The Christian Meaning of Christmas

Fr Werner Utri
University Chaplain
St Patrick’s Campus

When we think of Christmas, we often immediately think of the cheerful old man in a red suit called Santa Clause who goes around the world on a sleigh drawn by reindeer on Christmas Eve leaving gifts and toys for children. We think of Christmas trees decorated with baubles, lights and tinsel, of stockings filled with sweet treats and toys, of good food in plentiful supply and of friends and family gathering together. These images are but one side of Christmas that has developed over the last 2000 years.

For those of us who are Christians, Christmas is the second most important Feast on the Church’s calendar. The only other Feast more important than Christmas is that of Easter which celebrates the Suffering, Death and most importantly the Resurrection of Jesus. Christmas is the time that we celebrate the birth of Jesus and is a time for people of all faiths to celebrate Peace on Earth and Good will to all.

It is interesting to note that the Feast of Christmas was not part of the early Christian Church’s experience. The Church in the West, centred on Rome, really only begins to celebrate the Feast from about 336 AD, or about 300 years after the death and Resurrection of Jesus. In the early days of the Church, the people were awaiting the Second Coming of Jesus and as such, the people had certain imminent expectations about this. It was only after they realised that the second coming probably was not going to happen today or tomorrow, that they started asking questions about the origins and birth of Jesus.

The Jewish people were expecting a Messiah, a Saviour, and a mighty King, who would free them from the captivity they experienced under Roman rule. God does send a Saviour, a Messiah, but not in the form that the people were expecting. God sends his own son, a child, born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid down in a manger, the feeding trough for the farm animals. This is a less than glorious beginning for the supposed Saviour of the Jewish people and it is understandable that the people had difficulty coming to terms with who Jesus was. That first Christmas would not have been easy for Mary and Joseph, the parents of Jesus. They happened to be in a strange town, Bethlehem, because Caesar Augustus had decreed that a census of the then known world was to be taken. They were reliant on the kindness of strangers and there was no place for them to stay other than a stable because of the crowds that had come to Bethlehem for the census. Tradition has it that shepherds came in from the fields, angels filled the heavens with song and wise men came from the East bearing gifts to place before the child.

The new born child called Jesus was sign of hope, a hope that the world could be different, and a hope that the world could be renewed. It is this hope that we celebrate each and every year at Christmas.
St Thomas University: A Small Canadian Treasure

Nicole Badry
Exchange Student
Canada

“Good times in the Maritimes!” It’s a quote I thought I invented after eight months of adventure on Canada’s east coast. I soon discovered that it’s a well-used phrase here. The Maritime Provinces are notorious for their laid-back culture, friendly people, and beautiful landscapes. Enclosed by the Atlantic Ocean, they are home to lobster and salmon fishermen, a wealth of renowned universities, and a great mix of east coast music. Family is an important part of life here. Whether or not yours are near are far, Maritime hospitality will make you feel at home.

St. Thomas University (STU) is located in New Brunswick’s capital city, Fredericton. Divided by the scenic St. John River, Fredericton is home to 50,000 people, a population that swells during the academic year with an influx of 15,000 students. Four distinct seasons are experienced here. During the Autumn months (September-November), weather varies from warm (+20 degrees Celsius) to cool as winter sets in. Winter months are characterized by an abundance of snow and activities, such as ice skating, tobogganining, skiing, snowboarding, and hockey. Temperatures can dip to -20 degrees, but the average is between -5 and -15. Snow storms may bring a couple feet of snow which is great news for cross country skiers and snowmen builders! By the end of March, snow begins to melt and Spring moves in. Final exams for the year typically conclude at the end of April with Graduation ceremonies in May and warm summers (mid 20 to mid 30 degrees Celsius) enjoyed from June through to August.

There are a variety of activities to engage in throughout the academic year. Fredericton is host to a network of biking and walking trails, public parks, outdoor rinks, indoor arenas, swimming pools, golf courses, baseball diamonds, and many other recreational facilities. The Boyce Farmer’s market is a popular Saturday morning ritual. Local people sell a variety of locally grown produce, fresh seafood, homemade goods, clothing, art, and jewellery. There are also several venues for live music around the city, including the annual Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival in September. The Playhouse is Fredericton’s performing arts center. It shows cases local and international talent in dance, music, theatre, and comedy performances. For 2009, Fredericton was named a cultural capital of Canada. A special project will be launched in commemoration with displays and venues throughout the city.

STU is a place where you are known as a person and not just a number. The strong community atmosphere has been a great source of support and inspiration for thousands of students over the years. In small classes with engaged classmates and exceptional teachers, liberal arts is the focus of the educational program here. There are more than 30 academic disciplines to choose from in subjects such as Political Science, Human Rights, Journalism, Criminology, Philosophy, Environment and Society, Native Studies, English, Fine Arts, and History among others. Professional programs in Education and Social Work are also offered.

The campus at STU has consistently been ranked as among the most beautiful in the nation. Students are privileged with the intimacy of small classes and the fortune of access to shared resources such as libraries and the Student Union Building with the University of New Brunswick just down the hill.

There is also an abundance of extracurricular clubs, societies, and sports teams at STU which unite students of similar interests and provide groups for further knowledge and action. We have competitive varsity teams in Cross Country Running, Rugby, Soccer, Volleyball, Hockey, and Basketball among others. Societies such as Pre-Law, Students for Sustainability, Journalists for Human Rights and many, many more are dynamic forces of good in the community.

Fredericton has so much to offer, from the quaintness of its tree-lined streets and immaculate Victorian-style, riverside homes to the endless opportunities and quality of programs at STU. One of the greatest assets of this place is its people, extremely kind and generous, values of which east coast Canadians can be most proud. As a gateway to the rest of Canada, Fredericton has a unique charm you’d most certainly be happy you discovered! I know I am.

For more information, visit www.stu.ca or email admissions@stu.ca
Dealing with Addiction. Part 1

Rosemary Williams
Counselling Psychologist
Counselling Service

‘Sure thing, man, I used to be a laboratory myself once’, said Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones, on being asked to autograph a fan’s school chemistry book (Sunday Times, 13 November 2005). Yet, if we think that drug addiction occurs only in the world of celebrities or, on the other hand, only in the world of the poor and homeless, we would be wrong for drug addiction is an equal opportunity destroyer, as the saying goes. No matter who we are, what we are, how much we know, or how much we own, there is always a vulnerability to addiction. No one is immune.

Addiction or drug dependence, put in simplest terms, describes a strong compelling desire to continue taking a drug, either to experience its effects, or, to avoid the aversive experiences produced by its absence, such as headache, chills, irritability, diarrhea, muscle aches, anxiety and depression. Dependence may be largely psychological or physiological in origin and it compromises our freedom. As Ivan Illich (1973), the US social critic, wrote: ‘In a consumer society there are inevitably two kinds of slaves: the prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy’. Addiction deprives us of our liberty.

Drug addiction can involve alcohol and tobacco (nicotine), as well as drugs illicit in Australia, like amphetamines (speed), cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, GHB (fantasy), hallucinogens (LSD, acid, trips), heroin and ice. Unexpectedly perhaps, addiction also involves prescription drugs including painkillers like morphine and codeine (also sold over-the-counter in Australian pharmacies) and tranquillisers like the benzodiazepines (valium, serepax and xanax). When we consult medical practitioners about pain, insomnia or anxiety, we are often prescribed these medications, to which serious addiction can occur without us really being aware of what is happening.

The most common defence mechanisms that accompany addiction are denial and splitting. We looked at the ‘defence mechanism’ in the October edition of ISV-The Voice, where we saw that it is a descriptive metaphor for the clouding of reality through thought, feeling and behaviour. The human mind has an amazing capacity to invent mechanisms that shield us from mental pain and conflict and from becoming aware of unpleasant emotions and thoughts. These mechanisms often are disguised and often operate outside of our awareness. Their end-product is, time and again, a form of maladaptive behaviour, which has damaging consequences for us.

Let us consider the example of tobacco (nicotine) and the way in which denial and splitting take place. There are more than 4000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, many of which are poisonous and of which, at least 43 of them, are carcinogenic (cause cancer). Smoking is a major risk factor in cancers of the lung, throat, cervix, bladder and tongue and in heart, stroke and blood vessel diseases. It has been said that cigarettes are the only product that, if used according to the manufacturer’s instructions, have a very high chance of killing you’ (Michael Buerk, BBC journalist, Sunday Times, 11 July 1999).

In 2002 smoking-related diseases killed one in ten adults globally and in Australia, tobacco is still the largest single preventable cause of death and disease (Cancer Council, 2006). Yet, despite these alarming statistics, about 15 billion cigarettes, worldwide, are sold daily – or 10 million every minute - and in 2004-2005, 23% of adults in Australia – about 3.5 million persons - were current smokers (National Health Survey Users’ Guide, 2004-2005, Electronic Publication, Australia).

How is it then that we keep on smoking? The answer is by denial, which is the hallmark of any chemical dependency. We may sometimes not see something that is right before our eyes. We can shut off realisation of reality when it is too threatening to accept. When we are addicted to a drug, we often not only minimise how serious our addiction is, but, we may not allow ourselves to even recognise that we are addicted at all.

A close bedfellow to denial is splitting where we avoid inner conflict by keeping two kinds of incompatible feelings entirely separate. We split off from our awareness our fears about the danger of smoking and stay in touch only with our desire for it. Splitting tends to be more potent than denial, but, both enable us to continue with a habit that is going to make us very sick indeed. Both are used over and over again in any kind of chemical dependency.

Next month, we will continue to look at addiction. In the meantime, if you wish, you can consult www.justaskus.org.au – a new 24/7 online network with information, tools, and advice for students with drug, alcohol, health and well-being issues.

Do not stop taking a drug without consulting your medical practitioner.
They Don’t Speak for Me!!

Kunal Mehta  
MBA  
Melbourne

I remember one of the articles by student counsellor Rosemary Williams, talking about a time she heard someone pass a racial comment to another person. I felt exactly the same way when I asked a few of the international students doing the MBA what they thought of “The Voice”.

The first few students I asked, told me they had no idea what The Voice was! I was astounded. I felt a little sad that even after all of us working so hard these people did not even know about the existence of The Voice at all. Putting aside my disappointment, I asked them if they had a few spare minutes so that I could show them how wonderful and helpful this newsletter was for all of us. A bit reluctant, they all agreed and I felt pleased that from now on these guys would read it. After showing them the latest issue online, I was explaining to them the various areas covered by The Voice which may be helpful to them. Judging by their reactions, I knew it was just a waste of time. They seemed totally disinterested. Anyway, I moved on to the next group and déjà vu, the same reaction!

I don’t know if I was surprised by these reactions or if I was just expecting them. But for sure, these people do not speak for me! My thoughts while boarding the plane when I was coming to Australia for the first time were about how exciting it would be to make new friends from another culture. It was thrilling to know that I would be meeting so many new people and would try my best to fit in with them. To acquaint myself with a new culture and also be prepared to answer them when they inquisitively ask me about my culture. But, I was not prepared to be astonished so much by the attitudes of people from my own country.

Probably it was the development and connectivity of my city to the rest of the world, maybe it was my upbringing, whatever it was, I am certainly different to these people. Some of them absolutely refuse to change and open their mind and hearts to the wonderful people over here. If it was the other way around, i.e. if people from other countries come to my country, these people would welcome them with open arms and go to great lengths to make them feel comfortable. However, I just cannot explain why these people, when they want to settle over here, are not making any efforts to open up.

They don’t speak for me. They don’t speak for all other international students who may want to stay here forever, and call this picturesque country and the lovely community their home.

Results, Holidays, Work and Fun .... Be Safe and Take Care!

Well, another year has come to an end! How time flies when you are having fun!

Although the academic year is over, there is just one more hurdle to get over before you can relax and have your holidays. That’s right, results!

With results due to be released on the 12th of December, I am sure that there are a lot of anxious people waiting with baited breath for the fruit of their labour to be revealed. It is important to note that, whatever the results, in most cases you have done your best and can do no more. While results that are not what you expected may be disappointing, in the larger scheme of things, they are not the end of the world. So don’t allow yourself to get stressed about results and try to deal with them in the best way you can.

Once results are out, you can really let your hair down and relax.

While many of you will be using the long summer break to work and earn some extra money for yourselves, there will also be those of you lucky enough to get out and enjoy your break. Although it is great to get out and about, unfortunately a number of international students have serious accidents each year simply because they are unaware of the possible dangers in this big, beautiful land.

If you are on the roads, drive carefully. Follow the road rules and don’t rush. You have plenty of time!

If you are out in the big expanse of nature, keep a lookout for anything that may be dangerous. A good idea is to always look at what the locals are doing and do likewise.

If you are working, always be aware of your surroundings and follow the advice of your supervisors. Safety should always be utmost in your mind.

So on behalf of the International Student Advisers on each campus, I would like to wish you all a very happy and holy festive season and safe and enjoyable holidays. To our completing students, we wish you all the best of luck and success and hope that you will remember your days at ACU fondly.
Your Survey: Your Answers

John Crowder
International Student Adviser
Victoria

As all of you will be very aware after the numerous emails about the topic, we have recently conducted a survey of international students on the topic of social integration with local students. The aim of the survey was to get your idea about exactly what you think about this topic and how we can help you to integrate with local students, if that is what you wanted to do.

Well folks, the results are in and your answers are loud and clear. A resounding 90% of students surveyed felt that social integration with local students was either very important (45.67%) or important (44.31%)! This result has made it very clear that the majority of international students surveyed are really keen to integrate into Australian cultural life and mix with their local classmates. This is very encouraging news indeed. At least it is a start.

What is more problematic is how to deal with the difficulties in attaining some degree of integration with local students.

Whilst some students felt that it was “very easy” to mix with local students (4.58%), the vast majority of students found it either “difficult” (46.35%) or “very difficult” (20.71%) to integrate. That makes a total of almost 70% of students who are having problems making friends with local students. Obviously this is a “problem” that we all need to deal with and search for solutions to. While there is no point assigning “blame” for this result, it is necessary to look at where things are going wrong and try to address them, particularly given the fact that so many of you have said that social integration with locals is so important to you.

So what were the “problems” that students felt came in the way of achieving this?

One of the main reasons for a lack of social integration seems to be the unattractive nature of social activities put on by local students, as perceived by international students. Over 35% of survey respondents indicated that a difference in social behavior is the main reason for them not getting involved in social activities here. Now the question arises, should this be a reason for not getting involved? Having been an international student myself, and having lived in many countries in my time, I would have to say a resounding “no” to this question. Different social behavior is an inevitable part of living in a foreign land and is something to be embraced rather than feared. This, of course, does not mean that you are expected to follow the social norms here, but rather to be aware of them, learn from them and see which parts of the local culture you may be able assimilate into your own way of doing things.

At local social functions, almost 24% of students attributed the presence of alcohol to their reluctance to attend. The emphasis on sex and perceived promiscuity were next on the list with 22% of respondents listing these as concerns.

Once again, much of this could be one’s perception of the situation. No one will force you to indulge in alcohol or sexual activity and even if they try, you have a legal right to say no. Always remember that there is no requirement for you to behave in the same way as any other person, even if you think there is.

So we need to ask ourselves another question. “What can I do to facilitate social integration?” There are always two sides to every coin and “perception” plays a big part in what we do. Just as international students find it difficult to mix with local students, have you ever thought that perhaps the local students are feeling the same way? I have heard many Australians comment on how they love the cultural diversity of this country and how they love having friends from all over the world.

In a previous edition of ISV—The Voice, Vanjitha wrote an article about “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. Although you are not expected to follow everything that Australians do, it is a good idea to look at the local customs and take from them what you are comfortable with.

Try to make the first move. You will be surprised at the outcome!
Ask and You Shall Receive! A Lesson in Humility.

For many of us, the prospect of asking something of someone can conjure up an image of standing with a begging bowl. Be it for advice, for directions, for a favour, for anything really, our inherent human ego instinctively takes a step in the reverse direction when it comes to making a query, especially to a stranger. Sounds familiar?!

Indeed, I have been there too, ever so often. No wonder I can speak for myself in saying that until my study time in Australia, I would never have taken many of the bold steps I dared to take here. One of them is the ability to approach people when I need to ask for something of urgency or simply to clear a doubt.

Not that all will be smooth sailing always. Like the day I stepped on a bus in Heidelberg and asked the driver if the bus would take me to Glenroy. Understandably, he was irritated, for he stared at me quizzically before responding sarcastically, “I think that’s what it says on the board up front!”

Well, serves me right, folks. But you see, I was unsure. I could have sworn this was the stop I had stepped down on my way from home. And naturally, the Glenroy bus would be arriving on the other side of the road. But then, I was wrong, obviously! So I swallowed my pride with a pinch of salt and said to myself, “Oh well, what else did I lose anyway?!” At least I didn’t get on the wrong bus and waste precious time in the process.

Apart from bloopers of this sort, what I did learn from my experiences down under is: never shy away from asking, especially when in doubt. From day one at Uni, for example, I know I could never have survived without making the right enquiries. Overwhelmed with five units that included Religious Education and Theology (in addition to Science) as my teaching methods, I never knew that other options existed. Until I gathered enough guts to ask.

Only then could my wonderful Course Coordinator help me to reenrol into a double Science method after dropping the RE/Theology units. It is a decision that I shall never ever regret, considering the wealth of knowledge and inspiring experiences this particular unit brought to my future career as a teacher.

Likewise, whenever I thought it was beneath me to ask for a favour, I have been pleasantly surprised to find it was worth the effort taken, always. I refer now to the time I had to be admitted to hospital and the colossal bills that stared at my face immediately after. Of course, back home we would never be allowed to leave the hospital premises before all our dues were cleared and paid for in full. Not so, in Australia. The bills began to arrive several weeks, even months later. However, after a polite letter of enquiry, I was given the option to pay up in instalments over a period of six months. Now isn’t that great?! I continue to thank them for their generosity every time I send out a payment. That’s only because I feel indebted to them for the rest of my life.

On another note, I do understand people having bitter experiences about their stay here, especially with regard to taking emergency leave from study or work. Bad news is always painful, but it is really unfortunate that people panic when it comes to receiving sudden, unexpected news of illness or the death of loved ones back home. We are thousands of miles away from them and any information that is not pleasant can be so distressing and stressful, to say the very least.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

(Mathew 7:7).
When Rome was a great Empire ruled by Caesar Augustus and Israel was governed by King Herod, in the village of Nazareth lived Joseph and Mary. Joseph was a carpenter and Mary was a young virgin who would become his wife. Mary told Joseph of a dream in which she was visited by an angel who told her she had been chosen to bear the Son of God and his name was to be Jesus.

One day the emperor sent notice that all persons were to register for a new tax. They were instructed to return to the towns of their birth. Joseph and Mary left Nazareth for Bethlehem. Mary who was with child, and close to the birth, rode on a donkey while Joseph walked beside her. They travelled for many days and only rested at night. When they reached Bethlehem it was night. They looked for a place to rest but there were no empty rooms when they reached the inn. As they were being turned away Joseph mentioned his wife was with child and close to birth. The inn keeper took pity on them and told them of some caves in the nearby hills that shepherds would stay with their cows and sheep.

So Joseph and Mary went up into the hills and found the caves. In one cave was a stable room. Joseph cleaned it and made beds of fresh hay. He found a feeding trough which he cleaned and filled with hay to use as a crib. The next night Mary gave birth to a son and they named him Jesus, as the angel had said.

When the child was born a great star appeared over Bethlehem that could be seen for miles around. In the fields nearby shepherds were tending their flocks. An angel appeared to them surrounded by bright light. The shepherds were frightened and tried to run.

"Fear Not," said the angel, "For I bring you tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day in Bethlehem a Saviour who is Christ the Lord."

"And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling and lying in a manger."

Suddenly the sky was filled with angels, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men."

After the angels departed the shepherds set out for Bethlehem. When they reached the cave they found the stable and inside was the child wrapped in swaddling clothes.

As the star shined over Bethlehem, in the east three kings would see it. They knew it was a sign and they set off to follow the star. There was Caspar - the young King of Tarsus, Melchior - a long bearded old man and leader of Arabia, and Balthazar - the king from Ethiopia. They travelled on camels for many days over the mountains, and through the deserts and plains, always following the bright star.

When they finally arrived in Bethlehem they found the child in the manger. The 3 kings bowed to their knees and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They would stay the night in the cave and the next day returned to their lands to spread the news.
Being nursing students we all understand the importance of putting theory into practice when it comes to the real clinical environment. During clinical placements students have the opportunity to experience the real clinical environment. Not only that, but also the students are assessed to see if they practice what they learn. But unfortunately some students do fail their placements. Since the students have positive and negative attitude towards their placements I interviewed some International students regarding what they think about their placements. Coral Bayley, the clinical coordinator who was happy to participate in the interview to answer the questions that the students have come up with about their placements.

1) “I don’t know why I failed the placement when I did my best.”

I am sure all students try their best when on clinical placements. After all it is generally an area of the course most students enjoy. It is an opportunity to link classroom learning to clinical practice. If a student fails a clinical placement it is not usually because they have not tried. Clinical educators do not doubt a student’s desire to do their best. Unfortunately when a student fails they have not been able to demonstrate to their assessor achievement of the competency standards to the level required.

2) “Our clinical teacher is not that helpful and the nurses are so busy. They think we should know everything when we come to the placements.”

All students attend placement to learn, and then to be assessed. As such, students are not expected to know everything but rather to practice at the year level they are in and within their scope of practice. For example all students in year 3 are expected to reach a predetermined minimum rating for each competency to pass the subject. It makes no difference if a student is local or international.

Yes, nurses are busy and not all nurses are as willing to welcome students as they should be. If you come across nurses like this just remember how it felt to be the student when you are the qualified nurse. You will be more welcoming of students working with you. If you find a nurse is particularly unhelpful tell your clinical educator or supervisor.

3) “Even though we have some knowledge about all the assessments and procedures, when we are in a real clinical setting we need help from the nurses and the clinical teachers”.

Yes, students do need help from nurses and clinical educators. All students should know who their clinical educator or supervisor is and who is doing their assessment. Application of skills learnt at university to the real patient is not always easy. Contexts for patient care are always different. Even though a student learns to perform a bed sponge on a laboratory model and then practises on a family member or friend, it is the application of this skill in a variety of clinical settings which has to be learnt.

4) “Our clinical teacher was very good and at the beginning he told us that he wanted all of us to pass the unit and he helped us a lot”. That sounds very encouraging. Of course all clinical educators should start with that attitude. However I would recommend students do not focus on passing, rather focus on learning and providing quality holistic nursing care, then, as a result, a pass will come.

5) “The clinical teachers should not be too strict otherwise then we cannot learn anything”.

I suspect this student feels unable to learn from clinical educators who are too strict. Clinical educators should all be firm but fair. Students need to know what is expected of them. Perhaps the clinical educator in question
made the student feel too nervous to practice well. A little bit of anxiety can be good for performance but too much can be detrimental to performance and confidence.

6) “If ACU has the same guidelines for clinical teachers to follow, why are some very helpful and some are not.”

All clinical educators have similar roles to perform as part of being a clinical educator. The manner in which clinical educators perform their role will vary just as your lecturers and tutors have different styles of communicating the same information. I would hope that all clinical educators were professional in their approach to students and hospital staff.

It is important to understand that a helpful clinical educator is not one that tells you everything or gives you handouts on topics learnt at university. A helpful educator is one who encourages you to spend as much time as possible involved in bedside care, encourages students to take a patient load when appropriate and does not waste debriefing time with idle chatter.

7) “We know ACU does a great job and all the teachers are very helpful. We want very helpful clinical teachers who treat us as learners”.

I am pleased this student has found clinical educators helpful. Perhaps this student felt they have not been treated as a learner. Clinical educators know you are learners, however there comes a point in the placement when all students have to demonstrate they are at the level required.

It is acknowledged that international students undertaking the 100 credit point BN course can take longer to settle into their first placement in Australia and to become acquainted with the cultural differences between nursing in Australia and nursing in their home country. This is understood by clinical educators, hence, international students are given a longer settling in period during placements.

International students undertaking the three year BN do not have the same issues on clinical placements as students undertaking the 100 credit point course. By the conclusion of any clinical placement, all students, both international and local, must meet the required standard for each competency to pass.

8) “I have passed all of my clinical placements so far. It all depends on the clinical teacher”.

Congratulations on passing all your clinical placements so far. You underestimate yourself. I would suggest you passed because you are a good student and have met the required standard. I think a good student will pass no matter who their educator is. After all, if an educator has 8 students, he or she can only spend about 45mins with each student in a shift. A clinical educator you relate well to will enhance your learning experience. I suspect you have studied hard, practised your skills before going out on placement, have good language and communication skills and a positive attitude. Well done.

On behalf of all the BN International students my sincere thanks to Coral who has discussed the concerns the International students have regarding their clinical experience. I also thank the students who participated in the interview for sharing their experience in clinicals. I am sure we all as nursing students can learn something from what Coral has said and master our skills by putting our knowledge into practice.
How Christmas is Celebrated Around the World

Given the richness and diversity of the cultural mix at ACU, ISV—The Voice thought it would be a great idea, December being Christmas and all, to invite students from different countries to write about how Christmas is celebrated in their country.

The houses in the Philippines are never without lights, glitter and decorations. The culmination of Christmas celebrations is marked by daily, night time mass from the 16th of December to the eve of the 24th. After the final mass, the family gathers around to feast on a sumptuous dinner especially prepared for the occasion. After dinner, gifts are given. The children excitedly open their gifts (including those from Santa!). The family stay over to share how the year was for everyone, recalling the happy experiences and remembering the funny and memorable moments about loved ones who have already passed away. On the morning of the 25th, children from different places visit houses for some goodies and lollies. We call each Christmas a reunion for our family because everyone goes home at that time.

Aleta Chan (Philippines)

Although Christmas is not a typical celebration in my country Japan, all my relatives get together at my grandpa’s home bringing hand-made presents. Handmade presents is the only rule (but not strict for busy people), even for a child. Mum also brings dishes of delicious food and dad decorates his studio. He was a sculptor and the studio is full of his works. I used to play with my cousins or help mums as if I was a grown-up. Almost all the family members performed music or showed their recent art works, so it seemed like an exhibition and concert party.

Maki Imai (Japan)

For me Christmas is a wonderful time, a time of joy, a time of getting together, a time of sacrifices, and a time of offerings in the form of gifts, cakes, and greeting cards.

From December 1st onwards we, especially kids, are prompted to make at least a single sacrifice per day in the name of the infant Jesus. The church gives advice and prepares children to do so. In the mean time we all select our Christmas “friend” through a lucky dip; this is held by churches, colleges, schools, family units, clubs etc and is kept very secret until the 25th.

On the 25th we exchange gifts with our friend and it will be a very surprising moment. Also on December 1st we start to illuminate our houses with stars and cribs. There is even a competition held in many churches by the different units and catechism classes for the decoration of cribs. Apart from this it is a precious time for parents because all their kids and grandchildren get together at one time to enjoy a meal together. For young people, the evening of the 24th is another exciting time to enjoy carols lead by “Santa” to every house in the neighbourhood. The carollers sing and dance and distribute sweets and gifts to kids in every house. The carolling ends by 11:30 pm and the special celebration of Christmas mass begins at 11:50. At exactly 12 midnight, the church shows the birth of the infant Jesus and we can see how happy people are and how glad they are. That night, a procession is held through the streets and candles are lit for the infant Jesus. 24 days of special preparation and prayers for advent ends on that day........

With thanks and cheers,

Jiji Antony. (India)

In my country India, we start by making sweets 15 days in advance. Mom and dad take leave from work. We clean the house, buy new clothes (there’s a lot of shopping that month!). We go for midnight mass. Meet with all our friends and neighbours. Then we go for a Christmas dance and come home early in the morning. We wake up in the afternoon and visit all the neighbours and spend time with the elderly at home. It’s a great day and I am definitely going to miss it all this year.

Seema Coutinho. (India)
I am Sujana Shama, studying Nursing. I am really honoured to reply to your mail.

I am from Nepal. In my country we do not actually celebrate Christmas, but if I were to have a special Christmas, then I have a big and special way of doing it. However, it may only remain a dream until I finish my Nursing degree and start to earn money.

I really wish to celebrate it by giving happiness to unfortunate people. What I mean is, there are many people who don't have enough money to celebrate Christmas with their family even when they want to. Some days ago I read a small postcard saying, “Let’s save an expensive Christmas and help some people enjoy a little”.

Maybe I would really love to donate money and share happiness with those people. Christmas, as we often say is 'Merry Christmas', so I think it should be merry and peaceful.

My Christmas dream may sound a little too imaginary, but as I am to dream of a special Christmas, I would love to have it this way.

Thank you John for this chance to say what I feel.

Sujana.

Sujana Sharma. (Nepal)

Despite the same underlying spirit, the celebration of Christmas varies greatly in the vast expanse of India. These variations are largely because India is a country of diversity. The Christian community in India celebrates Christmas with pomp, gaiety and devotion. Celebrations of the Christmas festival begin on the eve of Christmas on the 24th of December and continue until New Year's Day. Christians across the country mark the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ on Christmas Day by participating in special masses organized in churches.

Celebrations of Christmas are marked by carols, cakes, candles and decoration of the Christmas Tree. Each area of India has a distinctly different way of celebrating Christmas. If in the North East it is celebrated in one way, in the South West it is done in a different way. In northwest India, the tribal Christians of the Bhil tribe go out night after night for a week during Christmas to sing their special carols the whole night through and tell the story of Christmas to everyone!

In South India, Christians light clay lamps on the rooftops and walls of their houses, the same way as Hindus decorate their homes during the Diwali Festival. People also prepare mouth-watering recipes, such as cakes, cookies, puddings etc.

Christians in the plains decorate mango or banana trees at Christmas time. Sometimes they also decorate their houses with mango leaves. In several states of India a popular custom is to decorate banana or mango trees instead of a traditional pine tree. In some parts of India, small clay oil-burning lamps are used as Christmas decorations. They are placed on the edges of flat roofs and on the tops of walls.

Another interesting Christmas tradition in India is decorating the Churches with poinsettia flowers. Churches are decorated with poinsettias and lit with candles for the Christmas Eve service. However, for the urban regions the ingredients of the festivities are the familiar Christmas trees (mostly potted) which are decorated with stars and tinsel, toys, plastic fruit, and colourful streamers and lights and placed in front of Christian houses, shops and restaurants.

Santa is also seen on some streets and some shops and departmental stores deploy Santa to entertain their kid-customers. In the major cities of India carolling processions are also seen on streets and thoroughfares. Days before the festival markets take on a colourful look as they are decorated with traditional Christmas trees, stars, images of Santa, balloons and festoons. In several parts of India, especially in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai, the Christmas Festival has assumed secular overtones and is joyfully celebrated by people of all religions and communities. In Mumbai, which has one of the largest Roman Catholic communities in India, there is a tradition to depict nativity scenes and decorate homes with big stars. Christmas Day called 'Bada Din' (Big Day) in Hindi is a national holiday in India and people from all religions join their Christian friends to make the most of the joyous celebrations.

(Continued on page 12)
Christmas Around the World

Though the Hindus and Muslims comprise the majority of the population, Christmas is celebrated with much fanfare in this secular country. Schools run by Christian missionaries celebrate Christmas by organizing nativity plays which depict the birth of Jesus Christ. Carols, songs and dramas make these celebrations even more joyful. Even non-Christian students enthusiastically participate in such celebrations.

In Christian households, preparations for Christmas begin at least a month in advance. People get their homes whitewashed and indulge in spring cleaning of the house to give it a fresh new look. Ladies start preparations for the traditional Christmas cake which is anxiously awaited not just by the entire family but also by the neighbours!! Hectic shopping activity takes place as everyone buys new clothes for the festival. Christmas Gifts are also bought for friends, relatives and kids in the family.

The biggest festival for Christians, Christmas is also the time for family reunions. People staying in different cities for work or higher studies rush back to their homes to celebrate Christmas with their near and dear ones. Indian Christians do not believe in short services. The main service on Christmas Day is a midnight one which lasts from two to three hours, with hundreds of communicants and many children all massed together on the floor. The Day is a national holiday and people irrespective of their religion enjoy it along with the Christians.

The most exhilarating celebration of Christmas can be seen in the vivacious state of Goa. A large number of domestic and international tourists flock to the beaches of Goa during the Christmas festival to watch Goa at its cultural best. One can also regale in the best of Goan music and dance during Christmas festivities. Catholics in Goa participate in the traditional midnight mass services locally called Missa de Galo or “Cock Crow” as they go on well into early hours of the morning. Goa is one favourite destination for Christmas celebrations. In fact a very large number of people from the country as well as abroad make a beeline to this little coastal state to celebrate their Christmas holidays in style.

Rajneet Kaur. (India)

Koreans who are Christians go to church in the morning. Korean parents usually prepare presents before the day for their children, and give them on Christmas morning. Koreans cerebrate with their families in the evening with a cake or going out to dinner.

Sunbog Ju. (Korea)

In Austria people celebrate Christmas on the evening of the 24th of December. During the day families prepare everything for the celebration in the evening which includes putting candles and decorations on the Christmas tree, preparing the food for the evening, wrapping the last presents and putting them under the Christmas tree (which in Austria are brought by the ‘Christkind’, an angel like figure). It is very traditional to go to church on the 24th of December. Even though in my family we always went to Church before we unwrapped the presents and had our meal, a lot of families visit special night masses that start at about 11pm after they have had dinner and exchanged presents. Christmas is furthermore celebrated with the families exclusively, even though it is becoming more popular for younger people to go out and meet their friends later in the night.

Christina Podgornik. (Austria)
I am Alka Thapa. Well I have been here in Australia for about a year. Actually I am Hindu and I have never celebrated Christmas before in my country, Nepal, because I was staying in Hindu community but I had seen other people celebrating it.

This time I am quite interesting that I am celebrating it for the first time. We had planned to exchange gifts among friends and family. Similarly I had already been to see the Christmas light in different suburbs. I also bought Christmas tree with lots of light on it. I have also bought different colours light and candles to light during the festival. I have planned to invite my friends for dinner and do Christmas party. I am also attending Christmas parties in different places.

I am quite excited that I am going to celebrate Christmas which I had always wished to celebrate. I am so happy to be here and celebrating this festival.

Thank you so much
Yours sincerely
Alka Thapa
Nepal

I belong to India, so in the following paragraph I will describe how we celebrate Christmas in India.

"India is a secular state which means a country that believes in "unity in diversity". One can find that almost every religion exists in India. Christianity came into our motherland with the British and since then the religion has been flourishing in the country. During Christmas time, not only Christian community, but, people of other beliefs also decorate their houses, visit each other with gifts and cakes and do lots of shopping. Mainly children love to celebrate Christmas in India as they will receive gifts from Santa Claus and do shopping with parents. Indians love to celebrate and join other communities' festivals and that's the reason we all celebrate Christmas with full zeal and zest without any discrimination."

Thanks and regards,
Shallu Randhawa
India

I am Desideria
I belong to Colombia

Cali is the place to be at Christmas time. La Feria starts on Xmas day and it'll be 10 days of never-ending party; lots of people out in the streets, public events, concerts, food, bullfighting season at the Cañaveralejo ring (for those who like that), parades, beauty queens...perfect for a lonely frozen Canadian who needs to be around people at Christmas time.

Thanks and regards,
Shallu Randhawa
India

I am Joseph Mgembi
I belong to Nigeria

All Christmases are special to us in Nigeria, to both young and old. The same scenario is repeated all over. It is celebrated by all religions—Christians or Muslims or traditional religions. Even atheists join the celebration.

It is a time when everybody travels back to their roots from wherever they are, even like at the time of the birth of Christ; it's a time when extended families, relatives, and kindred get together to celebrate not only Christmas, but also other festivals. It is a time for family meetings, engagements, and marriages. It's a time when all enmity and fights are put on hold.

To us Christmas is not only a day. It runs from December 25th to the 1st of January.

Joseph Mgembi
Nigeria

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If fortunate... snow arrives in Scotland over the festive period.
AM of the 25th is spent visiting all of our relatives. The final stop is at my Nannies home, where we open presents and eat too much dinner together. Gluttony is almost certain. Snoozing is definite.

David Newton
Scotland

If fortunate... snow arrives in Scotland over the festive period.
AM of the 25th is spent visiting all of our relatives. The final stop is at my Nannies home, where we open presents and eat too much dinner together. Gluttony is almost certain. Snoozing is definite.
Have you got what it takes to “Get Edged”?

‘This is awesome!’ was all I could think, as the lift of the Eureka tower zoomed up to the 88th floor at the breathtaking speed of more than 9 floors per second. As the doors to the lift opened, I stepped out onto the highest viewing platform in the entire southern hemisphere and was greeted with a truly amazing view of the Melbourne city skyline. “Look at that pointy building mummy!” I heard a little girl squeal with excitement behind me, pointing to Melbourne Central. At almost 300 metres above the ground, people of all ages seemed to shuffle around excitedly exclaiming and taking pictures of the view from way above the ground. Having paid $11 to travel up the tower, I enjoyed getting an aerial view of the city, a nice change to the familiar sights and sounds of the Melbourne I experienced 4 times a week on my way to uni. It felt very similar to my experience at the Rialto tower earlier this year, only there were a few key differences.

The experience one gets at the Eureka tower is exceptional compared to the Rialto tower, in that the latter is located in the middle of the CBD. The Eureka tower, being situated away from the CBD, gives one a very clear view of not only the city, but also of the surrounding area, such as the MCG and Docklands. One important feature that sets both towers apart is that the Eureka tower offers a very unique experience that has never been offered anywhere else in the world before, called ‘The Edge’. ‘The Edge’ consists of a box, made completely of glass reinforced with a steel framework. The match-box-like structure is designed to carry a maximum of 12 people in it, and to be projected 3 meters out of the building so as to give those inside the box the illusion of almost walking on air. Many people walking around the viewing platform seemed so excited to have gone on ‘The Edge’ and after hearing the excitement in their voices, I too decided to go ahead and get ’edged’. Getting to experience ‘The Edge’, required buying another ticket for $10. Upon arriving at the entrance of the cube, we were given little blue booties that we had to slip over our shoes to prevent any sand or the heels of shoes from scratching the glass floor of the cube. We were then led into the holding room of the cube, where we were told to leave our personal belongings, which unfortunately included cameras. The doors then opened, and we were allowed to move into the actual glass cube.

Once we were in, the ‘Edgemaster’ gave us a little pep talk, telling us that the cube was extremely safe and that we were in very safe hands. And then our ride began! Hearts pounding, all of us in the cube exchanged nervous glances and smiles, gripping on for dear life, as the cube started edging out of the building. Shaking slightly, the cube inch ed out of the building as the sounds of rusted machinery played on the sound system, an attempt by the designers to evoke fear in those inside the cube. Light began to slowly flood the cube, and then with a sudden sound of loud shattering glass, the frosted glass that we were encased in suddenly became clear, exposing us to what it must feel like to float on air!

I shuddered at the thought of just 45mm of glass separating me from the unthinkable while some fearless visitors in the cube stood in the middle of the glass floor jumping around to scare the rest of us on board. I, however, the scaredy cat that I am, never let go of the handle bars during the entire time we were out in the cube! After our 5 minute experience in the cube, which I almost wish had lasted a bit longer, the glass windows and floor finally fogged up again, as the cube slowly edged back into the building, signaling the end of our ‘edge’ experience. Breathing a sigh of relief, I stepped out of the cube into the tower once again.

After a quick snack at the Kiosk, I wandered off to the terrace, looking through the view finders, spotting many landmarks around the city. The icing on the cake for me that day, was the awe-inspiring view of the sun, setting on the horizon, as the streetlights and headlights of cars around Melbourne slowly flickered on. ‘What a beautiful way to end the day’ I thought to myself, as I stepped into the lift that took me back down to the ground in 10 seconds.

Brisbane Students go to The Gold Coast

Article contributed by:
Caroline Li Cunjing
Brisbane.

I hardly got any sleep at all last night! We girls woke up early in the morning so as to be on time to catch the school bus.

You might wonder what we were so excited about. Yes, the day had finally arrived when we would be visiting the Gold Coast! Even before coming to Australia, the Gold Coast is the place most of us had all been dreaming about going to. Just imagining the pure blue sea and soft golden sands was enough to make us excited. I am not ashamed to say that we can only get that sort of thing artificially in my home city of Shanghai.

It took almost an hour to drive to the Gold Coast from Brisbane. On the way we passed Dream World and Movie World, which I decided to put on the list for my next visit!

When we arrived on the Gold Coast, we went first to Qdeck, which is considered to be the highest residential building in the world, sitting right next to the sea. I could never have imagined being so high! The whole Gold Coast was laid out just beneath us and we could see as far as the horizon. It was amazing to see a city beside the sea with a long line of coast as if it was designed to be a huge holiday resort. Well, actually it is a great place to spend a holiday, with a family or as a couple of friends wandering around the shopping malls, or even just lying down on the beach doing nothing. Pity I had only one day to make the most of!

It was when we arrived at the beach that we realized that there is actually no need to bring a huge umbrella or chips because you won't even care about that sort of thing when you have the whole sea in front of you, but at the moment I touched the water, I almost fell backwards! It was so cold! One of my friends laughed and said that I had mistaken the sea for the pool at home and I had to admit that that I had. I could feel the sense of being pushed backwards every time the waves came when I tried to go deeper in the water, but I dared not go any deeper when the water reached my belly, afraid that I would be taken by the turbulent water so I decided I'd better not take that risk. A few girls actually went surfing while I was trying to bury myself in the sand. Just like I had seen on TV. It was so much fun! By the way, there were actually a few seagulls looking for food on the beach, several of them just standing right beside me whilst I was eating chips! I was wondering why they were not afraid of people.

Eventually we decided to go shopping after everyone was too tired to continue swimming in the sea anymore. I stopped at a place where there was every kind of video game! Later I bought myself a new swimming suit and a pair of sunglasses, feeling satisfied just as everyone else did. Finally we stopped at McDonalds ready to head home reluctantly, but wishing to come back again. The Gold Coast is just the name of the beach which is a paradise for surfers, and I might also say it's a paradise for visitors and you can never get enough of it within one day!
Gaming Exhibition - Melbourne 2008

Mohit Virmani
MBA
Melbourne

Okay, first of all - this was my very first visit to a gaming exhibition, and honestly I was not expecting to have such an amazing time as I did. Being a huge technology and video games fan, this event was the single most exciting experience of my life. As it is, I had my exams going on and this was a 3-day event, so I was unsure about how many hours I could spare for the event. So I made sure that I had prepared for both my remaining exams well in advance, and so I went ahead and got the full access all-day pass to the expo and ended up getting blown out of my socks.

I arrived at the Melbourne exhibition centre at 10am on Friday, the 14th of November, bought my ticket and got in, to be greeted by ushers who were handing out free goodie bags to all the attendees, which had freebies like a copy of gaming magazines, sample DVDs, neck bands and so on. It's sad that most of the people I know in Melbourne are not so interested in technology and video games, so I went for the expo all by myself. Thankfully, the expo was full of people like me who enjoyed the same passion, and so I had a very thrilling time meeting new people and making a lot of new and exciting friends. I was stunned by the sheer size of the expo, it was absolutely colossal. It was almost the size of a soccer field! The best part was that it was filled with geeks - people who I could talk to about video games, the latest gadgets, and newest technologies!

The first thing I did was visit the Digital Lifestyle booth, where industrial giants like Sony, Microsoft, Intel and Electronic Arts were showcasing the latest technological developments in home and personal entertainment. They had setup gigantic projection screens on stages all around the floor, where they were displaying and discussing their latest inventions. Right in the centre of the hall were the video-gaming multiplayer tournament set-ups, which were being held over a variety of gaming platforms like the PC, Xbox, Play Station and so on. Needless to say, I took part in most of them and won a lot of cool merchandise like t-shirts, caps, game discs, gaming accessories and collectible trinkets. What's more, it was a victory in itself to play with and against so many gamers, with the crowd cheering you on from all sides. It was an absolute joy and pleasure to get such an incredible experience.

Another thing which surprised me was the display of many unreleased and upcoming video games on display, and guess what - we could actually play and test those games for ourselves! I got invited to a special screening and first time ever hands-on experience of a very popular yet-to-be-released game, which I had never expected to happen. One after the other, I was getting my monies and times' worth from the unbelievable expo.

The expo had also attracted a lot of casual gamers, children and mature folk. Gaming as a source of entertainment seems to be a big hit down under. There were a lot of games specifically designed for children, families and aged people. Games like dance revolution, "Singstar", "Wii-fit", "Brain Training" and "Little Big Planet" cater especially to the younger audience and matured folk who find gaming a pleasurable and fun-filled pastime. The expo also hosted a myriad of strategy and role-playing games for teenagers, which demand the use of logical thinking and planning, resulting in actual sharpening of their minds, and do not simply employ the pressing of random buttons on the control console. This is why video-games cater to such a large and diverse audience these days – every group has something or the other that attracts them to gaming.
As the crowd grew in size, I was impressed to see the increase in the number of female gamers. It was very nice to witness a multi-gender gaming audience, since it is mostly us ‘boys’ who love to play video-games. Surprisingly, a lot of girls were playing difficult and challenging games, which made me realize that it is not just us guys who fantasize about being in the shoes of gaming characters, saving the world and accomplishing extraordinary tasks that are otherwise impossible to achieve in real life.

Sports fans were not to be disappointed, as there were multiple booths for soccer, tennis and skateboarding fans. The latest motion sensing and camera technology allows gamers to get so immersed into the games that it feels like reality. Also, the ability to use the internet for playing games online with friends and challenging people from all over the world has resulted in creating a very popular online gaming community. Thousands of players compete over the internet for personal glory while many others play just for the fun and experience of sharing games with their friends. Really, video games have now become part and parcel of the lives of many!

Australia’s very own band of professional gamers – “Team Infinity” were present at the expo. These guys compete professionally in video games on a global scale. They were inviting regular gamers to compete against them and win very cool prizes. Electronic Arts, which is a world-renowned game developer and publisher based in Sydney had set up a lot of booths to promote their latest titles like “Fifa Soccer”, “Need for Speed Racing”, “Command & Conquer” strategy and many more. There were also a plethora of stalls selling video games, gaming accessories, gaming collectibles, prop replicas, gaming apparel and other exciting equipment. I could not resist and ended up spending a good amount of money on some very unique and flamboyant collectibles. A lot of institutions offering technological and video-game development courses were also present at the expo, which only proved that video games are not just for entertainment but now also a serious career option for students.

What expo could be complete without its share of celebrities? Famous gaming critic Yahtzee Croshaw, and pop singer Brian McFadden were invited as special guests to host various competitions and hand out prizes to the audience. It was an experience like no other, meeting people dressed up as video game characters and posing with them. If you came in a costume, your entry was free! So guess what? Next year you will find me dressed up as some character too. The expo takes place annually, so I will try my best next year to get involved as a member of the expo staff - what could be better that getting to organise and set-up such an exhilarating event for future gamers and technology enthusiasts?
Chinese Recipe: Sour Radish Pickle

Ingredients:
- Radish 500grams
- 3 - 6 small red chillis
- White vinegar 200-300ml
- 1 / 2 teaspoon salt
- Ginger 50grams (or without ginger according to personal preference)
- Sugar 30grams

Method:
Cut radish and ginger into slices, add half a teaspoon of salt and mix thoroughly. Leave it aside for 30-60 minutes. Water will come out of the radish. Discard the water.

Cut the chillis into small pieces and mix them together with the radish. Pour vinegar in until it covers the surface of the radish.

Cover it for one hour and then it is ready to serve. (The same recipe also could be used for cucumber instead of radish).

Editor’s Note:
This is a deliciously refreshing recipe and very easy to prepare. It is good to make a big batch of it and keep it in the refrigerator for use at any meal. Although great as an appetizer, it is also good as an accompaniment to any meal or as a delicious snack on its own.

Try it out! You won’t be disappointed.

Tuna Salad Sushi Rolls

Recipe contributed by:
Sanae Masujima
Nursing
Melbourne

- 4 cups sushi rice (please see the recipe of sushi rice)
- 4 sheets of nori (dried seaweed)
- 1 tbsp finely chopped onion
- 2/3 cup canned tuna
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise

Preparation:
Mix chopped onion, tuna, and mayonnaise in a bowl. You can make tuna salad as you like. Put a nori sheet on top of a bamboo mat (makisu). Spread sushi rice on top of the nori sheet. Place the tuna salad lengthwise on the rice. Roll up the bamboo mat, pressing forward to shape the sushi into a cylinder. Press the bamboo mat firmly and remove it from the sushi. Cut the sushi roll into bite-size pieces. You can change other ingredients to roll such as raw fish, cucumber and crab meat.

Instructions for Sushi Rice:
1. Wash the rice and rinse thoroughly.
2. Add 3 cups of water and cook in a rice cooker.
3. Mix together the rice vinegar, sugar and salt; cook over a medium heat until sugar has dissolved.
4. Allow to cool.
5. Put the cooked rice into a large mixing bowl; then pour the vinegar sauce over the hot rice and mix.

Place a sheet of nori on the bamboo mat, shiny side down. Keeping your hands moistened, put two or three tablespoons of sushi rice in the center of the nori and spread evenly over the seaweed. Use the palm of your hand at the side of the seaweed to form a firm edge, and leave a one-inch margin at the top of the nori to seal the roll. Spread a streak of wasabi across the middle, then add layers of fish and vegetables across the center of the rice. To roll, fold the bamboo mat so that the filling is enclosed in the center of the nori. Press the mat around the roll for about thirty seconds to shape it, then moisten the margin of seaweed and seal the roll as tightly as possible. Remove the mat from around the roll, press in the loose ends and place it on a cutting board, seam side down. Slice the roll into one-inch rounds, using a wet, sharp knife. Do not saw, but cut firmly, straight down.
“Hi Aunty Rosemary, I am an international student and have finished my 2nd semester at ACU. I am very scared of one of my lecturers. I had heard stories about that lecturer being very strict and many students failing in that lecturer’s units. I was very honest and hardworking in my unit taken by this lecturer, but I still failed. I did not take any other unit of that lecturer this semester as I was too scared. Now I am in deep trouble as I have to compulsorily take 2 units of this lecturer in my 3rd sem. Due to this I am really stressed out. I had never failed in my life in any subject before this and I don’t want to fail again. Please help me. Signed Afraid and Dismayed”

Dear Afraid and Dismayed,

I am very sorry to read that you are so scared of one of your lecturers. The greatest achievement of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, was his insight about transference – that phenomenon by which we transfer feelings about our parents in the past onto authority figures in the present. Because of transference, we can all find those who have power over us – such as bosses and lecturers – very scary indeed. And if your lecturer is, in fact, very strict, that only intensifies your fear. I think your first task is to determine why you failed this lecturer’s unit so that you can modify your tack in your 3rd semester. If you feel that you are unable to approach this lecturer, an Academic Skills Adviser would assist you to understand why you failed. In 3rd semester, it will be imperative to seek help from an Adviser as you complete your assessment tasks in the 2 units. We cannot learn much when we are afraid, though, and your fear is so palpable that it leads me to wonder what else is going on here? In the first weeks of next semester, keep a diary recording in it the dates and details of that which is frightening you as you undertake these units. At the end of the first weeks, take your diary to an international student adviser or counsellor and have a frank and open discussion with them so that the ingredients of your alarm can be understood and addressed. Australian Catholic University affirms the dignity of the human person and does not want you to learn in fear.

All the very best from Aunty Rosemary

Dear Aunty Rosemary,

I’ve been in Australia for awhile now and I’m living with my boyfriend who loves me very much. However, when he gets angry, he beats me. He slaps me, pulls my hair tells me I’m useless and calls me horrible names. He promises to stop but then after some time, he goes back on his words and hits me when he’s angry. It’s like a cycle. I’m an international student and since he’s working, the house, all the bills and even my mobile phone line are all under his name. It’s like I don’t even exist. I’m afraid to ask for help or go to the police or even run away, because I’m not sure if the authorities will help me. I hope you can help me.

Sincerely,
Helpless

Dear Helpless,

It must be very distressing for you to be treated violently like this and not to know where to turn for assistance. Because your boyfriend is not violent all the time and promises to call a halt to it, it can be hard to see what’s really happening. Yet you understand already that this is a cycle – a cycle of violence, which will probably get worse over time and the relationship more abusive. Your first responsibility is to yourself – to get safe and stay safe. Australian authorities will help you. In the first instance, call the confidential 24 hour domestic violence helpline on 1800 200 526 to talk to an experienced counsellor to whom you will not have to give your name. The helpline may refer you to a specialist domestic violence agency. In Australia, your boyfriend’s behaviour is a crime, and, these days, Australian police are keen to charge perpetrators of domestic violence – your boyfriend can be convicted of assault and deported. Consult your International Student Adviser at ACU to discuss any visa implications which would arise from your changed financial circumstances if you follow this path. The ACU Counselling Service would also be keen to support you as you rightly break free from this cycle of violence, which is utterly unacceptable and undeserved.

Take good care of yourself,
Aunty Rosemary
Sokha Um
Solicitor, Melbourne

Some international students may go back to their home country to see their family and enjoy their holiday with them after a year of hard work. Some of you may want to stay in Australia and get some experience by joining the Australian workforce. Some of you may already have a part time or full time job during your long summer holidays.

However, some of you may not necessarily be aware whether or not you are being paid properly.

Please note that there are minimum rates of pay for all Victorian employees. These are set and changed by the Australian Fair Pay Commission. Your employment contract or workplace agreement is certainly able to give you a rate of pay that is higher than the minimum rate, but it cannot give you less than the minimum rate for your job and classification.

If you are not paid the correct amount, or if you are not paid at all and if you would like to find more details about your minimum rate of pay and any casual loadings, you can contact the Work Choices Info-line, which can also provide you with the terms and conditions of your work that you are entitled to. You can request a form, which you need to fill out and return to them and the Office of Work Choices Services (OWS) may then investigate your complaint. Sometimes the OWS can prosecute employers who do not comply with their legal obligations.

Please be advised that it is always a good idea to keep a record of your hours of work in case there is a dispute between you and your employer over your pay. Alternatively, you should always keep your pay slips as you are entitled to get regular pay slips from your employer. These pay slips prove where you worked, the period you worked, and how much you were paid. If you have any concerns or questions about your pay slips contact the Work Choices Info-line. Please remember that “cash in hand” jobs are alright as long as your declare tax. It is illegal not to declare your income, regardless of how much it is.

If you think that you have not been paid properly, it is essential that you seek assistance immediately. For more information and tips on how to get your entitlements, contact Job-Watch for a free copy of the Recovery of Wages booklet or download a free copy from www.job-wtach.org.au.

International students should always ensure that they do not work more than the hours they are permitted to do so under their visa conditions. When your course is in session, you are limited to 20 hours work per week. When your course is not in session, you may work unlimited hours. Please check the following web site for exact details on work rights. http://www.immi.gov.au/students/visa-conditions-students.htm

Your International Student Adviser, in particular, may assist you in seeking legal advice from a private lawyer or Legal Aid or a Community Legal Centre. But don't wait until the last minute!