



Heart to Heart

A monthly publication of **HJM** hearts of Jesus and Mary
prayer community
marayong australia



Hearts of Jesus and Mary (HJM) Prayer Community

August 2026

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To be a group of people who are journeying together in faith, guided by the Spirit of God, growing and learning from each other, and whose life, as a whole, follows the footsteps of the Master Himself...that is, a life of prayer and active, loving service to others.

From the Desk of Fr Floyd Gatana Straight to **The Hearts**

SEEKING SILENCE

We live in a world that is increasingly busy and noisy. We have become so accustomed to this way of life that it often shapes the way we think, live, and relate to others. As Christians, this constant busyness and noise can affect not only our daily lives but also our spiritual lives. Many Christians today find it difficult to remain focused in prayer and to make sufficient time for it. The demands and distractions of everyday life can easily become overwhelming.

However, as Christians, we are called to learn how to seek silence in our lives. This does not necessarily mean that we must physically withdraw from the noise and busyness of the world. Rather, we are invited to seek silence within ourselves, particularly within our hearts. The heart is at the very core of our being. From a spiritual and theological perspective, the heart can be understood as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a dwelling place of God. If we truly believe and understand this, we will begin to appreciate the importance of cultivating inner silence and creating space for God within us. This is a sacred place where God desires to dwell, but it is also our responsibility to allow that space to remain sacred.

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From the Desk of Fr Floyd Gatana Straight to **The Hearts**

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Silence, however, is not always easy, nor is it something that everyone readily embraces. In silence, we often encounter many things within ourselves: memories, wounds, fears, worries, and unresolved struggles. Yet, when we understand silence from a spiritual perspective, we begin to appreciate the profound effect it can have on our lives. Learning to embrace silence requires practice, patience, and discipline so that our hearts may gradually learn to rest in the Lord.

The Book of Psalms offers us a beautiful invitation to silence: **“Be still, and know that I am God”** (Psalm 46:10). These words remind us of the importance of becoming still before God. It is often in moments of silence and stillness that we become more aware of God's presence and come to know Him more deeply.

The prophet Isaiah also reminds us that **“in quietness and in trust shall be your strength”** (Isaiah 30:15). In silence, we discover strength in God. When we allow ourselves to become silent before Him, He embraces us with His love, strengthens us, and transforms us so that we may live more faithfully according to His will.

Silence can also reveal the strength and potential that we may not recognise within ourselves. God has blessed each of us with unique gifts and talents, but we must take time to discern and recognise them. The busyness and noise of the world can easily distract us from listening to ourselves and, more importantly, from listening to God.

As Catholics, therefore, we should cultivate an attitude of silence in our lives. Silence itself can become a form of prayer—a prayer of the heart. When we create space for God and cultivate inner silence, we become more attentive to His voice and deepen our relationship with Him. In this silence, our communion with God grows, and our love for Him expands.

When we sit quietly with God, we may begin to understand the meaning of things that we previously struggled to comprehend or recognise. Silence provides an opportunity for a deeper encounter with God and allows Him to speak to the depths of our hearts. For this reason, we should make it a conscious commitment to seek moments of silence in our lives. When we embrace God in the silence of our hearts, we allow Him to transform and renew us.

The deeper meanings of life are not always discovered through critical distance but through immersion in the realities of our own lives. Life must be lived within the realities of our giftedness, the blessing of family, the richness of community, and the world in which God has placed us. When we live and reflect, act and pray, create and celebrate, life itself can become meaningful, even in the midst of pain and struggle.

Ultimately, silence can help us grow spiritually and become more aware of God's presence in our lives. In the stillness of our hearts, we learn to listen, to trust, and to recognise that God is always present and working within us. By seeking silence, we create space for God to speak to us, transform us, and lead us more deeply into the fullness of life He desires for us.

Whatever Happened to Church Kneelers?

(contributed by Marcial and Tet Cacdac, July 2026)

I asked AI this question, and received this candid overview:

“Church kneelers (or hassocks) are becoming rarer because many congregations are aging and can no longer kneel comfortably. Additionally, modern churches are swapping traditional fixed pews for flexible, open-space chairs to host community events, making individual kneelers difficult to store or use.”

It also noted:

“Many congregations have transitioned from “liturgical halls” to modern spaces. The theological emphasis in these spaces has shifted away from private adoration and toward communal gathering and participation, meaning congregations are more likely to stand or sit.”

The subject of kneelers has been highlighted recently in Sydney following Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP’s pastoral letter **ADORING THE EUCHARISTIC LORD: “LET US KNEEL BEFORE THE GOD WHO MADE US” (PS 94:6): Pastoral Letter to the Priests, Religious, and People of the Archdiocese of Sydney on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ 2026.**

In this Pastoral Letter, Archbishop Fisher OP noted that kneeling is an “expression of awe and worship,” and cited various Scripture passages illustrating this reverence for Christ. He then called on the parish clergy “to restore kneelers in every church where they are missing” and “to teach the faithful appropriate postures .. and encourage them to adopt them in worship and in private prayer so that our bodies support and express our hearts in their acts of devotion.”

Below are some excerpts from the Pastoral Letter, as featured in the Catholic Weekly (<https://catholicweekly.com.au/adoring-the-eucharistic-lord-let-us-kneel-before-the-god-who-made-us/>):

“All our senses are engaged in the liturgy, and so too our sinews: we stand, sit, bow, process, and kneel.

“Of these physical postures, kneeling most clearly reveals what we believe about God and our relationship to Him. The Church invites us to genuflect, if we conveniently can, at the end of our pew, as we greet or farewell Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament on our way into and out of church. In Australia it directs us to kneel for the entire Eucharistic Prayer, when the Church recalls her history and our destiny, intercedes for many needs, offers the great sacrifice of Christ to the Father, and witnesses bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood. The Church calls us to kneel again, in adoration as we “Behold the Lamb of God”, in thanksgiving after Communion, in Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. We are also called to make a sign of reverence before we receive Holy Communion at Mass (GIRM 160). In most cases this reverence is shown by bowing deeply, however many people choose to genuflect, or even to receive Communion kneeling. This is a perfectly valid option envisaged in the current Missal. Kneeling was the default position of receiving Holy Communion in the Latin church for many centuries. Altar rails, which still exist in many of our churches, are a reminder of this reverent custom. ...

“We kneel in adoration or thanksgiving, to plead for mercy and healing, but God does not leave us on our knees indefinitely. He raises us up and sends us out.

Interestingly, the Parish of Saint Andrew the Apostle Marayong grabbed the opportunity some years ago to acquire, at significant cost, wooden pews with kneelers, helped by very generous donations from parishioners. We thank God for this blessing and opportunity to kneel, show reverence and present ourselves to God, as the prophet Isaiah did:

“Isaiah knelt in awe before the throne of God and heard the words, “Whom shall I send?”; then, to his own astonishment, he found himself answering, “Here I am, Lord, send me” (Isa 6:8).”

From the Core Group

The last Core Group meeting was held on 17 July 2026. The next meeting will be on 14 August 2026.

Apostolate Ministry – There is 1 more visitation by Bible Cell Facilitators to other Bible Cells before the end of the year.

The ministry is planning a retreat for the prayer community on November 7. Details as follows:

Topic – Contemplative hearts like Mary's

Venue – Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, 247 St Andrews Rd, Varroville

Cost - \$30 per person; Fee includes facilities, tea and coffee. Bring own meal.

Retreat starts around 8:30am and concludes with mass at 4pm.

Members to arrange carpooling. Alternatively, a Mini Van will be arranged depending on the number of attendees and the meeting place is at St Andrews Parish.

Growth Ministry – The Growth in the Spirit Seminar will be held on September 19 at Fr Byrne Centre.

Music Ministry – continues to provide music service during mass and praise and worship meetings and supports parish music service requests. HJM had donated the old PA to YouthWorks.

Praise and Worship Ministry – The 2026 prayer leader roster and schedules for Teaching, Sharing and Healing are now complete. The Ministry is looking for backup prayer leaders.

Prayers and Intercessory Ministry – continues the nightly prayers on Mondays through Thursdays.

Service Ministry – maintains roster on church cleaning after the 1st Friday Mass of each month and manages fellowship after prayer meetings and at morning tea after the 10:30am Mass on every 5th Sundays of the month.

Pastoral Team – Healing Journey through the Way of the Cross - This initiative will be incorporated as part of our yearly Lenten Retreat. The Apostolate Ministry will be the lead and will book the venue hall at Mt Schoenstatt or at Shrine of Innocence or at Our Lady of Angels. Booklets are to be prepared.

Please send any feedback to the Pastoral Team or corresponding ministry.



Bible Cell: Blessed Trinity

Message: A prayerful life and the gift of discernment will lead us to God's kingdom.

Action: Share an experience where your prayer helped you discern well.

Bible Cell: Our Lady of Fatima

Message: Let the Holy Spirit control your prayer life.

Action: Share an experience wherein you did not know how to pray and how the Holy Spirit helped you.

Bible Cell: Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Message: The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in our prayers and nourishes our spiritual growth.

Action: Share an experience how the Holy Spirit answers our prayers.

Bible Cell: St. John Paul II

Message: God's love is greater than our failures, stronger than our fears and constant through every season of our life.

Action: How did God's love manifest in your life during difficult moments?

Bible Cell: St. Mary MacKillop

Message: Listen, anyone who has ears, have faith in me.

Action: Share your faith experience in God.



ST JOHN PAUL II BIBLE CELL

The St. John Paul II Bible Cell (SJP II BC) was initially established in 2012 as Blessed John Paul II BC. It was renamed to SJP II BC following the canonization of St. John Paul II in April 2014. Cezar and Myra Estrera facilitated the cell from its inception until March 2025, when Efren and Lorie Atienza took over.

SJP II BC comprises Efren and Lorie Atienza, Cezar and Myra Estrera, Doris Ursua and Nandor Toth, Cheryl Dequina, Mercy Aquino, Erna Sow, Agnes Rupac, and Julietta Clark.

The HJM prayer community is fortunate to have SJP II BC as a means for individuals to grow and develop their spiritual lives alongside others. As St. John Paul II said, “the more ready you are to give yourself to God and to others, the more you discover the authentic meaning of life.” May SJP II BC continue its mission with the intercession, grace, guidance, and protection of St. John Paul II.



BERNARDO (DING) RIVERA

Bernardo Rivera, fondly known as Bro Ding, has been an active member of HJM since 1993. He held several HJM leadership positions in the past but has stepped aside to let the younger generation take the reins.

Bro Ding is a retired accountant and accounting teacher who enjoys being with his wife, Sis Adora, 3 adult children, and 5 grandchildren. He continues his spiritual journey with HJM.

Upcoming Events:

HJM PRAYER MEETING, SAT, 8 AUGUST 2026

PLACE: FR BYRNE CENTRE
TIME: 6.30PM to 8.00PM
LEADER: BRO DING RIVERA

HJM CORE MEETING, FRI, 14 AUGUST 2026

PLACE: MS TEAMS
TIME: 7.30PM to 8.30PM

HJM PRAYER MEETING, SAT, 22 AUGUST 2026

PLACE: FR BYRNE CENTRE
TIME: 6.30PM to 8.00PM
LEADER: ST JOHN PAUL II BIBLE CELL

1st FRIDAY MASS, 4 SEPTEMBER 2026

PLACE: ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
TIME: 7.00 PM
(FOLLOWED BY CHURCH CLEANING)

Birthdays & Anniversaries

August

Happy birthday and God's blessings to the ff:

Dolette Enriquez Aug 10
 David Bustamante Aug 10
 Remy Aquino Aug 15
 Shonee Attwood Aug 15
 Colin Attwood Aug 17
 Agnes Rupac Aug 20
 Ding Rivera Aug 20
 Mirza Alata Aug 29
 Linda Aguas Aug 30
 Merlin Alforque Aug 30
 Josefina Durante Aug 31

Anniversaries

None

September

Hennie Velasco Sep 7
 Elmer Nifas Sep 8
 Sonny Dequina Sep 9
 Marilyn Villa Sep 10
 Fred Desira Sep 12
 Milabel Estrera Sep 13
 Esther Viola Sep 14
 Jackie Tolentino Sep 16
 Edgar Reyes Sep 18
 Rod Limguangco Sep 21
 Annalise Capili Sep 27
 Danny Aguas Sep 27
 Gie Emperado Sep 28

Please send feedback to the
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If you would like to be a part of the **HJM's PLAN GIVING PROGRAM** to support our future community outreach activities, kindly make your donations to the following account:

Account Name:

Hearts of Jesus & Mary

BSB:

062 703

Account No:

1079 7414