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# Kildare Ministries Newsletter

Issue 5 · 15 Sep 2025

Hospitality - Welcoming All

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# Editorial

Australia recently witnessed the outpouring of strong opinions, with many thousands marching on our city streets over successive weekends. While a common denominator was how the 'other' should be treated, these events highlighted strong differences in views.

One protest was prompted by the war in Gaza. Over almost three years, this has caused the death of over 65,000 Palestinians and 2,000 Israelis, injuries to over 100,000 Palestinians, and famine throughout Gaza.

On 24 August, Australia added its voice to worldwide condemnation of this war. Echoing the plea of Pope Leo, marches across the country called on Israel to end the war. Sydney hosted the largest protest where, despite heavy rain, about 100,000 people marched across the Harbour Bridge. These vast demonstrations showed Australia's compassion for the vulnerable.





A week later, the March for Australia was held. The advertising invited those “... concerned for our culture, wages, traffic, housing supply, water supply, environmental destruction, infrastructure, hospitals, crime or loss of community ...” to protest against “mass immigration”, which organisers portrayed as the underlying cause of all these ills.

While a range of citizens joined these smaller protests, men from white supremacist groups were prominent, shouting racist slogans. Tomati Smith, an indigenous photographer who accompanied the march in Perth, later said:

*Hearing people yelling about immigrants, I thought it was hilarious. They were denying their own history.*

In Melbourne, a neo-Nazi addressed the crowd. After the march, he led black-clad thugs to attack Camp Sovereignty, a First Nations site, where their violence was first directed against the women.



Even aside from the extremists, chants and placards at these protests reflected that broader racist sentiments exist in society. Other than racism, why else would people carry signs targeting First Nations people at an anti-immigration march?

These views contrast starkly with the Kildare Ministries theme for this year:

*Hospitality – Welcoming All.*

Disrespect for the ‘other’ has been a problem throughout history. Nano Nagle and Daniel Delany lived when Irish Catholics suffered under laws that inflicted harsh discrimination and caused rampant poverty. Both Nano and Daniel devoted themselves to bring goodness and

hope, in the midst of despair. The Presentation Sisters and Brigidine Sisters carried this work forward for two centuries, illuminating countless lives.

Within Kildare Ministries, we are now the bearers of the flame. How will we allow the Spirit to work through us? How can we bring good to our complex times?

## **1.Information**

We need credible information that will help us understand reality, and the basis for other people's opinions. It's easy to lose perspective in social media 'echo chambers' and be overwhelmed in a sea of opinions and dubious information. Taking time to seek out reputable sources and [evaluating the reliability of information](#) helps us develop comprehensive and well-founded viewpoints.

Helpful information about refugees is the [BASP website](#).

Wellsprings for Women also offers [anti-racism resources](#).

## **2. Engagement**

While it's easier to avoid discussing subjects which might cause disagreement, even in our families, calm and respectful dialogue helps. To be effective, we should "[seek first to understand, then to be understood](#)". Listening to understand, with compassion and curiosity, helps us form genuine connections with others.

"Facts are stubborn things, but our minds are even more stubborn." (John Adams)

People's tendency to retain opinions is notoriously strong. We don't like to admit we were wrong. However, we and others can more easily change our mind if we have an 'excuse' to do so. If we can convince ourselves, or others, that the previous decision or belief was the right one given what was known, and now the available information has changed, it helps the mind to change. We need to cut people, and ourselves, some slack. ([Source](#))

To help other re-examine their assumptions, Leadership expert Adam Grant sometimes asks questions like: "What kind of information would you need to change your mind?" He then responds accordingly.

Experience is often the best teacher. Connecting across cultural and social boundaries challenges our assumptions and stereotypes. We can create chances to learn about others when travelling overseas – or at our local shopping centre.

## **3. Action**



In the way of Daniel and Nano, our actions can make a difference. A few ideas follow.

- Writing to and meeting politicians. Our decision makers need to hear that we want a more welcoming Australia. Contact details are available below:  
[List of Federal Senators and Members](#)  
[Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister](#)  
[Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship](#)
- Providing balanced and respectful contributions to newspaper and online forums. Moderate and reasonable voices are needed.
- Financially enabling [BASP](#), [Saltbush](#) and/or [Wellsprings for Women](#) to support refugees, immigrants and other disadvantaged people.
- Volunteering time and skills to support [BASP](#), [Saltbush](#) and/or [Wellsprings for Women](#).

We are part of a rich legacy. As Kildare Ministries, let's continue the work of the Spirit.

*You are the light of the world ... let your light shine for others.* (Matthew 5:14,16)

Peter Houlahan

KEM Executive Officer

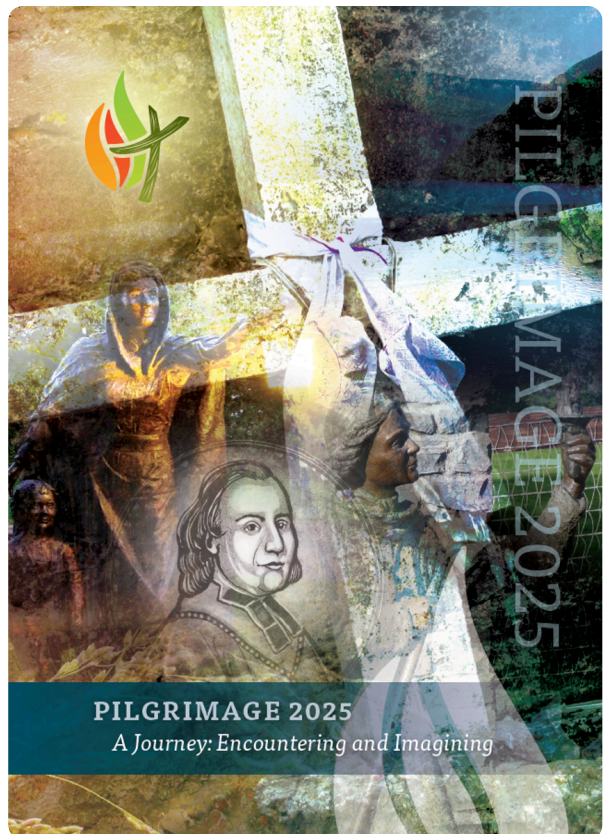


# Following in the Footsteps of Brigid and Nano: Pilgrimage to Ireland 2025

Later this week, 23 participants from across Kildare Ministries will set out on a 13-day pilgrimage through Ireland. Entitled *Following in the Footsteps of Brigid and Nano*, this sacred journey invites us to encounter the roots of our heritage, to walk the landscapes that shaped our founders, and to be renewed in spirit for the mission of Kildare Ministries today.

Pilgrims come from across our ministries—Trustees, board members, principals, and staff. Each of us brings our own story and hopes for the journey, yet we are united by a common desire: to be touched anew by the charism of our founders and to carry their flame into the future of Kildare Ministries.

Pilgrimage has always been more than travel. As Thomas Merton reminds us, the geographical pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out of an inner journey, in which we interpret the signs and meanings of the places we visit. Along the way, we will be nourished by prayer, reflection, and companionship, opening ourselves to the stories of St Brigid, Nano Nagle, and Bishop Daniel Delany in fresh ways for our time.



Our itinerary takes us to places closely connected to our founders. At the start of our pilgrimage, we will visit the monastic valleys of Glendalough, where we will step into the early traditions of prayer and learning that shaped Ireland's Christian story. On the slopes of Croagh Patrick and the cliffs of Inis Mór, we will sense the Celtic spirit that underpinned Brigid's flame of hospitality and courage. In Ballygriffin, we will visit the birthplace of Nano Nagle and walk the Cork laneways where she brought hope, education, and dignity to the poor. In Tullow, where Daniel Delany founded the Sisters of St Brigid in 1807, we will honour his legacy and that of the first Brigidine Sisters. Journeying on to Kildare, we will spend time at Solas Bhríde, where the Brigidine Sisters will help us enter more deeply into Brigid's story, before visiting her wells and cathedral—places where her legacy of welcome and justice continues to inspire.

Along the way, we will also be enriched by the wisdom of Bernadette Flannagan, who will explore the riches of Celtic spirituality, and Diarmuid O'Murchu, who will invite reflection on contemporary expressions of faith and mission. At the conclusion of our pilgrimage, Dr Noelia Molina will help us draw the threads of our shared experience together and embed the deeper gifts we have received. These voices will help weave our heritage into the fabric of today's hopes and challenges.

The Kildare Ministries pilgrimage to Ireland is a journey into the heart of our story. From the Celtic spirit of Brigid to the lantern of Nano and the vision of Daniel Delany, we will walk the landscapes that shaped our charism and mission. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity and look forward to returning with an enriched understanding to share with our ministries as together we continue the mission of Kildare Ministries.

Nicole Mangelsdorf  
Executive Director





# Kildare Ministries Tree Planting Day

On 19 August, Kildare Ministries held their first tree planting day at Saltbush Balnarring Beach. Maree Feutrill, CEO of Saltbush, gave the students from Killester College Springvale and Star of the Sea College Brighton a beautiful introduction to Saltbush which outlined the Presentation Sisters' long history of working for justice involved solidarity with the less fortunate.

The girls were supported by their teachers, Josie Delicetto (Killester) and Zara Lawlor (Star of the Sea), who are members of the Educating for Justice Network.

Regeneration of the land is one of the ways that the Presentation sisters continue their ministry at Saltbush. The tree planting site is on a paddock that has been used by cattle farmers for many years, until 2024, when the Sisters decided to restore this site by planting native vegetation, which will also transform it into a much-needed wildlife corridor.

Saltbush's regeneration of this site is being managed by the Merricks-Coolart Landcare Group, whose expert guidance ensures successful results from tree planting days. Members generously gave their time, setting up and educating attendees how to increase the chance of a tree surviving from a typical 20% to over 80%. One important step was to install mini 'rabbit-proof fences' around each tree, to prevent damage from rabbits and other animals.



The girls showed great independence, care and initiative in the way they put their commitments to look after the land into action. Their planting added 100 more trees to this site, bringing the total number planted this year to 5000.

This action flows from Kildare Ministries' commitment to integral ecology. We recognise that all living things on Earth are interconnected, as if we are all part of the one giant living organism. Understanding this interconnectedness comes the natural desire and responsibility to ensure we support not only our own health, but the health of earth.

Thanks are due to all involved - from Saltbush, the schools and the Landcare Group, to making the day such a success, and to those who supported this valuable activity.

Jane Collopy  
Mission Leader





# Kildare Ministries Ecology Alliance

## The first Kildare Ministries Ecology Alliance gathering!

The first Kildare Ministries Ecology Alliance gathering was held following the Net Zero student program at Amberley in July! Nineteen attendees from Kildare College Holden Hill, Brigidine College St Ives, Brigidine College Indooroopilly, Kilbreda College Mentone, Killester College Springvale and St Joseph's College Echuca joined the after-school online meeting. Clonard graduate Lauren Dillon who started the Kildare Ministries Net Zero program facilitated the meeting.

The group agreed at the Net Zero program in July to meet every term, so we can encourage each other to keep our motivation alive by drawing on each other's energy and ideas. As Lauren said, there is great power in connection, collaboration and having a shared purpose.

The meeting became a space of inspiration, with schools sharing the creative and practical steps they are taking towards ecological justice:

- **Killester College:** Twelve students attended their first ecology meeting and officially launched a Green Team. Interest was sparked by a student-made video, which was shared widely and generated great momentum. A reminder will go out before their next gathering to keep the enthusiasm strong.
- **Kildare College:** Students have been busy with a Scope meeting, a beach clean-up, and are preparing for an excursion to Jeffrey's to learn how landfill produces methane. They are also drafting a letter to school leadership advocating for more green bins on campus.





- **Brigidine College St Ives:** Students shared the wonderful *Lids for Kids* initiative, where plastic bottle lids are recycled into prosthetics.
- **St Joseph's College, Echuca:** The students are working to get a Green Team off the ground. Already, the school has added sensors to some heaters, run active transport days, and promoted composting with new signage. Keen Year 8 students are vlogging their activities, while Year 10 leaders are preparing documentary trailers and presentations to engage younger students. The school has also approved the introduction of a native bee hive on campus!
- **Kilbreda College:** The students are tackling canteen waste by encouraging students to bring their own containers when ordering a lunch order; the canteen has agreed to offering a 10% discount to incentivise this great commitment to avoid packaging waste! The Environmental Action Team is making strong progress through collections, promoting the thrift shop, and raising awareness about fast fashion.





The group also shared strategies for increasing involvement in Green Teams, including school club expos at the beginning of each year, creating creative notices for school communications (like *Animal Riddles* in pastoral classes), and linking ecology initiatives with existing mission groups such as Justice & Democracy and St Vinnies.

The energy in the meeting was a clear sign of the growing movement towards an more integrated ecology across Kildare Ministries schools. By sharing stories, challenges and successes, students are building resilience and community as they take responsibility for the planet.

Jane Collopy  
Mission Leader



# Opening and Blessing Oak Centre at Clonard College

On Friday 5 September, the Clonard College community gathered to celebrate the Opening and Blessing of the Oak Centre, a significant milestone in the College's history and the completion of Stage 1 of its Master Plan.

The celebration began with Year 9 student Grace, welcoming all gathered to the land of the Wathaurong people in language. This was followed by a Smoking Ceremony led by Aunty Naomi Surtees, enveloping the community in the spirit of healing, cleansing and connection to Country.

In a ritual rich with symbolism, Louise Cleary csb, Brigidine Congregational Leader, blessed the crosses and then the Building itself accompanied by the official party. Rosemary Copeland, Co-Chair of the Trustees of Kildare Ministries unveiled the plaque, marking this new beginning with prayer and reverence.

College Principal, Luci Quinn, in her reflection, spoke of the deep symbolism behind the name *The Oak Centre*. In Celtic spirituality and the Brigidine tradition, the oak represents strength, endurance, renewal and growth—qualities that the College seeks to foster in its students. She reminded the community that the Oak Centre





stands as a bridge between past and future, carrying forward the Brigidine legacy while embracing the needs of contemporary education.



The Oak Centre houses new Science and Technology learning areas, purpose-built to encourage curiosity, collaboration and innovation. For more than 65 years, Clonard has empowered young women to explore, question and create, with alumnae now trailblazing in medicine, research, engineering, and environmental science. The new facilities will ensure that future generations continue to flourish in these fields.

The day was a celebration not only of bricks and mortar, but of the vision and commitment of a community dedicated to educating young people for a future of courage, compassion and hope. The Oak Centre now stands as a living symbol of continuity, inspiration and opportunity—rooted in tradition, yet reaching boldly toward the future.



## Hospitality - Marian College Sunshine West

The theme of hospitality has been profoundly and consistently embodied throughout the entire year at Marian, resonating through every event and gathering held at the College. This commitment to hospitality is not merely a concept but a lived experience that shapes the fabric of our community in countless meaningful ways.

A shining example of this was the recent Staff Spirituality Day, a special occasion dedicated to reflection and renewal. This day provided our staff with a precious opportunity to pause and connect more deeply with our shared faith, recognising and honouring the vital role it plays in guiding and enriching all that we do here at Marian.





The day was thoughtfully designed to foster spiritual growth and to remind us that hospitality is rooted in an openness of heart, one that reflects our values and our commitment to welcoming others.

We began the day by ceremoniously setting the Marianist table, a symbolic and tangible representation of hospitality, belonging, and collective purpose. A broad cross-section of teaching and support staff brought forth an assortment of cutlery, decorations, and table settings. Each carefully chosen item was selected to symbolise a particular aspect of hospitality, challenging us to reflect on the idea that true hospitality begins even before guests arrive, it's in how we prepare ourselves and the space to receive one another with warmth and intention.

Hospitality at Marian extends far beyond these large, formal occasions. While significant events such as the International Women's Day Breakfast, Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, and the recent St Vinnies De Paul Social Justice School Conference provide wonderful opportunities to extend our spirit of hospitality to the wider community through acts of service, the true essence of hospitality is most powerfully expressed in the everyday moments. It is found in the small, often unnoticed acts of kindness and affirmation shared quietly across classrooms and staff rooms, the encouraging words, the thoughtful gestures, the welcoming smiles.







Our diverse College community plays a vital role in weaving together the theme of hospitality. It is through the contributions of students, staff, and families from all walks of life that we continually build an environment where hospitality is not just a theme, but a living, breathing reality that underpins and enhances all aspects of College life.

Our shared ongoing commitment ensures that hospitality remains a vibrant and guiding principle, shaping how we interact, learn, and grow together throughout the year.

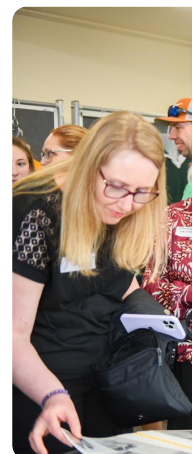


# Hospitality -Kildare College

Hospitality lies at the heart of Kildare College - a Core Value that underpins all we do, where every person is welcomed with warmth and a genuine sense of belonging.

This spirit was beautifully shown on Saturday 6 September, as over 350 members of the Kildare community gathered for our Celebration of the Hall – End of an Era event. Families, students, Old Scholars, and current and past staff came together to farewell our beloved Hall, the original building that began the journey of Kildare College in 1966. Our community enjoyed archival displays, College Tours, and speeches that celebrated memories and the College's history. The day was a meaningful opportunity to reflect, reconnect, and look ahead to the future as the Hall will soon be demolished to make way for the Lightbridge Centre, our new Performing Arts and Wellbeing Centre, due for completion in 2027.





This same sense of Hospitality also defines Kildare as a workplace. We are proud to have been named a 5-Star Employer of Choice for 2025 by The Educator, alongside only 35 schools from across Australia and 6 in South Australia. The award celebrates our commitment to cultivating a positive, inclusive culture where staff feel valued, supported, and inspired to make a meaningful difference.

As part of the selection process, an anonymous staff survey returned outstanding results, including an 84.5% satisfaction rating and an average score of 4.2 out of 5. Our School Performance Report data shows 100% of staff respondents agreed they feel valued, find their work meaningful, and believe Kildare has a strong focus on our Core Values. Initiatives such as Staff Breakfasts, our annual Retreat and Wellbeing Day, and ongoing professional learning foster strong relationships and continuous growth.



The 2025 Staff Retreat included a collaboration with St Patrick's Special School and acts of service supporting the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP) and Vinnies. It was a joyful and purposeful day of connection.



Together, these moments speak to the heart of our community, one built on hospitality where all are welcomed, all are valued, and all can flourish.



# Hospitality in action at BASP - End the Waiting Vigil for Asylum Seekers

The Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project continues to advocate for the just and humane treatment of people seeking refuge in Australia, in addition to its work of providing housing and relief to people without permanent visas who are experiencing extreme hardship. On 3rd September, as part of a nationwide campaign to 'End The Waiting' for asylum seekers, BASP hosted a vigil at the Brigidine Ministry Centre in Albert Park.



Over 60 people came to the event – including a welcome group of students from Killester College in Springvale. Claire Griffin, a Brigidine Sister, led the gathering with prayers and, together with BASP's founder Sister Brigid Arthur, introduced asylum seekers, faith leaders and community advocates who spoke about the precarious and difficult conditions experienced by those have been waiting for more than 12 years for their cases to be resolved.



BASP co-ordinator Libby Saunders spoke of the hardships of those who come seeking help. Most of them arrived by boat and went through an unfair procedure known as 'Fast Track' which was intended to process people quickly, but ended up doing the opposite. Today there are still around 6,000 people who have been issued with temporary Bridging Visas that have to be renewed every three to six months. Many are denied work rights and are practically destitute.



BASP sees and assists asylum seekers who have been worst affected by the injustices and inefficiencies of this system – those who are unable to work and can't afford rent or sometimes even food, who are often without healthcare and are suffering from worsening mental and physical health problems caused by the years of living in poverty and insecurity. The situation is both cruel and unsustainable.

Norman Katende, a Ugandan man seeking asylum who is associated with BASP, has experienced this first-hand. Addressing those gathered at the vigil, he talked about what it is like to be in limbo for so long, and the indignity of being seen as a refugee, rather than a person. "No one chooses to leave their home. They do it because they have to," he said.



Another person who has endured the at times unfathomable decision-making processes is Amineh Khasrajipourzabeh, who fled Iran with her family and arrived in Australia over a decade ago. With great strength, Amineh spoke briefly in person at the vigil – as well as appearing in a short video for the campaign – about her family's ordeal of living for so long without permanent status.

Major Colin Elkington (Salvation Army) gave his reflections on the decisions that can lead to suffering and uncertainty. Colin told one story about a young woman who had come to speak to him. She had arrived in Australia by boat as a teenager, with her parents and two younger



siblings. "When she arrived she had no English. She was 13 years old. She was bullied at school when she got here," he said.

"But today she has a master's in neuroscience and is working on her PhD as well as having a degree in medicine. Unfortunately, she and her family have been rejected and are in immigration limbo."



Father John Petrulis, Parish Priest at St Columba's, Elwood and St Kilda West, also addressed the vigil, speaking with compassion about the extreme suffering of people forced to spend so many years waiting, and the urgent need for policy change.

The #EndTheWaiting campaign is organised by the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT), a group under the auspices of the National Council of Churches. Its aim is to have 100 vigils in 100 different electorates all over Australia, over 100 days. We are hoping that Members of Parliament will speak up for all those who have been waiting for so many years for permanent visas.

Marion MacGregor  
BASP

## Student Reflection

On the 3rd of September, at the Brigidine Ministry Centre in Albert Park, 27 Killester College students and teachers attended the *#End the Waiting* Vigil to support thousands of refugees and asylum seekers who have remained trapped in legal limbo for more than a decade.

The *#End The Waiting* Campaign, was launched by Common Grace



and the National Council of Churches in Australia and the Australian Refugee Task Force, are calling on the Federal Government to fix the injustices left behind by the discredited Fast Track system.

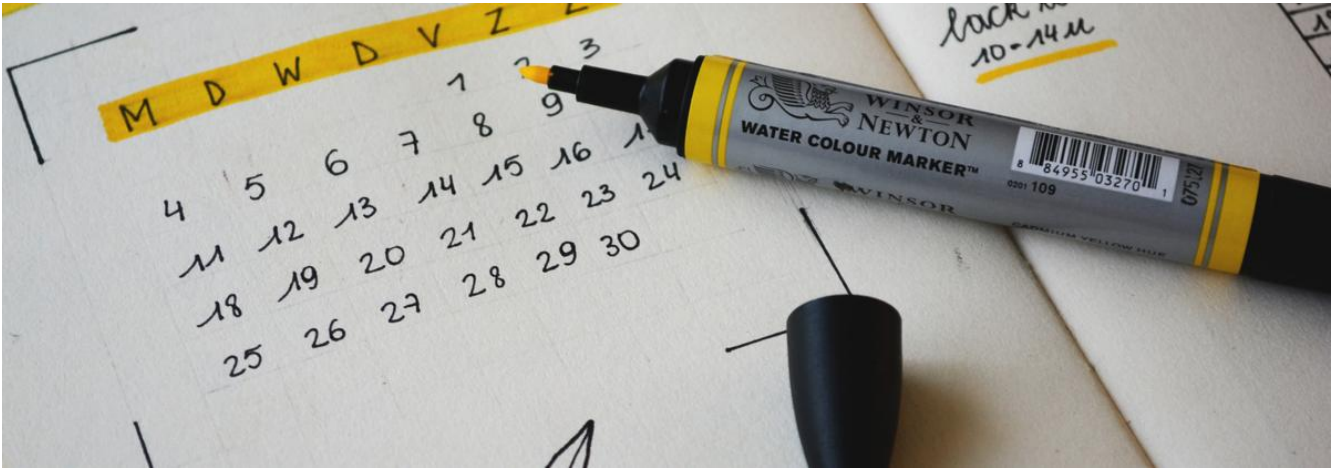
During this vigil, representatives of Killester were given the opportunity to pray for refugees and asylum seekers. They heard the moving experiences of asylum seekers who have been waiting for permanent residency for well over a decade. They also heard from passionate church leaders who spoke of the urgency needed to address these issues to ensure hope, dignity and a future could be available to all Australians.

It was a moving and enlightening experience that will hopefully foster a greater commitment in the Killester Community to respond to the call of injustice, particularly in our response to our fundraising and awareness raising for BASP.

Emily Martin

Living Justice Living Peace Leader  
Killester College, Springvale





# 2025 Calendar Dates

## KM Board Chairs Network

17 October

## KM Faith Leaders

28 November

## KM Risk Coordinators

23 October

## KM Leaders

21 November

## KM Business Managers

7 November

## *Retreats and Immersions*

### Pilgrimage to Ireland

21 September - 3 October

### Staff Integral Ecology Retreat

28 - 30 October



# *Student Programs*

## **Senior Leaders Retreat - Saltbush**

2 - 4 December



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