

New book by Catholic Religious Australia - building religious literacy during Vocations Awareness Week

How do you explain the vocation of Religious life to young people in a secularised culture like Australia?

One resource that can assist is *Our Stories, Our Lives, Our Mission: Catholic Religious in Australia*, a new book by Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) and St Pauls Publications, launched on 2 August 2023 at the National Assembly.

A year in the making, the idea for the book arose as CRA's response to World Day for Consecrated Life, celebrated by the global Catholic Church on 2 February each year.

CRA President, Peter Jones OSA, commented, "On this day, the Church celebrates our way of life as integral to the life of the whole ecclesial community. *Our Stories, Our Lives, Our Mission* provides a tool for connecting the stories of religious congregations with the teaching agenda of schools and the formation of the young. It offers a kaleidoscope of fascinating insights into religious life, be it the education of children in outback Australia or an ecological ministry of the twenty-first century, a Sister's 19th century shipboard diary, or the artistic symbolism of a religious insignia."

In 136 pages — along with a digital version and accompanying online teacher notes — over 60 Catholic Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Australia provide a compact two-page insight into their charisms, gifts and ministries.

Each congregation identifies its founder, historic turning points, notable writings, quotations of interest, as well as the meaning of its insignia. An accompanying 500-word story then elaborates on an historical aspect, often the founding story or the congregation's beginnings in Australia. Links in the online version take the student to relevant congregational web pages and the free online Glossary that accompanies the book explains over 200 Catholic terms in a brief sentence or two.

Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director explains, "If a teacher, parent or youth minister is seeking to awaken Generation Z or Alpha to the beauty of religious life as a sister, brother, or religious priest, then this resource provides a valuable starting point. Having parented children through their school years of religion assignments, I wish I had a copy of this publication for its accessibility, information and heart!"

Anne continued, "The significance of this resource is that, in affirming the gift of religious life, it's also sowing seeds of learning and insight for a new generation of Catholics. The resilience of Religious from their beginnings in Australia to now, is made clear."

Our Stories Our Lives Our Mission – Catholic Religious in Australia includes a short history of Catholic Religious Australia as well as a Foreword by Fr Richard Lennan, Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Theology and Ministry, Boston College, USA.

This resource can be purchased as a printed book from the website of [St Pauls Publications](https://www.stpaulspubs.com.au) website, with further information online at [Catholic Religious Australia](https://www.catholicreligious.org.au).