

# Stannies Family VINCENTIAN VOICE

**On Friday 21 February 2020, I was ordained a priest for the Bathurst Diocese in the Cathedral of St Michael and St John. The very next morning I celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving, my first at which I was the Principal Celebrant, in the St Stanislaus' College Chapel.**

This was the obvious choice for me, since it was while I was living at Stannies that I discerned my vocation to the priesthood, inspired in part by the witness of the Vincentian priests.

In 2007, I finished a Bachelor of Science with a major in Mathematics in Sydney and had been accepted into the 18 month Bachelor of Teaching at CSU Bathurst. Coincidentally, Stannies was advertising for supervisors in the Boarding House; I moved into Stannies on Australia Day 2008.

Working and living at the school, I found myself drawn into the life of the Boarding House and the wider College. I began tutoring

Stannies students in Mathematics and played guitar for Boarding House Masses. At the same time, I found myself less and less drawn to the idea of teaching. I deferred my studies (and eventually withdrew) and took on more hours in boarding and more students to tutor.

By mid-2009 my life revolved around Stannies. However, I knew this arrangement was only short-term. In July 2009, I had a conversation which prompted me to seriously consider the priesthood. Over the months that followed I was led to greater conviction that God was calling me to be a priest.

The witness of the Vincentian Priests at the College (Fr Doug Akehurst, Fr Rom Barry and Fr Jim Maloney) made me wonder if I should consider becoming a Vincentian myself.

I met with Fr Doug, who listened to my story and helped me to recognise that I was called to the Diocesan priesthood. Despite this, the Vincentian charism greatly

influenced the kind of priest I wanted to be, driven by a deep sense of justice and care for the poor. I joined the Seminary in 2012 and was ordained a priest eight years later.

One of the ways that the Vincentian charism was alive during my time at Stannies was the involvement of the students in the SVDP Conferences, which raised their awareness of the poor, helping them to see Jesus in the poor and the poor in Jesus.

As the Stannies community strives to take up the Vincentian charism, perhaps it is worth reflecting on the missionary zeal of St Vincent himself. His strong desire for evangelism was integral to his charism: helping people to encounter Jesus in their lives so that they can respond to their own call, living lives of prayer and service.

One area of strength that can be built upon in this regard is the tradition of singing in prayer and liturgy at Stannies. Listening to the boys sing praise to God has always been a highlight of worshipping with the Stannies community and there is much talent among the students in music and singing. Stannies' repertoire of school songs and hymns are able to lead students to a deeper encounter of Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

The Vincentian charism is alive and well at St Stanislaus' College. However, we are always being called to go deeper. I am thankful for the formative role Stannies has played thus far in my life and I look forward to working with the College into the future.



Fr Karl Sinclair, centre, celebrating his first Mass as Principal Celebrant

Fr Karl Sinclair