

# Laity of the Chevalier Family Australia National Gathering 2023


*Kerrie Wehbe*

Last weekend, the Laity of the Chevalier Family (LCF) Australia had its annual gathering at St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park, with 31 people attending. The youngest was six months old, and the oldest was 88! It was great to have Sr Ancilla and Sr Mary Stevens with us for the weekend, too. The theme was *One Heart... Many Stories* led by the Australia LCF Council.

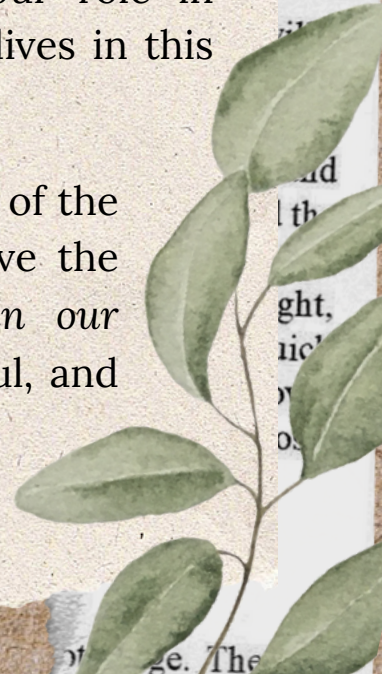
It was a beautiful weekend in a serene and peaceful setting. Participants were invited to encounter their own stories: their personal and Chevalier Family communities and their journeys with God and with Spirituality of the Heart. We listened, reflected, shared what was in our hearts, and connected with others' stories.

We began with an *Acknowledgment of Country* and smoking ceremony, remembering and honouring the Dharawal people and their ancestors, the area's original inhabitants. Lee Toll led a moving opening prayer session, *Our Shared Story*, that went back to the roots of Fr Chevalier and the works he began. It was an opportunity to come to a stronger awareness of our role in continuing the work and spirit of Fr Chevalier in our lives in this twenty-first century.

Fr Michael Fallon MSC, Spiritual Companion of the Laity of the Chevalier Family Australia, gave the excellent keynote address, *God's Story in our Hearts*, recalling the stories of Jesus, St Paul, and his personal story.



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Other presentations included *Creator Heart* (a guided reflective meditation), *Hearts Living Together* (discovering the why of how and what we live), and *Hearts Dreaming Together* (exploring LCF journey so far and its future directions). We were invited to reflect and share our experiences with Spirituality of the Heart, its call to us, and how we live it out daily. Lee Toll had also prepared a special celebration of the *Aboriginal Mass* held with the local parish on Sunday morning.

To end the weekend, we worked in small groups to suggest how the Australian Council and LCF members could move forward and what people wanted from the LCF.

It was a weekend of meeting and enjoying the company of new people, of singing, sharing, and praying together as LCF members, all united in a desire to continue the charism and spirit of Fr Chevalier: *to be on earth the Heart of God.*



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