

## **Awards 2005**

1. Best News Story
2. Best Feature Story
3. Best Editorial
4. Best Column
5. Best Headline
6. Best Social Justice Coverage
7. Best Example of Education Coverage
8. Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life
9. Best Feature – Magazine
10. Best Feature – Newspaper
11. Best Original Photograph
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15. Best Newspaper Layout and Design
16. Most Improved Publication (Newspaper or Magazine)
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19. Best Media Campaign of a Church Event
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21. Best Ecumenical/Interfaith Story
22. Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize – Magazine
23. Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize - Newspapers

## **1. Best News Story**

### **Winner**

Publication: The Catholic Weekly

Author: Sandra Murphy

Title: Catholic patients denied access to clergy

### Comments:

The entries in his section were of a below average standard with the exception of the winning piece.

Ms Murphy wrote about genuine news, presented it interestingly and without personal emotion.

The issue of clergy access to the sick and dying is real, and hindering that access should be a matter of public debate.

### **Highly commended**

Publication: The Catholic Weekly

Author: Sandra Murphy

Title: Funeral ban planned

## **2. Best Feature Story**

### **Winner**

Publication: Eureka Street

Author: Anthony Ham

Title: The voices of the silenced

### Comments:

This entry was an outstanding piece of journalism that left a strong impression of the tragic event that occurred in Spain.

Although the subject matter for the story was very powerful, which would seem to give it advantage over some of the other entries, this was not the main reason for selection. In fact, quite the opposite.

The story would have been extensively reported because of its international interest, so would have required more skill to set it apart from the many other reports, to present a new profile and information.

However, the ability of the writer to tell the story and evoke the feeling of involvement and understanding in topic is a credit to his professional and personal talent. It is a powerful piece and well-deserved, that reports sentiments without sentimentality, and is well deserving of its win.

### **Highly commended**

Publication: Australian Catholics

Author: Terry Monagle

Title: Helen's call to Rome

### Comments:

Unlike the winning entry, the subject matter was far less sophisticated and impacting, yet the overall impression was equally compelling. This is a delightful story, well-written in a relatively short piece, that conveys the character and love surrounding the subject, Sister Helen, and left me with a knowledge of some of her life. A great effort. Congratulations.

### **3. Best Editorial**

#### **Winner**

Publication: Tui Motu InterIslands

Author: Michael Hill

Title: All shall be well

#### Comments:

This section was strongly contested although several entries were not editorials in the real sense. An editorial not only outlines the stance of the publication, but must also challenge, provoke thought and intellectual debate, and put a balanced argument that is well researched. The winning article by Michael Hill fulfils those criteria.

The nuances of writing to a special interest audience present particular challenges, and this and the Highly Commended articles address those basic requirements that make up a quality editorial.

#### **Highly commended**

Publication: The Nathaniel Report

Author: Michael McCabe

Title: Abortion - Technology and truth

### **4. Best Column**

#### **Winner**

Publication: Tui Motu InterIslands

Author: Fr Humphrey O'Leary CsSR

Title: The cardinal's condom

#### Comments:

This article spells out in an easy to understand way, the Church's teaching on "double effect". Fr O'Leary claims it would be tragic if a highly debatable rigorist interpretation hindered the task of stopping the AIDS pandemic. It is a theological point not often printed in the Catholic press.

#### **Highly commended**

Publication: Australian Catholics

Author: Georgina McEnroe

Title: Back to school blues

### **5. Best Headline**

#### **Winner**

Publication: Kairos Catholic Journal

Author: Ramesh Weeraratne

Headline: A roma therapy

#### Comments:

This headline is short, simple and sums up what the story is about using a clever word-play and originality. The headline works perfectly with the content of the story - Roma, the physical and spiritual journey she found herself on and her eventual triumph. The colour scheme and placement of lettering works in beautifully with the image, helping the reader understand both meanings with clarity, without detracting from the play on words.

**Highly commended**

Publication: The Summit

Author: Paul Taylor/Elio Capra.

Headline: Do you ever dance with your bible

A very eye-catching headline which is novel and immediately captures attention, drawing the reader in.

Comments:

The standard of entries was generally high, making this choice difficult one.

**6. Best Social Justice Coverage****Winner**

Publication: Australian Catholics

Author: Lee Beasley

Title: Following wind

Comments:

The actions of one family led to the forming of a group to help refugees come to Australia after receiving a government visa. This work has led to other groups forming throughout NSW. It vividly tells the story of a family from southern Sudan who received a visa - but not the fare to fly here. "It's like winning the Lotto and not having the bus fare to collect it." The article is well presented with two photographs.

**Highly commended**

Publication: Catholic Outlook

Author: Bishop Kevin Manning

Title: Your vote is important

**7. Best Example of Education Coverage Winner****Winner**

Publication: Discovery (The Record)

Author: Phil Bayne

Title: A New Agenda: Are Single Sex Schools Making a Comeback?

Comments:

This very balanced article raises a question that has been discussed in Catholic, other non-government and even state schools in Australia. It quotes extensively from the director of the CEO, provincial of Christian Brothers, a former principal of an all-girls school and a parent. The pros and cons are spelt out > -> as is possible future action (including decisions to be made by government authorities). It is an issue being discussed throughout Australia at present.

**Highly Commended**

Publication: Champagnat

Author: Jeff Crowe

Title: Blueprints and footprints: Affirmation and challenge

## **8. Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life**

### **Winner**

Publication: The Summit

Author: Elio Capra

Title: Do you ever dance with your Bible?

### Comments:

This article describes how the Word of God is allowed into our hearts, often confronting and questioning our current attitudes, disposition, lifestyle and behaviour. It demonstrates how the Bible can be applied to everyday living. It notes especially the Bible readings at Mass (especially Sunday Mass). It also links the readings ("Word") to the Eucharist - thus giving us a "balanced spiritual diet" for our daily living.

## **9. Best Feature - Magazine**

### **Winner**

Publication: Australian Catholics

Author: Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ and Jenny Myers

Title: Relationships

### Comments:

This piece gave voice to an important issue of modern society, relating both to religious and mainstream society. It was simple but well presented and well written and a feature I felt would relate and involve the reader. Congratulations.

### **Highly commended**

Publication: Tui Moto InterIslands

Author: Michael Hill

Title: The Cistercians

### Comments:

This was an interesting entry, well presented and well written. I also thought the postscript by Michael Hill was relevant to the piece. Congratulations.

## **10. Best Feature - Newspaper**

### **Winner**

Publication: NZ Catholic

Author: Nicholas Reid

Title: Politics and art cause problems for saint

### Comments:

This is written in the form of letters to the Italian saint and in such a skilled way that it presented what might have otherwise been a mere historical recant, in a compelling story that delivered both information, entertainment and insight.

Although some of the other entries presented well, this particular effort stood out and deserves its win.

**Highly commended**

Publication: NZ Catholic

Author: Pat McCarthy

Title: Pope of the Millennium

**Comments:**

It is hard to ignore the excellent presentation of the feature, again in NZ Catholic, on the Pope of the Millennium. Although reporting on this event was always going to be a major concern, especially in the Catholic press, the feature is compelling and pictorially strong, as well as presenting a snapshot of the life of John Paul II. Congratulations.

**11. Best Original Photograph****Winner**

Publication: Catholic Weekly

Author: Kerry Myers

Title: Hats Off

I found Kerry Myers' excellent and accomplished "Hats Off" a life-affirming and joyous picture. This arresting image perfectly captures the students' youthful exuberance at the end of their school's third term and demonstrates the photographer's skill in recognising a critical moment in the flow of the event.

**Highly commended**

Publication: Catholic Outlook

Author: Hamilton Lund

Title: Ordination of Bob Sheridan

**Comments:**

In a complimentary way "Ordination of Bob Sheridan" by Hamilton Lund is a quiet and beautiful study of a spiritual journey. Hamilton's timing, like Kerry's is perfect, picturing Bob Sheridan's warm reaction at being welcomed into his new family.

**General Comment:**

There is a small difference between a competent picture and a great one. The distinction is made the moment the photographer releases the shutter. Beyond the technical requirements of information and content, great images are nourished by feelings and emotions.

The photographs I've chosen exemplify this.

**12. Best Magazine Front Cover****Winner**

Publication: Eureka Street

Designer: Janneke Storteboom

**Comments:**

A cover that says it all ... and with finesse. An intricate multi-layered image, striking and thought-provoking. It embodies the spirit of what Christianity should always strive to convey- a sacred of miracles, gentleness and sublime beauty.

The subtle colour combination of black and metallic bronze gives the picture a somewhat mystical, ethereal quality that encapsulates the over-all and powerful holiness of the message.

Equally impressive is the simple fact that the designer understood headlines could detract from the presentation. This is a cover that renders meaningless the use of text. A larger-than life Christian image that one may even frame.

### **Highly Commended**

Publication: Madonna

Designer: Charlotte Starrett

#### Comments:

Madonna and child, a simple and entrancing presentation of innocence. The cover is not just charming but also clear, clean and tasteful. The winning blend of colours, picture and easy-to-read typography makes it easy on the eye.

## **13. Best Newspaper Front Cover**

### **Winner**

Publication: The Record, Perth

Title: The Lion of Rome

#### Comments:

The entries show the importance of strong front pages in attracting readers has not been lost on church newspapers. All entries were of a challenging standard, but the Lion of Rome front of The Record was in a class of its own. It was impossible to look at the image of the Pontiff without sending the pain. The deep etching worked well to focus attention on the central image. This was a classic example of a picture being worth a thousand words. A great effort that would touch any potential reader.

### **Highly Commended**

Publication: Catholic Leader

Title: World mourns death of Pope

## **14. Best Magazine Layout and Design**

### **Winner**

Publication: The Summit

#### Comments:

Well presented, imaginative and, most importantly, quite clearly a useful guide for churchgoers. As with any communication tool, reader interaction is of prime importance and this magazine has some useful innovations, such as the take home sheet, and clearly defined sections that are uncomplicated and precise.

The clean lines of the publication make the general absence of pictures barely noticeable. A credit to the layout and design.

With a combination of long reads and quick-grabs, it caters for both the browser and the dedicated reader. Good over-all mix of generally easy-on-the-eye sans serif and serif types complements the tastefully used colour combinations.

### **Highly Commended**

Publication: Kimberley Community Profile

#### Comments:

For its obvious commitment to community involvement, effectively displayed through pictures and text.

## **15. Best Newspaper Layout and Design**

### **Winner**

Publication: NZ Catholics

#### Comments:

NZ Catholics is everything a newspaper should be: bold front pages, large photos that add to and explain the story, not just filling the space. Clean layouts that present a clear hierarchy of items on the page, informative headlines, consistency in style throughout all sections and a logical flow through the paper from news to opinion to features.

I was particularly impressed by the opinion pages which included an editorial column.

Special mention must be made of the commemorative addition to mark the death of John Paul II, which included a 12 page wrap around on high quality paper with numerous photographs and writings of the late Pope's contribution. Clearly all stops had pulled out in the main part of the newspaper as well. NZ Catholic shows just how good a well researched newspaper can be.

### **Highly Commended**

Publications: Catholic Leader and Catholic Outlook

## **16. Most Improved Publication (Newspaper or Magazine)**

### **Winner**

Publication: Broken Bay News.

#### Comments:

Already a bright and colourful publication in its earlier form, Broken Bay News ramped up its appeal and readability even more with its switch to magazine format dominating front page pictures which in the examples seen are eye-catching and inviting. Editorial content features interesting news and opinion pieces plus lots of cheerful photos.

### **Highly commended**

Publication: The Swag

#### Comments:

For its bright new covers and its chatty writing.

Publication: Champagnat

#### Comments:

For showing how a scholarly journal can be made more readable and attractive through such devices as content pointers, graphics and page layout reform.

General Comments: There is certainly plenty of evidence of continuing improvement on the part of Catholic publications in Australia. The large number of entries showed much positive change in design, editing and content, with a commendable shift towards clarity, simplicity and clear communication, all of which made picking a winner difficult.

## **17. Best Regional Publication**

### **Winner**

Publication: Catholic Observer

#### Comments:

This newspaper has colourful but not gaudy front pages using photos to good effect and making an imaginative choice of theme-related pictures. It makes good use of page 1 pointers to inside stories.

Throughout the publication, clear layout, snappy headings and well-placed pictures make the newspaper readable and interesting. Devices such as crossheads and theme-setting graphics help for example to lift the lengthy bishop's message (often a dull patch in church newspapers!). The Observer carries a variety of columns whose generally clerical authors seem to have been well-trained and/or well-edited.

### **Highly commended**

Publication: Kimberley Profile, published by the Diocese of Broome.

Comments: A bright and readable magazine radiating a cheerful and relaxed spirit. Very people-oriented and newsy.

#### General Comments:

This category attracted a number of very good entries, each demonstrating a great deal of work and commitment on the part of editors and their editorial teams. The variety of editorial inputs, the mix of news and commentary and the creative approaches to design are evidence that regional Australia is well served with its Catholic publications.

## **18. Best Website for a Publication**

### **Winner**

Publication: The Catholic Leader

The winner of this category is based on the fact it meets and in places exceeds the criteria as shown by the following.

The web's accessibility is enhanced by an easy to use consistent menu structure with external links opening up in new windows so as not to lose where the user is on the site. It has the ability to generate a printable version of each main story and sub page when required which is an important addition. The ability to enlarge and shrink the text size on a per page basis is something a lot more information websites should utilise.

## **19. Best Media Campaign of a Church Event**

### **Winner**

Author: Francine Pirola, Byron Pirola

Title: Celebrate Love Seminar, Perth, April 2005

#### Comments:

Excellent coverage in local Catholic paper (The Record) with very good pre-conference articles - essential before an event to encourage people to attend. Good coverage in Living Love - the newsletter for the organisers.

Unfortunately there was no evidence of secular coverage. The quote from the parish priest of Mt Isa (p3, The Record, 5 May 2005) would have been excellent for the secular media and the seminar presenters would have been excellent on radio interviews and talkback.

## **20. Best Advertisement**

### **Winner**

Publication: Kairos Catholic Journal

Author: Kairos for Caritas client

Title: The time is now - Caritas

### Comments:

The advertisement hits the eye with white reversed. The line “ ... the time is now” immediately has the brain asking “what do I have to do?” The photo gives the impression of three people - even though only one is in focus. The imagination feels there are more people out to the side. The boxes for card numbers are a practical size.

## **21. Best Ecumenical/Interfaith Story**

### **Winner**

Publication: Marist Messenger

Author: Peter Janssen SM

Title: Report on the Ecumenical Kirchentag - Berlin

### Comments:

This well-written report clearly shows the links and dialogue between the Catholic and other Christian Churches. It clearly demonstrates the challenges in ecumenical relations. It is highly topical.

## **22. Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize - Magazines**

### **Winner**

Publication: Kimberley Community Profile

### Comments:

Firstly, let me comment on the extraordinarily high standard of the publications throughout the Catholic media. I was impressed by the quality, the design and the content of many.

The quality, content and intelligent discussion offered by The Nathaniel Report was most impressive, as was the design and comprehensive coverage offered by The Summit and Tui Moto. In fact, to be honest, the standard presented from all sectors made the judging of this award very difficult.

It was also significant to realise the limited resources available to produce many of these magazines, so I would just like to pass on my congratulations and admiration to the editorial and layout staff involved. Working outside the Catholic area, I was thoroughly impressed.

As for the winning entry, I have chosen the Kimberley Community Profile. Although, in many ways, it is nowhere near as slick or streamlined in layout and production as some of the other entries, it had such impact, both for its heartfelt coverage of the local community and the enthusiasm it seemed to convey.

Although these are emotive words, this is the impression this magazine left, an effort whereby the involvement and interaction with the community it services, both on a social and spiritual level, were very obvious. It is also a bright, well-presented magazine and is my choice for the award.

### **23. Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize - Newspapers**

#### **Winner**

Publication: The Southern Cross

#### **Comments:**

Firstly, I would like to suggest that in future this section be broken down so that small bi-monthly and monthly publications produced by volunteers are not up against weeklies compiled by full-time professionals. An entry comprising three editions is adequate to judge the best.

Each entrant publication had strong points, but there were several disappointing aspects common to all. I was disappointed by the lack of effort made to appeal to youth readership. The lack of appeal of newspapers to the 15-25 age bracket is something we all grapple with, but I did not see any convincing attempt made by any of the entries to appeal to that readership. There is a distinct lack of youth contributors discussing social issues that worry them - illegal drugs, unemployment, depression; and equally they should have a forum to tell of wonderful things in their lives - their successes, their dreams, their pride in family and the Church, for instance. Each publication could look to encouraging such voices because there is no greater truism than that people love to read about other people - their achievements, their failings, their attempts, their aims, their ambitions.

As well, many of the newspapers, although faithfully reporting issues of concern to the specialist constituency, do not challenge their readership with a diversity of views or through provocative advocacy. I detected a general editorial direction that was very much in the comfort zone. The guide to this is the letters page and op/ed (opinion/editorial) where the readership express opinions. The winning entries were strong in this important sector, but most were watery. If the readers don't get excited, incensed, angered or otherwise emotional enough to pen a response or an opinion, we as journalists are failing in our job to challenge their thought processes. In doing that we deny ourselves and our readership the value of diverse opinions - in many cases the opinions and the wisdom of our senior citizens.

Photograph selection was often dull, with too much reliance on the lazy "smiling face" picture. Photographers have to try harder, take more natural photographs, be a bit more imaginative. In particular, many of the front-page photographs were disappointingly dull and stereotypical, while invariably inside there were wonderful - even exciting - photos which screamed out for greater display.

I recommend that Catholic media practitioners organise an annual seminar for a day or two where they are addressed by senior and experienced sub-editors, layout subs, leader writers and tabloid news reporters. This peer experience is beneficial for everybody and the consistent use of passive introductory paragraphs displayed in the entries I read has to be reversed. It is just as easy to write active intros, even if it does take a little more effort.

Every entry was strong in its social obligation sections - coming events, school and church news, important dates, obituaries. In judging the winner, I placed strong reliance on that organ's success in catering to its stated constituency. Some editors obviously lost sight of that most important link in the chain of communication. I was particularly impressed with the courage and responsibility demonstrated by almost all on social justice issues, and the contrition demonstrated in reporting unsavoury subjects such as Church involvement in past abuse of children. I also think that specialist papers like these are not avenues for soft portrayal of politicians - irrespective of whether that MP is presenting a much-needed cheque. After all, they are just giving back your money for you to spend - it has not come from their own pockets.

We should bear in mind some advice an old editor gave many years ago - that we are not referred to as a news medium only because we are neither rare nor well done. To that end I have selected the winner of this prestigious award as Adelaide's Southern Cross newspaper, a monthly tabloid produced by a staff of four. The copy was lively, the news judgment sound, with good use of photographs, particularly on page one. I particularly commend photographer Tony Lewis for his work throughout the publications perused. I would like to see this publication give some attention to its youth readership as an avenue for improvement. I thought it handled social justice issues with courage and sensitivity well above what one would reasonably expect from a newspaper with limited resources.