

*St Mary's*



# AVE

*Pentecost Edition May 2024*



*Stained glass window representing Pentecost  
Strasbourg Cathedral, France  
XIII century*

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*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the parish of St Mary's, the Anglican Church, or its members*

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**Ave is available for download via the St Mary's Parish Website [stmarys.org.au](http://stmarys.org.au)**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the great Kulin nation. We acknowledge their leaders past present and emerging and offer them our respects.

**Saint Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne**

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## What is AVE?

AVE is of course named in allusion to the Ave Maria, the angelical salutation to our Patron Saint Mary. It is an occasional publication of articles written by parishioners and others who are associated with St Mary's. There are usually three of so in a year.

On show is some of the variety of our interests and activities. There is no set theme, although we have followed certain threads such as Churches around the world dedicated to Mary; Church and Biblical History; Reminiscences of Childhood; Social Involvement issues – anything that moves the author and might be of interest to our gentle company.

We are extremely grateful to our Rhondda who conceived of the whole idea, who has nurtured the editions over quite some years, and on whose encouragement to authors (not to say her subtle badgering of them) the flow of articles has depended.

She has been deciding to reduce her input into the operation. We who now put a hand on the reins hope that she will continue to give us insight and encouragement. And who better than she to continue to be the Badgerer in Chief for future editions?

We of course thank you immensely, Rhondda, for giving us AVE to look forward to reading, and for the joy of our being able to write items for it too.

Darrell, until recently our office administrator, used his publishing skills to great effect. Laura has just arrived, and I am sure that together we will learn the production rhythm. We thank Darrell warmly as we now settle in to the business of keeping this little chapbook going.

David     May 2024

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*On Sunday 17 March the sermon was preached by a parishioner..  
The text on which Andrew spoke was from the book of the prophet  
Jeremiah, chapter 31, verses 31 - 34*

## **Remembering forwards to a world restored**

*Andrew Gador-Whyte*

*May the words of my mouth, and the mediation of our hearts, be acceptable to you,  
O Lord our rock and our redeemer.*

In our passage from Jeremiah today, the prophet is addressing the people of Judah who have been taken into exile in Babylon. Where the nation has fallen into corruption and idolatry, Jeremiah announces that the people will return, a just order will be restored.

Jeremiah reminds them that God identified with them as an enslaved people in Egypt. God rescued them from slavery. And the freedom God gives is the freedom of living by absolute trust in God, in their life together. Being freed from being run by fear, by the love of power, by self-interest. And it's the freedom of being given an authority to serve, teach and heal. The freedom of people given a vocation of service to exercise out of their own integrity in the world.

Now, as Jeremiah makes clear, the ancient Israelites often failed in this calling. Like us, they often allowed fear, self-deception and self-serving to take over and become another kind of enslavement. But God's word is never broken, God will not give up on his people.

Jeremiah makes a bold claim – the new covenant will be not only a renewal of morals and re-establishment of a just order. Jeremiah promises something more cosmic in scope. It will be a transformation of instincts, a transformation of the reflexes that run us, an upending of the exchanges of fear that make the world go round. By the free gift of the Other, we become what we could not make ourselves by our own effort.

God's promise will be to create in each of Jeremiah's sisters and brothers an authoritative voice. A voice that becomes their own voice - speaking from belonging as daughter and son to offer with boldness to others what belongs to God.

God needs nothing and will not coerce or manipulate us. And God wills freely that we should come to love God in our own words.

Now, we who have been baptised are reading this in the light of the cross and the empty tomb. We are mostly Gentiles who believe we have been enabled to belong in the same promise. And we have the boldness to claim that we have witnessed the new covenant and its transformative power – we have witnessed it in the body of the crucified God.

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We have the greeting of the risen Jesus ringing in our ears. And so when we read Jeremiah, it's as though we are reading it *remembering forwards to a world restored* (as the hymn writer Fred Kaan puts it).

That 'remembering forwards' is what was at work in Jesus. Even in the place of betrayal and dying he has seen us and our world *as we will be*, as we were from the foundation of the world – restored with him. That is the memory that was at work in the forgiving, healing mind of the crucified one.

We have seen Jeremiah's new covenant come into being in the suffering of one dying the death of an executed slave. It's in the weakness and disgrace of the excluded victim that we have seen the face of God. This is where God has shown his nature, his beauty and indeed his power. We believe that the law Jeremiah says will be written on our hearts is the Mind of Christ.

The Mind of Christ, Paul's phrase from Philippians, is that Christlike instinct that is the gift of the Holy Spirit growing in the whole community of faith. It is the restored instinct that no longer needs to be taught, and wills the healing of others. It is the authority, the daughtership and sonship, you see in people who have been enabled to live by faith. We imitate it from people enabled by Christ to live beyond the fear and self-serving that often seem to run us. The Mind of Christ is the boldness to offer to the stranger the hospitality we depend on.

God changes our hearts not by diminishing our own freedom and human integrity, but by working within it. God meets us above all in our sisters and brothers. If we were in any doubt of that, God came among us in the weakness of a child who needed to learn what it is to be human in just the way we each learn. And God came among in the weakness of a person suffering as one of us and in solidarity with us.

In baptism, at this table, in our sisters and brothers, in prayer: Jesus meets us here. Here Jesus slowly restores our consciences, making his instincts second-nature to us. Jesus brings our lives into solidarity with him, and brings us to speak out with authority his invitation to belonging, to his peace and to his truth.

The new covenant is not simply a promise for the end of the ages. The new covenant has been established even in this vale of tears; even in a world of such cruelty, the kingdom of God has begun in our midst.

We are continually confronted by the pain that our sisters and brothers suffer in this dark world. We think particularly of the people of Gaza and pray for the violence to end now, for famine to be averted. We pray that the trade in weapons will cease throughout the world. We pray for a complete reordering in Palestine and Israel that makes for mutual security, mutual healing, mutual trust. And we pray for a new freedom and prosperity for the Palestinian people.

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We pray, too, that we who have been baptised into the Prince of Peace may grow into deeper solidarity with *this* world - where often, we cannot see clearly where God is at work. Faith commits itself to the world in solidarity and in hope. The world that often seems abandoned by God is precisely the world in which God in Jesus Christ died and lives beyond that death. This is the world to which God commits us, as Christ's body, animated by the logic of his self-giving love; as his body, animated by his forgiving *memory of a world restored*.

The faithfulness to the world for which we pray is itself the trust in the God who has identified with our humanity completely and without reserve. And we pray that the Mind of Christ may grow in us. And we pray and that our human instincts and human freedom may be perfected by it.

In the time between Jesus' death and rising and the renewal of all creation, we keep our Lenten discipline. We live in the time of grace, the time marked by the slow working of the Holy Spirit, making us most truly who we are by bringing us more deeply into solidarity with Jesus Christ. We keep our joyful discipline of slowing putting aside our self-interestedness. And in that discipline, we open ourselves to the Spirit's work renewing in us that hospitality for Christ.

We pray that God will lead our hearts into a free imitation of God's own love, and into instinctive solidarity with the Crucified one. We pray that we may live into the authority and freedom of God's children in this world. And we pray that we may have the courage and hospitality to lead our neighbour and the stranger, our guest, into the same invitation.

Amen.

### **Jeremiah Chapter 31**

31. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

32. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

33. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

*from Andrew: [Fred Kaan's hymn](https://hymnary.org/text/god-as-with-silent-hearts-we-bring-to-mi) can be found at [Hymnary.org](https://hymnary.org):*

<https://hymnary.org/text/god-as-with-silent-hearts-we-bring-to-mi>)

*The hymn is topical to wartime remembrance at this time of year (and we sang it at St Paul's at a Pax Christi service on Anzac Day)*

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*Our active Climate Action Group at St Mary's reports on an initiative to collaborate with other parishes*

## **Inter-parish Creation Care Meeting**

*The St Mary's Climate Action Group*

*A report on a Zoom meeting between the St Mary's Climate Action Group (CAG) and a few other Anglican parishes with similar objectives.*

There is an increasing awareness (in some quarters!) of the urgent need for the care of creation by the Church, by the Diocese, by the Parishes, by each of us. The Melbourne Diocese has recognised this in recent years through passing environment motions at Synod, however, there has been little concrete action to date.

On the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> April, six members of our parish joined other parishes in an on-line, informal meeting to discuss our common efforts towards caring for our earth. In the apparent absence of leadership at the diocesan level, we hope that the meeting will provide some impetus for ideas for expanding awareness and action at the grassroots, parish-level.

Volunteer members of the diocesan Social Responsibilities Committee (SRC) environment sub-committee, Audrey Statham (St Mary's North Melbourne), Sally Hibbert (St Stephen's & St Mary's Mount Waverley), and Robert Dawlings (Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), St Philips Collingwood), set up the Zoom meeting and information-exchange session with people from a few other parishes who were also known to be either active in this area or wishing to be so.

It was an opportunity for us to inform other Melbourne Anglicans about the work our parishes have done and to learn from what others have done. The meeting was recorded (watch the video (30 mins) by clicking here: <https://bit.ly/interparish-climate-care>) and below is a summary of who attended and what was discussed.

Members of St Mary's North Melbourne Climate Action Group are Helen McCallum, Michael Noble, Tim Pilbrow, Marion Poynter, Darwin Guachi. We were joined by parishioners from St Stephen's and St Mary's Mount Waverley, St Dunstan's Camberwell, and St Mark's Camberwell.

A representative, Jenny Irving, from Boorondara Hard Rubbish Rehome (a secular group that organises through a Facebook page) and the Provincial Representative to the

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Anglican Communion Environmental Network, Philip Hughes (St Jude's Carlton) also attended.

Sally Hibbert explained how her parish completed a stage of the Five Leaf Eco Awards and was awarded the basic award in June 2023 (the first of six levels – no-one has yet achieved the sixth level). Members of St Mary's CAG then described how our Climate Action Group was established, gave insights into different past actions including the transition to a green electricity provider which reduced the parish's carbon footprint by 42%, and into future projects.

The next presenter was Jenny Irving from Boorondara Hard Rubbish Rehome Facebook group, a secular community group which aims to create a community and aims to change thinking of waste into being a resource rather than something to be thrown away.

Finally, Robert Dawlings explained the aims of the Season of Creation and ARRCC's plans for actions during the coming Season of Creation (<https://www.arrcc.org.au/weekofaction> ).

Open discussion followed about whether attendees might be interested in working together as an inter-parish group during Season of Creation. The following actions were proposed and it was agreed the group would meet again in early July to discuss:

1. All go to the ARRCC organised event in September which will hopefully take place at St Paul's Cathedral.

As part of Season of Creation, ARRCC is encouraging people of faith from each major city to attend a multi-faith service at an iconic place of worship in that town during which a giant banner could be unfurled (these will also be media events) – hopefully including St Paul's in the CBD (14 – 24 Sept). Once the date, time and venue are confirmed, the group will be notified and members will encourage parish members to attend.

2. Put together a resources kit (could include green tips) for all to use in their parishes (e.g. in parish newsletters, e-bulletins).

SRC committee members, Audrey, Robert and Sally will devise a way of making a resource kit easily accessible and invite all to contribute (past green tips and including some resources Sally already has).

3. Hold a film night: *Stronger Together* (put out by Move Beyond Coal, the trailer for the film can be watched here:

[https://www.movebeyondcoal.com/walanbaa\\_ngiiyani](https://www.movebeyondcoal.com/walanbaa_ngiiyani)).

The film follows a diverse group of Pacific, First Nations and youth activists as they come together on Gomeri Country to confront the destruction being wreaked on lands,



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lives and livelihoods by the coal and gas industry, and to build a movement of powerful shared resistance.

At the next SRC meeting (13 June), Audrey, Robert and Sally will discuss and ask for feedback from the SRC convenor, Rev'd Dr Gordon Preece, regarding the idea of holding a viewing of the film at a central venue.

#### 4. Next meeting in July

Following Social Responsibilities Committee on 13 June, a date in July will be set and an email will be sent to attendees.

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As we approach this season of Pentecost and bring together aspects, hopes and aspirations of our Climate Action Group, please join us in calling on the Spirit of God to help us.

‘When the Spirit of Truth is come, s/he will guide you into all truth’ (John 16.13)’.

We need help to grow, to broaden the learning and knowledge we have gained at St Mary’s, and we need to learn from others’ successes and failures on how to mitigate the effects of climate change as a parish, as individuals and to take concrete action as a Diocese.

We need courage to be taken out of our comfort zone, beyond the usual boundaries of parish and Church, to care for the earth.

Help us to learn priorities for the Church in caring for Creation.

Teach us how to collaborate with each other, and to speak up for Creation of which we are a part.

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*Revd Professor Emeritus Robert Gribben has a long and distinguished association with the Uniting Church in Australia, and is noted for his work in ecumenical relations and theological studies*

*Robert these days attends St Mary's regularly with his wife Susan, and his occasional sermons delight us.*

## **Nostra Aetate, a declaration for our time**

*Robert Gribben*

When I preached on Good Shepherd Sunday, my text included that intriguing remark of Jesus:

*<sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.'*  
(John 10).

I mentioned the Vatican's Declaration of the Church's Relation to non-Christian Religions, an official document of the Second Vatican Council, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 28 October 1965. It translates as, '*In Our Time*', and its time is still now, even a year before its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, because it's hardly known outside Roman Catholic circles. Never has it been so apposite: in our time, troubled by wars and rumours of war, especially in the Middle East, we should affirm again the bond which links the 'children of Abraham', Jews, Christians and Muslims, despite and because of all that divides us.

As the document was becoming known, it so happened that two young worshippers at St Mary's had just left for studies in Europe, me at Cambridge and my friend John H. Foster at the University of Tübingen in southern Germany.<sup>1</sup> One of John's greatest gifts to me was an understanding of what he called 'our parent faith'.<sup>2</sup> I am also writing this on the first day of Pesach (Passover). We should know more of our common heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1985, John and I both contributed an article to a collection published by the Victorian Council of Churches, John Roffey (ed.), *When Jews and Christians Meet, Australian Essays commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*. John wrote a moving essay on 'The Churches and the Holocaust', mine was 'Christian worship: the gifts of the parent faith'.

<sup>2</sup> John gathered the stories of 14 German Jews in Melbourne who came here at the time of World War II, which were recorded by him and his students: *Community of Fate*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin 1986. He was fluent in German and Yiddish. He died on 6 May 1994 and was buried from St Mary's. See also, Mark Baker (ed.), *History on the Edge*,

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*Nostra Aetate* has this to say in its rather imperious language:

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock. Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith (Cf. Gal. 3:7) are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. (Cf. Rom. 11:17-24) Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself. (Cf. Eph. 2:14-16)

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen [sic]: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She [i.e. The Church] also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.'<sup>3</sup>

The Council goes on to draw some inferences. Since the heritage we share is so great, and despite real differences, there are grounds for a respectful dialogue based on biblical and theological study. That some Jewish leaders at the time called for Jesus' death, that 'cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures.' That alone removed a bloody misunderstanding of centuries. Preaching or teaching such

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*Essays in Memory of John Foster, 1944-1994*), University of Melbourne (Department of History), 1997.

<sup>3</sup> For something so significant, the document is startlingly brief, one page with five paragraphs; see [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html). Para. 2 speaks of the non-Abrahamic religions, e.g. Hinduism and Buddhism.

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untruths is condemned.<sup>4</sup> *'Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men [sic] and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.'*<sup>5</sup>

So much for the 'Church' = the Roman Catholic Church's view at the highest level. It has produced much good fruit. One religious order, active in Melbourne, is the Sisters of Sion, for whom this declaration is its primary calling. Most historic churches have responses to the same need 'in our time'.

Under Archbishop Rowan Williams, a Jewish-Anglican Commission was established which meets annually.<sup>6</sup>

The Orthodox Churches have lived alongside Jews and under Islamic regimes for much of their history. There are current dialogues both with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and with the Vatican. These maintain the distinctiveness of the religions, while promoting dialogue to remove prejudice and create a spirit of mutual understanding and constructive cooperation as they confront common problems.

In response to this, we too can inform ourselves and be alert to language which continues the Christian anti-Semitism which begins in the Scriptures themselves. St John is a particular offender in this: his Gospel shows the growing pains of the two communities, Jewish and Christian, separated and the Church became a distinct reality. If you are a reader, you can substitute for 'the Jews' something like 'the local community' or 'the crowd' (mob!). Or you can indicate that the words should not be seen as applying to all Jews of all time (perhaps best left to the preacher). In our own time, old fear and prejudice, utterly irrelevant to modern contexts, is provoked yet again by violence both here and abroad.

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<sup>4</sup> The Council for Christian and Jews published *Rightly Explaining the Word of Truth*, Guidelines for Christian Clergy and Teachers in their use of the New Testament with reference to the New Testament's presentation of Jews and Judaism, in 1995 - one of a panel of authors officially appointed by the Churches. The Rev. Professor Dorothy Lee AM and I served on the panel.

<sup>5</sup> The VCC published a second book of essays in 1987, John Roffey (ed.), *Jews and Christian, Creating a New Spirit*. My article described the Australian Churches for Jewish readers and Paul Forgasz did the same for the Jewish communities.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/inter-religious/jewish.aspx>

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*Some of our congregation have experiences from way back. The Austins, Ron and Audrey are in their nineties, and have joined us in the last few years. Ron reminisces here on some of the early years of their adventurous lives.*

## **Hunting for food in the 1940s** in Mt Gambier. South Australia

Ron Austin

This period includes the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War years when every Australian was restricted in food purchase because of the system of rationing which was adopted during this war. Staple foods such as butter, sugar and meat required a ration ticket, and we were all issued books of tickets for this purpose. Our parents had a task to feed teenage children a balanced diet. Just of interest Audrey's father Ken Ferguson and my father Jim, were active members of patriotic organisations in the Mount such as the Volunteer Defence Corp. (VDC). Their aim was to protect us if there was an invasion.

As was normal in those days, many country children grew up in homes where part of our food, fish or meat, was supplied by our fathers. The lower Southeast of South Australia was mainly sheep or cattle grazing and a newly introduced industry, Pine forests, which will feature later in this story. No commercial hunting was being undertaken. Fishing gear and gun ammunition were difficult to buy, as every effort was made to reserve equipment for the War effort. We are documenting animals and birds which existed in abundance at that time, why, because so many younger and active men were away fighting our war and native animals and birds were not being culled, so numbers increased. There were no restrictions on shooting seasons or bag limits as we have now.

Ducks: Friends would plan a duck shoot if there had been plenty of rain to fill the swamps. these Ducks were at home on the water having nested in the reeds. A small group of men would meet at a known swamp, usually on a Saturday morning. there was no need to be out at first light, as is common these days. Having joined these shoots at 14 years of age, I was trained to walk quietly and bend over in the bush to reduce my height. When all the men were in an advantageous position, the shoot veterans would fire, and we could follow. Ducks immediately flew up and the skills of the hunters were tested. There was no wholesale shooting. only enough birds were shot to allow everyone 10 or so birds to take home. I can remember the ducks being collected in one pile and we all selected what we needed. Again, my father taught me to pick out the smaller, plainer birds not those with glossy brilliant feathers. The latter would be the adults, and be less tender to eat.

One point I must make, alcohol was not an inclusion in these shoots. All respected the danger of lethal guns being used in a dangerous manner. One disadvantage of eating birds or animals shot with shot guns cartridges was the small quantity of lead pellets which penetrated, and remained, in the meat. As is normal for children, we did not chew

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our food very well, so of consequence we swallowed the pellets. Today we would be concerned at the danger of lead poisoning, to my knowledge, this didn't occur.

Another available bird was Quail. To catch these birds the hunter strode across the paddock and these birds would fly up from the grass. It took a good eye and reflexes to hit one with the shot. Because they are small and had little flesh, they were classed as, very occasional food. Snipe were birds prevalent in the rows of pine timber off cuts, which remained after the harvesting of pine logs. At this time, in the 1940's, we had no knowledge that these birds migrated from Japan or their nesting habits. They were not caught in great numbers; they were again a bird which flew up in front of the hunter and were difficult to shoot.

Rabbits: First and foremost, in the food line were Rabbits. These were considered a useful addition to the meat stock they could also be bought in shops but required valuable ration coupons. Our mothers stewed or roasted them to produce lovely dishes for the family. During the earlier depression period in the 1930's, rabbit was the only meat many families had to eat. People could catch enough rabbits, in traps, to feed families. In my teens, most country children were taught how to set a steel rabbit trap, at a hole in the fence or on a likely path to catch one of these prolific animals. We had to be very careful setting the trap, as the spring was very powerful and tripped easily. We did have further incentive to trap, as beside putting food on the table, we could stretch the skins over a wire to dry and then sold as a bundle of skins to agents for the manufacture our soldiers' hats.

Ken Ferguson, Audrey's father had several ferrets, these are a long thin animals which can be taught to slip down the rabbit burrows, alarm the rabbits who then attempted to escape from the burrow, finishing up being caught in wire cages inserted by the "rabbiter" in every hole around the burrow. Occasionally, while down the burrow, they would find a young rabbit to eat so they would stay down and not reappear. Their recovery created heavy work for the rabbiters, as the entire burrow had to be dug out to reach the ferret. Today, rabbits are still evident when grass conditions are lush. Often, when conditions are ideal for breeding, the rabbits become a plague. On one occasion, in 1957, flying a DC3 freighter from Melbourne to Perth, we landed, at night in Forrest, which is in the centre of the Nullarbor plains. The grass season in this area was so good that on approach we could see, in the landing light glare, a positive moving carpet of rabbits disturbed by our noise and lights. Trappers were busy catching rabbits and loading them into refrigerated trucks for sale in Perth.

Rabbits were an introduced animal from England. They were imported by a Western Victorian Grazier for sport. I hesitate to add, that his name is the same surname as mine, Austin. Rabbits multiplied rapidly and spread across Australia. Manufactured viruses were later developed to reduce the numbers but never worked for very long, the rabbit population quickly recovered.

Fishing: The effects of the war became more apparent when we lost the commercial fishermen who lived along the coastal waters of Sth Australia, they were arrested as

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potential security risks. These unfortunate men were of either Italian or German descendants. The reason given for their arrest was a suspicion that they may assist German or Japanese submarines to collect fresh water from the local limestone caves.

We confirmed some justification for this one summer evening. Having set the net around a school of Tommy Rough fish we pulled the net, removing trapped fish from the net as we progressed. Contrary to Regulations my father switched on his torch to free the fish from the net. Just a short period of light, but suddenly a large flare went up above us from the sea direction. We panicked. Heaving the net in the boat we rowed ashore, drove to Mt Gambier and rang the police. Shortly after a RAAF representative from the Training Airfield appeared at our house to plot the exact location of the flare. Many flights were conducted the next morning but there was no sign of the enemy. Dad received a lecture for showing a light contrary to regulations,

The fishermen's absence allowed the fish and crayfish, in this area, to rapidly increase in number. We as amateur fishermen could catch enough surplus food to sell to the fish shops in Mt Gambier. Boxes of fish and bags of crayfish were very welcome to vary the normal menus of our small country town. There were no outboard motors available, not until 1960 that's 14 years after the war ended, the English Seagull and the American Johnson outboards arrived. For all fishing we used our rowboats with oars. Fishing nets were also scarce. If available, they were natural white and too easily visible to the fish when set in the water. To dye our new nets brown, we placed them in a half barrel with wattle tree bark and water or, the alternative dye, was to soak the net in old tea leaves.

In the Mount we were told there were deer living in the pine forests, but as they only came out at night to graze in the fire breaks, we did not see them. My father Jim was familiar with deer hunting as he took part, in 1937 shoots in the Dandenong ranges, near Melbourne. Despite all his knowledge Venison meat did not appear on our table.

The normal living conditions of the country people were far better than people living in the City, but the Government regulations forced us to compromise and "Make Do". !!!

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*Marion has been a stalwart in organizing the annual fete, and in providing for it.  
This year was no exception,*

## **St. Mary's Fete 2024**

*Marion Poynter*

A visit to St. Mary's for the annual church fete has become a regular event for many friends of the parish over the years. Held this year in conjunction with Vicar Jan's big Garage Sale, our church fete took place on the morning of Saturday, May 4. In so many ways, it was a great success. Notably we had fun—making preserves, baked goods and handcrafts. A big noticeboard, distributed leaflets, and word of mouth, attracted a steady stream of locals into the church halls on the day.

Many parishioners—including Jen, Judi, Virginia, and Mary, plus a couple of my grandchildren—helped with setting up in the Big Hall and, later, cleaning up, with selling our wares and, in the Small Hall, serving a delicious Devonshire morning tea at nicely-clothed small tables under the direction of Susan and helpers Margaret, Michael and David.

Stock on the produce stall soon sold out. Who could resist buying such favourite culinary treasures as Virginia's Tomato Kasoundi and Cumquat marmalade, Rhondda's lemon curd and raspberry jam, Andrew's Plum chutney, my lemon cordial and Seville orange marmalade, Mary's mint jelly, or Christine's apricot jam? Many people contributed cakes and scones and loaves and biscuits—and all were soon gone—along with Josie's scrumptious fudge. Also irresistible to shoppers were Margaret's lavender bags and my little bowls of home-made pot-pourri. Great gifts for Mother's Day!



Grateful thanks to Andrew Mc and Andrew B. for their help handling the money. We were delighted that we had made a total of \$2500 to help the Parish. And as I have always thought, holding a parish fete or fair is a great chance for members of the church community to work together, sharing time and their personal skills.



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*Fr Luke has a long association with St Mary's, since his being an associate priest some years ago. He is now Chaplain of Trinity College Melbourne. He continues his association with us, often worshipping here, preaching on occasion, or accompanying his wife Alice who is currently the Secretary on our church council.*

## **'It is good, Lord, to be here' – Reflections on a Long Trip**

*The Reverend Dr Luke Hopkins – Chaplain of Trinity College Melbourne*

Last year, I had the privilege of travelling with our College's choir to Europe on a four week tour. Our destinations took in Rome, Florence, Dublin, Kilkenny, Cambridge, Ely and London. A long time but a good time, and certainly 'not a bad day at the office' (which got said several times over the four weeks).

One of our first stops was at St Peter's Basilica to sing at the evening Sunday mass. Dressed in my cassock, I was able to wander around in a setting where the sight of a priest was as normal as sunshine (one person came up and thanked *me* for the wonderful building, which brought great amusement). One of the best things about our trip was that we allowed time. Time to look. Time to sit. Time to pray. Time to take it all in. This is so unlike other trips I've been on where you are constantly rushing from one thing to the next – simply to take a photo and then say you've been and seen (which on reflection, I now know is a complete waste of time and energy, as no one really cares if you have been and seen but not actually experienced).

St Peter's could not be described as possessing *humble* architecture (a nice medieval build with 'modest 16<sup>th</sup> century renovations' (a comment I made several times) – built with funds raised by a religious marketing scam, I should add). However, the sheer size and grandeur (if you allow yourself time to appreciate it) really does take your breath away. The giant statues of the apostles and martyrs gaze down at you as you witness one Renaissance masterpiece after another. There is something that stops you when you look over and see St Peter's grave looking back at you. However, indulgent (excuse the pun) the building might be, as a student of history I remind myself that if hadn't been for the funding of this building, the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformations (however, inevitable they might seem now) might have taken a very different course. That Basilica is a historic catalyst that led to Luther's 95 theses, later the English Reformation, and as we trace the course of time, through triumphs and pitfalls, leads all the way to a slightly more modest church in North Melbourne and all those who gather there.

As we sat in the apse waiting for the mass to begin, and I gazed up at the Bellini's massive alabaster *Gloria* with the glass image of the Holy Spirit shining at its centre, the Australian across the isle turned around. 'What does it mean for you to be here?' he asked. As we stared up at Bellini's sculpture together, my response was brief and polite:

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‘Well you can find God anywhere I suppose, but this is pretty special’. I said this as know that the lavishness of the place can been off putting for some (my first experience of the Basilica years ago certainly was). I wondered if he thought this was all a bit much. He simply nodded and turned back. I’ve since had more time to think about what this gent might have been asking. On reflection, I think this chap (who I found out later was a Roman Catholic) was actually asking the Anglican chaplain from Melbourne what it meant for me to be at the very centre of Roman Catholicism on earth. As such, my given response might have seemed a bit trite (which, I suppose, it was – *mea culpa*).

His question has stuck with me though. What does it mean for us to be in such places? For me, the great privilege that this Choir Tour provided was to return to places I had been before. However, the great opportunity it provide me was to find moments to go and visit places and see things I had not before. This meant going to particular churches and visiting relics. Taking time to sit, think and pray in the place where the remains of names I have read in books are physically present in front of me.

So I return to the question I was presented with – ‘What does it means for us to be in such places?’ What does it mean go to these historic places and buildings that have been built on or over the site of historic events and people, and witnessed so many significant events in church history since? What did it mean for me to deliberately walk across Rome in order to see relics of the True Cross? What does it mean to kneel at the baroque altar where the remains of St Catherine of Siena are housed? To sit by St Francis of Assisi’s tomb? To glance at a portion of the Book of Kells? To read the story of long forgotten local saint so-and-so in Florence and sit quietly by her tomb and remember her? Can these things form us as Christians?

Those who have had the privilege to travel around the world make up a very small percentage of the earth’s population. Those who travel for business or pleasure (and not for just for migration or as refugees from their homeland) make up less than 10% of the world’s population (some estimate its less than 20%, others less than 5%). This is something that should make us stop and think. We who travel internationally, often many times across a lifetime, are an extremely privileged group. We have the resources and means to do so – most do not, and never will. Perhaps something to think about the next time we complain about how long it’s been since our last holiday.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it was common for English gentlemen of a certain age, class and sensibility to undertake a *Grand Tour*. These rambling holidays through central Europe were meant to expose these young men to classical antiquity and Renaissance culture. They would take in Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan and all the Romantic centres of Italy. They might travel to Greece or Malta, go through the Alps, and/or across the Low Countries. These holidays would last several weeks, if not several months. They would then return enculturated, and with plenty of art and sculptures to decorate their townhouses in tow. This was not exactly what we had in mind for our young choristers, but one might see a similarity.

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However, a *pilgrimage* is something different from either a modern holiday or a Grand Tour. Ideas of pilgrimage in Christianity go back practically to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. The earliest Christians often met at the site of where particular Christians had been martyred or buried. The earliest churches were often built on or around these places. It is a living witness to our faith in Christ's Resurrection. To explain what I mean, I include a passage worthy of a long quotation. Australian theologian Ben Myers once wrote the following:

In the ancient church, the message of Christ's triumph over death produced some peculiar attitudes towards the dead. Believers would assemble for prayer in tombs. They would worship Christ among the bones of the dead. Believers would raise the bodies of the martyrs in the air and parade them through the streets like trophies. At funerals they would gaze lovingly on the dead and sing psalms of praise over their bodies. Such behaviour shocked their pagan neighbours. According to Roman law, the dead had to be buried miles away from the city so that the living would not be contaminated. But Christians placed the dead right at the centre of their public gatherings. The earliest church buildings were really just big mausoleums erected over the remains of martyrs. The tombs of the saints were, in the words of John Chrysostom, "tombs with life, tombs that give voice".

When new believers were preparing for baptism, they would gather in the presence of the dead, there they would receive instruction in the ancient catechism. Even today the Apostles' Creed makes the most sense when you imagine the words echoing among the bones of the catacombs. The creed is marked everywhere by an unflinching acceptance of the facts of human mortality, coupled with a straightforward confidence in the ultimate triumph of life – a triumph that has already happened once and for all in the person of Jesus.

Where others see only defeat, Jesus' followers see a paradoxical victory. Where others see only contamination, we see the sanctification of human nature. Where others see only darkness and despair, we see broken gates. Where others see an end, we see new beginnings.

When Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, visited the Holy Land she not only laid the foundations for churches to be built there but brought back to Rome artefacts she believed to be associated with Christ and the Apostles. Modern historians and scientists might cringe a little at the stories but the fact remains that these relics were *believed*. Millions of Christians have since travelled to these sites and prayed just as we might. They brought with them the same faith, doubts, questions, problems, virtues and vices that we too might take with us. Whether or not, it really is a splinter of the Cross that Christ hung upon, that little piece of wood is material connection that points me to Him.

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I acknowledge that these things can be idolised. We pray *with* the saints not to saints. We acknowledge the sanctity of items associated with Christ and his saints, but we do not worship them as if they have salvific power. These relics can help us grow towards God in faith, hope and love, but they do not possess supernatural power in and of themselves. I also acknowledge that the veracity of such items does need to be questioned sometimes. Don't even get me started on the medieval relics containing the skull of John the Baptist *as a baby*... We need to wisen up to the fact that there have always been religious con-artists just as there are today (after all, for those who don't believe, it's the easiest lie to tell – though the hound of heaven catches up with you...). The 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformations did a lot to clean these fakes up and throw them away, although sometimes they might have over done it. One does not need to spend long in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral (located just up the road from Oliver Cromwell's house) to notice all the heads missing off the sculptures. However, just because there was rampant abuse does not mean that all these religious relics were or are fakes. In fact, some have excellent provenance in that regard.

Unlike Islam which stipulates that those who can must make the Hajj pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime, Christians have never said that pilgrimage is a must for our spiritual life. I suppose that our innate understanding that no practices of such kind can even attempt to win God's favour. However, as I return to my question, I think they can nevertheless help us to grow as Christians. These experiences can ground us. They can connect us to those who have gone before and inspire us. It is not to say that one must do these things, or that someone is more of a Christian for having done so. But to stand on the shores of the lake of Galilee and wonder if Jesus had stood in the same place watching the same sunset, now that would be something, wouldn't it? To touch the spot where Thomas Cranmer was burned to death for his faith? To see the skull and bones of St Agnes look back at you – the same kinds of bones that you and I have? To wonder what I am doing with these bones of mine in comparison, perhaps?

We feel these heroes and heroines of our Faith to not only be part of our revered past, but also part of continuing present and future. We confess that we are surrounded by a whole company of witnesses. This is not just an intellectual exercise or a bit of wishful thinking that those absent by death are still around. It is a living spiritual connection that means God's church is not just made up of those present today but all the Christians who have ever been and all those who will be. The boundaries of the Church stretch across time and space. 'He is God not of the dead, but of the living' (Matthew 22:32).

It is also good to be reminded I think, amongst all our contemporary ecclesial angst, of church buildings that are thousands of years old. These places of worship have seen many people come and go, great changes and events across history, and are witness to many loves, hates, sins, good works and prayers across time. Christians in these places have encountered the living Christ at the feet of those we read about today, and also remember times before and after them. I sat in a chapel in the Tower of London that was

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built by William the Conqueror. As I sat and marvelled at the best example (I was told) of a Norman chapel in England, I thought about all those Christians who have come and gone in that place. Their names lost to history but every single one remembered and loved by God. I wondered what it meant to be in a place of worship built in a castle – a building designed with violent intent as a symbol of violence by a man of violence. A place of worship built by a conqueror – an ‘outsider’ who oppressed those already present in the land. A man who, nevertheless, who have brought all his virtues and vices to this same place in prayer, just as I do. If I had never visited that Norman chapel I would never have asked those questions in quite the same way.

Just as a we reverence these great saints of the past, we must become more cognisant of encouraging and nurturing the saints of today and tomorrow. We know not how our words and actions now might raise up a generation of saints and martyrs that will be remembered and revered in ages hence. Alive today are Christians who will be regarded as saints in the future. Let us not simply remember the saints but push ourselves in all virtue and aspire to nothing less than their company in Heaven. In the end, what else really matters? St Mary’s might be a great place of pilgrimage one day... remembering St Sam of Casino or the foundation house of the Rich Clares... I’m being glib, but hopefully you get the point.

Steven Runciman, the great Medievalist and historian of the Crusades, once wrote the following:

<sup>1</sup> Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades: Volume 1, The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951, p.38 (the beginning of Chapter 3).

‘The desire to be a pilgrim is deeply rooted in human nature. To stand where those that we reverence once stood, to see the very sites where they were born and toiled and died, gives us a feeling of mystical contact with them and is a practical expression of our homage. And if the great men {and women} of the world have their shrines to which their admirers come from afar, still more do men {and women} flock eagerly to those places where, they believe, the Divine has sanctified the earth.’

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*Libby joined St Mary's some few years ago, along with her husband Tony. They did so with several other members of the Canterbury Fellowship which was winding up its activities in an orderly fashion after some eighty years.*

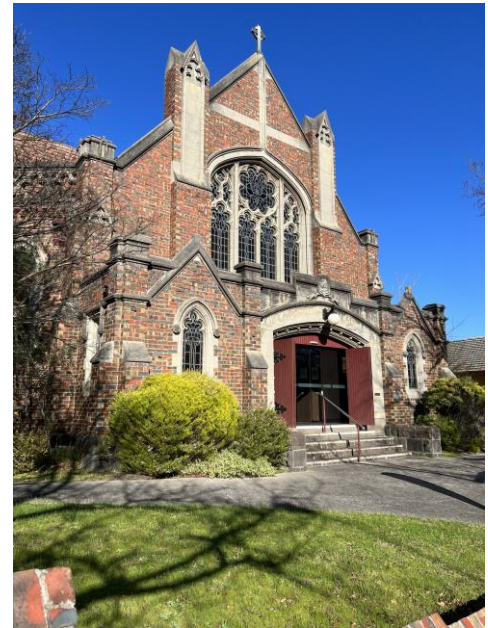
## **“Reminiscences of the Church of my childhood”**

*Elizabeth Brookes*

I was born into a Methodist family and our church was known then simply as the “Burke Road Methodist Church,” on the corner of Burke Rd and Mont Albert Rd in Canterbury. It was made of Klinker bricks which had dark reds and smoky blues (sadly I am unable to supply any photos of my own as I am currently writing from overseas.)

The porch, which had a large bricked archway and quite a few stone steps, was very welcoming (nobody had yet invented “Health and Safety Rules” in the fifties and sixties) and there was a door on each side to enter the Church.

Inside it was like a small Ancient Greek amphitheatre: the entrance was higher and wider at the back with a gentle slope downwards, while the walls were moved subtly inwards: the eye was then drawn to the pulpit, placed high in the centre of the back wall and fitting well with the Methodist tradition of focusing on The Word. The organ console was directly below the pulpit, with pews for the choir on either side.



Quite by chance, our church had three Cornish ministers in a row.

I was too young to remember the first, Mr Vercoe, but I was told he preached in the fine tradition of the Methodists before him! Everyone in the Congregation loved singing, ably assisted by the Organist and Choir.

Wine was never served in Communion, rather a reddish grape juice, served in very small individual glass cups, which were lovingly washed after morning tea. My mother, who was a Bacteriologist (as they were then called) and my Doctor father thoroughly approved.

My second Cornish Minister was Alf Milligan, and I have very happy memories of climbing up on the pew, just as Alf was walking up the aisle at the end of the service,

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running behind my parents and leaping out into Alf's arms, which always made him laugh. (I was aged three at that time, and he never missed the catch.)

My third Cornish Minister was Viv Roberts, a very thoughtful man with an excellent sense of humour, and from the age of eight onwards, I found that I was understanding so much more.

In the nineteen-fifties and -sixties the Church was full every week, including a very large Sunday School. Whilst many might have believed that Methodists were dour and humourless, once a year there would be a fundraising Concert/Variety Show which was always hilarious and very clever. Happy memories!

Libby Brookes

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*Josie has been an active member of our parish for several years. She shares with us here a study arising from her chaplaincy role at an aged-care community in the inner west of Melbourne*

### **Meditation and Prayer for aged-care residents**

Josephine Snowdon

An Exploration of the Positive Assistance received through Meditation and Prayer Rituals, within Services held for Residents Confronting Major Health Problems.

*Case study from the Chaplain at Aged Care Community, Footscray.*

#### **The Study**

This study arises from the positive feedback from resident with regard to the help they have received and observations made by the Chaplain delivering the services across three floors for three years.

This paper offers the findings related from residents' individual experiences of well-being and coping with their major health problems, as a consequence of meditation and prayer within the weekly services they attend at an Aged Care Community, Footscray. (L2)

Theological Reflection<sup>7</sup> is a transformational activity concerned with helping people change situations. In this paper it operates from a committed faith perspective, attempting

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<sup>7</sup> Some Reflections on Theological Reflection: John Patton (Prof. Emmer of Pastoral Theology Columbia University, Georgia, in *The Journal of Christian Ministry*, JCM, VOL. 2 – 2010)

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in this case to bear witness to the truth of the experiences of the residents who participated in the meditation and breath prayer,<sup>8</sup> linked to the service.

Theological reflection is adopted as the method of both engaging in the process of prayer and meditation as well as researching the residents' experiences in this case study.

## **Background and Supporting Literature**

**Spiritual care** is an essential aspect of holistic person – centred Aged Care. Spiritual care responds to and connects with the personhood of those who face a decline in ability, for physical, psycho-social and cognitive reasons. In aged care facilities residents are usually facing, becoming more aware of their mortality. Understanding the meaning of their life's journey is significant to many, as is finding intimacy with God.<sup>9</sup>

Gero-transcendence is a “a psychosocial theory of ageing developed by Lars Tornstam, a Swedish Sociology professor.”<sup>10</sup> An understanding of the theory of gero-transcendence<sup>11</sup> has been identified as the frequent growth of faith and deepening of spiritual beliefs in people who suffer from cognitive decline or dementia.

**Spirituality** is broader than religion, it describes the significant connections, personal meaning in life's experiences and a sense of the transcendent, that forms nurtures and sustains people through life's journey and its transitions. Connection with God has been identified to relate to a feeling of belonging, a deeper relationship with God, religion and religious rites.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, with relationship to aging, the evidence supports that spirituality does not extinguish with dementia.<sup>13</sup> Common rituals that Chaplains use for assisting a person with connection to self and God include Meditation and Prayer, within services or independent of services.

In relationship to **Meditation**, Lindberg identifies through an integrative review of research, that not only can the practice of meditation enhance physical well-being in the elderly, but reduce anxiety and provide a sense of calm within a session that may last for a period of hours.<sup>14</sup> Further studies indicate that mindfulness meditation assists the

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<sup>8</sup> Breath as Prayer, Tucker, J. Publ: Thomas Nelson Nashville Tennessee ,2022

<sup>9</sup> Spiritual care and Growth in the Fourth Age of Life, Mackinlay, E. Publ: Jessica Kingsley ,London, 2006

<sup>10</sup> *Int J Older People Nurs*: Editorial, 2007 Dec;2(4):289-94. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-3743.2007.00085.x.

<sup>11</sup> The Role and meaning of Spirituality in Older people Living with Dementia: A Systematic Review, Mlinar Reljic, Natasa et al. in Research Square. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-50594/v1>, p.2.

<sup>12</sup> The Role and meaning of Spirituality in Older people Living with Dementia: A Systematic Review, Mlinar Reljic, Natasa et al. in Research Square. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-50594/v1>, p.9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.4.

<sup>14</sup> Integrative Review of Research Related to Meditation, Spirituality and the Elderly; Lindberg, D, A. In *Geriatric Nursing*, vol26, Number 6, p.375



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memory of elderly people.<sup>15</sup>In relationship to **Prayer**, through literature review, Kreps indicates that the evidence points toward prayer being an important ritual that can assist people facing significant health challenges and that there is little evidence to show it can be of harm.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Chaplain /Author**

Currently employed as a Chaplain, I am interested to explore the significance of the work of prayer and meditation in the lives of the residents that travel along side, especially how they experience and find the prayer/ meditation offered in the services.

**The Services** are short around 20 minutes with pastoral spiritual theme for the day. accompanying psalm, gospel reading, a Hymn, Chaplains insight/ reflection, some traditional prayers and the saying of the Peace and the Grace.

The Prayer/ meditation section starts immediately after and finishes with ten minutes. It follows the theme for the day.

This comprises guided breath prayer and meditation with specifically chosen music that evokes calm mood and a sense of tranquility. There is a visual picture and words maybe from the psalm to reflect upon ie\* a theme linked to that explored in the service.

### **Case Study**

Ten residents attending the service- 4 permanent the remainder in Transition Care Program (Geriatric Residents undergoing a time of medical/social assessment – a liminal space of not knowing what the outcome of their stay might be).

All have been assessed by the Chaplain as potentially wanting to attend the service and either have made their way there independently or they have been assisted by care staff.

### **The service**

Held at 10:30 in the morning following a cup of coffee or tea, in the library .

The spiritual theme was “ God, Our Help.”

The gospel story was Mark ch 1:12-15

Jesus going into the wilderness to pray, supported and surrounded by animals and angels. The visual image was a picture of Jesus seated on a rock in the wilderness, surrounded by animals and angels.

The chaplain first practices the prayer mediation with the residents so that they get into the cycle of breathing for breath prayer.



### **Breath Prayer**

In: My help comes from you Oh Lord,

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<sup>15</sup> Effect of Mindfulness Meditation on Attention and Working Memory in Elderly People.Indian Journal of Clinical Anatomy and Physiology: Kurmi,N. et al, Jan- March , 2019;6(1):pp.73-76

<sup>16</sup> The role of Prayer in Promoting Health and Well Being, in the Journal of Communication and Religion, Vol. 35No.3, fall 2012,pp.237-254:Kreps, G,L.p.244

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Out : Maker of Heaven and Earth

Meditation after service

Music “Lent vol. 3” - “Salt of the Sound” You Tube

- Introductory videos and exit videos for the service while residents arrive have coffee and leave after:
- Tim Janis- instrumental hymns and seasonal scenic photography-

**Summary of results for Resident evaluation of Prayer and Meditation experience.**

**Questions in this enquiry**

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?
2. With regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?

**Resident Responses**

***Resident Permanent 1.***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*I want to take life one day at a time*
2. with regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*They make me feel good*

***Resident Permanent 2.***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*I have my health, I don't need any more.*
2. With regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*It makes me feel happy, it all helps.*

***TCP resident 1.***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*That God will grab my hand and make me feel more secure.*
2. With regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*A feeling of courage and energy to keep going.*

***TCP resident 2.***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*I am grateful for good sleep, and seeing my family*
2. With regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*I pray most of my life, and this is the same here, I am very interested in what you have to say!*

***TCP resident 3 (Russian)***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*To feel good*
2. with regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*It helps me feel good*

***TCP resident 4 (Greek )***

1. What is most important to you at the moment in your life?  
*I am worried about my pain*
2. With regard to the prayer and meditation today, how did it make you feel?  
*It makes me feel peaceful, although I cannot follow the words, I understand the music.*

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## Reflection

Theological reflection is a transformational activity concerned with helping people change situations. In this paper it operates from a committed faith perspective, attempting in this case to bear witness to the truth of the experiences of the residents who participated in the meditation and breath prayer, linked to the service.

Through engaging in a period of theological reflection, prayer and meditation led by the Chaplain, residents related experiencing feelings of courage, energy, feeling good and peace.

The music selection and pictures were shown to be especially significant for those who come from multi-cultural backgrounds and different denominations of faith, without English literacy.

Observation of those who were not able to participate in the short survey because of specific constraints, showed that they were significantly relaxed, curling up resting, closing eyes and breathing deeply, secure in this space of spiritual sanctuary and safety.

The meaning of the meditations are specific to each individual, there would be a deeper understanding expressed by those of different language if time this day would allow, for some translation, if they did not have deep strokes and language was limited, however this was undertaken as a brief quality case study, and is not intended to be in depth research.

As to the meaning that I as a Chaplain am able to speak of to the group, or “what I say” as one participant said: There are many ways that we are supported through rough times, times, when we seem to be in the desert or wilderness, praying, when the time seems to extend on and on, even to 40 days. At these times it can be the person we least expect, our pets, our family, our neighbours, doctors, treatments, social workers, therapists, medications our singing of hymns, our praying and meditations that help us.

In this way the faith perspective of the Chaplain, impacts the message gained from the texts. The Chaplain is wanting to offer a pastoral approach that is supportive to residents and significant for the participants. Through these opportunities God meets us and supports us, these are the ways God can uphold us... hidden angels and messengers ministering to us.. and so we are thankful! We give thanks to God and raise our voices in singing of a hymn of praise.

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*Josie would like to share the following with us*

Dear members of the St Mary's congregation,

You may be unaware that I am moving to Gisborne end June, living with my family in a small family unit as I retire from work at Footscray Aged Care after three years. I am exploring other ministry options as well.

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I am offering the above item as my last one for Ave !  
This is an offering from my authorised ministry within St Mary's and  
outreach in my Lay Ministry as a chaplain:

Some may be unaware that I have had two volunteers from St Mary's  
work with me regularly within this ministry and I am grateful to both Lewis  
and Judy.

I am also immensely grateful for opportunities to Serve with Fr Jan and the  
spiritual support from Fr Jan's ministry.

Peace and enjoy!

Josie

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*Music and poetry: a run-down of recent delights and of some to come*

## **Poetry and Music in the Air**

*Rhondda Fahey and Beverley Phillips*

There's usually quite a lot of music in church circles - hymns, organs and pianos, maybe even an orchestra or band - but not always as much poetry, unless, of course, you count the words to the hymns, which, for the most part, we will not. This year, however, we've been not so much surrounded by poetry as infused and inspired by it, not only at St Mary's North Melbourne but also at the Basilica in Geelong, at St Peter's Eastern Hill, and, even on Wednesday May 8, at St Paul's Cathedral. At Pentecost, looking backwards and sometimes forward, it is hard not to conclude that poetry as well as music is in the ecclesiastical air

### ***St Mary's North Melbourne***

There's always music in the air at St Mary's. Our musical director and our wonderful choir see to that. But sometimes there's more of it than others: the high holy days are a case in point, where the choir make an extra special effort to celebrate the feast. And this Lent, Passiontide and Easter their

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liturgical ministry extended to the three-part series  
*Twilight at 5: St Mary's – Lenten Moments.*

### **Lent 1**

Lent 1 featured *Tenebrae*, which was the mediaeval Office of Mattins (midnight) sung on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week. *Tenebrae* is the Latin word for darkness. In this adaptation, as we listen to the story of the last hours of Jesus' life, candles are extinguished to symbolise the enveloping darkness. To be thrust by the music and readings into Passiontide at the beginning of Lent was a helpful reminder of where the penitential season leads.

### **Lent 2**

Lent 2 was quite different. Beverley's original intention, as it was near to both the Women's World Day of Prayer and the weekend where Women Composers were celebrated around the world, was to present a program of Lenten poetry and music by Australian women. The music was fine but the poetry not so easy. In the first place the volumes of verse she hoped to draw on were missing (and here a fervent plea that if anyone finds her copy of *The Oxford Religious Verse* or the corresponding book of Australian verse on their bookshelves, please send them home). A call for suggestions for Australian female poets was sent around the parish,

There was Elizabeth Smith, of course, whose hymns can rightly be called poetry but, although we have discovered other female Australian religious poets since then, not much else emerged at the time. Overseas there were Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Madeleine Engle, among others, but it wasn't until Mtr Robin Boyd suggested Mary Oliver that Beverley had a program of Australian composers and international poets.

For the music, Beverley played organ and piano and Helen Duggan beguiled us with her flute. Helen is a member of the Ballarat Symphony Orchestra and the Ballarat Wind Orchestra and is currently musical director of Ballarat Choral Society and choral director of Ballarat Central Uniting Church. The atmosphere created by poetry and music took us to a deeper understanding of the meaning of Lent.

### **Lent 3**

Lent 3 was different again. *Last Words of Love: Seven last words from the Cross in Readings, Prayers, Music and Silence* is a program prepared by the RSCM. Guided by the choir and readers, we entered the Good Friday events as we stood at the foot of the cross to meditate on Jesus' last words of love and his great sacrifice for all people. Truly this Twilight series was a great Lenten experience and we thank our musicians.

### **St Mary's Basilica Geelong**

Meanwhile, down the coast in Geelong, Frank De Rosso and Helen Seymour were also doing an organ and poetry reading as part of the Lenten reflections at St Mary's Basilica. In this case, the readings were from Helen Seymour's recently published latest volume

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*Fragile Threads*. Helen has several earlier books of poetry to her credit and is tutor at the Surf Coast Poetry Group. She has graciously agreed to our inclusion here of two poems from this publication, chosen by Beverley.

### **In the No Colour of Evening**

In the no colour of evening  
that shadowy time between things  
when the hue of pleasure has faded  
drained away  
into some unknown void  
along with laughter and busy talk  
and definition of things achieved  
all dissipated

decisions must be made  
a meal prepared to appease  
the weary home-comers  
irritable teens – tired workers  
eerie monochrome descends  
alien emptiness  
a no time  
neither one thing nor another  
a hole in space  
something to be crossed  
endured  
filled with shadows  
of what has been  
and what is to come  
this shadowy blur  
this end of day  
scribble of  
time

### **Body Bags**

21<sup>st</sup> century cocoons  
black plastic  
ironic  
laid out in neat rows  
on the mourning muddy earth  
waiting to be tagged  
evidence –  
crimes of war

empty panicked old men  
wrapped against the cold  
look on  
bewildered women  
keeping it together  
pride tightly knotted under their chins  
eyes searching for sons, brothers,  
children  
for some morsel of control  
to wrap them  
in blankets of love  
bury them with prayers  
salvage crumbs of comfort,  
dignity amidst  
broken blasted rubble

Many know Helen's husband, Tom Healey, who was to have presented an organ recital of women composers at St Mary's during Lent but some health issues drastically intervened. We now look forward to this happening, most probably next year.

### ***St Peter's Eastern Hill***

Poetry has been in the ecclesiastical air at the Hill in *Poets and the Faith* 2024, a series of poetry readings and lectures organised by Mtr Catherine Bellhouse on the second Tuesday of each month. So far Professor Dorothy Lee has offered new and challenging insights (but so reasonable that one wonders why no one else has remarked on them) into Gerard Manley Hopkins, Carol O'Connor has introduced English poet, Denise Levertov, whose *The Servant Girl at Emmaus* must surely be part of next year's Lenten Twilight series at St Mary's, and Ken Parkes has discussed Australian poets James McAuley and Gwen Harwood. In June Rowan Williams will present R.S. Thomas, by the magic of

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zoom. The series continues until it finishes with Auden and Eliot in October. It's not too late to sign up. There's always a group from St Mary's for you to sit with.

### ***St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne***

Mtr Professor Canon Dorothy Lee's book, *Poems of Lament and Grace* with its Foreword by Bishop Rowan Williams, was launched in the Barbara Darling Room on May 7 by Fr Professor Russell Goulbourne. Those who had gathered to cheer the book on represented many facets of Dorothy's life, the academic, the theologian, the priest, the mother, grandmother, friend, and classicist, and all the other Dorothys in between. Poems by all of them, which mysteriously allow her readers to understand emotions and ideas for which they previously had no words. Good poetry does that. Thank you, Dorothy.

Today this poem is my favourite:

Question-mark

A little here, a little there,  
Not really here, not truly there:  
Where do I belong?

Most days the question hangs in the air:  
sometimes in bright sunlight fading like hazy smoke or skywriting;  
                  other times circled in black lines  
                  across a winter sky  
                  mirrored on soft interior walls  
                  and cozy furnishings,

echoing doubts  
that seem to speak an undying word of  
disconnect.

Yet not a quest  
for me to answer or resolve:

this one is yours.  
Your shadow lurking  
within the punctuation  
even as it slowly curls in upon itself:  
Your circle to sustain the failing lines  
to make the crooked straight,  
                  and forge a path  
                  across a semantic wilderness.

These are not necessarily all easy poems. The door through which we glimpse Dorothy's complex recontextualizations of her experience is sometimes only half open. You have to work at these poems Which makes their unpacking all the more precious. Ideas surface for a few verses then twist away.  
It was a great evening.

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## **So much to look forward to after Pentecost**

### **At St Mary's North Melbourne**

#### *Something very special this year in July*

Choirs from all over the globe will be gathering in Auckland for what is called the 'World Choir Games'. Tom Healey was approached by a group called 'Ung Klang' from Denmark, who were interested in adding a tour in Australia to their visit to the Southern Hemisphere. Plans are still being finalised, but Beverley is delighted to report that St Mary's will host a concert by the group on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, exact time and ticketing to come. A Google and/or You tube search will demonstrate the excellence of the group, ensuring that you will want to be there. It is most opportune that we have a Danish visit this year as our organ (rebuilt by Knud Smenge, originally from Denmark) turns 40. More plans later. Any assistance in promoting and publicising this event would be very gratefully accepted. For now, please put a note in your diaries and begin to let others know.

#### *Twilight at five in 2025*

If Beverley and her supporters can be persuaded to repeat the Lenten series, we now have more female poets to add to that list. If you missed this inspiring series this year, make plans to deepen your Lenten experience next year.

#### **Tom Healey's postponed concert.**

### **At St Peter's Eastern Hill**

The rest of *Poets and the Faith 2024*. Can't wait to see how they cram Auden and Eliot into the last presentation. The name of this series promises more discussions in 2025.

And there you have it. Lots of special, out of the ordinary, music and poetry. How lucky and stimulated we have been. Thanks to the Holy Spirit who not only spoke by the prophets but also inspired the poets and musicians. Thanks to the Holy Spirit who inspired the organisers who made these events possible. May the same Spirit inspire us to support their efforts to fill the air with poetry and music.

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