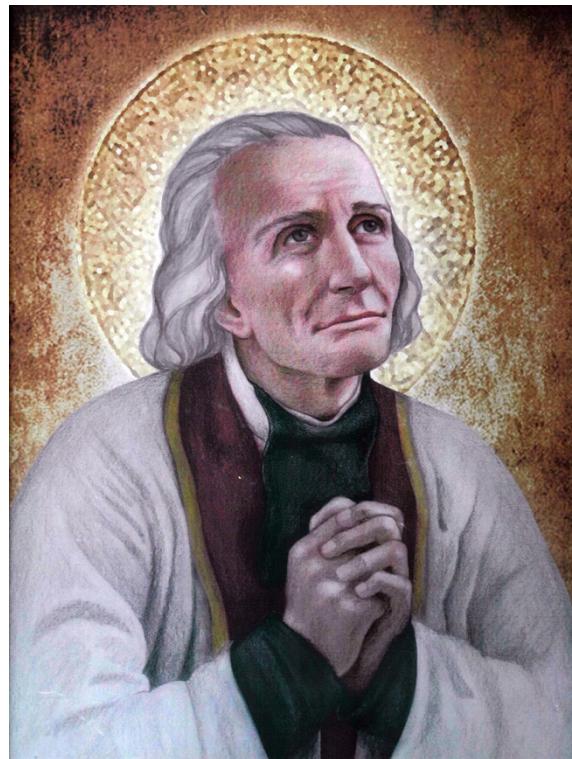
### Upcoming Priestly Ordinations:



Rev. Prodencio Bognay  
Lismore Diocese  
St. Carthage's Cathedral  
8 December, 2021  
Vianney College: 2017



Rev. Michael Boudaher  
Maronite Eparchy  
Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Melbourne  
18 December, 2021  
Vianney College: 2015-16



*St. John Vianney,  
Pray for us!*

## Vianney College

**Editor:** Dominic Franssen

17 Durack Cct  
Boorooma,  
NSW 2650

P.O. Box 172  
Wagga Wagga,  
NSW 2650

P: (02) 6923 1222

W: [www.vianneycollege.org.au](http://www.vianneycollege.org.au)  
E: [editor@vianney.nsw.edu.au](mailto:editor@vianney.nsw.edu.au)

