

## **ACPA AWARD WINNERS**

### **Category 1: Best News Story**

#### **Winner: NZ Catholic**

Author: Gavin Abraham.

Title: "Catholic rest homes facing crisis." (May 22-June 4, 2005).

Gavin and the NZ Catholic packaged up in this issue in a powerful and compelling way, highlighting the potential plight of thousands of aged New Zealanders living in homes run by religious and welfare providers.

Gavin's story was a call to action on behalf of many of the most vulnerable members of our society, the aged poor.

It challenged the national government to honour its promise and to help the ailing sector. A break-out story citing the huge challenges faced by individual homes, as told by their CEOs, helped provide depth and understanding and the editorial: "Govt ignores plight of rest homes" pulled no punches. However, it was the lead story which has won the award. Gavin quickly captured the reader's attention, telling much of the story in the first 10 paragraphs which appeared on page one, before spilling to page two. His sources were first-rate and his backgrounding sound.

I would have preferred, however, that the right of reply had been extended to the government. It may well have been in subsequent reporting but was missing on this occasion, although government inaction or ineffectiveness over the years was well documented. In keeping with the criteria covering impact on readers, it would have been interesting to know what life this story assumed after its original publication.

#### **General comment:**

I would say that I appreciate it is difficult to break "news" stories when publishing only on a weekly or a fortnightly basis but the Catholic press does have \_ or should have \_ regular access to informed sources, not so easily available to mainstream media.

News, primarily, must be telling readers something of relevance and which they did not previously know. I don't believe all the submissions met that criteria. It is not enough simply to write about an issue, already well reported elsewhere, and then to categorise it as a "news story."

**Category 2: Best Feature Story****Winner: Eureka Street**

Author: Anthony Ham

Title: A sorry tale of human bondage

The writer puts a human face to the horror of slavery in Niger and highlights the confronting ethical question of how the world has allowed such injustice to prevail. In a revealing and moving article, the writer captures the reader's attention from the outset, telling his story through an engaging, descriptive style based on thorough research. It is an incisive piece of journalism meeting the requirements of topicality, initiative, creativity in topic selection and quality writing and presentation.

The standard of entries in this category was high.

**Highly commended: The Record**

Author: Geraldine Capp

Title: Against the odds

A vivid presentation of the thoughts of an author who questions a supposed tolerant society's attitude to disability.

**Category 3: Best Editorial****Winner: Marist Messenger**

Author: Fr. Brian O'Connell

Punchy and pertinent is the best way to describe the winner's contribution.

Marist Messenger's Fr. Brian O'Connell takes on difficult subjects and gives good concise answers.

The editorial of a Catholic publication should obviously be suited to stimulating or provoking the Catholic reader, but it should be instructive and offer information to non-Catholics.

Annulment and a welcoming Christian message in a multicultural society are topical and important issues in the daily lives of Catholic and having that message understood by non-Catholics is just as important.

A good editorial should answers readers questions and not pose them.

The questions as to why the Church has such a strong view on marriage and divorce and what New Zealanders need to look for when it comes to embracing 23,000 fellow Kiwis who are Muslims are issues needing answers. *The Messenger* gives strong answers.

**Highly Commended: Madonna**

Author: Chris Gleeson SJ

The others in the category were all worthy. Chris Gleeson SJ in The Madonna writes in a beautiful easy-to-read style and the message within is clear.

Both Winner and Highly Commended are also examples of considered comment that readers would be looking for in future publications.

**Category 4: Best Column**

**Winner: Eureka Street**

Author: Brian Matthews

Title: Tour Buzz, in By the Way

This is a cleverly-written column which draws the reader into what appears a real situation. Matthews uses his column to astutely analyse and comment on both our community and our propensity to label others. The story is as simple as the message Matthews conveys and he does this in an engaging way, without berating readers.

**Highly Commended: Wel-Com**

Author: Elizabeth Julian RSM

Title: Dem Bones, Dem Bones: On the Veneration of Saints.

**Category 5: Best Headline**

**Winner: The Southern Cross, Adelaide**

Author: Rebecca DiGirolamo

Title: Spreading da word thru the new txtstament

This is a wonderfully crafted headline. It draws the reader in, and gives a teasing glimpse of the story about text-message versions of the Bible. The headline was cleverly thought out and shows both a sense of humour and the confidence to try something different in print. It was a clear winner in my view.

**Highly Commended: The Southern Cross, Adelaide**

Author: Chris McWilliams

Title: A van for all seasons

**Category 6: Best Social Justice Coverage****Winner: Madonna****Author: Clare Molony****Title: Meeting St Peter—a traveller's tale (March/April 2006)**

I award the prize to Clare Molony for Madonna Magazine because I think it is the best yarn. Good opening para setting the scene; well written throughout and managed to invert the reader's perception very cleverly through the course of its development while avoiding cliché and sanctimoniousness. It was a story that hit at the human condition in a penetrating manner. It is journalism that provokes self-analysis and change in the reader, and it does this by pointing into the heart of the Gospel in a simple and accessible way that a broad audience can understand.

**Comments**

The range of entries in this category was challenging in terms of judging their relative merits- because they reflected the nature and policy of their respective publications—including the type of audience they were written for.

The judgment I make therefore takes into account more objective journalistic measures of content, craft and style rather than those related to the type of publication. Overall, I noticed that the leads were not universally strong—they did not typically make me want to read further (though a few did). My general comment would be that many of these stories would be helped by more concentration on the first line, and the subsequent development of the story in journalistic style.

While I considered the "Letter from prison" gripping in its own controversial way, the letter by Bishop Manning so clear-minded and worthy of note as being likely to gain him canonisation at a later date, and the NZ Catholic "The Church and the Treaty" impressively comprehensive, I did not consider these journalistic "coverage" articles for the purposes of the judging criteria since two were letters, and the third was an entire edition.

**Highly Commended: Aurora**

Title: Scapegoats galore

It is comprehensive in story telling; the first line had me from cock-crow, and set the urgency and importance of what was to follow. It avoided platitude and cliché, and it pushed boundaries for Catholic journalism. It was good writing. It didn't win because of its date (ie. timeliness)—it is a considered piece that came well after the execution of its main scapegoat.

**Highly Commended: Eureka Street**

Author: Liz Curran

Title: The human Side of Poverty

**Highly Commended: Eureka Street**

Author: Brian F McCoy

Title: Tired of the Injustice

I highly commend these for their thoroughness of coverage and timeliness.

**Category 7: Best example of Education Coverage**

**Winner: The Catholic Weekly**

Author: Kerry Myers

Title: Notre Dame: Catholic Excellence in Learning

The Catholic Weekly's coverage welcoming the University of Notre Dame to Sydney presented a broad and interesting canvas of issues associated with the project; including the changes it would bring to one of the city's most historic churches. Its sweep took in the history of that building; a profile of the parish priest; and another of the Vice-Chancellor; the links with Notre Dame in Perth and the United States; the values of the University; and what it would be offering.

Lay-out was clean and eye-catching and made good use of colour, interwoven with faded black and white historic pictures. It answered many questions associated with the project, and in the process reached out to a broad stream of interest within its readership and further afield.

**Highly Commended: The Broken Bay News**

Author: Annie Carrett

Title: November 2005

**Category 8: Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life**

**Winner: Australian Catholics**

Author: Sarah Hassall

Title: Deep Reconciliation (Winter 2005)

**Comment:**

There were 26 entries in this section and any of another five could have been the winner. There were six entries I read about five times each to pick the winner.

**Category 9: Best Feature – Magazine****Winner: Marist Messenger**

Author: Derek McCarthy

Title: "God's beauty secrets"

I chose the entry by the Marist Messenger's Derek McCarthy as the winner. It is a simple presentation, a simple subject matter and is delivered in a very straightforward, unsophisticated manner. In that sense, it did not compare to some more weighty features and stylised presentations submitted by other entries. However, in judging this entry I allowed my own interest to be the guideline. I found myself reading the story and being carried along by its message. I found the writing clear and able to convey and involve me in the subject material. I know this is not necessarily a religious based judgment, but I also found an inspiration in the piece and a sense of it being written to educate and involve the reader in a positive way. It was my choice based on a number of criteria, not the least being its ability to impact on a reader beyond the simple presentation.

**Highly Commended: Contact**

Author: Br Michael McMurray

Title: "Everything we do is a Family"

**Category 10: Best Feature – Newspaper****Winner: Wel-Com**

Author: Cecily McNeill

Title: Interchurch Families

The series on inter-faith marriages provided an in-depth insight into an issue faced by many couples and the Church. I was particularly impressed by the use of up to date figures, which added context, by saying 68 percent of Catholics in New Zealand marry non-Catholics, with similar numbers in Australia.

The series outlined the latest Church thinking on the issue. But most importantly, the series examined how the issue affected real people, telling the stories of how they balance their faith and their lives together. This gave the series a real human impact.

My only criticism is that I would have liked more direct quotes. But I was also impressed that the series pointed readers to support services for people going through the same struggles.

**Highly Commended: Aurora**

Author: Various

Title: From the Indiaphiles 2005—A series on how a study trip to India became a spiritual and life-changing experience.

### **Category 11: Best Original Photograph**

#### **Winner: The Catholic Weekly**

Photographer: Kerry Myers

The front page of The Catholic Weekly special edition on Vocations.

The bold use of the full bleed image across the front page signalled that this was a special edition of the newspaper, clearly emphasising the importance of the subject matter, one of the biggest challenges facing the Catholic Church in Australia today, the shortage of candidates for the priesthood.

The image shows a young priest at the highpoint of the liturgy, the consecration of the Eucharist. The photo appears to have been taken during an actual event rather than having been specially set up so although technically it's not as well executed as a couple of the other entries, it wins because of the combination of a number of factors coming together to deliver the message successfully.

#### **Comments:**

On a more general note, it would have been good to have seen a few more entries in this section. Images, both static and moving, are the most powerful form of communication available to the modern media and the audience is increasingly sophisticated and discerning in their choice of which messages they choose to receive. No publication can afford to ignore the competition coming from all forms of communication and need to look in earnest at the way they create and publish images. Technical advances in photography and post production techniques should be reflected in photography in the kind of publications that fall under the ACPA umbrella. It's an area worth extra investment.

### **Category 12: Best Magazine Front Cover**

#### **Winner: Australian Catholics**

Photographer Bruce Miller/Designer Maggie Power

The death of Pope John Paul II was felt throughout the world. This cover, in essence, illustrated not only his important role in life but his belief in the future for mankind through its youth.

The words which accompany the cover photograph, namely ``For Peace AT PEACE'' compel the reader to look inside the pages of the publication and read on.

The cover is simple in design yet represents and tells a relevant story of a man, his mission and his belief, with his ultimate aim for a world at Peace.

The photograph not only represents the past and today but also the future. Much is said in this one simple graphic presentation. Well done!

**Highly Commended: Eureka Street**

Author: Maggie Power (March-April 2006/)

**Highly Commended: Kairos Catholic Journal**

Author: Ramesh Weererahne

Both these covers portrayed a living image of their subjects, compelling enough (combined with cover headlines 'Plea from Pakistan' and 'Moral conscience') in both instances to encourage readers to look inside the publications.

**Category 13: Best Newspaper Front Page**

**Winner: The Record**

Author: Peter Rosengren

Title: A Church Out of Touch? Look Again (Thursday, Aug 25 2005)

Compelling, modern page design. Makes the most of a dynamic picture by combining it with a punchy headline and good pointers. Cries out to the reader: "Please pick me up".

**Highly commended: Catholic Leader**

Author: Marcus Kuczynski.

Title: Stop In The Name Of God (July 17, 2005)

Neat, clean design with good use of reverse. Strong headline and good use of pointers along the top.

**Category 14: Best Layout and Design – Magazine**

**Winner: Kairos**

My choice for best layout is Kairos magazine. This was the entry that personified what it set out to present. While it may not conform to strict guidelines of layout as to headline balance and type styles, which may in itself come down to design choice, what did impress me was the bright, refreshing and uplifting impression of the magazine. I found myself enjoying the energy it portrayed and wanting to read through it.

**Highly Commended: Eureka Street**

There were other entries that were far more sophisticated in design and one I would commend highly is Eureka Street, which is very impacting and truly impressive. Its style in content and layout are excellent. However, my selection of Kairos was on the overall

effect of opening up the magazine, and it delivered the warmth and excitement in its presentation that impressed me the most.

### **Category 15: Best Newspaper Layout and Design**

**Winner: No winner awarded.**

#### **Highly commended: Catholic Outlook**

Designer: Chris Murray.

The Outlook is generally a clean, reader-friendly newspaper making good use of colour, screens and graphics. Layout of inside pages stood it out from other entries.

### **Category 16: Most Improved Publication (Newspaper or Magazine)**

#### **Winner: Catholic Outlook**

Author: Jane Favotto

I have chosen Catholic Outlook as the winner of this category. As part of a major re-design, the paper has been transformed into a modern, clean, contemporary-looking newspaper which is easy on the eye and easy to read.

Like all the entries, it is also strong on the quality of enriching the reader experience in terms of its journalism, focusing on issues which matter; milestones and major events; and includes an outstanding section dedicated to education and all the while honouring the good work of those who contribute so meaningfully to the life of the community.

The strong message throughout the paper, often articulated in The Bishop's Letter, Questions Bishops are Asked and From the Bishop, is that while the Catholic Faith is a gift it also brings with it certain obligations and high standards. "Catholic Outlook" challenges its readers to be the best they can be. Bishop Kevin Manning publishes his full contact details, including his email address as does Editor Jane Favotto and perhaps the paper would benefit from a Letters to the Editor column, providing an important feedback loop. This could also be done in the form of SMS messages. A more comprehensive p2 index, complementing the pointers on page one, might also assist the reader.

Catholic Outlook has also worked hard on improving the design of its advertising and promotions, the full pages it devoted to events like the Frank Duff 25th anniversary Mass and the 2005 Pastoral Appeal being quite outstanding.

**Highly Commended: The Majellan**

I have also awarded a Highly Commended prize to The Majellan which, while maintaining its high standard family-based content, has improved its readability and its visual appeal through better use of colour, layout and design.

**Highly Commended: Marist Messenger**

A second Highly Commended prize goes to the Marist Messenger which has also lifted its readability while retaining its very valuable daily prayers for the month segment.

**General comments:**

This category was based on the greatest improvement made in the judging period and it was impossible not to notice the high and consistent quality of the other entries.

I was particularly impressed with the sheer joy and exuberance emanating from the pages of the "Marounia". There is clearly no shortage of passion and belief in either the people who produce the magazine or those who appear in it. It is a pleasure to read.

"Broken Bay News" is equally an outstanding publication while "Catholic Life" provided me with a couple of excellent reads, including an article on a former U-boat captain who later became an inspirational priest in Australia.

**Category 17: Best Regional publication****Winner: Catholic Life**

Function before aesthetics.

Modern newspapers are all about visual appeal with some sacrificing depth for looks.

All papers in this section could be made visually better with some slight changes to design, but ultimately what is their purpose?

To best inform their readers [and potential readers] of Catholic life in their region. The two chosen papers - like all the entrants - do this well.

The winner infuses other elements the best. Apart from what one would expect in a Catholic regional newspaper it has sizeable sections on youth, young readers (love the colouring-in contest), sport and history. It truly does have something for everyone.

News judgments on what should lead the publications are sound and right, but its appeal is telling the 'people stories' of the Diocese.

The articles of Mgr Dan McCartan and Fr Pat Walsh were ideal. The stories of these two men—just like so many of our priests who have touched so many lives—deserved to be told.

If there is a criticism across the whole group of entrants - there are not enough stories of the good and great people right in our midst.

The *Catholic Life*'s story of the later Fr Wally Silvester—*U-boat captain and priest* should be the next Hollywood blockbuster! Where's Mel Gibson?

The best way to sell a message is to humanise it. Like Christ, Pope John Paul II was universally loved because he met people where they lived. He shook hands with them he prayed with them, he shared himself with them.

A good regional newspaper can do the same with its readers. It talks with them, leads them, shares their lives—tears and laughter - and it shares their stories. *The Catholic Life* does just this.

A purist might question its design and could say it should have a few more smiling faces and bigger pictures and a picture on every page, but it has something for all. It's a great read.

### **Highly Commended: Aurora**

#### **Comment:**

Another deserving of a pat on the back is the *Voice – Katolika* Catholic Church Solomon Islands. Happy smiling faces are uplifting and infectious!

### **Category 18: Best Website for a Publication**

#### **Winner: Kairos**

Although the standard of those publications that entered the Best Website category was very high, and each entrant presented a degree of originality and innovation in presenting their websites, the winner excelled in a number of areas. The website for Kairos was more professionally executed and had better design elements; the site was easier and more consistent to navigate. It is also commended for its use of additional features, such as the print and email functions.

#### **Highly Commended: NZ Catholic**

NZ Catholic is to be commended for the originality that it shows in rethinking the role of a website for a publication, and for its work in cross promoting each. Further refinement of the website concept could see the site in a strong position for next year's awards.

### **Category 19: Best Media Campaign**

#### **Winner: Debra Vermeer, ACBC**

Title: "Go tell everyone"

This Pastoral Letter was one of the best publicised events in the Australian Church since the death of JP II and election of Benedict XVI.

The Pastoral Letter itself was easy to read, bright, well laid out and on good quality paper. The coverage reached overseas Catholic publications and various Vatican departments.

It's a shame an organisation as large as the Catholic Church in Australia could not have afforded TV advertising. TV coverage was very little. Also (probably because of cost) it was not included as an insert in Catholic/tabloid papers. A real shame.

### **Category 20: Best Advertisement**

#### **Winner: Kairos**

Author: Matthew Price

Title: Calling Columban Missionary Priests

This entry demonstrated a compelling proposition, which was effectively conveyed through a distinctive layout.

The message to the target audience is clear - that many have not heard the gospel, and that here is an opportunity to be God's messenger and turn peoples' lives around. The image showing a crowd of people from behind, suggests the vast number who have not been exposed to the message. By asking "Who will be God's messenger?" the text is questioning the reader directly, asking them to consider if they can be that person who can proclaim the good news to the masses, and turn so many peoples' lives around, to hear the Truth.

The layout is simple, clean, uncluttered. The use of orange to highlight the headlines and website is extremely effective.

Overall, its simplicity and focus makes it stand out from the clutter.

#### **Highly Commended: Kairos**

Author: Damon Carr

Title: Lourdes Day Mass

**Category 21: Best Ecumenical/Interfaith story.****Winner: The Catholic Leader**

Author: Marcus Kuczynski / Robin Williams

Title: Ecumenical spirit brings new hope and healing to community

**Winner: Catholic Viewpoint**

Author: Theresa Turner

Title: A volunteer's experience in Banda Aceh after the tsunami

The joint-winning entry from *The Catholic Leader* highlighted the way in which ecumenical relationships offered both symbolic and practical reconciliation to the community of Palm Island after the death of an indigenous man in custody last November and the ensuing riot. The violence and division in the community gave an impetus for building closer relations between the four churches on the island, and this ecumenism offered an opening for a wider community healing.

I note that the story quoted only the Catholic priest. Even though he was most relevant to the paper's readership, other voices would have been welcomed as such stories are best told when all players are heard and valued. But the story is compelling and important nonetheless, and serves well to highlight - in terms of this Category's criteria - the advances and challenges of ecumenical relations, in this case in a volatile and difficult setting.

*The Catholic Viewpoint's* joint-winning story from Banda Aceh gives a personal account of the relief work following the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami. In this particular region Islam is deeply woven throughout the fabric of community life, and the article describes the particular challenges faced by one Christian volunteer assigned to work with the Islamic relief group, Muhammadiyah.

The article opens an interesting and important window on the sensitivities of cross-cultural, cross-religious engagement, where good intentions are not enough to ensure one acts appropriately and constructively. The author draws the conclusion that Australians, and people in her diocese in particular, need to be more aware of religious differences so that lack of understanding does not hinder efforts to reach out in true humanity in times of crisis.

Both articles show how the church press can reveal the ecumenical or interfaith dimension of major news stories. This illuminates complexities and hopes in difficult situations which other media may be less sensitive to.

**Highly Commended: Champagnat**

Author: Stephen Smyth

Title: Interfaith Dialogue

Highly Commended is an article which outlines the experiences of a Marist in interfaith dialogue and his reflections on the Catholic Church's work in this area globally over recent years. To my mind the references at the end to the Marists' concerns for identity, role and the relational, would have been a more interesting starting point for the article, going on to develop its ideas from there. But it clearly points to the imperatives and achievements of interfaith engagement on both an institutional and personal level.

Overall, despite the good qualities in these winning articles, I note the relatively few entries in this category and hope that this doesn't indicate a lack of attention or effort being applied by Catholic journals to issues of ecumenical and interfaith relations. These stories must be in the front line of the church's journals as it is in the church's work in mission and education. The Catholic press has a vital role to play in informing and, indeed, inspiring, their readers towards an enlarged view of the grace and activity of God beyond that which our own experience or understanding affords.

**Category 22: Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize – Magazines****Winner: The Majellan**

Author: Paul Bird

Title: Talking with Teens

The Majellan lives up to its sub-heading 'Champion of the Family' by consistently presenting simple, yet arresting, easily-read material with clear lay-out on issues of strong interest to all Catholics. The publications submitted for judging covered controversial but important matters such as teenage problems, abortion, marriage and mental health in ways that attracted attention and always managed to weave in the Christian message. It's by no means a new publication, but it has evolved with the times and makes good use of colour on almost every page, especially through pictures. The Majellan not only serves its specific market of Catholic families, but through its constant combing of issues of interest to the broader society, reaches out to a wider Christian readership.

**Highly Commended: Catholic Education Circular**

Author: Phil Bayne/Irene Jipp

Title: April 2006

**Category 23: Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize - Newspapers**

This has been a difficult award to judge, as each of the entrants can lay claim to "excellence in performance as a Catholic newspaper in its specific market". There is much good writing and presentation, with none of the newspapers failing to be relevant, bright and newsy.

**Winner: NZ Catholic**

Editor: Gavin Abraham

Ultimately I have selected "NZ Catholic" as the winner. This fortnightly national newspaper is packed with interesting and diverse news, both local and overseas. The features are a solid adjunct to the news pages, as are the opinion pages. Readability and tight editing are evident throughout. Design is elegant and understated. Pictures are well-chosen and well-used. It's a well-rounded and excellent production.

**Highly Commended: Catholic Voice**

Editor: Geoff Orchison

This is a solid and varied monthly, particularly commendable because of its solo staff. (I would suggest a bumping down of the front page heading point size, and more variety in page 1 designs.)

Evident throughout all the entries was a focus on timely issues as well as a connection with readership. Well done all editors and their staffs.