



Dear Friends,

Thank you to all who participated in the National St Luke e-Conference. Archbishop Mark Coleridge and Sr Elizabeth Dowling rsm engaged and challenged us. I was interested to hear the Bishops' focus on our need for reassurance in our faith journey. Just like Theophilus I need reassurance about *how well founded the teaching is that we have received*.

My sincere thanks and admiration goes to the three people who shared how they tried to live out their faith. It's tough to share from the heart because we are actually sharing who we are. It was an extraordinary experience. The final lines from Mr Adrian Gomez' presentation is so encouraging to me.

"Like the apostles, I am an imperfect person who often fails to live up to the example of Jesus, but Luke tells me "do not worry", "put God first", but no matter what, "God will always, always love me". I try my best and like Peter I sometimes fall, but in the Gospel of Luke Jesus keeps reminding me again and again– "do not be afraid... my child, do not be afraid" – and so I get up and try again."

If you missed out on the e-Conference on the day you can still access all the talks at [www.bbi.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au)

**E-Conference dates for 2010:  
Tuesday May 18<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday September 16<sup>th</sup>.**

In this final edition of *Mission and Spirituality News* for 2009 our regular contributors reflect on the Season of Advent from a wide range of perspectives.

Bishop David Walker has written and produced an Advent *Lectio Divina* Booklet. It is an excellent way to pray with the readings of Advent. If you would like this free gift please contact Leanne Kermond on (02) 9847 0214 to order copies. I'd like to share with you the words of Karl Rahner about Advent from the introduction of the booklet:

**“At Christmas God says to us:**

“I am there. I am with you. I am your life. I am your time. I am the gloom of your daily routine. . . . I weep your tears – pour yours out to me, my child. I am your joy. Do not be afraid to be happy, for ever since I wept, joy is . . . more suitable than the anxiety and grief of those who think they have no hope. . . I am in the prison of your finiteness, for my love has made me your prisoner. . . I am present in your needs, I have suffered them and they are now transformed, but not obliterated from my heart. I am in your lowest fall, for today I began to descend into hell. I am in your death, for today I began to die with you, because I was born, and I have not let myself be spared any real part of this death . . . I have sheltered, safely and completely, in the cold stable of your world. I am there. I no longer go away from this world, even if you do not see me now. . . . I am there. It is Christmas. Light the candles. They have more right to exist than all the darkness. It is Christmas, Christmas that lasts forever.”

(Karl Rahner, *The Great Church Year*)

My prayer is that I can remember to bring that light into my suburban heart this Christmas. My Christmas anxiety starts when I see *The Women’ Weekly* Christmas edition at the supermarket checkout. My anxiety escalates in a crowded Westfield car park as I search for a spot. The cleaning, the arranging, the wrapping, the politics, the expectations and the Christmas lunch takes me to the brink of tears.

My prayer is that I choose to do it with God: *I am there*.

**Virginia Ryan**

**Adult Faith Education and Pastoral Formation Coordinator**

**The Broken Bay Institute**

**[vryan@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:vryan@bbi.catholic.edu.au)**