

FLOURISHING IN FAITH

The Official Newsletter of St Barnabas College

A (BRIEF) EASTER ADDRESS FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Dear SBC Community,

I have been asked to write an Easter message for the SBC newsletter, and as the “turnaround” is tight because of the Coronavirus situation and having to make arrangements to manage it at SBC over the last few weeks, I have decided instead to direct your attention to an article by Ockert Meyer, a lecturer from United Theological College in Parramatta and a colleague in the School of Theology. This Easter message (which I am including with permission) says it all far more eloquently than I would.

<https://news.csu.edu.au/opinion/the-easter-hope-of-isolation-not-your-usual-easter>

I wish for you all, a blessed Easter, and a renewal of life and hope albeit that we continue to face challenges in the weeks and months ahead.

Every Blessing,
Cathy.

SUPERVISION 2020 IS A WRAP

Beginning Monday February 10 and concluding Thursday February 13, over 80 people packed into the Learning Commons above the refectory of St Mark's College for the SuperVision 2020 conference.

The conference began as an idea in the mind of the Principal, The Rev'd Dr Cathy Thomson, as a result of attending a retreat on Supervision in 2019 ran by a Scottish, Episcopalian priest, The Rev'd Dr Michael Paterson. The success of that event combined with the recently mandated professional supervision of clergy (as recommended by the findings of The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse), spurred the idea of having a professional conference on supervision for those involved in ministry, here in Adelaide, facilitated by Michael Paterson.

Bringing on board corporate sponsorship from AnglicareSA and support from the greater Charles Sturt University body, what began as an idea quickly morphed into reality. Dates were set, marketing was sent out and the day finally arrived, attended by an ecumenically diverse and lively group of people from all over South Australia. The content was wide and varied: the nature of supervision, the role of the supervisor, dynamics between supervisor and supervisee, tools and frameworks for supervision, implementation of supervision, and so on.

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Teaching was consistently punctuated with group discussions, roleplays, shared activities, crowd interaction and chances for feedback – it seemed that the learners themselves had their agency respected and were able to contribute to what was a co-learning experience.



The Rev'd Dr Michael Paterson

Reflecting on the conference, Michael writes:

"As an adult educator, when invited to speak to groups I do not know, I worry far less these days about content than I do about connection."

Who are these people? What interests them? What will they have in common? How can I facilitate a learning experience which neither leaves novices behind nor bores those deeply familiar with the material?

Next on my concerns list is the venue.

In what ways will the physical environment, the room lay out, lines of visibility, audibility etc foster or impede a space conducive to learning?

On first entering the conference venue (two days before we began) my heart sank. A podium at the front in a long narrow room was not what I was hoping for. I have long distrusted educational environments which locate wisdom and expertise in the person chained to the podium rather than in concentric circles of dialogue.



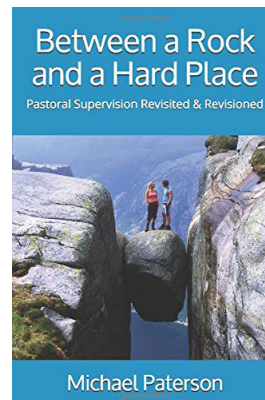
The attendees of SuperVision 2020

And yet, what supervision has taught me more than anything is the need to 'play the ball where the monkey drops it'. So, unknown to anyone, I spent hours in the conference room, mindfully walking the room, creating a space within me to welcome each person, each point of view and each learning style. That more than anything enabled me to prioritise the learning group over the

learning material. And that more than anything made it possible to hold a very large and diverse group and guide them through an educational experience which had the potential to migrate from informational through formational to transformational learning. I remain deeply grateful for the space we co-created in the conference and for the life-changing insights and experiences."

It certainly seems that Michael's sensitivity to the group paid off, with feedback from the event being positively glowing. Michael's dynamic, relational and receptive teaching method was lauded and considered to be the highlight - a high praise indeed considering the quality of the catering.

And so, to all our supporters, attendees and sponsors who made this event possible, thank you! It was an event that will be long remembered and has been integral in helping equip the clergy of the diocese (and beyond) in fulfilling their vocation as ministers.



Since the conference, Michael has published a new book which includes some of the material presented in the conference.

Michael Paterson, (2020) *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Pastoral Supervision Revisited and Revisited*, Edinburgh: IPSRP Publications

To find out more about this new publication, you can read an outline and review at:

www.sbc.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BRHP.docx

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INTERVIEWING DAMIAN SZEPESSY

MEET SBC'S ACADEMIC MANAGER

The following interview is an edited exchange between SBC's Digital Media Coordinator and Dr Damian Szepessy, our Academic Manager. We hope you enjoy getting to know Damian.

Tell us a little bit about yourself Damian.

I grew up Roman Catholic and came to faith when I was about 17 in a youth group called 'Glenelg Antioch'. At that time, I had an apprenticeship as a butcher, but I was in and out of butchering and did a lot of labour hire work: making boxes, industrial cleaner and made solid timber doors for kitchen and benchtops. I didn't like my work and I knew there was something I wanted to do – something God wanted me to do – but I didn't know exactly what. However, even though I didn't do so well in school, I knew that I wanted to study.

In my late twenties I started attending a friend's Pentecostal church whilst still attending a Catholic church, and it was there that he invited me to stay on and help him out because it was a small church. He went on a mission trip to Papua New Guinea and was due to go again in 10 months' time and I felt a real sense of calling to go, so I went with him to Port Moresby for three weeks. After my three weeks I came back to Adelaide, worked for a while and then went back to PNG about ten months later, studying at the World Missions Faith Training School. I thought that maybe I was being called to be a missionary for life, however I caught malaria three or four times (as well as my mother being quite ill) and I had to come home.

When I got back, I decided to study at Tabor College, thinking that I'd go back to work as a missionary teaching in a Bible College. I ended up studying a Bachelor of Arts and Theology, but my health wasn't getting particularly better and I realised that I'd have to do something else for a career. It was suggested by my friend that I help pastor his church, so I did. I continued to study as suggested by people around me. I wasn't entirely sure but I was getting the grades and it seemed I should keep going. When I was doing my Master's thesis I remember saying to myself, "God, if I get a credit or below, I won't go any further, but if I get a distinction or higher I'll keep going." I received two distinctions and it was recommended that I continue onto a PhD.

This ties in nicely with my next question: how did you end up working here for St Barnabas College?

Well, to do my PhD I got in contact with one of my Master's markers to discuss research topics, who happened to be Bishop Tim Harris. I started doing a PhD with SBC and near the end of it the role of Academic Administrator opened. I had experience relevant to the role as I had some experience in the VET sector with Tabor College and I had some similar experience with the College of Ministry affiliated with my church denomination. I oversaw courses and student enrolment and those sorts of things. So I applied and won the position. With the various staff changes in the years since, I am now in the role of Academic Manager.

Walk me through your role.

It involves lots of emailing! More seriously, it involves helping students seeking credit or advice on enrolment and applications including student support on matters relating to Charles Sturt University. Support for Adjunct Lecturers is also part of this role. In addition I've been working with the School of Theology at Charles Sturt University on redesigning and adjusting subjects so that we have more to offer for students. As a result, I'm on various course review and assessment committees which act at a wider university level.



What's the best part about being the Academic Manager?

I see what I do here as helping students fulfil what they believe God has given them to do. What I'm doing is helping students get to where God has given them a vocation: I feel like that's my vocation. I have a sense of accomplishment when I see students move on, get ordained or when events like conferences go ahead successfully. I get a sense of satisfaction when the goals of the college are reached in this sense, because we helping people be who God is calling them to be.

What are you most looking forward to in SBC's future?

I hope and look forward to SBC becoming even more collegial in its outlook: being a more research focused place and having more to offer the Dioceses of Willochra and the Murray.

What has COVID-19 taught you?

That I don't like working from home (you're not meant to say that are you?) I've learned that we take a lot of things for granted, like freedom of movement – being able to go where we want when we want. The Coronavirus has taught me that this can be taken away and that I'm not as in control as I think I am.